

Thurrock Schools' Forum

14 September 2023, 10am to midday
Virtual meeting – Microsoft Teams

Agenda

Multi Academy Trusts	Name
Catalyst Academies Trust	Mr T Parfett (Chair)
Harris Federation	Mrs N Graham
Ormiston Park	To be advised
Ortu Federation	Mr K Sadler
Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust	Mr Griffiths
REAch2 Academy Trust	Mr E Samuel
South West Essex Community Education Trust	Mr S Munday
The Gateway Learning Community Trust (GLC)	Mrs V Reid (Vice-chair)
Vine Schools Trust	Mrs E Wigmore
Christus Catholic Trust	Mrs J Seymour
Secondary Voluntary-Aided School	Name
Grays Convent	Mrs P Johnson
Standalone Academy Trusts	Name
Woodside Academy	Mr S Proctor
Giffards Primary	Mrs N Haslam-Davis
Infrastructure Groups	Name
TASS	Mr S Bell
TPHA	Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes
Alternative Provision	Name
Olive AP	Mr M Vickers
Special Schools	Name
Treetops Academy	Mr J Brewer
Beacon Hill Academy	Mrs Sue Hewitt
Non-school members	Name
Diocese of Chelmsford	Miss S Jones
Diocese of Brentwood	Mrs M Shepherd
0-5 EYFS Representative	Mr A Melbourne
0-11 Representative	Ms A Jones
11-19 Representative	Mr S Bowak

Thurrock Schools' Forum

Number	Item	Time guide
Introductory items		
1.	Welcome from Chair – introduction Rebekah Hughes (Clerk)	10am
2.	Apologies for absence Mark Vickers – Jo Gillman representing	10:02am
3.	Agreement of agenda, time-guide and notification of 'any other business'	10:03am
Items for decision		
4.	Forum Membership Review and Election of Chair and Vice Chair presented by Sarah Williams	10:05am
5.	Dedicated Schools Grant 2023/24 presented by David May	10:10am
6.	Early Years Update 2023/24 presented by David May	10:30am
Items for information		
7.	Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 presented by David May	10:50am
8.	Schools' Forum Forward Plan presented by Sarah Williams	11:10am
Closing items		
9.	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 June 2023	11:20am
10.	Action log	11:30am
11.	Matters arising	11:40am
12.	Any other business	11:45am
13.	Next meeting Thursday 16 November 2023	

THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE:	14 September 2023
SUBJECT:	Election of Chair and Vice Chair and Membership Update
REPORT OF:	Sarah Williams
THE REPORT IS:	For Decision

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks for the Schools Forum to agree the election of the Chair and Vice Chair for the academic year. To note changes to the membership structure.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Forum members to agree that the current Chair, Mr T Parfett continues as the chair of the forum whilst we are in the process of 'The Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme'.

2.2 Schools Forum members vote and agree a new vice chair for the academic year 2023/24.

3.0 MAIN BODY OF REPORT

3.1 Each year the Schools Forum membership is reviewed and updated. There have been no changes to membership.

3.2 *School forum membership structure*

<i>Name of Multi Academy Trust - 10 members</i>	Name	Role
CEO – Catalyst Academies Trust	Mr T Parfett	CEO
Harris Federation	Mrs N Graham	Assistant Director
CEO Ormiston Park	To be advised	
CEO ORTU Federation Ltd (Stanford & Corringham Trust)	Mr K Sadler	Interim CEO
CEO Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust	Mr P Griffiths	CEO
CEO REAch2 Academy Trust	Mr E Samuel	Headteacher Purfleet Primary
CEO South West Essex Community Education Trust (SWECET)	Mr S Munday	CEO
CEO The Gateway Learning Community Trust (GLC)	Mrs V Reid	CEO
CEO Vine Schools Trust	Miss E Wigmore	CEO

CEO Christus Catholic Trust	Ms N Cashell	CEO
<i>Secondary Voluntary Aided School</i>	Name	Role
Grays Convent	Mrs P Johnson	Headteacher
<i>Standalone Academy Trusts</i>	Name	Role
West Thurrock Academy	Mr S Proctor	Headteacher
Giffards Primary	Mrs N Haslam	Headteacher
<i>Infrastructure Groups</i>	Name	Role
TASS	Mr S Bell	Chair of TASS
TPHA	Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes	Chair of TPHA
<i>Alternative Provision</i>	Name	Role
Olive AP	Mr Mark Vickers	CEO
<i>Special Schools</i>	Name	Role
Treetops Academy	Mr J Brewer	Headteacher
Beacon Hill Academy	Ms Sue Hewitt	Headteacher
<i>Non-school members</i>	Name	Role
Diocese of Chelmsford	To be advised	
Diocese of Brentwood	Mrs M Shepherd	
0-5 EYFS Representative	Mr A Melborne	
0-11 Representative	Ms Alison Jones	
11-19 Representative	Mr S Bowak	

4.0 CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

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THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE: 14 September 2023
SUBJECT: Dedicated Schools Grant 2023/24
REPORT OF: David May
THE REPORT IS: For Decision

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The DSG is currently projecting a breakeven positions that would maintain the deficit at £0.534m.
- 1.2 There continues to be significant risk within the High Needs Block:
- Continued increase in demand for EHCP's.
 - Sufficiency of local offer to prevent high-cost external placements; and
 - Costs incurred in providing education for pupils not in school.
- 1.3 At this stage pupil movement, within the schools and high needs block, for the new academic year is not fully known. This will be included in the information to be reported in November.
- 1.4 The ESFA have released information on the Teachers pay additional grant. A decision is required on how this funding is allocated to Special and AP academies. This is outlined in section 6 of the report.
- 1.5 Work on the SEND Delivering Better Value programme is progressing. Findings will be reported to the November meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Schools Forum is invited to:
- a) Note and seek clarity on the contents of the report.
 - b) Agree the method of distribution to Special and AP Academies of the Teacher pay additional grant as outlined in Section 6.
 - Option A – Table 1: Funding allocations as provided by ESFA.
 - Option B – Table 2: The inclusion of a lump sum element

3. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 To inform members of the Schools Forum of recent announcements and the projected outturn position in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2023/24, in accordance with the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

4. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2023/24

- 4.1 The current projected outturn for 2023/24 is a breakeven position as shown below:

DSG 2023/24	Funding	Academy	Funding	Final DSG	Projected	Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Schools	156.834	(150.641)	(0.742)	5.450	5.158	(0.292)
Central Services	1.632	0.000	0.000	1.632	1.621	(0.011)
High Needs	37.356	(7.026)	0.742	31.073	31.375	0.303
Early Years	13.599	0.000	0.000	13.599	13.598	(0.000)
Total	209.420	(157.667)	0.000	51.753	51.753	(0.000)

- 4.2 The outturn position reflects the following key areas:

- Schools Block – Pupil Growth, in line with latest projections, has an underspend of £0.292m.
- Central Services Block – Staffing underspends and maximisation of external funding.
- High Needs Block
 - Out of Borough Placements – Budget realigned and latest September projections. Current overspend of £0.230m linked to current and future placements.
 - Resource Base – Savings of £0.233m. Forecasts include provision for bases originally scheduled to open in September 2023 that are delayed to November 2023 and January 2024.
 - Top up Funding Academies – Overspend £0.482m. The demand for EHCPs continues, average of 34 new EHCPs a month.

Appendix A provides further detail in the key areas of expenditure.

- 4.3 At this stage pupil movement, within the schools and high needs block, for the new academic year is not fully known. This will be included in the information to be reported in November and allow a more accurate picture of the projected outturn to be known.

5. DSG RESERVE

- 5.1 The DSG has a carried forward deficit of £0.534m into 2023/24. The history and movement is reflected in the table below:

DSG Deficit - Summary	£m	Deficit % DSG
DSG Unfunded 31/03/2018	(4.046)	2.78%
DSG 2018/19	1.390	
DSG Unfunded 31/03/2019	(2.656)	1.74%
DSG 2019-20	0.678	
DSG Unfunded 31/03/2020	(1.978)	1.26%
DSG 2020/21	0.095	
DSG Unfunded 31/03/2021	(1.883)	1.12%
DSG 2021/22	0.178	
DSG Unfunded 31/03/2022	(1.705)	0.93%
DSG 2022/23	1.171	
DSG Unfunded 31/03/2023	(0.534)	0.19%

- 5.2 As a result of having a DSG deficit, a DSG management plan is required to be submitted to the ESFA that outlines the reason the deficit has occurred and actions to be taken to contain expenditure within the funding envelope provided.
- 5.3 The 2022/23 outturn position demonstrates that expenditure has been contained within the resource available, although each funding block has its own story to tell. The realisation of one-off savings has significantly contributed to the reduction of the historic deficit position whilst continuing to meet increased demand and cost within the High Needs Block.
- 5.4 Thurrock, as previously discussed, is part of tranche 3 of the Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) programme. This programme aims to support local authorities to improve delivery of SEND services for children and young people while ensuring services are sustainable. The programme will provide dedicated support and funding to 55 local authorities with less severe deficits than those in the Safety Valve programme. Tranche 3 will run from June to December 2023.

6. TEACHERS PAY ADDITIONAL GRANT 2023/24

- 6.1 The Teachers pay additional grant (TPAG) allocates funding for mainstream schools (for the 5 to 16-year-old age range), special and AP schools in 2023/24.
- 6.2 In 2023/24, funding through TPAG covers the 7-month period from September 2023 to March 2024. TPAG will continue into 2024/25, with the expectation that from 2025/26 this will be included as part of the Schools and High Needs national funding formula.
- 6.3 Local authorities will have flexibility in how they pass on the funding allocations for special schools and AP schools to individual providers. This flexibility recognises that the teachers' pay costs faced by special schools and AP schools vary

considerably between individual providers, depending in part on the complexity of the pupil needs that they serve.

6.4 Funding Rates 2023/24

Mainstream schools

The base funding rates for 2023/24 financial year are:

- a basic per-pupil rate of £36 for primary pupils
- a basic per-pupil rate of £50 for key stage 3 pupils
- a basic per-pupil rate of £57 for key stage 4 pupils
- a lump sum of £1,345
- an FSM6 per-pupil rate of £31 per eligible primary pupil
- an FSM6 per-pupil rate of £45 per eligible secondary pupil

Special schools and AP schools

The funding rate for 2023/24 financial year is £260 per place.

An Area cost adjustment (ACA) is added to all the rates shown above.

6.5 Allocations 2023/24

Mainstream schools

School level allocations showing the total funding allocated for the 2023/24 financial year and the conditions of grant have been published.

Special schools and AP schools

The table below shows the funding to be received in October 2023 that will be paid in November.

Table 1: Funding allocations as provided by ESFA

School Name	ACA	PLACES	VALUE	TOTAL
Beacon Hill Academy	1.047175	75	£260	£20,420
Olive AP Academy - Thurrock	1.047175	85	£260	£23,143
Treetops Free School	1.047175	147	£260	£40,023
Treetops School	1.047175	318	£260	£86,580
Total - Value of Grant		625		£170,166

The decision to be made is if this funding methodology should be used or a local variant that would include a lump sum consistent with how the HNB Additional grant formula was allocated. This is shown in the table below.

Table 2: Option for consideration

School Name	Lump Sum	ACA	PLACES	VALUE	TOTAL
Beacon Hill Academy	£5,000	1.047175	75	£229	£23,020
Olive AP Academy - Thurrock	£5,000	1.047175	85	£229	£25,422
Treetops Free School	£5,000	1.047175	147	£229	£40,319
Treetops School	£5,000	1.047175	318	£229	£81,405
Total - Value of Grant			625		£170,166

7. DELIVERING BETTER VALUE IN SEND PROGRAMME

- 7.1 Thurrock is part of Wave 3 and started engagement and data exchange with the team from Newton and CIPFA in June. Pupil level data and costs have been returned. Analysis and discussions have started to ensure accuracy and understanding of information.
- 7.2 A fundamental characteristic of the DBV diagnostic approach is the whole system engagement with partners and stakeholders. This includes the Schools Forum; Children and young people; Parent Carer Forums and wider parent carers; Education colleagues (Headteachers, Setting Leads, SENCOs, teachers, and governors) and Health and Social Care partners.
- 7.3 Workshops are to be held in September and October with partners and stakeholders. This will include seeking views on the current system and inclusive practice, what works well or less well at present, and which areas for improvement would make the greatest difference.
- 7.4 Officers to attend two separate residential sessions to discuss current practice and outcomes with other Local Authorities. These are to be held in August and October.
- 7.5 The emerging insights from DBV in SEND Tranche 1 programme is to provide better support and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The greatest opportunity exists in increasing the ability of local systems to support children in a mainstream setting.
- 7.6 The expected outcome from the programme will be a grant application to the Department for Education, backed up with data, which will allow investment to improve outcomes for young people through invest to save initiatives.
- 7.7 Newton have been invited to the November meeting to discuss the outcomes from the programme.

8. REFERENCES TO OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS / PREVIOUS REPORTS

- School Forum meeting 22-06-23 – Dedicated Schools Grant 2022/23 and 2023/24

9. CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact.

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Appendix A

<u>Dedicated Schools Grant</u>		<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2023/24</u>
		<u>Outturn</u>	<u>Revised</u>	<u>Projected</u>	<u>Variance</u>
		<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>	<u>£m</u>
SB	Schools Block	145.100	156.091	155.799	(0.292)
CSSB	Central Services Block	1.619	1.632	1.621	(0.011)
HNB	High Needs Block	33.170	38.098	38.401	0.303
EYB	Early Years Block	12.526	13.599	13.598	(0.000)
Dedicated Schools Grant Funding Settlement		192.415	209.420	209.420	(0.000)
Less Academy Recoupment		(147.461)	(157.667)	(157.667)	0.000
Dedicated Schools Grant Received		(46.125)	(51.753)	(51.753)	0.000
(Under) / Overspend		(1.171)	0.000	0.001	0.001
SB	Maintained Schools Budgets	3.814	4.018	4.018	0.000
SB	Growth Fund	0.324	1.432	1.140	(0.292)
CSSB	Statutory and Regulatory duties - Education	0.444	0.473	0.473	(0.000)
CSSB	Statutory and Regulatory duties - Finance	0.142	0.176	0.165	(0.011)
CSSB	School Place planning	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.000
CSSB	Admissions	0.213	0.300	0.300	(0.000)
CSSB	Schools Forum	0.006	0.010	0.010	0.000
CSSB	SACRE	0.010	0.015	0.015	0.000
CSSB	School Licences	0.137	0.154	0.154	0.000
CSSB	Contribution to Combined budgets	0.640	0.477	0.477	0.000
HNB	Place Funding	0.000	0.280	0.280	(0.000)
HNB	Top Up Funding - Thurrock Academies	3.386	3.600	4.081	0.482
HNB	Top Up Funding - Thurrock Resource Provisions	3.596	4.948	4.715	(0.233)
HNB	Top Up Funding - Thurrock Special Schools	6.501	7.811	7.808	(0.003)
HNB	Top Up Funding - Thurrock Alternative Provision	1.728	1.815	1.815	(0.000)
HNB	Top Up Funding - Other Local Authorities (4-16)	1.401	1.448	1.538	0.089
HNB	Top Up Funding - Post 16	2.275	2.500	2.329	(0.171)
HNB	Pupils not in School	0.461	0.500	0.422	(0.077)
HNB	Medical Tuition	0.211	0.225	0.211	(0.014)
HNB	Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	1.041	1.863	1.863	(0.001)
HNB	Non Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	2.098	2.141	2.283	0.141
HNB	Commissioned Services	1.123	1.185	1.170	(0.015)
HNB	Additional High Needs Targeted	0.507	0.400	0.522	0.122
HNB	Home Hospital Education Services	0.023	0.030	0.016	(0.014)
HNB	Travellers Team	0.046	0.050	0.049	(0.001)
HNB	Home to School Transport	1.600	1.600	1.600	0.000
HNB	High Needs Central Team	0.675	0.675	0.675	0.000
EYB	3&4 Year old	10.534	11.395	11.395	0.000
EYB	2 year olds	1.563	1.714	1.714	0.000
EYB	Early Years Central Team	0.429	0.490	0.490	(0.000)
Dedicated Schools Grant		44.954	51.753	51.753	(0.000)

THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE: 14 September 2023

SUBJECT: Early Years Update

REPORT OF: David May

THE REPORT IS: For Decision

1. BRIEFING NOTE

- 1.1 As announced in the 2023 Spring Budget additional funding is to be provided to increase the hourly funding rates for early years providers to deliver the existing early years entitlements for disadvantaged 2-year-olds and 3 and 4-year-olds from September 2023. In 2023/24 this will be paid as a standalone top-up grant known as the **Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG)**.
- 1.2 The additional funding allocation is £288m, to be provided to local authorities over 2023/24 (£204m) and 2024/25 (£84m).
- 1.3 The Education and Skills Funding Agency expect to publish in September conditions of grant for the EYSG, this will include details of reporting and monitoring requirements.
- 1.4 A provisional allocation will be provided to LAs in September 2023, this will be amended to reflect the January 2024 census. This is consistent with current DSG Early Years funding allocations and allows the full increase to be passported to providers. The table below reflects the change proposed to be implemented from September 2023.

EYNFF v Thurrock Increase	2022/23	2023/24 Apr23 to Aug23	EYSG	2023/24 Sept23 to Mar24
3 and 4 Year Old				
Hourly rate for 3 and 4 year olds from EYNFF	£4.77	£5.10	£0.51	£5.61
An increase of		£0.33		£0.51
Hourly rate for 3 and 4 year olds - Providers	£4.48	£4.79	£0.51	£5.30
An increase of		£0.31		£0.51
Early Years Pupil Premium		£0.62	£0.04	£0.66
Disability Access Fund		£828.00	£53.00	£881.00
DAF Sept-23 to Mar-24		7/12	£30.92	
2 Year old				
Hourly rate for 2 year olds from EYNFF	£6.03	£6.09	£1.98	£8.07
An increase of		£0.06		£1.98
Hourly rate for 2 year olds - Providers	£5.44	£5.50	£1.98	£7.48
An increase of		£0.06		£1.98

- 1.5 The government on 21 July 2023 released a consultation on Early Years Funding – extension of the entitlements with responses required by 8 September 2023.
- 1.6 The consultation document makes a number of proposals regarding the approach to funding for the early years entitlements for 2-year-olds and under from 2024-25.
- Section 1 focuses on the national funding formula that we will be using to distribute funding to LAs for 2-year-olds and under from 2024-25. It also includes proposals to extend eligibility for early years pupil premium (EYPP) and the disability access fund (DAF).
 - Section 2 sets out the overall illustrative impact that these proposals will have on funding rates for LAs in 2024-25.
 - Section 3 then sets out our proposals regarding the framework of rules for the distribution of all funding by LA's.
- 1.7 A presentation on the consultation and the response submitted will be made to both the Early Years Provider Forum (13 September) and Schools Forum (14 September).
- 1.8 In Spring 2024 consultation with providers will be required to implement new funding formula for 2024/25. This will follow the release of the outcome of the above consultation and 2024/25 LA funding allocations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Schools Forum is invited to:

- a) Agree to the new funding rates to be paid from September 2023.
- b) Consider the recent consultation and impact from April 2024.

3. REFERENCES TO OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS / PREVIOUS REPORTS

- [Early years supplementary grant 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-supplementary-grant-2023-to-2024)

4. CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact.

Name: David May
Role: Strategic Lead, Corporate Finance
E-Mail: dmay@thurrock.gov.uk

THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE:	14 September 2023
SUBJECT:	Dedicated Schools Grant – Indicative Funding Allocations 2024/25
REPORT OF:	David May
THE REPORT IS:	For Discussion

1. BRIEFING NOTE

- 1.1 Overall, core schools funding (including funding for schools and high needs) is increasing by £1.8 billion in 2024/25 compared with the previous year, on top of the £3.9 billion increase in 2023/24.

The table below shows Thurrock’s provisional allocation:

Dedicated Schools Grant	Funding Allocation 2023/24	Indicative Settlement 2024/25	Funding Increase 2024/25	% Increase
	£m	£m	£m	%
Schools Block	155.497	165.811	10.314	5.8%
Central School Services Block	1.633	1.599	(0.034)	
High Needs Block	37.356	38.958	1.602	4.3%
Early Years Block	13.599	13.599	0.000	
Total	208.085	219.967	10.626	5.1%

These allocations are based on updated funding values with pupil data unchanged.

1.2 Schools Block

Funding for mainstream schools through the schools NFF is increasing by 2.7% per pupil compared to 2023/24. Taken together with the funding increases seen in 2023/24, this means that funding through the schools NFF will be 8.5% higher per pupil in 2024/25, compared to 2022/23.

The main updates in the schools NFF for 2024/25 are:

1. Rolling the 2023/24 mainstream schools additional grant (MSAG) into the NFF. Adding the grant funding to the NFF ensures that this additional funding forms part of schools’ core budgets and will continue to be provided.
2. increasing NFF factor values (on top of the amounts added for the MSAG by:
 - 2.4% to the following factors: basic entitlement, low prior attainment, FSM6, income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI), English as an additional language (EAL), mobility, sparsity and the lump sum.
 - 2.4% to the minimum per pupil levels (MPPL)
 - 0.5% to the funding floor
 - 1.6% to the free school meals (FSM) factor value

- 0% on the premises factors, except for: (i) Private Finance Initiative (PFI) which has increased by Retail Prices Index (RPIX) which is 10.4% for the year to April 2023 and (ii) split sites funding which has been formularised.

3. Introducing, for the first time, a methodology for calculating and allocating funding for falling rolls
4. The minimum per pupil funding levels (MPPLs) will increase by 2.4% compared with 2023/24. This will mean that, next year, every primary school will be allocated at least £4,655 per pupil, and every secondary school at least £6,050.

1.3 **Direct national funding formula transition**

The 2023/24 was the first year of transition to the “direct” schools NFF. The NFF policy document published sets out the requirements on local authorities to move their formulae closer to the NFF:

1. In 2024/25 LA’s will continue to be only allowed to use NFF factors in their local formulae and must use all NFF factors.
2. LA’s will also be required to mover their local formula factors 10% closer to the NFF values, compared to where they were in 2023/24, unless local formula is classed as mirroring the NFF.

1.4 **High Needs Block**

In 2024/25, high needs funding through the NFF is increasing by a further £440 million, or 4.3% - following the £970 million increase in 2023/24 and £1 billion increase in 2022/23. This brings the total high needs budget to over £10.5 billion.

All local authorities will receive at least a 3% increase per head of their age two to 18 population, compared to their 2023/24 allocations, with some authorities seeing gains of up to 5%.

1.5 **Central School Services Block**

Central school services funding is provided to local authorities for the ongoing responsibilities they have for all schools. The total provisional funding for ongoing responsibilities is £304 million in 2024/25. In line with the process introduced for 2020/21, to withdraw funding over time for the historic commitments local authorities entered into before 2013/14, funding for historic commitments will decrease by a further 20% in 2024/25.

1.6 **Next Steps**

A presentation will be made at the meeting to build on the summary information provided and to show the context on Thurrock schools and academies.

1.7 **If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact.**

Name: David May
Role: Strategic Lead, Corporate Finance
E-Mail: dmay@thurrock.gov.uk

Thurrock School Forum Forward Plan for 2023 – 2024

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item / Focus
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 16 November 2023</p>	Dedicated Schools Grant – Finance Report - Decision
	Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan / DBV SEND Programme - Decision
	High Needs Block 2023/24 - Decision
	ESFA Consultations - Standing
	Childcare Sufficiency - Standing
	Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme
	Review of Forward Plan 2023/24 - Standing
<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday 16 January 2024</p>	Dedicated Schools Grant – Finance Report & Presentation
	Growth Fund 2023/24
	ESFA Consultations - Standing
	Review of Forward Plan 2023/24 - Standing
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 14 March 2024</p>	Thurrock Budget – Children’s Services
	Dedicated Schools Grant – Finance Report - Decision
	Thurrock Code of Practice for delivery of early education for 2, 3&4 year olds - Standing
	Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan – Decision
	ESFA Consultations - Standing
	Pupil Place Planning Review - Standing
	Review of Forward Plan 2023/24 - Standing
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 13 June 2024</p>	Dedicated Schools Grant – Finance Report - Decision
	Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan - Decision
	ESFA Consultations - Standing
	Union Facility Time Annual Review
	Review of Forward Plan 2023/24 - Standing

Draft Minutes
22 June 2023 at 10am to midday
Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

In attendance

Multi Academy Trusts

Catalyst Academies Trust
Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust
South West Essex Community Education Trust
The Gateway Learning Community Trust (GLC)

Name

Mr T Parfett (Chair)
Mr P Griffiths
Mr S Munday
Mrs V Reid (Vice-Chair)

Secondary Voluntary Aided School

Grays Convent

Name

Mrs P Johnson

Standalone Academy Trusts

Giffards Primary

Name

Mrs N Haslam-Davis

Infrastructure Groups

TASS
TPHA

Name

Mr S Bell
Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes

Alternative Provision

Olive AP

Name

Mr M Vickers

Special Schools

Treetops Academy
Beacon Hill Academy

Name

Mr J Brewer
Mrs Sue Hewitt

Non-school members

0-5 EYFS Representative
0-11 Representative

Name

Mr A Melbourne
Ms A Jones

Also in Attendance:

Assistant Director, Education Skills
Strategic Lead – DSG and Schools
Strategic Lead - Education Support Service
Strategic Lead – Specialist Provision/PEP
Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND
Clerk

Mrs M Lucas
Mr D May
Miss S Williams
Mr M Taylor
Mrs A Winstone
Miss T Lydon

1. Welcome from Chair

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Mr S Bowak, Mrs E Wigmore and Mrs M Shepard.

3. Agreement of agenda, time-guide and notification of 'Any Other Business'

a) The Forum agreed the agenda and time guide.

b) There was no other business.

4. Dedicated School Grant 2022/23 and 2023/24

Mr D May advised the members that the DSG reserve outturn position is a deficit of £0.534m. This is an overall improvement of £1.171m achieved through an improved in year position.

The significant areas of financial risk are:

- continued increase in demand for EHCPs
- sufficiency of local offer to prevent high-cost external placements
- costs incurred in providing education for pupils not in school

Although the final 202/23 Early Years funding allocation will not be confirmed by ESFA until July 2023 Mr D May advised that it is part of finalising the accounts a decrease of £0.164m funding has been calculated based on January 2023 census data.

Mr D May went through the budget changes for the 2023/24 High Needs Budget to reflect the most up to date information available.

Mr D May advised an email had been received last night from ESFA on Early Years funding changes from September 2023. A supplementary grant will be paid for 2023/23 but no further detail has been made available. This will be discussed at the next meeting and changes to funding will be applied from 1st September 2023.

Mr P Griffiths commented that the operational guide states that a deficit must be carried forward against the schools' budget in future years but does not identify how this is framed. How will it be recouped from the School Block and will it impact on school budgets for next year. Mr D May advised he does not see an impact on the schools budget next year. This will be discussed further in November and January as we consider future year allocations and implications of the DSG management plan.

Mr P Griffiths commented that the place funding is going down, but the place funding recouped is going up. Is there an impact? Mr D May advised there is no impact, this is the DSG making provision for the increase in place funding from September that the ESFA may recoup, or the LA will pay Academies

direct. Mr P Griffiths commented on the children not in school and advised there is additional funding being put in place for them. Mr D May advised that this is part of the High Needs Block which was moved from the Post 16 monies, reflecting the 2022/23 outturn position.

Mr A Melbourne asked if there was an indicator from the email from the EFSA when we would get clarification on the grant. Anything we can do over the summer as the timings is particularly important and needs to be in place for September. Mr D May advised a report must be presented to the School Forum to consider before any funds can be allocated.

Mr M Vickers asked about HNB 2023/24 is there any other potential impact. The report reflects current placements. Mr D May advised that by October he will have a clearer picture for the 2023/24 academic year.

Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes asked why looking at 2022/23 versus 2023/24 there were some big increases. Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes requested a breakdown of this. Mr D May advised that the Treetops Free schools have a phased increase in places. At the November meeting of each year discussion on future requirements and expansion to places are agreed. The expansion of the outreach support is a key area for development.

Mr P Griffiths commented that other LAs make different decisions to us. The resistance is less here than other LAs. The concern is if there is a deficit it has to be paid off by the Schools Block. He feels that Thurrock has been wise and has the right balance in trying to support their children. Mr D May advised the Delivering Better Value SEND Programme (DBV) and updated DSG Management Plan will support and facilitate that development of a long-term strategy.

Mr M Taylor commented that they want to further enhance the outreach services, and this will be monitored by the headteachers, and the panels involved in this.

Agreed

- a) All Forum members noted and had clarity on the contents of the report
- b) All 13 Forum members approved proposed changes to 2023/24 budget as outlined in the report (1.5).
- c) All Forum members agreed to seek projected outturn updates on the 2023/24 projected outturn position at the September 2023 School's Forum meeting.

5. Dedicated School Grant Management Plan/Delivering Better Value SEND Programme

Mr D May talked through his presentation. The DSG conditions of grant require that any LA with an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the financial year must be able to present a plan to the Department for Education (DfE) for managing their future DSG spend.

The Management plans need to reflect the most current forecast DSG position and this will be signed off by the relevant leads in finance and special educational needs (SEN) areas. Thurrock is also part of Delivering Better Value in SEND programme that aims to support LAs to improve delivery of SEND services for children and young people while ensuring services are sustainable. There are fifty-five local authorities included in the programme. Thurrock is in Tranche 3 - Wave 8 alongside Buckinghamshire, Cornwall, Lewisham, Tower Hamlets, West Berkshire, Wiltshire. This programme runs from May to December 2023.

The Thurrock long term strategy is to:

- increase the local offer and reduce the number of out of area placements.
- deliver improved outcomes for young people
- deliver improved value for money

This will be achieved by:

- Maintaining and supporting pupils in mainstream provision
- Funded outreach support
- Resource Provisions attached to Mainstream School
- Special School / Academy Provision
- Out of Borough

Included in this presentation was a slide identifying some of the outreach services for 2023/24. He advised there is a need to further increase the local offer – Social, Emotional Mental Health SEMH, Autism and Outreach. Early years and Post 16 are areas of significant growth.

As a partnership approach, schools need to:

- continue to be fully inclusive and to admit children with EHCPs by making reasonable adjustments.
- ensure use of notional SEND budget before making requests for additional funding.
- ensure the graduated Assess-plan-do- review processes are undertaken, and the Provision Guidance (Publish date Sep 21) is used to inform next steps before requests for EHCPs take place.

The DBV programme looks at implementing sustainable changes that improve support and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, as well as to improve financial stability of local authorities' High Needs Block budgets.

In order to achieve this aim:

- Children and Young People are at the centre of the programme
- Commitment to listening to the perspectives of those receiving support
- Collaboration is key, including with system partners and parent carer forums
- Funding is a challenge and key source of frustration – routes to financial sustainability should be considered throughout the planning.

Short Term Help

- Identifying **sustainable changes** that can be made by a local area which result in better quality support and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. These are identified through a rigorous diagnostic evidence base, and a DfE grant is supporting their implementation.

Informing Long Term Reform

- Building an objective evidence base across a third of the sector, which can be used to: Inform future policy and reforms; Build a national playbook & share best practice; Inform future national programmes.

He commented that a fundamental characteristic of the DBV diagnostic approach is the whole system engagement with partners and stakeholders including Schools Forum, Children and young people, PCF and wider parent carers, Education colleagues (Headteachers, Setting Leads, SENCO's, teachers and governors), Health and Social Care partners.

This will include:

- Outlining the approach and how this is different to other projects.
- Seeking views on the current system and inclusive practice, what works well or less well at present, and which areas for improvement would make the greatest difference.
- Involvement in the grant application stage to jointly develop ideas and plans, what change will have the biggest impact on key measures/outcomes
- Involvement in the implementation phase, as appropriate.

Mr D May advised that the DBV diagnostic will help LAs identify sustainable changes that can drive high quality support and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and support the LAs in building an evidence-based grant application to assist the implementation of those changes. The key dates are:

- Data Return – May / June 2023
- Evaluation and Set up - Weekly Conversation – Jun-23 to 14/08/23
- Module 1 – Baseline and Forecasts - 21/08/23 to 04/09/23
- Module 2 – Root Cause Diagnostics - 04/09/23 to 30/10/23 – looking at what they determine what will improve the system.
- Module 3 – Implementation Planning - 16/10/23 to 13/11/23
- Grant Preparation & Application – 20/11/23 to 18/12/23

He outlined the emerging insight from DBV in SEND Tranche 1:

- To provide better support and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, the greatest opportunity exists in increasing the ability of local systems to support children in a mainstream setting.

The evidence highlights three priority drivers to achieve this:

1. Increasing the ability of mainstream schools to provide day to day support for children with SEND (e.g., staff skills, staff capacity/school resourcing, physical space in schools)
2. Improving the access mainstream schools and children have to wider system resources (e.g., system navigability, service capacity and effectiveness)
3. Increasing parent carer confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet their child's needs (e.g., Quality of communication with parents, involvement in support planning).

Mr D May commented we need to review the current outreach provision and consider what additionality is required.

Mr A Melbourne asked how we arrive at the reduce percentage increase in future years to 3% when this had previously been higher. Mr D May commented that projected demand is considered alongside new initiatives / changes to be implemented.

Mr P Griffiths asked in terms of future years what assumptions have been made. Has the unfunded pay increases to teachers pay been included. Mr D May advised that in line with ESFA guidance a 3% increase has been applied to HNB increase and band values, no further scenarios have been prepared. Updated guidance on future years budget may provide further insight / clarification.

Mr P Griffiths advised that the grant application suggests that we are going to put money into the system. What does the grant look like. Mr D May advised that no detail has been received as yet but the SEND DBV programme will support and provide evidence. Investment in the outreach services is required, and this is consistent with the outcome from Tranche 1. He feels they need a grant for a two or three-year period to allow savings to be realised to sustain ongoing investment. Mr P Griffiths advised he agrees with this, the schools need credibility in the system going forward and good outreach services with good support. This is a long-term piece of work for children who find mainstream challenging. Mr M Taylor commented that we have existing outreach services which have been developed from the resource bases. This ties in with the SEND bases and inclusion bases, The Olive Academy, Beacon Hill, Treetops school and Treetops Free school. He advised we have exceptional high needs around autism and complex needs.

Mr T Parfett commented that in his experience part of the application would have to be sustainability. This would need to be part of the application process.

Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes commented that we need good systems in place where people know how to access outreach services. Mr M Taylor responded that in terms of support of children with SEMH needs, this would go through the

panel so there is Headteacher involvement especially at primary level to provide longer term support to make sure places are more stable.

Mr P Griffiths agreed with Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes that a well-planned service that meets the needs of children early on and is then in place long term. He advised that many children's trauma exists in their early years. He thinks that vulnerability can be identified early on. He does not believe there is a service in Thurrock currently to support children who are at risk of permanent exclusion. He feels that the impact of support needs to be reported to the School Forum. Mr M Taylor agreed and advised that the managed move service has worked very well but believes they need a service which works with the children before they arrive at the Inclusion panel for a managed move. They do not have a behaviour support team in Thurrock because all schools are academies, and the funding now sits within the schools. This can only be done through the Schools Forum to get the services needed. We need to have a better broad offer and be able to pick up the children in crisis early.

Mr M Vickers advised that there is an opportunity to think differently about this. He feels the SEND sub-group can explore this more.

Mr P Griffiths commented that previous services around behaviour support had a lack of credibility with the system for being seen for having the impact to prevent permanent exclusions. It does need to be in line with the three-tier approach and they need to build capacity and feels that if they have more support, they can keep children in the mainstream and reduce permanent exclusions. Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes commented that it is very evident sitting on the Inclusion Panel that you can write a profile on the children presented there. Social care needs to look more at the home life of the children and past traumas. Mr M Taylor advised they need to link up with CAMHS and other multi agencies to tackle issues early on to help these children. Mr M Vickers commented that an application went into the EFSA under current wave of Alternative Provision schools, and they have been invited to interview but there has been a lot of interest in this wave.

Agreed

a) All Forum members noted the contents of the report and offer support and challenge.

6. Union Facility Time

Mrs A Winstone advised that the report distributed to all members provides an annual update to the Forum on the administration of Union Facility Time. The Forum requested for the administration of this service to be reviewed on an annual basis so that a decision could be made by members on whether they wished Thurrock Council to continue with the administration. The balance is at £13,167.00.

She advised that Thurrock Council administers the Union Facility Time budget on behalf of all schools in Thurrock for an annual fee of £500.

Agreed

- a) All 13 Forum members agreed that no contributions are required for 2023/24.

7. The Purchase of 5 AV1 robots

Mrs A Winstone advised that the LA must arrange suitable education for children of compulsory school age who because of illness would otherwise not receive suitable education.

She advised that since the pandemic they have seen significant rise in school-based anxiety and mental health issues resulting in an inability to attend school. She went through the cost of the medical tuition to the DSG High Needs Block from 2020 to 2023 which totalled £497,726.

She proposes the AV1 The pupil's eyes, ears and voice in the classroom via a distance learning avatar controlled by an app. It is a social and education tool used to improve wellbeing, attendance, attainment, engagement and reintegration of children absent from school. Please read Thurrock AV1 document in appendices for videos and impact of AV1. These are currently being used by Essex and Southend.

The robots aided reintegration by enabling children and young people to have a consistent link to their classroom and their teacher". 75% of pupils reported improved mental health, confidence and feelings about the future. 75% of pupils increased their attendance and kept up with schoolwork and peers. 100% of educational leaders recommend AV1 to others o 50% of pupils returned to mainstream quicker than expected.

The proposal provides an invest to save opportunity.

- The initial £3,300 3-month trial cost can be prioritised within the existing budget provision.
- If the trial is successful the remaining cost of £47,695, can be prioritised subject to school's forum approval

Mr T Parfett commented that they would project to have an outcome for the School Forum meeting in January 2024.

Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes asked for some like for like figures. The children in the trial versus the AV1 cost. Mrs A Winstone advised that current tuition is £65 per hour, and they offer 10 hours a week which is a cost of £650 per week per child. Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes asked if their AWPU money pays for it. Mrs A Winstone advised that they do not take the AWPU but need to re-charge the schools for the tuition. She advised they would hire the AV1 to the schools for a small charge.

Mr P Griffiths advised that this is a promising idea and supports this. Some children find it much easier to use the AV1 instead of being in the classroom.

It is an innovated future solution. Mrs P Johnson asked who the trial was being lead with. She thinks that secondary students should be involved. They already have children in The Olive Academy and would this involve these children. Mrs A Winstone advised that currently the majority of requests are for children in secondary. The pilot would be for the next five children who would require tuition in the autumn term. Mrs P Johnson advised that they have students that have not been in school for over a year. Mrs A Winstone advised this will not be suitable for everyone.

Mrs N Haslam-Davies commented they have had enormous success with google classrooms. Are their protocols in place for this as she feels that parents may use this to keep children at home that do not need to be at home. How is work completed and uploaded using this device. Mrs A Winstone advised that work would be returned to the school in the same way it does now. She advised that this was a request to go ahead with the trial. Mrs N Haslam-Davies commented that all schools should have other means of access in place i.e., Google classrooms etc. have these children not been able to access the education. Mrs A Winstone commented that for a number children the anxiety is far too much. Mr M Taylor commented that there is a clear process for how children will access this. He also advised that not every school currently is setup to be able to use laptops for individual children. Mrs A Winstone advised that the request is for the initial spend and they will come back with the results of the trial.

Agreed

- a) 12 Forum members agreed to 'spend to save' expenditure against the DSG High Needs Block to trial and if successful purchase the AV1 avatars for medical/home tuition. 1 member disagreed.

8. Childcare Reform and Consultation – Early Years

Mrs A Winstone commented that the aim of this report is to provide members with an update on the Childcare reform following the budget announcement in 2023 and details of the Early Years Consultation which closes on 26th July 2023.

The consultation includes

- Entitlements: Eligible working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of funded childcare per week, for 38 weeks a year, from when their child is 9 months old to when they start school. Government will also increase the hourly rate for providers.
- Wraparound: The government will invest £289m over two academic years, from Sept 2024, to enable schools and local areas to set up wraparound childcare provision
- Market reforms, including more choice for childminders and changes to EYFS requirements, to improve flexibility for providers and support the workforce

- Changing staff: child ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 for two-year-olds in England to align with Scotland and provide greater flexibility for These will be rolled out in stages, to ensure enough supply in the system providers
- Childminder grants to attract people to childminding, with £1200 for those who register with a childminder agency and £600 for those who register with Ofsted
- Universal Credit reforms will pay childcare support up-front when parents move into work or increase their hours and increase the monthly re-imbusement caps

These will be rolled out in stages, to ensure enough supply in the system. The following timeline is proposed.

Autumn Term 2023

- Childminder grants to become available
- Staff child 2-year-olds ratio change

April 2024

- 15 hours for eligible working 2-year-olds introduced

Sept 2024

- National wraparound support begins 15 hours eligible working parents of children 9 months plus

Sept 2025

- 30 hours for eligible working parents of children from 9 months to primary aged introduced

Sept 2026

- All schools able to offer 8am to 6pm wraparound on their own or in partnership

The budget also announced additional funding of £204 million from this September rising to £288 million next year (financial year 2024 to 2025) to increase the funding paid to nurseries for the existing free hours offers. This investment will allow the national average rate for local authorities for 2-year-olds to increase by 30% from the current national average rate of £6 per hour to around £8 per hour from September 2023. The national average 3- to 4-year-old rate for local authorities will rise in line with inflation from the current national average rate of £5.29 per hour to over £5.50 per hour from September 2023.

Mrs A Winstone advised they have a recruitment fare next week.

Mr A Melbourne commented that the LAs have been working so hard to alleviate recruitment and retention. It will be interesting to see how many attend the recruitment fare. He commented it is really challenging for early years and delivering this will also be particularly challenging.

Agreed

- a) All Forum members noted changes to the Childcare Reform details in Appendix 8
- b) All Forum members noted the consultation deadline of 26 July 2023 on proposals to provide more flexibility and remove burdens within the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

9. Schools Forum Meeting Dates 2023-2024

Miss S Williams proposed the following future meeting dates for the next academic year:

All meetings are proposed to take place 10am to midday on a Thursday except for the meeting in January which will take place on a Tuesday.

- Thursday 14 September 2023
- Thursday 16 November 2023
- Tuesday 16 January 2024
- Thursday 14 March 2024
- Thursday 13 June 2024

Action: Miss S Williams to contact schools that have not had representation at the School Forum for replacement representative

Agreed

All forum members agreed the School Forum dates for 2023-24

10. School's Forum Forward Plan

Miss S Williams presented at the meeting the forward plan and asked if any items needed to be added. She advised she is also going to review attendees that have not taken part in these meetings.

Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes would like a report around Pupil Place Plan for reception and Year 7. How many children got their first choice etc. She also would like to know the impact of the new free school on local schools. Mrs S Williams advised that she normally presents this at the March school forum. The new Pupil Place Plan will be published very shortly.

All Forum members were happy to keep the same school forum cycle of meetings for 2023/24.

11. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 March 2023

The Chair went through the minutes of the previous meeting for accuracy. There were no changes. All members were happy with the content.

12. Action Log

Miss S Williams advised that she has sent out the action log along with the other paperwork.

13. Matters arising

Actions outstanding:

Action 1: The Chair to put a letter together to be send to the DfE regarding Early Years – This has been delayed until the Early year’s consultation has been completed.

Action 2: Mrs S Hewitt and Mrs A Winstone to discuss the Equipment Policy in relation to Beacon Hill to look at the mechanisms outlined in the policy. – Andrea advised this has been completed.

Date of next meeting

- Thursday 14 September 2023

AGENDA ITEM 10

Thurrock Borough Council

Schools Forum 14th September 2023

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action details	Action Owner	Action or Decision	Relevant Timescales	Action Status	Additional information
17th January 2023	Item 7 - Child Sufficiency Assessment	The Chair to put a letter together to be send to the DfE regarding Early Years	The Chair/Mrs M Lucas/Mr A Melbourne	Action			The Chair advised this has been delayed until the Early Year's consulation has been completed
22nd June 2023	Item 9 - School Forum Meeting Dates	Mrs S Williams to contact schools that have not had representation at the Schools Forum for replacement representative	Sarah Williams	Action			