



## **Papers for Schools Forum meeting 13 May 2025**

### **Item 4**

#### **Surrey Schools Forum**

**13 May 2025**

**For information and discussion**

**Lead officer: David Green**

**Update on final schools and early years budgets for 2025/26, including special schools inflation and national insurance grant funding.**

#### **Final school and early years funding rates**

Final decisions on various aspects of the 2025/26 school and early years funding formulae were delegated by Cabinet to the Director for Education and Lifelong Learning, to be made once all of the necessary pupil data was available.

Final decisions were taken as follows and have already been notified to schools/providers, but they are stated here for completeness.

#### **Mainstream schools**

Units of resource were agreed as previously proposed, i.e. 98.3% of National funding formula (NFF) rates, with adjustments as in previous years to support a higher lump sum, minimum funding guarantee of 0% and no ceiling on gains. Surrey's application to transfer 1% of NFF funding to high needs block was approved by the DfE at the end of February 2025 and the final budget allocations to schools reflected that transfer, as had the projections at the 10 January meeting.

#### **Early years**

Hourly rates were set as follows (increases are relative to initial 2024/25 rates):

3-4 year old basic hourly rate: £6.25/hr (increase of 20p)

2 year old basic hourly rate: £9.01/hr (increase of 47p)

Under 2s basic rate: £12.89/hr (increase of 79p)

Increased teacher pay and pension supplement for three and four year olds for maintained and academy schools employing a nursery teacher in the teachers' pension scheme: the new rates are:

\* £0.88/hr for maintained nursery schools (2024/25: £0.63),

\* £0.727/hr nursery classes in maintained schools and academies (2024/25: £0.54)

The increase in supplement reflects the assimilation of 2024/25 early years budget grant rates into the supplement, as that grant was mainly intended to cover the additional costs of the 2024/25 teacher pay award. The supplement will be recovered from maintained schools and academies which do not employ qualified teachers/qualified early years teachers/qualified early years practitioners on teacher pay and conditions (this was also done in 2024/25).

The deprivation funding rate for three and four year olds remains at £2.81/hr. The deprivation supplement for two year olds and under twos remains at £1.00/hr.

The deprivation supplements will now apply to looked after and post looked after children, not just to children entitled to early years pupil premium because they meet the criteria for free school meals. Therefore the former separate looked after children supplement is being deleted. It was of lower value than the deprivation supplement which these children will now receive.

### **Special schools and SEN centres**

As agreed previously with Special School Phase Council, the Special Schools Working Group made of Special School Headteachers and SCC Officers jointly proposed an annual inflation uplift to all Surrey Special Schools in March. We are pleased to be able to confirm that all responded positively and unanimously agreeing to the proposed inflation uplift of top up rates for special schools and SEN centres by 3.0%. Other special schools funding streams have not been inflated.

### **Pupil referral units**

A similar process with the PRU working group led to an agreement that top up rates for PRUs should be increased by 3%. Place funding for hospital PRUs (which do not receive top up funding) has been increased by 1.61%, which is the same as the average percentage increase in funding for other PRUs taking all non-grant funding streams together. Again all of the PRUs responded positively and unanimously to the proposal.

### **Additional grant towards increased employer national insurance costs.**

The DfE is paying an additional grant to mainstream schools and state maintained early years providers to assist with increased employer national insurance costs. For mainstream schools this will be distributed on a formula basis (pupil numbers, Ever 6 free school meals and lump sum) and the LA has no power to vary the allocation from that calculated by DfE, so some schools are likely to receive more grant than is needed to offset their additional NI costs, whereas other schools may receive less. The grant also provides an additional sum per place for schools with SEN centres, again set by DfE.

For early years the government grant is distributed to local authorities on the basis of a rate per part time equivalent (pte) pupil in maintained and academy nurseries (including governor run school nurseries), with separate rates per part time equivalent (pte) for three and four year olds, two year olds and under twos. Allocations are based on historic data. Unlike core early years funding, the DfE will not revise funding allocations to reflect changes in takeup during 2025/26. Therefore it is likely that the LA will need to

allocate to providers based on historic data. A final decision on local allocation has yet to be taken.

Funding for increased employer national insurance costs for special schools and PRUs is provided by an increase in the core schools budget grant, which continues for special schools and PRUs. Again, the additional funding may be more or less than additional costs at school level.

There is also a national insurance grant allocation for LA centrally employed teachers.

DFE has advised that final allocations of all components of the grant will be published in May and paid to local authorities in September.

**Action requested of the Forum**

To note the final funding rates for 2025/26 and related issues.

**Item 5****Surrey Schools Forum****13 May 2025****For information and discussion****Lead officer: David Green****Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) outturn 2024/25****Summary**

The final DSG position at outturn 2024/25 was a net deficit of £60.8m against estimated DSG income for the year. This compared to a net planned deficit of £26.3m.

The outturn position on DSG can be summarised as follows (gross of academy deductions):

**DSG summary table**

<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Final DFE allocation £000s</b>	<b>Block Transfers £000s</b>	<b>Other (safety valve) £000s</b>	<b>Total budget £000s</b>	<b>Actual £000s</b>	<b>Overspend/ (Underspend) £000s</b>
Schools	836,702	-8,364		<b>828,338</b>	826,879	<b>-1,459</b>
CSSB	6,711			<b>6,711</b>	6,426	<b>-285</b>
High needs	225,559	8,364	5,730	<b>239,653</b>	303,456	<b>63,803</b>
Early years	149,709			<b>149,709</b>	148,417	<b>-1,292</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,218,681</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,730</b>	<b>1,224,411</b>	<b>1,284,891</b>	<b>60,780</b>

Note: final early years allocation is the latest published DFE figure. We estimate that the allocation will be reduced by £240,000 when updated by DfE for Jan 2025 census data, making an underspend of £1.043m.

The cumulative DSG deficit before and after safety valve funding is summarised below:

	<b>Cumulative deficit £000s</b>	<b>Safety valve £000s</b>	<b>Net £000s</b>
Total at 1 April 2024	155,792	-76,270	79,522
Prior year early years adjustment*	1,570		1,570
Change in year	66,508	-5,730	60,778
<b>Total at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>223,870</b>	<b>-82,000</b>	<b>141,870</b>

\*made in 2024/25 to 2023/24 DSG, Jan 2024 census correction.

The key variations per block were as follows:

#### 1. Schools Block

	<b>2024/25 (Under) / overspend</b>	<b>Explanation of variance</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	
Main formula	108	Mainly rates adjustments and academy conversions
Growing Schools	-1,388	We are obliged to allocate funding for planned bulge classes and PAN increases but in many schools (particularly secondary) the expected growth did not happen. Growth costs are currently falling year on year.  We have reduced provision for growth in 2025/26 following review of 2024/25 projected outturn
De-delegated intervention fund (maintained primaries only)	-23	Intervention fund is managed by SAfE and used to support maintained primary schools facing leadership and standards issues (note: this fund should have been reduced during year to reflect academy conversions and consequential reduced de-delegation)
De-delegated Special Staff costs (union facilities)	101	Dependent on academy buyback rate, which is always uncertain until well into the year.
De-delegated special staff costs (other)	-32	Demand led and not used in 2024/25 or indeed in 2023/24

Central services levy-new redundancies	-151	Necessarily demand led budget
Others-de-delegated	-57	Specialist teachers
Others	-17	NOTE individual services budgets were not reduced for the impact of academy conversions)
<b>Over (under)</b>	<b>-1,459</b>	

## 2. Central Schools Block (CSSB)

	<b>(Under) / overspend</b>	<b>Explanation of variance</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	
Devolved Admissions Appeals	-72	Demand led I.e. depends on the number of admissions appeals claimed by individual schools
Various centrally managed services	-213	
<b>Over(under)</b>	<b>-285</b>	

### 3 High Needs Block

Outturn and Variation compared to planned budget	Outturn	Budget	Outturn % of total spend	Over (under)
	£000s	£000s	%	£000s
Non-maintained/independent/OLA special (incl centres) pre 16	95,985	78,914	31.61	17,071
Alt SEN/personal budgets pre 16	7,919	4,372	2.61	3,547
Non-maintained/independent/OLA special (incl centres) post 16	26,180	13,010	8.62	13,170
Other post 16 (alt SEN/personal budgets/colleges)	9,853	8,808	3.25	1,044
Surrey Maintained/Academy Special schools and centres	77,378	76,438	25.54	940
Place funding (Academies and colleges)	27,015	27,015	8.90	0
Mainstream additional support	30,353	24,767	10.00	5,587
PRUs/AP academies	5,310	5,466	1.75	-156
Therapies/PSSS/Access to education	18,884	20,196	6.22	-1,312
Others (social care homes, HOPE, contingency, post 16 mainstream places)	2,597	6,967	0.86	-4,370
Central costs eg IT, property	1,982	1,982	0.65	
<b>Total High Needs</b>	<b>303,456</b>	<b>267,935</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>35,521</b>
HNB DSG (gross of place funding)		225,559		
Transfer from schools block		8,364		
Safety valve funding		5,730		
Total HNB DSG available		239,653		
<b>Overspend against available HNB including block transfer</b>		<b>63,803</b>		

(Note: a year on year comparison of outturn is provided at Annex 1 in response to previous requests). The budget included a planned overspend.

#### 4. Early Years Block

	(Under) / overspend	Explanation of variance
	£'000	
<b>Three &amp; Four Year Olds</b>		
Main Formula	-396	The underspend is 0.5% of allocated budget-largely reflects variation in termly takeup compared to estimates
Early intervention fund	236	Increased demand and incidence for children with additional needs and increased complexity of need.
Early years pupil premium	-107	
Disabled access fund	-295	Surrey's allocation is based on DWP data. The number of children for whom Disability Access funding is claimed has historically been well below the allocation
<b>Two Year Olds</b>		
Disadvantaged entitlement main formula	45	The overspend is 0.91% of allocated budget Reflects variation in termly take-up. Historically this has been overspent in recent years
Working parent entitlement main formula	1,104	This is an overspend of 4.5% of budget
Early years pupil premium	-13	
Disabled Access fund	-74	
Early intervention fund	-481	We paid for some activities through centrally retained funding which were originally to be funded from EIF– for example LEAP and SEES services
<b>9 months-2 years</b>		
Working parent entitlement	-30	
Early years pupil premium	1	
Disabled access fund	-28	



Early years pupil premium	-185	
<b>All age groups</b>		
Centrally managed services	-820	Partly reflects large increase in allocation due to new entitlements-note that central funds were reduced from 5% to 4% of total allocation in 2025/26
<b>Total Over(under) Against estimated final allocation</b>	<b>-1,043</b>	Underspend of 0.7% of overall budget  NB £1.292m compared to current DfE allocation, before impact of Jan census update.

The overall DSG outturn for the year across all blocks is thus an in year overspend of £60.8m. DfE advice is that local authorities with an overall DSG deficit cannot hold separate surplus and deficit reserves for different DSG blocks. "The whole of (the DSG deficit) is to be put in an unusable reserve. The definition of how the deficit is to be calculated includes any surplus from previous years. Separate reserves with surpluses in them cannot be held". Accordingly, the whole of the surpluses on schools, central schools and early years blocks must be offset against the high needs block deficit, and no surplus on the blocks other than high needs, may be carried forward.

#### **Action for the Forum**

To note and discuss.

## Annex Year on year comparison of high needs block outturn

The table shows high needs block expenditure for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

	<b>2023/24 outturn £000s</b>	<b>2024/25 Outturn £000s</b>	<b>2023/24 %</b>	<b>2024/25 %</b>
Non-maintained/independent/OLA special (incl centres) pre 16	80,210	95,985	30.91%	31.63%
Alt SEN/personal budgets pre 16	6,169	7,919	2.38%	2.61%
Non-maintained/independent/OLA special (incl centres) post 16	17,600	26,180	6.78%	8.63%
Other post 16 (alt SEN/personal budgets/colleges)	9,005	9,853	3.47%	3.25%
Surrey Maintained/Academy Special schools and centres	71,629	77,379	27.59%	25.50%
Place funding (academies and colleges)	23,658	27,016	9.11%	8.90%
Mainstream additional support	24,091	30,353	9.28%	10.00%
PRUs/AP academies	5,174	5,310	1.99%	1.75%
Therapies/PSSS/Access to education	16,852	18,884	6.49%	6.22%
Others (social care homes, HOPE, contingency, post 16 mainstream places)	3,231	2,597	1.24%	0.86%
(Corp allocations)	1,982	1,982	0.76%	0.65%
<b>Total High Needs</b>	<b>259,602</b>	<b>303,456</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Item 6**

### **Surrey Schools Forum**

**13 May 2025**

**For approval**

**Lead officer: David Green**

**Growing schools fund 2025/26: Proposed variation for schools admitting pupils from closed schools.**

### **Summary**

The Forum is asked to consider an extension of growing schools fund criteria to include additional funding for schools admitting pupils into existing classes from schools which close during the year. The costs would largely be funded by savings from not funding the closed schools for a full year. Growing schools criteria require the approval of Schools Forum.

### **Background**

When a school closes during the financial year, pupils from the closed school must be transferred to other schools. Where another school raises its PAN or extends its age range in order to accommodate the transferred pupils, funding is automatically adjusted to fund the additional pupils "in year". Where it is necessary for a successor school to open a bulge class to accommodate the additional pupils, and that has been agreed with the LA, that bulge class would be funded under the existing growing schools criteria, including vacancy funding where necessary. However, where pupils from a closed school move into existing vacancies in existing classes there is no current funding mechanism.

In order to support a proposed primary school closure, officers propose to introduce additional growth fund criteria to cover this situation in primary schools thus:

- Where a primary school closes at the end of the summer term and pupils, who would otherwise have remained in the school, are transferred at the closing date (but not before) to occupy existing places within other schools (not in new bulge classes), those pupils will be funded at the new school from the date of transfer to the end of the financial year pro rata to the average pupil led funding of the old school. This would apply to any school admitting five or more pupils from the closed school. The same would apply to pupils in the year of entry whose parents had previously accepted places at the closed school who were actually admitted to other local schools
- pupils transferring from the closed school before September, but after publication of the closure proposals, would also be funded at their new school from September (subject to the combined threshold pupils being admitted from the closed school being five or more, taken alongside the previous category)
- both criteria would apply only where the pupils' addresses remained in the locality (ie funding would not be given in respect of school changes which could

reasonably be expected to have occurred anyway due to house moves) and where Surrey admissions team were satisfied that the pupils had been appropriately admitted.

The additional cost to the growth fund would be met from reducing the budget to the closed schools, although it cannot be guaranteed that this would cover the cost if a bulge class was required but had low occupancy. It should be noted that :

- where pupils transfer from schools prior to closure, the LA is not allowed to reduce the “old” school’s budget before the date of closure
- a school with vacancies is obliged to accept any pupil wishing to transfer to it, would not be funded in year for such pupils were they not transferring from a closing school, and might be expected to incur only marginal costs in respect of the additional pupils
- where a bulge class is required at an agreed school, but a significant number of pupils transfer to other schools, the LA could in effect double fund the pupils in the schools they go to and by funding vacancies in the bulge class.

We do not anticipate that a similar situation will arise in respect of secondary schools imminently and financial arrangements to support any such closure would be considered if the need arose

### **Recommendation**

That the Forum approves the proposed extension to growth fund criteria to cover September transfers within the PAN of the admitting school

That the Forum considers whether to extend such funding to provide funding from September for pupils transferring before 1 September but after publication of the closure proposal.

**Item 7****Surrey Schools Forum****13 May 2025****For discussion****Lead officer: David Green****Initial suggestions for 2026/27 school and early years funding consultation.****Summary**

At the May meeting, the Forum is usually asked whether it wishes to propose funding issues to be reviewed prior to the following year, so that proposals can be developed for consideration at the July meeting, prior to inclusion in the annual consultation paper, which goes to all schools in the autumn. The Forum is invited to suggest areas for consideration and is asked to consider some issues which officers see as worthy of review. Any changes must be consistent with the requirements and general policy direction of the national funding formula, and changes should have regard to the impact of local government reorganisation, which will necessitate separate funding arrangements for each successor authority from April 2027, if reorganisation is implemented on the proposed timescale (see item 9).

**Transfer to high needs block and varying the minimum per pupil funding level (MPPL)**

Once again, in 2026/27, the LA will be asking schools to support a transfer of 1% of schools block funding to the high needs budget, in line with the “safety valve” agreement with the DfE. In previous years, the LA has delivered the minimum per pupil level in full, despite the safety valve agreement, but this has meant that schools not benefiting from the MPPL have contributed appreciably more than 1% of budget to the block transfer. Officers suggest that it would be timely to consider the possibility of reducing MPPL, in order to spread the impact of the block transfer more evenly across schools. In 2025/26 73 Surrey schools are on MPPL of which 69 had received extra funding under MPPL every year from 2022/23-2025/26. The nature of the MPPL is such that it benefits large schools with low levels of additional needs, because those are the schools with the lowest average per pupil funding.

**Review of falling rolls funding for schools with temporary falls in rolls**

In 2025/26, for the first time, the LA allocated additional funding to schools with recent falls in roll, where school capacity data suggested that the places would be required in or by September 2027 as a result of pupil growth in the area, subject to certain additional conditions. Officers recognise that pupil number forecasting is uncertain, even in the short term, and propose to review the reliability of the estimates used for falling rolls fund distribution for 2025/26 and to consider whether the criteria should be changed, in so far as DfE regulations permit.

At present, officers continue to see no need for funding for temporary falls in roll in secondary schools.

### **De-delegation**

Proposals for de-delegation of specific services are normally included in the annual consultation paper. Officers do not propose any changes to the services funded by de-delegation in 2026/27. The Forum may wish to consider what supporting information should be included in the consultation paper to assist maintained schools in forming a view on de-delegation proposals.

As a reminder, de-delegated services include

- behaviour support (primary only)
- free school meals eligibility checking (primary and secondary)
- trade union facility time (primary only since April 2024)
- other special staff costs (primary and secondary)
- support for travellers (primary only)
- non-statutory school improvement support (primary only).

While in principle all of these services could be de-delegated from both sectors, where secondary schools initially refused de-delegation we have not generally asked the Forum to review in later years.

### **Early years**

We are proposing to run a separate consultation for Early Years as we have for the past 3 years as we have attained a much better response rate compared with when proposals were consulted on as part of the Schools funding consultation.

The consultation will be live for four weeks term time and the analysis of responses will be reported back to Schools Forum in October 2025.

The expectation is that funding rates for LA's for 2026/27 will be provided to us by DfE at some point in December 2025 and that we will be expected to publish our rates for providers by 28 February 2026.

### **Early Years Expansion**

The expansion of Early Years Funded Entitlement continues to be rolled out according to the timeline decreed by DfE for the delivery of provision for working families.

**September 2024 – All eligible children from 9 months to school age could access 15 hours per week term time only**

**September 2025 - All eligible children from 9 months to school age can access 30 hours per week term time only.**

Take up of the entitlement for 15 hours has been high in Surrey and we continue to monitor and manage the sector to ensure sufficiency. This is particularly difficult as approximately 72 % of the sector is private, voluntary or independent including

childminders. We also have 113 maintained schools and academies delivering funded entitlement.

<b>Expanded entitlement claims</b>			
	<b>Summer 2024</b>	<b>Autumn 2024</b>	<b>Spring 2025</b>
<b>2YO – working parent claims</b>	5,229	6,320	6,068
<b>% population – 2YOs</b>	38%	48%	46%
<b>Under 2YO – working parent claims</b>		5,481	5,323
<b>% population – under 2YOs</b>		22%	21%

### **Additional Funding for Expansion**

DfE have provided both capital and revenue funding to support the expansion of places and we have successfully awarded £1,515,118 to Surrey Schools and providers.

#### **Early years capital grant funding**

<b>Total awarded</b>	<b>No of providers</b>
£1,171,661.05	32

£215,544 capital funding paid out by the end of the 24/25 financial year

#### **EY revenue funding**

<b>Total awarded</b>	<b>No. of providers</b>
£343,457.93	19

A further 4 awards were made, however these were then rescinded due to successful school based nursery applications.

1 offer due to be withdrawn due to pending inadequate Ofsted report

1 offer undeliverable due to planning consent, but reviewing whether there is an alternative plan for delivery

1 offer that may need to be rescinded based on lack of heads of terms / licence in place

£215,544 paid out by the end of the 24/25 financial year

The table below shows the gross DSG budget for Early Years over the past 3 years and the year on year increases. 2026/27 will be the first financial year that reflects a full year of the new entitlements.

Financial Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 Est
Total EY DSG	£79.5m	£84.6m	£149.4m	£220m
% increase		+66.4%	+76%	+47.2%

### Hourly rates

The table below shows the hourly rates over the past 3 years. DfE have significantly increased the rates and SCC have committed to passing through the maximum amount that we can to Early Years providers.

Hourly rates	Under 2s WPE*	2yo WPE*	FEET	3&4yo
2022/23			£6.13	£4.87
2023/24			£6.65	£5.14
2023 Sep-March including EYSG**			£9.03	£5.72
2024/25	£12.10	£8.54	£8.54	£6.05
2025/26	£12.89	£9.01	£9.01	£6.25

\*working parent entitlement \*\*early years supplementary grant

The statutory guidance allows for a differentiated rate for disadvantaged 2 year olds compared to 2 year olds of working parents.

We propose to continue to fund all 2 year olds at the same rate whether they are eligible under the disadvantage criteria or under the working parents criteria.

We are committed to protecting the provision of excellent quality provision for disadvantaged children however at this time we are proposing that we allocate targeted funding through our **Brighter Beginnings** programme to focus on closing the attainment gap for our most vulnerable pre school children and babies and working with



providers to ensure that these children can access the curriculum when they start in Reception. Brighter Beginnings programme is funded through Centrally Retained Funds. This year we distributed £667,000 to providers through this targeted approach for children eligible for FEET in Autumn and Spring 25 and all children eligible for EYPP in all ages. This was funded from centrally retained funds. **Additional funding was also provided to support the sector in both sufficiency and sustainability totalling £343,457 therefore the sector received an additional £1,020,457 from centrally retained funds.**

Additional funding was also provided to support the sector in both sufficiency and sustainability from centrally retained funds.

### **Centrally Retained Funds**

DfE previously permitted LAs to retain up to 5% of the budget to support the sector, to administer the funding, to ensure sufficiency and compliance.

From April 25 DfE changed the maximum that can be retained to 4% and expressed their intention to further reduce this to 3% once the new entitlements were fully embedded. Although not confirmed we have forecast for 2026/27 on the basis that we will be required to pass through 97% to providers. As the overall budget is expected to have increased, the actual monetary impact of the percentage reduction in centrally retained funds will be limited.

### **Early Intervention Fund (SENIF)**

We intend to continue to allocate SENIF as we have this year as follows:

3 & 4 year olds – 5% of total funds

2 year olds – 3% of total funds

Under 2's – 1% of total funds

Although we have had an underspend on the allocation for 2s and under, this has to some extent off-set an overspend for the 3 and 4 year olds. We propose to keep the rates the same and review next year once we have a full year of data on applications and levels of need.

The funding can be used for enhancing the staff ratio, staff training, specialist outreach and a wide range of other interventions to support children experiencing any barriers to making appropriate progress.

### **Action requested of the Forum**

To support the proposals identified for further work and to suggest any others they consider to require further investigation.

To support the proposed general direction of early years funding as a basis for consultation.

## **Item 8**

### **Surrey Schools Forum**

**13 May 2025**

#### **For discussion**

**Lead officer: Jim Nunns**

### **Early Intervention and Inclusion Funding (EIIF) pilot: Midpoint review April 2025**

#### **Background:**

EIIF pilot was devised in Term 1, 2023/24 and received support from Schools Forum in December 2023. It commenced in April 2024 to allow for data collation and analysis

It was agreed to allocate £375,000 in total from the High Needs Block for the period April 2024 to August 2025 which allows for evaluation over a full academic year and time for the collation and analysis of data before the academic year started.

The intended impact was to reduce the demand for EHC Needs assessments originating from Year groups -1 and Reception through targeted, bespoke training, advice and support from the L-SPA Early Intervention Team. This took the form of a menu of support which was revised termly (three times across the year) and from which schools could choose what offers may best meet their needs or enhance existing professional development. In addition to the training and resources offer all EIIF schools received direct support from our L-SPA SEND Support Adviser, Family Communication Officers, Neurodiversity Advisers and other colleagues from across the partnership.

45 schools were identified as in scope of the pilot of which 37 originally agreed to engage. Two further schools chose not to proceed with the pilot at the end of Term 1 2024/25

The selection criteria were agreed as being schools who would be

- Receiving at least 3 children starting in their Reception 2025 cohort who have received Universal + or Targeted EIF funding in their Early Years Setting.
- Children who have received the above funding and were not on the EHCNA pathway.

In March 2025, we extended the selection criteria as through the L-SPA and TAS activity we identified 5 additional schools which had complex cohorts in Year R which were not identified through Admissions data. In many cases this was related to movers into Surrey or parental preference for school placements changing.

#### **Current situation:**

Since September 2024, 40 schools have submitted requests from the EIIF menu of support. Request for interventions, training or support were evaluated by the EIIF panel which comprises senior practitioners from L-SPA and Team Around the School (TAS) all of whom have extensive experience in Primary schools and Early Years. As the EIIF

menu of support is dynamic and the schools are encouraged to have reflective conversations about their specific circumstances with a support partner from the L-SPA Early Intervention Team most requests were agreed and support allocated. Where there was increased demand for an intervention or training, we increased capacity or replicated the offer in a subsequent round.

The Menu of Support offers a range of training across the 4 main areas of need and offers with a high uptake have included

- Makaton Level 2
- Attention Autism
- Brick by Brick Programme Facilitator training (Lego therapy)
- Total Communication inc. additional considerations for SEMH and PDA
- Emotion Coaching
- Supporting children who mask/ have a PDA profile ( ASD Outreach team)
- Setting up an Indoor Movement/Play area
- Sensory Circuits and how to create sensory resources on a budget
- Child centred effective transitions

Schools which have engaged with some training have also been able to request resources to use in the classroom or school to put training into practice and which are over and above what a school should be ordinarily expected to provide.

The schools have received additional support in the form of drop-in sessions in addition to bookable consultations which have been well received.

Where possible EEIF training and support is delivered from within SCC existing service providers to make sustainable use of high needs block funds. Where external training providers were necessary, we adopted a train the trainer approach so that learning can be delivered more widely, and the initial costs are limited. A full breakdown of costs and the value of training and resources allocated to each school will be made available in August 2025 when the pilot ends and a full evaluation is undertaken.

### **Impact and outcomes to date:**

All schools in the EEIF pilot undertook a baseline assessment at the start of the academic year 2024/25 and this will be reviewed at the end of the academic year to evaluate the difference. We will be measuring the impact of the input on

- Staff confidence in meeting needs
- Child level progress data
- Requests for EHCNAs from schools and parents
- Reductions in suspensions and exclusions for children at SEND Support

Although the final evaluation is some months away the mid term temperature check has indicated that

- The number of EHCNAs submitted from EEIF schools has reduced by 42%
- The source of EHCNAs in EEIF schools has changed with schools submitting 45% less and parents' requests decreasing by 28%

- The ratio of EHCNAs refused at the point of submission reduced by 9.4%
- Suspensions of children at SEND Support reduced by 44%

Based on the metrics collated to date we have hypothesised that

- Although the EEIF activity was centred on Year R the benefits have been felt across the whole school which suggests the interventions and support provide good value.
- The decrease in parental EHCNAs suggests an improvement in parental perception of how well a school is supporting their child. This is positive as the transition from the small ratio Early Years setting to Primary School is a period when parents benefit from seeing tangible inclusive strategies being modelled within schools.
- The decrease in suspensions suggests that school staff are feeling more confident in meeting needs related to emotional dysregulation
- The reduction in EHCNAs that resulted in a refusal to assess at the first application suggest that where EEIF schools have made a submission it is appropriate, and the graduated response has been clearly demonstrated.

#### **Learning points:**

- Feedback from schools that did not engage suggested they wanted access to funds not supported training and resources
- Regular communications and check-ins have been key to maintaining momentum and engagement
- Leadership from a professional with operational, schools-based experience promoted confidence
- The initial criteria for selection were too narrow and did not factor in children who were not in an EY setting in 2023-24 or for whom a setting had not applied for EIF (Early Years Inclusion Funding)
- By limiting the scheme to children not on the EHCNA pathway we missed an opportunity for additional impact through promoting placement stability in Year R and parental preference for specialist and independent sector placements
- We initially missed an opportunity to support movers in and those who have entered Year R on very reduced timetables due to perceived level of need and/or an existing high needs cohort
- There is a wide range of high-quality support available at phase transition points and specifically Early Years into Year R already. This can be confusing for schools and may lead to school systems being overwhelmed

#### **Next steps**

- A full evaluation of the EEIF pilot will be shared early in Term 1 2025/26. This will include a breakdown of costs and distribution.
- A proposal will be submitted to Schools Forum outlining options for an extension of the pilot in order to increase reach and effectiveness.

**Action requested of the Forum**

At this time, we are seeking views from the Forum as to whether

- The EIIIF pilot principles of training, support and resources should be extended to Secondary phase schools specifically targeted at Year 8 and 9 cohorts.
- The EIIIF Primary input be amended to year groups other than Year R to focus support at periods of child led social transition and increased academic demand.

## **Matter arising from January meeting: Additional information on de-delegated school intervention fund and governor support**

### **Primary Intervention Fund – Non-Statutory School Improvement**

In Surrey Primary Head Teachers of maintained schools have been consulted and have voted to de-delegate DSG in order to provide additional school improvement services over and above statutory requirements and to fund interim leadership costs to schools that face standards and performance issues where the delegated budget is insufficient to bear these costs.

The decision to de-delegate funding for non-statutory school improvement sits with the Primary Head Teachers and is separate from the responsibility for providing statutory Schools Improvement services for all maintained schools, which sits with the LA, and the contract for both statutory and non-statutory services is between the LA and the provider. Surrey County Council (SCC) has chosen to deliver these statutory responsibilities by commissioning SAE; however the duty remains with SCC. Should SCC wish to deliver statutory or non-statutory services through an alternative provider they could do this. Primary Heads could then decide if they wished to continue to de-delegate the funds.

The funding for non-statutory school improvement is only targeted and used to support Maintained Primary Schools. The rate of deduction was £8.75 per pupil in 2023/24 and 2024/ 25 and is £9.06 per pupil in 2025/26

This funding is managed and overseen by Schools Alliance for on behalf of Surrey Maintained Primary schools.

In 2023/24 the primary intervention fund was allocated by SAE to:

- provide additional school improvement and leadership support to schools designated as ‘Support and Challenge’(S&C). Each S&C school has an allocated S&C partner (an experienced HT, CEO or other leader with significant SI experience) who works with the school leadership to devise and cost a support programme. Depending on the school’s budget some or all of the support plan may be funded through the intervention. Progress against the action plan is monitored termly through S&C meetings chaired by a SAE advisor. Schools are not allocated the money – the support provider invoices SAE directly for the funding
- cover interim leadership costs where the school’s budget could not support this. Each case is considered on its merits and a decision is taken in partnership with the LA after consultation with finance. In all cases half-termly reviews are conducted to ensure value for money
- provide additional targeted support to other maintained schools where a need is identified, and the school’s budget cannot support this – in particular in small schools. Schools are identified through their annual visits or by requests from the LA or schools themselves. These schools are not classified as S&C schools

- fund targeted projects: this year this included (but is not limited to) the Outstanding Schools Project, The Positive Outcomes for all Project, continued support for Priority Projects and the Primary Leadership Conference. All the targeted projects address Surrey priorities.

In total in 2023/24:

- 6 schools received interim leadership support
- 41 Support and challenge schools were supported and some point in the year – many transitioned off S&C due to making strong progress and/or achieving a good Ofsted judgement
- 13 (non-S&C) schools received targeted intervention or support to access professional learning
- 105 schools took part in free or subsidised targeted projects or training.

Details of all schools that are in receipt of this fund are shared with Primary Phase chairs through the regular SAfE Primary RA meetings and an approval process is in place.

#### **Budget Breakdown for 2023/24**

Figures for 2024/25 will be available July 2025

<b>2023-2024 Primary intervention fund funding</b>	<b>£401,464</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>	
Interim Leadership	£121,447
Support & Challenge Intervention	£149,540
Targeted intervention (non- Support and Challenge)	£43,445
Targeted Projects or Training	£54,073
7% Overheads, management and PS	£28,102
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£396,607</b>
<b>Underspent</b>	<b>£4,857</b>

#### **Governor Services delivered through the SAfE Contract**

This is one element of the SAfE contract with SCC for Governor Services. A proportion is paid via a DfE grant which is specific to the statutory requirement to maintain a

governor database. The balance is paid for via SCC General Fund and delivers non-statutory services in addition to statutory services.

#### Governor Services

- Maintenance of Surrey's governor database
- Provision of general governance advice and guidance to governors and clerks
- Provision of specific advice and guidance for the appointment of Parent, Staff and LA governors as well as the re-constitution of governing bodies
- Provision of FREE Governance Webinars and Clerks' Briefings
- Provision of a termly Governance Bulletin
- Management of Surrey's Local Authority Governor Appointment processes
- Maintenance of database of maintained schools Constitutions and reviewing and processing new Instruments of Government
- Provision of a limited programme of training and development opportunities linked to supporting school improvement. These include termly governance webinars and other events. They are free to all those involved in governance in Surrey schools and academies
- Provision of a new Governor Welcome Pack and video for all new Surrey Governors
- Management of the Annual Governance Recognition Awards
- Development and deployment of our Local Leaders of Governance network (LLGs). Our LLGs are usually deployed to support schools to improve their governance or to mentor new or inexperienced chairs.

The allocation for this element of the contract for this year is £110K.

#### **Central Services Levy**

This is a budget created by deductions from all maintained schools apart from maintained nursery schools, in order to pay for LA responsibilities in respect of maintained schools which are not specifically tradeable. It is in addition to delegation for behaviour, REMA travellers, special staff costs and additional school improvement. Total "central services levy" deduction is currently £44.00 per pupil of which £6.73/pupil is for statutory school improvement. Some elements paid for by Central Services Levy are delegated to SAfE and form part of their contracted work, including statutory school improvement, governor services and monitoring of national curriculum assessment (over and above the part funded by separate specific grant).