

Schools Forum

Agenda

Tuesday 16 December 2025 at 2.00 pm

This meeting will be held remotely. If you'd like to observe the meeting please contact: Amrita.White@lbhf.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 2

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Schools Forum Minutes

Tuesday 11 November 2025

PRESENT

Voting members	Non-voting members
School Members Anne-Marie Strachan (Thames Federation) Dave Colins (Brackenbury School) Michele Barrett (Randolph Beresford / Vanessa Nursery) Kathleen Williams (Holy Cross Primary)	Observers Aiden Smith (Governor, Jack Tizard School) Alex Parker Jacqueline Munro
Academies and Free Schools Gary Kynaston, Hammersmith Academy (Chair) Daniel Cundy & Sophia Martin (Senior Principal, AP Academies)	
Non-Schools Members Jane Gleasure (Little People, Early Years PVI)	

Officers

Jacqui McShannon (Director of Children's Services)
Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services and Education)
Peter Haylock (Director of Education and SEND)
Satwinder Saraon (Head of SEND Services and Early Years)
Irolla Valerie (Principle Accountant)
Amrita White (Committee Coordinator)

Union Representative

Eleanor Charman-Blower (NEU Secretary)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

Minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting as a correct record of the proceedings and any amendments arising will be recorded in the minutes of that subsequent meeting.

3. SCHOOLS BLOCK TO HIGH NEEDS BLOCK BUDGET TRANSFER 2026/27 DISAPPLICATION

Peter Haylock (Director of Education and SEND) presented the report on the disapplication request for 2026/27 to support mitigating the High Needs Block (HNB) budget pressures over the medium term. He highlighted the following key points:

- The number of plans had increased to 1840.
- Last SEN2 was a 5% increase compared to a 11% increase nationally.
- 79% of new plans were for children aged up to 10.
- The grant allocation did not fully account for the inflationary pressures across the SEND sector, mainstream, special and independent.
- Lower than originally forecasted forecast HNB funding than originally modelled per DfE advice up to approx. £1.5mil
- Overall structural deficit of £2.6 mil at 2024/25 closing balance.
- Outlined the actions to mitigate this and support the delivery as the area was facing budget challenges.

Michele Barrett (Randolph Beresford / Vanessa Nursery) asked whether a cost analysis of the early year's intervention programme was available. Peter Haylock explained that, while a formal cost analysis had not yet been produced, current indicators suggested that the programme was having a positive impact. For example, our applications for renewing EHC Plans were 5–6% lower than the national average, which indicated the effectiveness of early intervention work.

He noted that the Council remained committed to delivering these interventions but faced challenges in quantifying their full impact due to other mitigating factors. What was clear, however, was that additional investment in early intervention would be critical to achieving even greater outcomes.

Satwinder Saraon (Head of SEND Services and Early Years) added that programme data showed clear impact when children received specialist intervention within an early year setting for two terms, most no longer required this support afterward. This demonstrated the effectiveness of targeted early intervention.

Alex Parker (Observer) asked about the HNB budget and whether the budget could be reviewed as a whole, assess sector performance against it, and understand how income and expenditure were being balanced.

The Chair noted that this remained a national challenge due to the nature of the SEND provision and the increasing number of EHCPs that must be funded by Local Authorities.

Jacqui McShannon (Director of Children's Services) highlighted that, since joining the Council, had been mitigated around £5m through the Safety Valve programme. She stressed that the Council received significantly less funding compared to other Local Authorities, which continued to be a major challenge.

However, substantial work had been undertaken to prevent the gap from widening while still meeting the needs of children.

Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services and Education) added that the Council was awaiting the Government's Schools White Paper on SEND reform, originally expected in Autumn 2025 but now delayed until Spring 2026. This would provide clarity on the national direction of travel. He also noted that the Council currently had no indication of funding levels for the Dedicated Schools Grant for High Needs, mainstream and early years settings from April 2026. This information was expected in late December 2025.

Members discussed the disapplication proposal and unanimously agreed the recommendation in the report

RESOLVED:

The Schools Forum approved the Schools Block to High Needs Block Transfer Disapplication Request.

4. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2025/26 Q2 UPDATE

Peter Haylock (Director of Education and SEND) noted that the paper was presented for information purposes only.

The report provided an update on the High Needs Block programmes of work and outlined performance against the Department for Education's Safety Valve Agreement at Quarter 2.

RESOLVED:

The schools Forum noted the report

5. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT Q1 2025/26 MONITORING REPORT

Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services and Education) presented the report the 2025/26 Quarter 1 monitoring position on the Dedicated Schools Grant following the retrospective Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant Funding adjustment for 2024/25.

The High Needs Block was forecast to overspend by £3.9m versus the funding allocation in 2025/26 at Quarter 1 after the budgeted application of £0.243m transfer from Central Services Schools Block and £1.23m transfer from the Schools Block. This represented an adverse position versus funding on High Needs.

On the Early Years Block budget 2025/26, a technical adjustment to the budget was explained. The Summer 2025 S251 budget return identified that the total supplements as a percentage of funding paid to providers over the 12% limit on 3- and 4-year-old entitlements per grant conditions. The supplement element of the budget had been reduced and the Special

Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) increased to ensure the budget was compliant with grant conditions. Greater inclusion support funding was available to all Early Years providers as a result and the SENIF would provide additional funding to meet SEN needs below the statutory threshold.

The Chair asked about the Government's general priorities. Jacqui McShannon (Director of Children's Services) acknowledged this was a challenging question to answer. She explained that across the sector there was increased regulation, rising demand, and higher expectations to deliver better outcomes for residents, all against the backdrop of significant funding gaps. From a local perspective, the Council's two main priority areas remained Children's SEND (where there was a substantial structural overspend) and Adult Social Care.

RESOLVED:

The Schools Forum noted the report

6. 2026/27 NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA UPDATE - VERBAL UPDATE

Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services and Education) provided a verbal update on 2026/27 National Funding formula and highlighted the following key points:

- Due to the timing of the Government's spending review and Autumn 2025 budget, the provisional funding and operational guides for 2026/27 financial year have not been issued to date.
- The provisional funding, modelling tools and Dedicated Schools Grant Operational Guidance for Schools and High Needs was usually received before the summer break in July.
- Final information was expected from The Department of Education by 19th December 2025 at the latest. The delay to the release of 2026/27 budget information presented a challenging timetable for 2026/27 Schools Budget process.
- The Early Years budget 2026/27 and Early Years operation guidance were expected in early December which was broadly in line with the expected timescale of late November.
- An update on the 2026/27 budget would be brought to Schools Forum scheduled for 16th December. This would include an update on known funding proposed for 2026/27 at that time, in addition to the broad principles proposed for setting the 2026/27 budget in line with the expected parameters of the National Funding Formula, if the full detail is not known at that time.
- Final 2026/27 financial year school and early years budget papers would be circulated in early January 2026. With workshops for Schools Forum members, mainstream school leaders, Early Years providers and finance professionals in week commencing the 12th January 2026. This would be ahead of the Schools Forum budget decisions at the meeting on 20th January.

RESOLVED:


That the Schools Forum noted the update.

Meeting started: 2:00pm
Meeting ended: 2:52pm

Chair

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Agenda Item 3

	<p style="text-align: center;">London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SCHOOLS FORUM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">16 December 2025</p>
Schools Block Mainstream Budget 2026/27	
Open	
Classification - For scrutiny, review and comment	
Key Decision:	
Wards Affected: (All Wards): All	
Accountable Director: Jacqui McShannon, Executive Director of People	
Report Authors:	
Peter Haylock – Operational Director of Education and SEND	
Tony Burton – Head of Finance Children’s Services and Education	
<p>Purpose of the report</p> <p>This report sets out the provisional Schools Block allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2026/27 following the receipt of updated national funding formula guidance and provisional funding allocations.</p> <p>Schools Forum are asked to review and agree the principles to be used for modelling the Schools Block budget. This will determine the final budget allocation for the financial year 2026/27.</p>	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The provisional allocation of the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2026/27 has been received from the Department for Education (DfE) of £128.476m. This is still based on October 2024 census numbers and excludes any additional funding for growth and falling rolls.
- 1.2. The Council expects to receive the final 2026/27 allocation by the 19th December 2025. This will be based on October 2025 census numbers and should include an additional funding amount for growth and falling rolls.
- 1.3. In 2025/26, mainstream schools received funding through the National Insurance Contributions Grant and the Schools Budget Support Grant in addition to their DSG allocation through the Schools Block. From 2026/27 the funding previously distributed through these grants will be allocated through the Schools Block. The DfE has made a 2025/26 baseline adjustment to ensure schools are not disadvantaged. The value of the adjustment is £3.140m and

has been allocated through the basic per pupil funding factor, Free School Meals Ever 6 factor and the lump sum factor.

- 1.4. Table 1 below details the change in the provisional allocation for 2026/27 compared with the final 2025/26 Schools Block allocation adjusted for the separate grants as described in paragraph 1.3.

Table 1 Schools Block Funding Allocation Year on Year

	2025/26	2026/27	
Number of pupils (R to Y11)	15,625	15,625	
	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	Movement between years £m
Schools Block Baseline (excludes growth funding)	121.859	127.045	
Additional Grants:			
NICS	1.945		
SBSG	1.195		
Premises Factor	1.425	1.431	
Sub-total before growth and falling rolls funding	126.424	128.475	2.051
Per pupil funding before growth and falling rolls	8,091	8,223	1.62%
Growth funding	0.228	TBC	
Falling rolls funding	0.840	TBC	
Total Schools Block Funding (including Growth and Falling rolls)	127.492	TBC	

- 1.5. Per pupil funding has provisionally increased by 1.62% for Hammersmith and Fulham mainstream schools. This compares to a 2.48% increase nationally. However, this does not mean that schools will receive a uniform increase in funding year on year.
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) must be set between minus 0.5% and 0% within the National Funding Formula (NFF) for 2026/27.

- This protects schools from potentially larger falls in funding year on year, that could occur as a result of the application of the NFF.
 - Some schools could see up to 0.5% year on year reductions in pupil led funding in 2026/27 after the baselining of additional grant funding.
- 1.6. The detailed funding model will be worked on for publication in early January 2026 when the updated authority proforma tool is published with updated October 2025 census figures. To note:
- The NFF will be finely balanced and the ambition is to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee as close to 0% as the funding allocation allows. This will minimise any potential funding losses to individual schools.
 - The H&F per pupil unit of funding allocated through the national funding formula has increased from 2025/26 to 2026/27.
 - The unit of funding informs the overall schools block allocation for H&F and doesn't represent the level of increase that individual schools see in their funding allocations.
 - Final NFF to be released by the DfE week commencing 15th December will inform the level of funding allocated to each school.

2. The main features of the 2026/27 Schools National Funding Formula

- 2.1. There are no structural changes to the Schools National Funding Formula (NFF) from 2025 to 2026.
- 2.2. The basic per pupil rate, free school meals Ever 6 values and the lump sum factor have increased to reflect the 'rolling in' of the separate SBSG and NICs grant from 2025 to 2026.
- 2.3. A further overall increase has been applied to school and pupil-led factors.
- 2.4. Through the minimum per pupil funding levels, every primary school will attract at least £5,115 per pupil and every secondary school at least £6,640 per pupil. This increase reflects the rolled in SBSG and NICs grants.

3. Local funding formulae

- 3.1. As in 2025 to 2026, local authorities can only use NFF factors in their local formulae and must use all NFF factors except any locally determined premises factors.
- 3.2. Local authorities will continue to set a minimum funding guarantee in local formulae. For 2026 to 2027, this must be between minus 0.5% and 0%. This mirrors the 2025/26 NFF.

4. 2026 to 2027 Final Budget Modelling principles

- 4.1. The modelling for the 2026/27 school budget will be made once the Department for Education (DfE) issues the updated Authority Proforma Tool (APT) by 19 December 2025.
- 4.2. The final model will be produced consistent with the principles agreed by Schools Forum in November 2025 and in line with requirements of the Schools Block NFF for 2026/27. The principles are:
- National Funding Formula (NFF) factor rates set to the higher of:
 - NFF values after area cost adjustment for inner London
 - Factor rates uplifted by a percentage across all factor rates in so far that this is affordable within each model to ensure all funding is allocated.
 - Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) set within the required level by the NFF.
 - This is the minimum increase in funding through pupil led funding factors year on year.
 - MFG must be set between minus 0.5% and 0.0% for 2026/27.
- 4.3. The principles for producing the Schools Block model assumes continuing support to the High Needs Block through a 1% transfer from the Schools Block.
- Continues the level of block transfer agreed by Schools Forum and the Minister of State for the 2025/26 budget.
 - The value of the block transfer is expected to be around £1.28m.
 - A disapplication of above 0.5% level requires Schools Forum approval and a disapplication to the Minister of State. This was approved by Schools Forum in November 2025. The outcome of the request is not expected until January 2026.
 - The continued disapplication is required for the short to medium term sustainability of the High Needs Block.
- 4.4. The modelling will also need to be produced on the assumption of a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to support the High Needs Block. This is a requirement of the DfE pending a decision on the disapplication submission. Therefore, two models will be produced.
- 4.5. The modelling will also provide the budget for de-delegated budgets and the Education functions fund. This is applicable for maintained primary schools only.

5. Schools Block 2026/27 Budget Consultation

- 5.1. The consultation will open for a short period and will be based on the budget modelling principles agreed by Schools Forum. A workshop will be held prior to the January 2026 Schools Forum.

6. Key dates

Date	Activity
19 th December 2025	Final date that the confirmed 2026/27 Dedicated Schools Grants budgets are expected to be received from the DfE
w/c 12 th January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Release of the proposed 2026/27 Schools Block funding models• Briefing workshop and information sharing with key mainstream school partners• Request for feedback on budget proposals.
20 th January 2026	Schools Forum consideration and decisions on the final budget models
21 st January 2026 (TBC)	Completed APTs submitted to the DfE
28 February 2026	Deadline for confirmation of school budget shares to maintained schools.

Report ends