

Schools Forum Agenda

Tuesday 3 March 2026 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 20 January 2026

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) Imogen Lavelle (The Good Shepherd)	Aidan Smith Alex Parker Helen Pickering Jacqueline Munro
Academies and Free Schools Gary Kynaston, Hammersmith Academy (Chair) Daniel Cundy (Senior Principal, AP Academies) Sally Brooks (Fulham Cross Academy and Fulham College)	
Non-School Members Rebecca Moore (William Morris Sixth Form) Jane Gleasure (Little People, Early Years PVI)	

Officers

Tony Burton (Head of Finance - People)
Peter Haylock (Director of Education and SEND)
Valerie Irolla (Principal Accountant)
Satwinder Saraon (Head of SEND Services and Early Years)
Caroline Baxter (Finance Manager Education and Schools)
Liam Oliff (Committee Coordinator)

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.

3. SCHOOLS BLOCK BUDGET AND MAINSTREAM BUDGETS 2026/27

Tony Burton (Head of Finance - People) presented the report which outlined the final Schools Block allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2026/27

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.

following the receipt of final funding allocations and the Authority Proforma Tool (APT) in December 2025.

Alex Parker (Lady Margaret School) referred Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility and Trade Union Facilities and was concerned whether all of this budget would be recouped. He added that some Academies did their own FSM eligibility checking, and may continue to do this, rather than pay a fee. He commented that if LBHF were to pass on the charge, that there needed to be clarity on what schools were being asked to pay for. Peter Haylock (Director of Education and SEND) explained that schools had been benefitting from this for many years. The auto enrolment process meant that if a single young person was enrolled as part of LBHF's process, schools would benefit from Pupil Premium and FSM and FSM6 funding in the schools funding formula. Trade Unions Facilities time was being paid for to support members in whatever way was deemed fit, but it was not up to the Council to decide how the facilities were being used. Alex Parker stressed the importance that this be in writing, so schools understood where their contribution was going. Peter Haylock noted this request and agreed to provide more clarity.

Alex Parker asked whether the FSM eligibility was completed using census data, or whether it was notifiable through the Local Authority (LA). Peter Haylock explained that an auto enrolment process had been introduced, working alongside the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to collect the relevant information. Previously there was an opt-in process where families would need to apply for FSMs, due to changes in regulation at primary school level, there was not the urgency for parents to apply for FSMs so there was now an opt-out process where LA does the searching in the background, and this in turn would add to Pupil Premium numbers. The first time this process took place, 10-20 extra pupils were identified as being eligible for FSMs. Alex Parker commented that this process needed to be explained further to provide more evidence of the difference it was making to schools.

Kathleen Williams (Holy Cross Primary) felt that the auto enrolment process was having a big impact at primary school level, as fewer parents were applying for FSMs. She asked whether the requirement for trade union facilities for staff was a statutory one? The Chair explained that the change in statutory function for trade unions was a general principle one and that the charges needed to avoid being overly bureaucratic. He added that more clarity was needed on the reasoning behind the process and what it did and didn't serve.

The Chair commented that children receiving FSMs at primary school had an impact on receiving FSM6 at secondary school. He added that LBHF did need to provide clarity on exactly how identification of pupils eligible for FSMs was impacting schools so there was an understanding of where their contribution was going. The Chair suggested that the plans in the report were put in place for the upcoming year, due to the time constraints, but Schools Forum would expect to see more detail in a future report.

Daniel Cundy (Senior Principal, AP Academies) mentioned that from an academies' perspective regarding trade union facilities time, they made a commitment to undertake union business, represent staff and the cost of that was internal so he questioned what the contribution was to LA. Peter Haylock explained that the contribution was to the wider, region trade union team.

Kathleen Williams referred to de-delegation and asked whether Academies were to be invoiced for just trade union facilities and FSMs? Tony Burton explained that the de-delegation in the budget was just for maintained schools, but that academies and free schools would need to be invoiced for their contributions.

Dave Colins (Brackenbury School) asked what could be done in terms of liaison with other LAs as at some schools within the Borough, 80% of students could live in a different LA and therefore would not be picked up within the Council's auto enrolment process. He also questioned what the consequences would be if large national multi academy trusts didn't like the changes and didn't contribute and this led to a shortfall, he added that it would be problematic if maintained schools were forced to make up shortfall. Peter Haylock was in agreement that a system needed to be implemented to work with neighbouring boroughs to identify pupils with FSM eligibility. Tony Burton added that they would not be asking maintained schools to contribute more.

The Chair suggested that in the summer term a group of Schools Forum members met and looked at the implications of the loss of funding that was to take place over the coming years.

RESOLVED That:

1. The January 2026 APT for the recommended model is submitted to the DfE for the 2026 to 2027 schools budget share. This is with the revised uplifted NFF rates detailed in paragraph 4 and in appendix 1 and an MFG value of minus 0.50% per pupil.
2. The Schools Forum confirmed agreement of the disapplication request to transfer 1% of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2026/27 as part of the recommended model based on principles agreed in the Autumn Term Schools Forum meetings. The 1% transfer is now approved by Minister of State at £1.262m.
3. It is recommended that maintained school representatives at Schools Forum agree to the proposed 2026-27 de-delegation budget of £0.564m.
4. It is recommended that maintained school representatives at Schools Forum agree to the proposed 2026/27 Education Functions budget of £0.285m.
5. Schools Forum agree the approach to ensure statutory trade union facilities and free school meals eligibility costs are sustainable with contributions from school's budgets following further information and engagement from officers.

4. EARLY YEARS BUDGET 2026/27

Tony Burton (Head of Finance - People) presented the report which outlined the initial allocation of Early Years Block funding for 2026/27 including the extended entitlements for working parents of two-year-old children and children from age 9 months.

Jane Gleasure (Little People, Early Years PVI) mentioned that in the early years childcare sector, funding was stretched over the entire year, and this led to budgetary issues in the summer term. She explained that in 2027 there was to be a 21 week summer term but they would only get paid for 13 weeks. She added that there were fewer issues in the autumn term as more weeks calculated when funding was allocated. She commented that it made sense in a school system but not in the PVI sector as children were joining at all points of the year.

Tony Burton mentioned that this was something that lots of settings would experience, including schools, but that there was an added complication in the early years childcare sector. There would still be 38 weeks of funding available to providers but over a different profile.

Tony Burton told the Forum that there had been an update on calculator for schools on 3-4 year olds thresholds and maintained nursery schools for budget setting.

The Chair asked whether the budget setting was based on census data for autumn and spring. Tony Burton confirmed that the budget used Department for Education (DfE) data. He added that for 2026-27 a termly census model will be used. He added that the LA has always provided its funding on a termly basis but now the DfE would be doing the same, whereas previously they had been funding on a yearly basis for some entitlements and funding. It was agreed that Officers would work with early years providers to understand the implications of the termly funding change on their settings.

RESOLVED That:

1. Schools Forum noted the engagement, and briefings were undertaken with schools and Early Years providers from 12th January 2026 ahead of Schools Forum on 20th January.
2. Schools Forum approved the proposed deployment of central budget in Table 4 above and noted the impact of the impact of passthrough requirement on available central funds from 2026/27.
3. Schools Forum noted the proposed 2026/27 Early Year budget across all entitlements including the revised base rates, deprivation and local formulas proposed.
4. Schools Forum noted the change in termly funding proposed from April 2026 to align termly funding paid to providers on the same basis as funding to be received by the local authority. Funding would now be provided to all settings on the basis of 13 weeks in the summer, 14 weeks in the autumn and 11 weeks in the spring for all the early years funding streams. This was a change from the 12.66 weeks per term used to calculate termly funding per the census and headcount in 2025/26.

Meeting started: 2:00pm
Meeting ended: 2:59pm

Chair

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Agenda Item 2

	<p>London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham</p> <p>SCHOOLS FORUM</p> <p>Tuesday 3rd March 2026</p>
<p>DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT MONITORING QUARTER 2 2025-26</p>	
<p>Open</p>	
<p>Wards Affected: (All Wards); All</p>	
<p>Accountable Director: Jacqui McShannon, Executive Director People's Services</p>	
<p>Report Author: Tony Burton Head of Finance for Children's Services and Education</p>	<p>Contact Details: E-mail: tony.burton@lbhf.gov.uk</p>

Purpose of the report

This report updates forum on:

The 2025/26 Quarter 2 monitoring position on the Dedicated Schools Grant following the retrospective Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant Funding adjustment for 2024/25.

1. Introduction

1.1. This paper sets out:

- Current DSG budget 2025-26 after academy recoupment
- Forecast variances in each of the blocks of the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2025/26
- Projected closing balances at 31st March 2026 at Quarter 2 2025/26

2. Summary Position

2.1. Table 1 below shows the high-level position for 2025/26 financial year at quarter 2.

Table 1 – Block Budgets and Forecast 2025/26

DSG Allocations stated after deductions for academies recoupment, NNDR and direct funding of High Needs Places by the DfE

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Balances by Block

Figures in red and brackets represent deficit

	2025/26 DSG Budget £m	2025/26 Forecast Variance Qtr2 £m	Comments
Schools Block	38.560	0	All funding is forecast to be passported to schools or spent in 2025/26 pending recommendations for allocation of contingency for schools in the financial difficulty later in the year.
Central Services Schools Block	1.939	0	Nil variance after budgeted £0.243m transfer to support HNB expenditure.
High Needs Block	34.987	4.9m (deficit)	In-year deficit forecast of £4.9m in 2025/26 on High Needs versus DSG funding. This will result in a retained DSG deficit forecast of £7.6m at 31 st March 2026. Note there is significant risk of further in-year expenditure versus forecast as a result of sustained EHCP demand following the start of the new academic year 2025/26.
Early Years Block	21.477	0	Note the retrospective adjustment of 2024/25 funding confirmed in Summer 2025 was £45,851 adverse on closing estimates, principally due to a £62,662 reduction in the Maintained Nursery Supplement funding based on final activity. It is expected this can be contained within 25-26 budgeted contingency.
TOTAL DSG 25-26	96.964	(4.9)	Forecast In-year deficit
Cumulative Deficit 31/03/26		(7.6)	Forecast retained DSG deficit at year end is £7.6m with significant downside risk

3. High Needs Block

- 3.1. The High Needs funding allocation is £34.987m after academy recoupment of £5.085m. Total High Needs funding before recoupment is therefore £40.072m in 2025/26.
- 3.2. The High Needs Block is forecast to overspend by **£4.9m** versus the funding allocation in 2025/26 at Quarter 2 after the budgeted application of £0.243m transfer from Central Services Schools Block and £1.23m transfer from the Schools Block. This represents an adverse position versus funding on High Needs.
- 3.3. The import/export funding adjustment on the high needs block was confirmed in Summer 2025 for the 2025/26 budget. This has resulted in a reduction in the High Needs funding allocation in 2025/26 of £0.5m which will further increase to £0.566m confirmed in November 2025.
- 3.4. The expenditure for 2025/26 includes the investment in special and SEN unit places in H&F schools from September 2025. This will provide value for money local places in H&F schools from 2025/26 academic year and beyond.
- 3.5. The quarter 2 forecast assumes that financial benefits realisation with respect to new resource provision will occur from September 2025, however there is risk that the expected savings occurring from the investment may be limited in the remainder of 2025/26 financial year.
- 3.6. In addition, further risks with respect to the forecast exist for 2025/26 with respect to:
 - sustained EHCP growth following the start of the academic year above the forecast level
 - placement needs driving cost growth due to increasing complexity of need presenting

4. Schools Block and Maintained De-delegation 2025/26

- 4.1. Table 2 shows the Local Authority held budgets for the Schools Block for maintained primary schools and for the block transfer to High Needs totalling £38.560m.
- 4.2. A further £84.434m of the Schools Block has been recouped by the ESFA and paid directly to academy and free schools via their GAG funding.
- 4.3. No variances are expected, with dedelegated and statutory education functions budgets fully spent in 2025/26.
- 4.4. De-delegated budgets include £96,900 for contingency for maintained primary schools in financial difficulty.

Table 2 - Schools Block Forecast 2025/26

	£m 2025/26 Budget	£m 2025/26 Forecast	£m 2025/26 Variance
Schools Block delegated (after academy recoupment) Maintained Primary Only	36.486	36.486	0
Falling Rolls Fund	Nil	Nil	Nil
Maintained schools de-delegated Budget	0.555	0.555	0
Maintained schools Education Functions	0.289	0.289	0
Transfer to High Needs Block	1.230	1.230	0
Total Schools Block received by LBHF	38.560	38.560	0

4.5. Three schools in financial difficulty have requested support with redundancy costs as part of stabilisation and deficit recovery plans. The total support requested is £212,020 against the available funding of £96,900.

4.6. The proposed support would fund 45.7% of the support requested in each case as per the table 3 below:

Table 3: Proposed Support from Contingency for Schools in Financial Difficulty

School	Support Requested £	Support Proposed £	Purpose of Support
Miles Coverdale	66,176	30,365	
Flora Gardens	55,844	25,635	Support with costs to reduce cost base and move to sustainable medium-term position
St Pauls C of E	90,000	41,297	
Total	211,176	96,900	

4.7. Maintained Primary representatives on Schools Forum are asked to agree the contingency payments to schools linked to ongoing financial recovery planning for budget sustainability and licenced deficit agreements with the local authority to be agreed in due course.

5. Central Services Schools block 2025/26

5.1. The CSSB block is forecast to outturn to budget at £1.939m in 2025/26, including the £0.243m budgeted contribution to the High Needs block.

6. Early Years Block 2025/26

- 6.1. An additional retrospective adjustment of the 2024/25 Early Years Block was made in Summer 2025 by the Department for Education with respect to the maintained nursery supplementary funding based on final activity in 2024/25. It is expected that this will be covered by the 2025/26 contingency budget.
- 6.2. A further adjustment to Early years funding expected in Autumn 2025 and following Spring 2026 census with respect to revised activity which is not expected to have caused any pressures to the budget.
- 6.3. The estimated budget outturn position will be presented at June 2026 Schools Forum which will be subject to final retrospective funding adjustments by DfE in July 2026.
- 6.4. Note that following the technical adjustment in Qtr1, funding has been deployed in line with revised quality supplement for mainstream primary schools for historic pay and pension grants.

Report ends