



Schools Forum

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Venue: Shrewsbury
Training and Development
Centre

Paper

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Public

10% Pupil Growth Contingency

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Summary

Shropshire's local funding arrangements for maintained schools have included for many years a pupil growth contingency where a school's funded number on roll increases significantly in-year.

Following the national funding reforms introduced in 2013-14 this contingency budget is delegated to all Shropshire schools. Maintained schools, through Schools Forum, agree the de-delegation of this budget to be managed centrally on their behalf on an annual basis.

The pupil growth contingency is applied consistently based on a 10% increase to a school's funded number on roll. The introduction of using the October school census data as the basis for allocating funding for the following financial year led to the inclusion of a reception uplift in a school's funded number on roll. A school's reception uplift is based on the previous year's deferred entry of reception pupils.

The inclusion of the reception uplift in the funded number on roll has led to a request from a school to review the use of the funded number on roll as the baseline for the 10% growth trigger.

Recommendation

That Schools Forum members consider the current 10% pupil growth contingency policy in particular the use of the funded number on roll including the reception uplift as the basis for determining the baseline for the increased number on roll, and agree the policy to be applied for 2017-18 and onwards.

REPORT

Background

1. Shropshire's local school funding arrangements have included a pupil growth contingency for many years. Originally based on a 5% increase to a school's funded number on roll it was amended to a 10% increase several years ago to maximise the delegation of funding to schools and limit the need to hold funding centrally.
2. In line with the requirements of the national school funding reforms introduced in 2013-14 this contingency budget is now delegated to all Shropshire schools. Maintained schools, through Schools Forum, agree the de-delegation of this budget to be managed centrally on their behalf on an annual basis.
3. Additional funding is triggered from the date of the notification to the local authority by the school that the number on roll increase has been triggered. Additional funding is provided to the school based on the reasonable additional costs incurred by the school as a result of the additional pupils, to a maximum of what the funding formula would have provided on a pro rata basis, taking into account any minimum funding guarantee (MFG) already received. This ensures fairness of funding levels across schools and limits the amount of funding de-delegated from school's budgets.
4. Guidance notes on the application of the current pupil growth contingency arrangements are attached as Appendix A to this report.

Pupil growth contingency arrangements and the use of the funded number on roll

5. The pupil growth contingency has historically used a school's funded number on roll as the baseline from which to determine the number on roll growth achieved by a school.
6. Prior to 2013-14 a school's funded number on roll was based on the January school census immediately preceding the start of the financial year. From 2013-14 the school census used for calculating funding for the following financial year was moved from the preceding January to the preceding October. This enabled school budget shares to be calculated and notified to schools earlier. However, unlike the January school census, the October school census did not include any reception pupils that deferred entry to the start of the spring term. To compensate for this the government added a reception uplift to the October census data used to calculate the following financial year's individual school budget shares. The reception uplift is based on the previous year's deferred reception pupils.
7. Therefore, since 2013-14 a school's funded number on roll is calculated as the total of the October census number on roll plus the previous year's deferred reception pupils as an estimate of the current year's deferred reception pupils.
8. The use of the funded number on roll to determine the 10% pupil growth rather than the actual October census number on roll has been challenged by a Shropshire maintained school. The table below illustrates the point at which contingency funding would be triggered under both methods.

	October Census	Reception Uplift	Funded Number on Roll	10%	Number on Roll needed to trigger contingency
Funded Number on Roll	55	2	57	6	63
Census Number on Roll	55			6	61

9. Schools Forum are asked to consider the current pupil growth contingency arrangements, in particular the use of a school's funded number on roll, including reception uplift, as the baseline for determining a 10% increase, and agree the policy for 2017-18 and beyond.