



Schools Forum

Date: 17 September 2020

Time: 8:30 to 10.20am

Venue: Virtual Microsoft
(MS) Teams

Paper

E

Public

SCHOOLS' FINANCES AND COVID-19

Responsible Officer Phil Wilson

e-mail: phil.wilson@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: (01743) 254344

Fax: (01743) 254400

Summary

A report was presented to Schools Forum at their meeting on 25 June 2020 on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Shropshire schools' finances, outlining the issues that had emerged and were being faced by schools and academies. This paper provides an update on developments over the summer.

Recommendation

This report is for information only.

REPORT

Background

1. Schools were closed from 20 March 2020 as the Government escalated its efforts to curb the increasing spread of coronavirus (Covid-19) across the country. Schools remained open, however, for the supervision of the children of critical workers and for vulnerable children. As the national position improved, the restrictions were eased, meaning that from 1 June primary schools were able to extend opening to children in nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, while from 15 June, secondary schools were able to welcome back students in Years 10 and 12. From the beginning of the Autumn term the education sector has moved to the full reopening of schools, operating within the Government's Covid safe guidelines.
2. Schools Forum received a report at their meeting on 25 June 2020 on the impact on schools' finances at that stage of the national crisis and the issues that were emerging in the education sector at that time. This report updates Schools Forum on developments since they last met.

Covid-19 Schools Fund

3. The arrangements for the Covid-19 Schools Fund were detailed in the Government guidance initially issued on 7 April - *School funding: exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) for the period March to July 2020*. This guidance was updated on 24 June, accompanied by further guidance on the process for schools to claim exceptional costs related to Covid-19, with a deadline set for 21 July for first claims to be submitted online.
4. Notification has been received by the Council on the payments made to Shropshire maintained schools at the end of August from this fund. The payment has come to the Council for passporting into maintained school budgets. There is no information on how many schools submitted claims or whether they received everything they claimed for. Academy trusts will have been contacted regarding the outcome of any claims they submitted.
5. The following table summarises the approved claims for maintained schools, with details on individual (anonymised) maintained school payments detailed in Appendix 1.

Number of schools receiving payments	32
Total payments to these schools	£84,711
Analysed as:	
• Premises	£45,953
• Free school meals	£23,495
• Additional cleaning	£15,263
Range of payments	£207 up to £14,372
Average payment	£2,647
Total funds available to these schools	£845,000
Percentage of total available funds claimed	10.0%

6. The June guidance indicated that 'further claims will be possible in a subsequent claim window in the autumn and details regarding that process will be published later in the year'.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Catch-up Premium

7. On 20 July the Government announced £1 billion of funding was being made available to support children and young people to catch up - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-catch-up-premium> . This includes a one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year 'to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time'.
8. The balance of the funds - £350 million – is being targeted at disadvantaged and vulnerable groups who have been hardest hit during the pandemic. A National Tutoring Programme will provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help.

9. Individual school allocations of catch-up premium will be calculated on a per pupil basis as follows:
 - £80 per for each pupil from Reception through to Year 11 in mainstream
 - £240 for each place in special, alternative provision and hospital schools.

A typical primary school of 200 pupils will receive £16,000, while a secondary school of 1,000 pupil will receive £80,000.

10. Schools will receive the funding in three tranches: autumn 2020, early spring 2021 and in the summer 2021. The autumn and spring payments will total £46.67 per pupil/£140 per place, and the summer payments will be £33.33 per pupil/£100 per place. The spring and summer term payments will be based on the October 2020 census data.
11. Schools are expected to use the sums available to them as a single total from which to prioritise support for pupils according to their need. The catch-up premium guidance signposts support for schools on how to use the funding, in particular a support guide published by the Education Endowment Foundation.
12. In terms of accountability, 'school leaders must be able to account for how this money is being used....', with governors and trustees expected to scrutinise their schools' approaches to catch-up and the plans for and use of the allocated funding. Ofsted will be conducting a programme of non-graded visits in the autumn during which 'inspectors will discuss how the school is bringing pupils back into full-time education – this may include plans schools have to spend their catch-up funding'.
13. The National Tutoring Programme will comprise of at least three parts in the 2020 to 2021 academic year:
 - a 5 to 16 programme making high-quality tuition available to disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in primary and secondary schools, from the second half of the autumn term
 - a 16 to 19 fund for school sixth forms, colleges and other providers
 - a reception year early language programme that will make training and resources available at no cost to schools.

Schools will be able to use their catch-up premium to cover the subsidised costs of the programmes.

f40 Letter on the Impact of Covid-19 on School and Education Funding

14. The lobby group f40, on behalf of their 42 member local authorities and school forums, including Shropshire, has written to the Department for Education on 12 August, highlighting a series of areas regarding the impact of Covid-19 on school and education funding. The letter is attached in Appendix 2.