

# Schools Forum

Thursday 11 September 2025

Via MS Teams

# Schools Forum online meeting

- In order to facilitate the smooth operation of the meeting:
- Please mute your microphones when not speaking
- Officers will briefly present their reports, using a PowerPoint presentation to get across the key aspects
- Use the 'Raise your hand' facility if you would like to raise a question or comment
- Alternatively use 'Chat' to advise the Chair that you would like to speak
- Turn off your video if bandwidth becomes an issue
- Please note that this meeting is being recorded and will be posted on YouTube





**Paper A**  
**Minutes and Matters Arising**  
**19 June 2025**  
**(Bill Dowell)**

## Minutes and matters arising - 19 June 2025

	Action	Name	Update
1.	Communication & Financial Statement updates from Central Government	JR	Draft letter to be worked on with AH and NB regarding funding challenges and circulated to BD prior to meeting for feedback
2.	Schools Forum Members	SB	EOI to be circulated to invite new members
3.	Funding Formula briefing	JR	Meeting to be set up to explain APT and NFF and mechanics behind the calculations including Growth Funding
4.	HN funding formula and methodology	CE	To be circulated
5.	Weekly newsletter from f40	CE/SB	To be shared with Schools Forum Members

# **School Library Service**

## **(Sarah Browne/John Rowe)**

# School Library Service

- There remain significant cost pressures on the SLS.
- Schools made a commitment to continue to support the library service. Removal of SLA and move to 'pay as you go', means an imperative for schools to use it.
- Some Shropshire schools aren't even meeting the minimum amount to qualify for delivery (£150)
- At the moment, the level of income is not presently sustainable to support the future operation
- Ask is for headteachers to consider how to best to support the future operation/organisation of the SLS



## Topic Box

- 30 non-fiction books on a set topic
- Choose from a range of topics suited to the curriculum
- Available for key stage 1 & 2

Popular topics include: Ancient Rome, All About Me, Weather and Climate, Greek Culture, Religions of the World, Continents and Oceans.

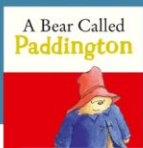
Price per Term: £75.00



- 30 fiction books from popular authors
- Titles chosen to suit relevant key stage

## Fiction Collection

Price per Term: £60.00



## Group Reader

- 6 group reading sets
- Each reading set contains 5-7 of the same books
- Titles chosen to suit relevant year group

Price per Term: £105.00



### Artefact Experiences

Dive into history with Shropshire School Library Service! Our educational adventures offer young children exciting themes and hands-on experiences, bringing the past to life and sparking curiosity in every young explorer.



#### Black History

African cultural artefact boxes, a range of African instruments to play PLUS Djembe drumming workshops.

Join us on a musical adventure, exploring African history through lively songs and stories! Dive into the rhythms, melodies, and vibrant tales bringing rich cultural traditions to life.

Embark on a journey through ancient Rome! Explore the legends, heroes, and history of this great empire with captivating stories, making Roman history fun for young explorers.

#### The Romans!

Roman artefact boxes PLUS a guided tour of Wroxeter Roman city!



#### WW2

Historical artefact boxes PLUS ukulele workshop!

Experience World War II history through music and stories! Discover the courage and resilience of this era with engaging songs and tales, making the lessons of the past accessible.

Discover the Amazon's wonders and learn about climate change through music and stories. This connects young children to the rainforest's beauty and the importance of protecting our planet.

#### Climate Awareness

Amazonian artefact box PLUS Samba drumming workshop!



### Artefact Experiences

Price per half term including a half day 'experience': £300.00

## **NEW: Term Resource Package - £350 per half term**

4 topic boxes

1 fiction box

1 artefact box

**Saving of £110 (compared to buying separately)**

Our new tariff:

- Is flexible: termly ordering allows you to order by affordability
- Features the most popular items requested by schools
- Is still delivered to your door
- Is – in many cases - more affordable

The following breakdowns show actual price comparisons of school buy-ins comparing the 2023/24 SLA cost to the new tariff:



TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3
60 non-fiction books 17 fiction books	138 non-fiction books 28 fiction books	60 non-fiction books
<b>2023/24: £444</b>	<b>2023/24: £444</b>	<b>2023/24: £444</b>
<b>New tariff: £195.90</b>	<b>New tariff: £408.60</b>	<b>New tariff: £150</b>

**School 1**  
**Cost saving:**  
**£579.50**

TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3
39 non-fiction books 1 group read	60 non-fiction books 30 fiction books 1 group read	128 non-fiction books 30 fiction
<b>2023/24: £389</b>	<b>2023/24: £389</b>	<b>2023/24: £389</b>
<b>New tariff: £204.30</b>	<b>New tariff: £315</b>	<b>New tariff: £350 (TR Package)</b>

**School 2**  
**Cost saving:**  
**£297.70**  
**PLUS free**  
**artefact box**

TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3
58 non-fiction books	90 non-fiction books	31 non-fiction books
<b>2023/24: £419.33</b>	<b>2023/24: £419.33</b>	<b>2023/24: £419.33</b>
<b>New tariff: £150</b>	<b>New tariff: £225</b>	<b>New tariff: £77.70</b>

**School 3**  
**Cost saving:**  
**£805.30**

# SMS

Shropshire Music Service  
TEACHING MUSIC - CHANGING LIVES

## Ensembles

Groups include folk and guitar ensembles, in addition to Orchestras, Choirs and Stompers for all age groups.

Rehearsals take place weekly in term time, and are free of charge for all participants.

**Get in touch today for further information and to register!**

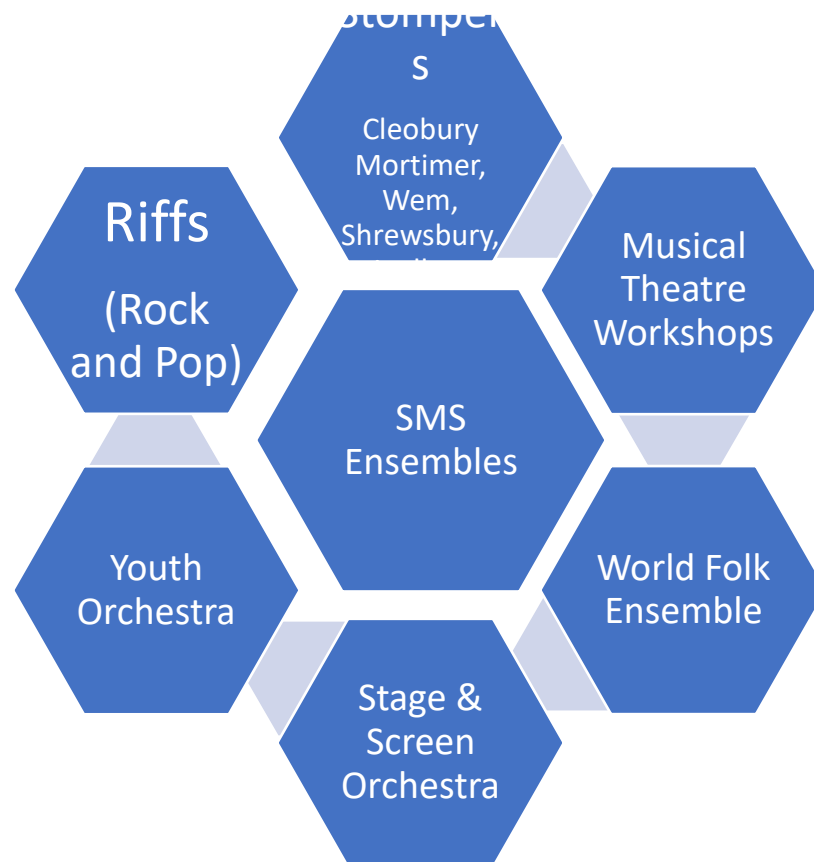


☎ 01743 874145

✉ [admin@shropshiremusicservice.org.uk](mailto:admin@shropshiremusicservice.org.uk)

🌐 [www.shropshiremusicservice.org.uk/ensembles](http://www.shropshiremusicservice.org.uk/ensembles)

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All our ensemble activities are FREE OF CHARGE. We're now based at  
The Lantern, Meadow Farm Drive, Shrewsbury

# **Final Dedicated School Grant 2024-25 (Stephen Waters/Collins Elechi)**

## **Final Dedicated School Grant 2024-25**

- The final 2024-25 DSG allocation was published in July
- This included an increase to the Early Years Block DSG of £0.073m.
- This has reduced the cumulative DSG deficit carry forward figure from £17.638m to £17.566m



# **Updated Dedicated Schools Grant 2025-26 (Stephen Waters/Collins Elechi)**

## Updated Dedicated Schools Grant 2025-26

	<b>Provisional DSG</b>  (as at Mar 25) £m	<b>Recoupment / Deductions for HN places</b>  (as at Mar 25) £m	<b>Provisional DSG</b>  (as at Mar 25) £m	<b>Recoupment / Early Years Adjustment / HN Import/Export Adjustment</b>  (as at July 25) £m	<b>Latest DSG</b>  (as at July 25) £m
Schools Block	224.161	169.840	54.321	-3.810	50.511
Early Years Block (Provisional)	42.638	0	42.638	0.399	43.037
High Needs Block	46.113	8.029	38.084	-0.313	37.771
Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)	2.568	0	2.568		2.568
<b>Total DSG</b>	<b>315.480</b>	<b>177.868</b>	<b>137.611</b>	<b>-3.724</b>	<b>133.888</b>

## Updated Dedicated Schools Grant 2025-26

- A further Recoupment of £3.810m in Schools Block Funding
- No Change in CSSB from March 2025 update
- An increase of £0.399m in Early Years Funding from Jan count
- Overall HNB allocation reduced by £0.313m due to £0.243m import/export adjustments & £0.070m reduction in Special Free School funding.
- Further import/export adjustment to be confirmed in November
- National Insurance Contributions (NICs) grant not part of DSG
- 2025 pay award not part of DSG but due in Oct 2025

## **Paper B**

# **Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26 (Stephen Waters/Collins Elechi)**



# Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26

- National funding formula for DSG introduced in April 2018.
- Local authorities still set local funding formulas.
- Shropshire Council adopted national formula locally from 2018–19.
- ESFA published 2025–26 funding guidance in December 2024.
- 2026–27 guidance pending; minimal changes expected.
- **Schools Block Funding (2025–26)**
- **Shropshire funding for Primary & Secondary Unit Funding, PUF & SUF (2025–26):**
  - Primary: £5,661 (2024–25: £5,224; 2023–24: £4,960)
  - Secondary: £6,829 (2024–25: £6,314; 2023–24: £5,971)
- Based on October 2024 census pupil numbers

# Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26

- **2025–26 Formula Changes**
  - Split site funding must follow national formula.
  - Growth and falling rolls now formula-driven.
  - Teachers Pay Additional Grant (TPAG), Teachers Pension Employers Contribution Grant (TPECG) and Core Schools Budget Grant(CSBG) all consolidated into baseline.
- **Confirmed NFF Funding actors (2025–26):**  
73.6% Basic Entitlement, 10.7% Deprivation, 5.9% Low Prior Attainment (LPA), 1.1% English as an Additional Language (EAL), and 0.18% Mobility.
- **Minimum Per Pupil Funding Levels**
  - Primary: £4,955 (2024–25: £4,610) an increase of 7.5%
  - Secondary: £6,465 (2024–25: £5,995) an increase of 7.9%
  - Includes TPAG, TPECG, and CSBG grants

# Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26

- **Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)**
  - Local authorities set MFG between -0.5% and 0.0%.
  - NFF funding floor is 0.0% for 2025–26.
- **Schools Block Transfers**
  - Up to 0.5% transfer allowed with Schools Forum approval.
  - Disapplication needed for transfers above 0.5%.
  - **Shropshire has transferred balance to High Needs Block in previous years.**
- **Notional SEN budget** is part of delegated school funding and must cover up to £6,000 per pupil using basic entitlement, low prior attainment (LPA), and deprivation factors; high needs top-up funding applies beyond this threshold, and local authorities must review the calculation annually to ensure compliance

# Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26

- **High Needs NFF – 2025–26**
- £850 million national funding increase (7% uplift).
- Funding floor: minimum 7% increase per head vs. 2024–25.
- Gains cap set at 10%.
- NFF structure unchanged:
  - Basic entitlement
  - Proxy factors: historic spend, population, FSM, IDACI, bad health, disability, LPA
  - Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) applies to all except historic spend.
- Hospital education funding increased by 7%.
- New/growing special free schools now funded within NFF.
- Import/export adjustments continue for cross-border placements.

# Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26

- **Special Schools MFG & Future Outlook**
- **Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG):**
  - Must be  $\geq 0\%$ ; recommended range: 0% to 0.5%.
- **2026–27 Outlook:**
  - Same NFF structure expected.
  - Updates based on census and ILR data.
  - Operational guide to follow NFF allocations.
  - Continued focus on SEND reform, commissioning efficiencies, and budget sustainability

# Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26

- **Central School Services Block (CSSB) – Overview**
- CSSB funds local authority central functions for pupils in maintained schools and academies.
- Two elements:
  - **Ongoing responsibilities** (e.g. education welfare, asset management, copyright licences)
  - **Historic commitments** (pre-2013–14), being phased out.
- **Protection & Funding Adjustments**
- Year-on-year funding reduction capped at **2.5% per pupil**.
- Funding gains capped at **5.51%**.
- **Historic commitments** funding reduced by **20%** from 2024–25.
- Funding protected for **prudential borrowing** and **termination employment costs**.

# Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26

- **2026–27 Outlook**
- Continued **phasing out of historic commitments**.
- **Rolled-in grants** to remain in CSSB baseline.
- Adjustments expected based on **pupil count** and **cost pressures** (e.g. copyright licences, centrally employed staff).

## **Paper C**

# **Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26 (Stephen Waters/Collins Elechi)**



## Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26

- The 2025-26 forecast outturn position for the DSG is a £19.323m in-year deficit.
- This deficit needs to be added to the £17.566m DSG deficit carried forward from 2024-25 resulting in a cumulative DSG deficit of £36.888m

	£ m'
DSG Deficit carried forward from 2024-25	17.566
Forecast Outturn 2025-26	19.323
<b>DSG deficit to be carried forward into 2026-27</b>	<b>36.888</b>

## Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26

- 2025-26 Outturn by Block:

	2025-26 DSG Allocation £ m'	2025-26 Expenditure £ m'	2025-26 Variance £ m'
Early Years Block	43.037	43.038	0.000
Centrally controlled or retained High Needs Block	35.455	54.859	19.404
Central Schools Services Block	2.568	2.592	0.024
De-Delegated Items from Schools Block	0.566	0.460	-0.106
School Growth Fund from Schools Block	0.381	0.381	0.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>82.007</b>	<b>101.330</b>	<b>19.323</b>

## Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26

- **High Needs Block DSG**
- The outturn position for the High Needs Block is an in-year deficit of £15.464m against a centrally controlled High Needs Budget of £31.776m. This budget excludes the place funding element of the High Needs Block totalling £10.574m.
- Shropshire's 2025-26 High Needs Block DSG allocation of £45.800m has increased by £3.450m compared to the £42.350m allocation in 2024-25. An 8.1% increase.
- Schools Forum agreed up to a 0.5% transfer from the schools block to the High Needs Block DSG after fully funding the schools in line with the National Funding Formula. £0.476m was the value transferred, so High Needs Budget is £46.275m overall.
- According to an F40 report in 2024/25, Shropshire Council was the 15th worst funded Local Authority for High Needs Block DSG on a per pupil basis out of 151 Local Authorities

## Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26

### High Needs Block – Top-Up Funding to Mainstream Schools

- Forecast overspend of £5.318m relates to the top-up funding paid to mainstream schools (including SEND Hubs).
- Large increase in top-up funding to mainstream schools reflecting increasing requests for EHC Needs Assessment and issuing of EHC plans.

	2022-23 Outturn (£)	2023-24 Outturn (£)	2024-25 Outturn (£)	2025-26 Forecast Outturn (£)
Primary Mainstream	3,096,667	3,826,004	6,762,292	9,334,607
Secondary Mainstream	1,936,949	2,122,070	3,051,664	3,672,895
<b>Mainstream Top-Up Funding</b>	<b>5,033,616</b>	<b>5,948,074</b>	<b>9,813,956</b>	<b>13,007,502</b>
Primary Mainstream % Increase		24%	77%	38%
Secondary Mainstream % Increase		10%	44%	20%
<b>Mainstream % Increase</b>		<b>18%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>33%</b>

## Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26

### High Needs Block – Top-Up Funding to Special Schools

- Forecast overspend of £4.021m relates to the top-up funding paid to Special schools (including PRU).
- This review of, and subsequent increase in, banding levels in 2024 across the Council's special schools aligns with the strategy to build capacity in these settings where appropriate and significantly reduce the numbers of pupils placed in independent special school settings

	<b>2022-23 Outturn (£)</b>	<b>2023-24 Outturn (£)</b>	<b>2024-25 Outturn (£)</b>	<b>2025-26 Forecast Outturn (£)</b>
Special Schools (excluding PRU)	5,588,486	6,347,464	9,799,307	10,388,121
<b>Special % Increase</b>		<b>14%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>6%</b>

## Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26

### High Needs Block – Non-Maintained and Independent Providers

- Expenditure for 2025-26 is forecast to be 21% higher than 2024-25 levels at £22.134m, resulting in a forecast overspend of £7.546m.
- Continued demand shown by increase in numbers
- A 21% increase in expenditure indicates that increasing funding to Council's special schools and SEND hubs has helped to decrease the acceleration of expenditure in this area

	2022-23 Outturn (£)	2023-24 Outturn (£)	2024-25 Outturn (£)	Forecast Outturn (£)
Independent Providers	8.466	13.892	18.259	22.134
% increase		64%	31%	21%

## Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025-26

### Overall Position

- The Council's DSG financial position of a cumulative deficit of £36.888m as at the end of the 2025-26 financial year reflects a continuing pressure on the total High Needs budget as expenditure continues to increase sharply year on year. This increase has been particularly pronounced over the last 3 financial years; 2023-24, 2024-25 and now 2025-26.
- As it stands, there is a DSG Deficit statutory override in place. The government announced in June that it has extended the statutory override to keep councils' spending deficits for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) off their books for another two years until March 2028.
- Council Officers met with representatives of the Department for Education (DfE) on 7<sup>th</sup> July to focus on addressing the DSG deficit. This meeting focused on progress with the DSG management plan



**HNB Monitoring Group (representatives  
required)  
(John Rowe)**



# Creation of HNB Monitoring group

- Establish a representative interest group from schools' forum
- To analyse more closely the HNB management plan and jointly develop the strategy to support recovery work and communication
  - "To ensure impartiality, it is crucial that the schools forum includes representation from the various types of education providers in the area. This will simultaneously increase the awareness of ongoing issues locally. The research project found that more regular reporting to the schools forum and the use of High Needs Working Groups had enabled greater transparency and stakeholders were more aware of emerging trends." (Source: [Local authority guidance on high needs sustainability](#))
- Link to SEND and AP Partnership Board

## **Communications**

### **(Bill Dowell)**

f40 opinion piece

<https://www.politicshome.com/members/article/now-time-grasp-nettle-around-send-reform-fairer-education-funding>

Schools Week

[SEND: Urgently set out plan for 'cliff-edge', MPs tell DfE](#)

Finance Briefings for schools and forum members (Dates TBC and circulated)  
Covering NFF, DSG management, and de-delegation options