

Appendix 6 – Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25

- 1.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ringfenced grant. The majority of the DSG is used to fund individual school budgets in schools and academies via the schools block. It also funds, through the early years block, nursery free entitlement places for the expanded early years offer that will include Under 2's, disadvantaged 2-year-olds, working parent 2-year-olds and the 3-and-4-year-olds. Provision for pupils with high needs, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), education health and care plans (EHCP) in special schools and specialist provision in and out of area is funded through the High Needs Block. Finally, there is the central school services block which supports the local authority role in education.
- 1.2 The 2024/25 DSG was published on the 19 December and reflects the outcome of the October 2023 school census. The table below shows the information received.

Dedicated Schools Grant	2023/24	2024/25	Increase
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	156.834	167.156	10.322
Central School Services Block	1.633	1.610	(0.023)
High Needs Block	37.356	39.083	1.727
Early Years Block	13.599	22.127	8.529
Total	209.421	229.977	20.555

Schools

- 1.3 In 2024/25, each local authority will continue to set a local schools funding formula, in consultation with local schools. Thurrock's funding formula will implement the following principles consistent with the decision made by Cabinet in December 2023:
- National Funding Formula including Area Cost Adjustment values to be applied.
 - The Basic Entitlement value to be applied will be equal to the minimum value increase allowed to ensure the formula can be contained within the resource available.
 - Growth fund to be retained to support sufficiency of school places.

The Schools Forum has agreed to the transfer of £0.400m from the Schools Block to support pressures in the High Needs Block.

High Needs

- 1.4 In 2024/25 the High Needs Block funding has an allocation of £39.083m, an increase of £1.727m. Whilst the increase is welcome, Thurrock continues to experience high level of demand for Specialist places and Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP).

- 1.5 In 2024/25, the expansion of the local offer will increase commissioned numbers for the academic year to 912, an increase of 94. This reflects planned expansion of Primary Autism, Secondary SEMH and Specialist provision. In addition, Top-up values across all providers have been increased by 3% to reflect increased costs and inflationary pressures aligned to the increase in funding received.
- 1.6 Thurrock as part of the Delivering Better Value SEND programme submitted a grant application to Department for Education on 14 December 2023 for additional funding of £1 million for 2024/25 to develop initiatives to support the reduction of EHCP and the upskilling of school-based staff.

Early Years

- 1.7 As part of the largest investment in childcare in England's history, further increases to government funding rates for childcare have also been confirmed. In 2024/25 alone, over £400 million is to be invested to deliver a significant uplift to local authority hourly rates, to ensure enough places are available wherever they're needed around the country and support from April the expansion of the offer to eligible working parents of 2-year-olds who will be able to access 15 hours of government-funded childcare a week.
- 1.8 National average hourly rates paid by the government will be £11.22 for under 2s, £8.28 for 2-year-olds, and £5.88 for 3 and 4-year-olds from April. These rates reflect the increase in the National Living Wage from April 2024, which makes up a significant proportion of providers' costs.
- 1.9 Thurrock's increased allocation is £8.5m. Officers continue to work through the detail to determine the local funding formula that can be applied within Thurrock to support settings and the expansion of the early years offer.

Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 – to be received by Thurrock.

- 1.10 On calculation of the indicative School budget for 2024/25 the ESFA fund directly Academies, shown as Academy Recoupment. The Indicative Dedicated Schools Grant to be received by Thurrock Council in 2024/25 is shown in the table below:

Dedicated Schools Grant	2024/25	Recoupment	Final DSG
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Schools Block	167,156	(161,079)	6,077
Central Services Block	1,610		1,610
High Needs Block	39,083	(7,256)	31,827
Early Years Block	22,127		22,127
Total	229,977	(168,335)	61,641