

| | |
|---|---|
| Date: 12 January 2023 | Item 7 Type of report: Decision |
| Report title: | Dedicated Schools Grant - 2023-24 de-delegations and centrally retained items |
| Author name and contact details: | Dave Richards dave.richards@southwark.gov.uk |
| Officer to present the report: | Dave Richards |

Executive Summary

This report starts to consider the 2023/24 budget for the schools block centrally retained and de-delegated budgets. The schools funding formula is considered in a separate paper on this agenda to avoid this report becoming overly complex.

Schools Forum Actions

The Schools Forum is asked to agree:

- i) The top-slices to the schools block in **Table 1** in **section 3.4**
 - a) **Growth Fund**
£50k to be set aside (a reduction of £50k from 2022-23)
 - b) **Falling Rolls Fund**
£300k to be set aside (the same as 2022-23)
- ii) The de-delegated services individually detailed in Table 3 in section 4.5 by phase (mainstream representatives only). The proposed total budget is £3.167m which compares with £3.339m for the current year (2022-23)
 - a) Contingency
 - b) School Improvement
 - c) Behaviour support services – Contribution to early help
 - d) Behaviour support services – Summerhouse
 - e) Free school meals eligibility (primary schools only)
 - f) Staff costs supply cover (maternity scheme)
 - g) Staff costs supply cover (trade union)
- iii) The funding for the Central Education functions of Southwark (to be agreed individually by maintained schools only), as outlined in **section 5**. The proposed budget is **£16.43 per pupil** which is no change from 2022/23.
- iv) The centrally retained budgets of **£1.336m** (to be agreed individually by all schools: maintained/academy and free schools), as outlined in **section 7.1**.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant is made up of four blocks

- The schools block;
- The central school services block (CSSB);
- The high needs block
- The early years block

1.2 Each of these blocks have different regulations but they all allow for some funding to be held centrally by the Local Authority rather than schools.

1.3 The guidance surrounding these central retentions and de-delegations are governed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) publication *Schools operational guide: 2023 to 2024*.

[Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\) publication Schools operational guide: 2023 to 2024.](#)

1.4 This paper is only concerned with the Schools block and the central school services block (CSSB) as the other blocks are dealt with in other papers on the agenda

2. Schools Block

2.1 Under the regulations the schools block of the DSG can only be held centrally for certain services as specified by the DfE and where Schools Forum agree to:

- Centrally top-slice retaining funding before the schools formula allocated funding
This covers the
 - Growth Fund
 - Falling Rolls Fund
- de-delegate funding, by phase once the formula has been allocated;
- Education functions for maintained schools

2.2 The LA is required to submit to the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) the provisional 2023-24 authority pro-forma by 20 January 2023. The pro-forma outlines the details of the local funding formula, and importantly both the central top-slice, the agreed de-delegated budgets and the Education support functions.

2.3 The main funding for which the Schools Forum are asked for decisions are from the following:

2.3.1 Schools Block – Centrally top-slice (retaining funding before the schools formula allocated funding)

Local authorities may set aside schools block funding to create a fund for growth and falling rolls. Once the top-slice has been made the remaining funding is distributed to schools. The top-sliced fund is open to both maintained and academy schools.

2.3.2 De-delegated services

De-delegated services are for maintained schools only; funding for de-delegated services must be allocated through the formula but can be passed back, or 'de-delegated', for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools with schools forum approval. De-delegation does not apply to special schools, nursery schools, or PRUs. Where de-delegation has been agreed for maintained primary and secondary schools, the presumption is that we will offer the service on a buy-back basis to all schools and academies in Southwark which are not covered by the de-delegation.

There is a specific list of services which can be de-delegated set by the Department for Education.

2.3.3 Education functions for maintained schools

Local authorities are able to fund services previously funded from the Education Services grant (for maintained schools only) from maintained schools' budget shares with the agreement of maintained school members of the Schools Forum. The services involved are defined by legislation. In financial terms, the process operates in a similar way to de-delegated services.

3. Schools Block – Central top-slice (retaining funding before the schools formula allocates funding)

3.1 Local authorities may set aside schools block funding to create a fund for growth and falling rolls. Once the top-slice has been made the remaining funding is distributed to schools. The top-sliced fund is open to both maintained and academy schools.

- Funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy (Growth fund);
- A falling rolls fund

3.2 Growth Fund

These funds are managed by the schools in financial difficulty panel, which comprises three head teachers. The growth fund has been reduced to £100k over the past few years, it is used to contribute to the cost of bulge classes where these have been set up. Bulge classes do not permanently expand all the year groups, rather they are a one-off class. Bulge classes are only funded when a need has been identified and agreed with the LA. It is proposed to keep a small amount aside as an emergency provision in the event of a school closure so might be needed for extra capacity in another school, but to reduce it to one class worth which is £50k.

3.3 Falling rolls funds

This fund is also managed by the schools in financial difficulty panel. The criteria are set by national regulations with some limited scope to adjust them locally. The title of the fund is something of a misnomer as the funds only supports those schools whose rolls are falling now but expected to rise over the coming two to three years. Its purpose is to protect against a school having to make staff redundant only to have to re-employ staff a year or so later.

With schools rolls falling across Southwark it may be assumed that there is no need for a fund as there will be no increase in rolls. However the fund operates on an individual school basis and with the Keeping Education Strong Strategy (the strategy for future proofing primary schools and protecting the quality of education in Southwark), there are undoubtedly some schools who will see rolls rise and consequently qualify for funding. We have already had one bid on the fund this year.

The current level of the fund is £300k and is proposed to keep it at this level, with the proviso that if it is not spent at the year-end it is set aside for the following two years while the Keeping Education Strong strategy is being put in place.

3.4 The proposals are summarised in the following table

Table 1: Schools block – central top-slice

| Budget | Approved 2022-23 budget £000 | Proposed 2023-24 budget £000 | Comments |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Growth fund | 100 | 50 | The funding has been reduced and now provides for one bulge classes in case of emergencies. |
| Schools Falling Rolls | 300 | 300 | The purpose of the fund is to provide support to those schools whose rolls are falling only for them to rise in the following years. With a number of potential re-organisations the funding has been kept at the same level of £300k, which means 6 schools can potentially be funded. |
| | 400 | 350 | |

4.0 Schools block de-delegated services

- 4.1 This funding is initially allocated to all schools, as part of the Southwark School Funding Formula. For maintained primary and secondary schools, funding in some instances can be de-delegated or “returned” to the Local Authority to be held and managed centrally. De-delegation is not applicable to academies, special schools, nurseries or PRU’s. For these schools to benefit from these services there would need to be “buy back” into service.
- 4.2 The Schools Forum are required to formally agree the de-delegated budgets annually, with members for primary maintained schools and secondary maintained schools required to decide separately for each phase. The decision applies to all maintained schools within that phase.
- 4.3 Funding for de-delegated services is automatically allocated to academies as part of the schools funding formula and they are able to make their own arrangements for these services. Academies may choose to purchase services from the LA, where they are offered.
- 4.4 Last year (2022/23) the Schools Forum agreed to de-delegate funding for the following services:

Table 2 – 2022-23 de-delegated services

| Budget | Report | Basis | Actual 2022/23 Budget £000 | Actual 2022/23 Primary School Rate £ | Actual 2022/23 Secondary School Rate £ |
|---|---------------|---------------|---|---|---|
| Contingency * | 4.7 | AWPU | 667 | 38 | 38 |
| School Improvement | 4.8 | Lump Sum | 274 | 4,800 | 0 |
| School Improvement | 4.8 | AWPU | 246 | 14 | 14 |
| Behaviour support services – contribution to early help | 4.9 | FSM Ever 6 | 384 | 64.55 | N/A |
| Behaviour support services – Summerhouse | 4.10 | FSM Ever 6 | 1,114 | 187.00 | N/A |
| Free school meals eligibility (primary schools only) | 4.11 | FSM Ever 6 | 58 | 9.81 | N/A |
| Staff costs supply cover (maternity scheme) | 4.12 | AWPU | 526 | 30.00 | 30.00 |
| Staff costs supply cover (trade union) | 4.13 | AWPU | 70 | 4.00 | 4.00 |
| Total de-delegated budget | | | 3,339 | | |

*Schools in Financial Difficulty £631k, Audit £36k.

- 4.5 The proposed rates for 2023/24 are shown in the table 3 below. The overall principle in drawing up this proposal has been to reduce the total amount to be de-delegated in line with the reduction in pupil numbers. This means the total sum de-delegated would be £3,167m which is slightly lower than in 2022-23 which was £3,339m

The rationale for the proposals are shown below:

Table 3 – Proposals for de-delegation of services

| Budget | Report | Basis | Proposed 2023/24 Budget £000 | Proposed 2023/24 Primary School Rate £ | Proposed 2023/24 Secondary School Rate £ |
|---|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Contingency (now excluding the intervention Fund) | 4.7 | AWPU | 618 | 38.85 | 38.85 |
| School Improvement | 4.8 | Lump Sum | 411 | 7,344 | 0 |
| School Improvement | 4.8 | AWPU | 223 | 14 | 14 |
| Behaviour support services – contribution to early help | 4.9 | FSM Ever 6 | 277 | 49.75 | 0.00 |
| Behaviour support services – Summerhouse | 4.10 | FSM Ever 6 | 1,043 | 187.00 | N/A |
| Free school meals eligibility (primary schools only) | 4.11 | FSM Ever 6 | 55 | 9.81 | N/A |
| Staff costs supply cover (maternity scheme) | 4.12 | AWPU | 477 | 30.00 | 30.00 |
| Staff costs supply cover (trade union) | 4.13 | AWPU | 63 | 4.00 | 4.00 |
| Total de-delegated budget | | | 3,167 | | |

Note - the above budget includes the drop in pupil numbers and schools that have already converted to academies.

4.6 De-delegation – services analysis

4.7 Contingencies

This includes funding for Schools in Financial Difficulty and school audits. The Schools in Financial Difficulty funding is allocated by a panel of three head teachers supported by Local Authority officers. The panel sits at regular intervals and schools put forward applications for funding when considering re-organisations within their school to help cover redundancy costs.

The fund is likely to come under increasing pressure as more schools find it difficult to balance their budgets. If a school is in financial difficulty and are already making redundancies, it is not always easy or possible for the school concerned to meet the full cost of redundancy unless they reduce their costs even further. It is proposed to keep the fund at the same level and not increase it to avoid a further burden on school budgets.

The fund also makes a contribution to the Internal Audit service which is undertaken by an external provider. This is different to the audit of the external account that is undertaken on an annual basis. This budget funds the school internal audit programme, to meet the duty to ensure that all schools in Southwark are audited once every three years. This provides assurances to schools, governing bodies and the Local Authority on the financial controls in place in schools. The cost of the audit has increased this year and although this has created a budget pressure for the authority, this has not been passed onto to schools. The increase will however need to be passed on next year, so the de-delegated amount has been increased by 0.85p.

Special schools and Nursery schools can buy into this fund at rates per pupil of £190 and £72 and these schools will be asked to confirm their decision at the January 2023 meeting.

4.8 **Additional school improvement services**

As members will recall the Department of Education (DFE) made a decision in December 2021 to end the schools monitoring and brokerage grant which is used to support the work of the Learning and Achievement team. The DFE proposed that in future these functions should be funded from maintained school budgets and consequently reduced the grant by 50% in 2022 to 2023 ahead of full removal in 2023/24. For the current year we are expecting to receive £140k, we will not receive anything for 2023/4. Accepting that some schools will convert to academy and the Learning and Achievement will adjust their budget accordingly this still leaves a shortfall which is proposed to be added to the de-delegation amount increasing it by £2,544 to a total of £7,344.

Members will be aware of the huge strain schools budgets are under and any increase in costs is unwelcome. With this in mind last year we sought views of the Schools Forum on reducing other de-delegated amounts, specifically the Family Early Help de-delegation. This is discussed more in the next section

4.9 **Behaviour support services - Contribution to early help service**

The September 2022 Ofsted inspection confirms the quality of our services:

“Early help provision in Southwark is strong. Leaders maintain a focus on delivering effective early help services. Children and their families benefit from impactful preventative work. Children’s needs are identified through good quality assessments, leading to effective plans which are linked to presenting issues and deliver the help they need promptly. This improves their lives.

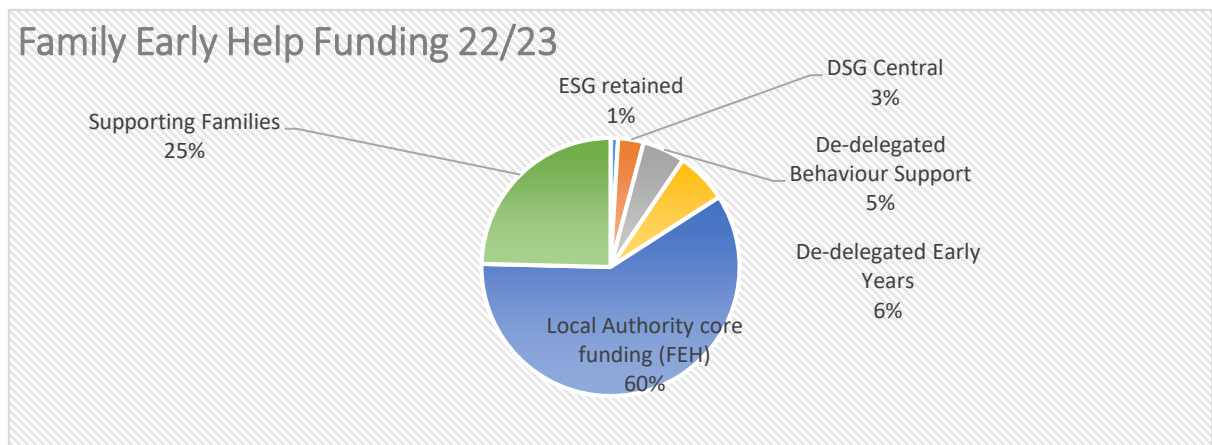
Since the last inspection, in 2017, leaders have invested in, and strengthened, several areas of practice that benefit children and their families. For example, stronger preventative early help services help families meet their children’s needs, in many cases preventing the need for statutory intervention.”

[Inspection of Southwark local authority \)](#)

Parental feedback from FEH casework has been obtained in 79% of cases closed as of 10/11/2022 (n=947). The key summary indicator is **“FEH left me feeling more confident in managing future situations in the family should they occur.”** 76% of parents who answered this question responded that they strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.

The de-delegated behaviour support contribution is one of multiple income sources for our Family Early Help (FEH) Service located within statutory Children’s Services and managed alongside the Youth Justice Service. A continued reduction in funding from DSG without any contribution from Academy/VA schools will impact on access to early help and fewer families being supported.

Challenges to LA funding are also expected to impact on early help given the non-statutory nature of the provision and a review of service delivery is envisaged in 2023.



FEH includes four teams in the Under 11 service wrapped around Primary Schools and including the support provided by Children & Family Centres in localities. The 11+ service also has 4 teams working with Secondary Schools with the addition of an Education Inclusion Team who lead on statutory education welfare duties. A parenting team also delivers on average 10 parenting groups per term reaching approximately 450 parents per year. Each school has a named Single Point of Contact.

The LA commissions 4 Children and Family Centre Hubs across the borough focusing on services for children under 5 and including family support workers who work in a whole family way and are part of the Under 11s early help referral panel.

Additional resources co-located within Family Early Help include the LA funded Early Help CAMHS team, a specialist school nurse; plus links to the YJS provision (e.g. Staying Safe programme) and a number of third sector agencies (e.g. Chance UK, St Giles, Young Carers, De Paul Trust). FEH also funded a 10 day arts based transition to secondary school programme for 80 vulnerable children in summer 2022.

Since Covid 19 all schools have been provided with increased access to FEH services where multiple risk factors require a whole family approach. Each school is also offered a Team Around the School (TAS) meeting to coordinate additional resources and support work with vulnerable children and families. This TAS approach recognises the partnership work needed to support children and families, and education providers as part of our Southwark 100% Inclusion Charter commitment.

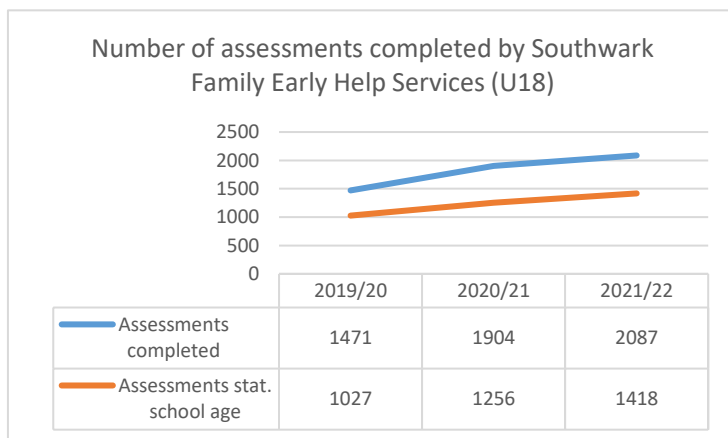
Any child at risk of permanent exclusion can be referred to the Education Inclusion Team who also offer weekly consultations service on Wednesday afternoons to support attendance and inclusion.

The average monthly contacts from external agencies requesting early help for children has increased from 235 per month in 2019/20 to almost 400 per month in 21/22 (a 65% increase) This is alongside approximately 100 children a month transferred from statutory services to our level 2 provision.

Not all contacts progress to a whole family assessment and discussion with referrers' aims to signpost families to appropriate resources within families and support universal services in managing risk. The FEH Duty team works alongside MASH colleagues to manage the interface with child protection activity and the weekly FEH referral panels ensure consideration of a wide range of resources from the VCS and across the council.

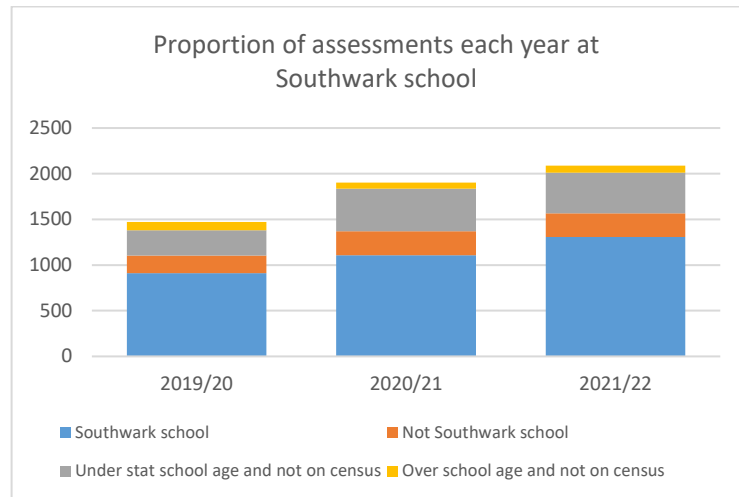
Assessments are undertaken with families using the FAMILY model (also known as STAIRS) and goals for change identified with the family and actions agreed within a plan. Typically, children remain open to Southwark's Early Help services for under 9 months, with just 6% remaining open longer.

The data below (from the last 3 school years) focuses on assessment information as this measures direct work undertaken with families (rather than the contact and referral process) and includes Children & Family Centre information.



The table below outlines the number and proportion of FEH assessments completed on children of statutory school age, under 5s and 16+ in each academic year. Each year, approximately 20% of FEH assessments are completed for children who are not of statutory school age (either U5 or post 16). The whole family work undertaken recognises the importance of understanding all members of a family and is crucial to a systemic approach and expected within the Supporting Families and Early Help System delivery model.

| No. FEH assessments | 2019/20 | | 2020/21 | | 2021/22 | |
|----------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| | No | % | No | % | No | % |
| Stat. School age | 1027 | 69.8% | 1094 | 66% | 1418 | 67.9% |
| Non. Stat school age | 342 | 23.2% | 565 | 29.7% | 570 | 27.3% |
| U5 | | | | | | |
| 16+ | 102 | 6.9% | 81 | 4.3% | 99 | 4.7% |



The majority of children assessed by Southwark Early Help services, who are of statutory school age (or under / over statutory school age but enrolled in a Southwark school) attend Southwark schools (between 80 and 84% in any one year)

If only children of statutory school age are considered, the range does not significantly change (from 79% in 2020/21 to 82% in 2021/22).

The table below shows the phase of the schools attended by children who have undergone an Early Help assessment in each academic year. It is evident that the numbers from our all through school, nursery, primary and secondary schools have increased year on year.

| Phase | 2019/20 | | 2020/21 | | 2021/22 | |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | No. schools | No. assessments | No. schools | No. assessments | No. schools | No. assessments |
| All through | 1 | 31 | 1 | 42 | 1 | 51 |
| Nursery | 5 | 30 | 5 | 38 | 5 | 52 |
| Primary | 70 | 535 | 72 | 649 | 72 | 790 |
| Secondary | 18 | 258 | 19 | 338 | 19 | 376 |
| Special | 7 | 35 | 7 | 35 | 8 | 34 |
| PRU | 1 | 21 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 3 |

In 2021/22, 58% (n=728) of all children with an Early Help assessment who attend Southwark schools (1,306), were from schools who de-delegate to FEH. In 2019/20 this proportion was 60%, and in 2020/21 54%.

Following Schools Forum discussion in the 2021/22 school year a letter was sent to all academies and voluntary aided school in October 2022 requesting a contribution to the Family Early Help service based on the LA maintained schools de-delegation calculation.

4 schools acknowledged the request. At their request a meeting has been held with finance colleagues from Harris Academy Trust and the LA has agreed to provide more detailed information.

This analysis of assessment work can now be provided to each academy/VA school to discuss options, highlighting that 42% of the children being worked with are attending schools who do not contribute to the council's FEH services.

This table shows the work that Academy schools currently receive:

| Academy | 2019/20 No. schools | No. assessments | 2020/21 No. schools | No. assessments | 2021/22 No. schools | No. assessments |
|---------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 | 64 | 3 | 101 | 3 | 105 |
| 4 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 25 | 1 | 26 |
| 5 | 5 | 35 | 6 | 47 | 6 | 50 |
| 6 | 3 | 41 | 3 | 57 | 3 | 74 |
| 7 | 2 | 13 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 16 |
| 8 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 13 | 1 | 23 |
| 9 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 13 |
| 10 | 7 | 94 | 7 | 118 | 7 | 121 |
| 11 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 8 |
| 12 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 7 |
| 13 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 10 |
| 14 | 1 | 17 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 23 |
| 15 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 2 | 8 |
| 16 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 16 |
| 17 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 9 |
| 18 | 0 | | 1 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| 19 | 1 | 13 | 1 | 25 | 1 | 23 |

At this time last year it was identified that Family Early Help services were being provided to academies and secondary schools similar to those provided to Primary Schools, the only difference being that Primary schools were paying for the service through the de-delegation mechanism. To ensure fairness the Family Early help team were asked to explore charging Academies and secondary schools for the service. These schools have all been written to about making the service chargeable. Potentially if all academies and secondary schools take up the option of buying the service it would raise just over £500k. As negotiations are still on-going it is difficult to say how many will buy-back into the service. However it does mean the cost of the service can be reduced. It is proposed to reduce the primary de-delegation by £14.80 to £49.75. This will also offset the cost increase for Learning and Achievement.

4.10 Behaviour support services - Summerhouse

Summerhouse Behaviour Support Service and Provision is the Local Authority Service which offers SEMH intervention for primary pupils at risk of permanent exclusion from Southwark mainstream schools. Interventions are tailored specifically to the individual pupil by specialist staff who have proven expertise and skills in this discrete area. It is directly responsible for the reduced number of fixed term exclusions and eliminating the need for primary permanent exclusions within the borough.

On average over the last three academic years:

- 86% of pupils returned to their mainstream primary schools and/or on to a mainstream secondary school.

- 78% of Southwark primary schools made referrals to Summerhouse resulting in at least one placement in the provision.
- Pupils from 49 maintained schools and 7 academies attended Summerhouse
- Nearly all placements were for at least two terms.
- Only two pupils returned to Summerhouse sometime after their placement had ended; then on to a specialist school setting.
- No pupils were permanently excluded from their mainstream schools during or after their placement at Summerhouse.

Growing pressures in recent years are affecting schools' capacity and ability to identify and support an increasing number of pupils' complex needs (particularly SEMH and developmental difficulties). Summerhouse has a track record of providing early interventions for pupils, school staff and parents to support stakeholders with the complex needs of its pupils. Referrals to Summerhouse have steadily increased for its specialist knowledge, skills and support. Summerhouse continues to respond to the changing landscape of mainstream school challenges ensuring permanent exclusions remain a very rare occurrence and pupils are better prepared emotionally and academically for the next phase of their education.

Summerhouse is one of the services that is currently being reviewed as part the inclusion and exclusion work stream suggested in the High Needs Sub Group report. It is right that all SEND services are reviewed as part of the high needs deficit recovery plan. It would be advisable to allow that review to conclude and determine the shape of the service going forward rather than to hastily make changes at this point in time.

It is with this in mind it is proposed to continue with delegation at its current funding rate, which is a real terms reduction to the service as there is no increase for inflation.

4.11 Free School Meals Eligibility

The Free School Meals (FSM) service provides confirmation of family's eligibility for free school meals using the Central Government (DWP) Benefit Hub for 70 maintained schools through de-delegation and a further eight on a traded service basis. As at October 2020, 13,173 Southwark children were eligible for FSM – 1,600 more than recorded in the January 2020 Census. This has included a significant uptake linked to Covid where families either applied so that they would be able to receive support with meals through the first lockdown or where they became eligible due to a drop in family income.

In addition to FSM eligibility checks, the service includes:

- Confirmation to schools of children included on the FSM protection scheme until 31 March 2023
- Provision of FSM and Census training package to school based staff
- Information and advice to schools regarding checks, returns and changes to legislation/process.
- Responding to parent queries relating to vouchers/support through the Covid period
- Processing of clothing grants/vouchers
- Support with Southwark Stats and assistance linked to Census data matching.

As this service is provided by the LA and linked to the Census, school claims are not subjected to audits by the DfE, neither do they need to manage investigations with the DWP when eligibility queries arise – this is all included in the service.

Benchmarking the provision showed Southwark's charge to be high in past years. In response to this, the rate was reduced to the average level across London.

4.12 Supply Cover (Maternity cover)

This allows a school to claim back some of the cost for replacing staff on maternity & adoption leave. It acts as an insurance scheme. Payments are made for the following categories of staff, where they are classroom based

- Deputy Head (with timetabled classroom responsibilities)
- Classroom Teachers
- Special schools' support assistants
- Learning Support Assistants for specific statemented pupils only
- Nursery nurses

The pay-out rate is currently set at 70%.

Special schools and Nursery schools can buy into this fund at rates per pupil of £106 and £17 and these schools will be asked to confirm their decision at the January 2023 meeting.

4.13 Trade union duties

Having reduced slightly in 2022/23, the proposed de-delegation rate is unchanged for 2023/24 at £280 per day.

4.14 Overall principle

The overall principle adopted for the de-delegated services is that that the costs will not increase for schools next year. The services concerned will need to manage inflationary pressures and the reduction in pupil numbers. With this in mind and noting the loss of the school improvement monitoring and brokerage grant, if the overall total of the de-delegated services is not to increase reductions need to occur in some services. The proposal in the paper is to reduce the Family Early Help de-delegation to offset the cost of the loss of the grant

There are of course alternatives and one would be to reduce the Learning and Achievement team by approximately 1.5 FTE advisors. Other de-delegated services could be reduced such as the schools in financial difficulty panel or the maternity fund, but this in turn would reduce the funding these funds pass back to school

5 Schools Block - Education functions for maintained schools

Where responsibilities are held by local authorities for all schools including academies these are funded from the central school services block, with the agreement of the Schools Forum. However, where the responsibilities held by local authorities are for maintained schools only, these are funded from maintained schools by de-delegation with the agreement of the maintained schools' members of schools forums.

The current year's budget amounts to £288k, which is an amount per pupil of £16.43. The overall level of funding has been reducing since the start of the fall in pupil numbers and schools converting to academies. With the pupil numbers continuing to fall the budget for next year will reduce to £261k

The funding is used in a number of ways and covers some of the costs of the Education Management Team, Family Early Help, Education Welfare Service, national curriculum assessment, Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), finance teams, corporate overheads, Human Resources Team, data analysis and Property Management.

A strategic review of all central Local Authority expenditure was started, but with the considerable work needed on the safety valve application and the issue of the overheads within the High Needs block this work has taken precedence. However, the education functions still need to be reviewed. The Local Authority will likely take a different shape over the coming year as the Keeping Education Strong strategy progresses. It is proposed to look at the education functions as part of this and currently keep the budget at the same level as last year, albeit reduced by the drop in pupil numbers.

6 The Central school services block (CSSB) and Education functions for maintained schools

6.1 Central school services block

The CSSB forms one of the four spending blocks of the Dedicated Schools Grant. It provides funding for local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of maintained schools and academies. Southwark currently spends all but of £100k of this, the balance of which is transferred to the high needs block.

The CSSB was created from two different funding streams: the schools block funding that was held centrally by local authorities and the retained duties element of the Education Services Grant (ESG), which no longer exists. While the Local Authority proposes how much is spent on each of the headings, the Schools Forum decides. In the event of a dispute, the Department of Education adjudicates where Schools Forum does not agree with the local authority. If the Schools Forum disputes the amounts, it would need to consider the areas within the defined legislation where the Local Authority needed to refocus its attention.

As with Learning and Achievement, there is a cross over of funding streams for services around the centrally retained budgets and the Education Functions budget. Expenditure is not matched against one or the other.

The former (CSSB) relates to statutory and regulatory duties for all schools in the borough regardless of whether they are maintained, free or academies. The later, Education Functions, relates to those duties for maintained schools only. Hence the funding for statutory and regulatory duties for all schools is met from the central schools service block, while those services for maintained schools are funded by an adjustment to each schools budget.

6.2 Table 6 Benchmarking wise spend is linked as noted above to the Education Functions Comparison on a per pupil basis).

| 2021-22 Budget LA Table (Net) £ per capita | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|------------|
| | 1.5.1 Education welfare service (B) | 1.5.2 Asset managemen t (B) | 1.5.3 Statutory/ Regulatory duties (B) | 1.6.1 Central support services (B) | 1.6.2 Education welfare service (B) | 1.6.3 Asset managemen t (B) | 1.6.4 Statutory/ Regulatory duties (B) | 1.6.5 Premature retirement cost/ Redundancy costs (new provisions) (B) | 1.6.6 Monitoring national curriculum assessment (B) | Total |
| ENGLAND - Average (mean) | £4 | £2 | £9 | £0 | £0 | £1 | £2 | £0 | £0 | £18 |
| 202 Camden | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £11 | £0 | £0 | £11 |
| 203 Greenwich | £15 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £15 |
| 204 Hackney | £1 | £2 | £9 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £12 |
| 206 Islington | £10 | £4 | £3 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £17 |
| 207 Kensington | £0 | £0 | £15 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £15 |
| 208 Lambeth | £6 | £0 | £5 | £5 | £0 | £3 | £5 | £0 | £0 | £24 |
| 209 Lewisham | £9 | £5 | £5 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £19 |
| 210 Southwark | £4 | £1 | £8 | £0 | £1 | £0 | £5 | £0 | £0 | £19 |
| 211 Tower Ham | £0 | £0 | £18 | £2 | £4 | £1 | £6 | £5 | £0 | £36 |
| 212 Wandsworth | £0 | £0 | £0 | £5 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £5 |
| 213 Westminster | £0 | £0 | £13 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 | £13 |

Note

The data in the table above excludes one local authority whose spend is quoted at £141, which seemed high and was skewing the averages without the clarification needed that it was genuine spend

7.1 Summary - centrally retained items

For summary purposes these are the services and proposed budgets for next year

Table 7 centrally retained items

| Budget | Approved 2022-23 budget £000 | Proposed 2023-24 budget £000 | Comments |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| LA duties for all schools | 600 | 600 | This relates to statutory and regulatory duties for all schools in the borough regardless of whether they are maintained, free or academies. |
| Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils | 294 | 294 | LA proposes to continue to top-slice the schools budget to contribute towards the educational costs of looked after children that Southwark is responsible for. |
| Admissions | 435 | 435 | Admissions is a statutory LA responsibility and therefore funding cannot be delegated to schools to carry out this function. |
| Servicing of Schools Forum | 15 | 7 | Due to the change in the clerking arrangement, the budget can now be reduced. |
| Total | 1344 | 1336 | |