

Item 7 - Centrally Retained Expenditure CSSB & SB

Date: 16 January 2025	Item 7 Type of report: Decision and noting
Report title:	DSG 2025-26 Centrally Retained Budgets
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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. This report provides an update on the confirmed 2025-26 Central School Services Block allocation and the final proposed budgets for both the Central School Services Block and the centrally retained budgets for de-delegated funding and education functions from the Schools Block. The report also seeks agreement from maintained nursery and special schools for buy back rates for specific de-delegated items.

RECOMMENDED ACTION FOR SCHOOLS FORUM

That the Schools Forum:

2. Note the 2025-26 Central Schools Service Block allocation (para 10).
3. Approve the final proposed budget for the total contribution to ongoing responsibilities for all schools in **Table 1** (para 12).
(Voting: all members)
4. Note the de-delegated services projected budgets individually detailed in **Table 2** (para 15) for:
 - (a) School Improvement (primary schools only)
 - (b) Behaviour support services – Summerhouse (primary schools only)
 - (c) Free school meals eligibility (primary schools only)
 - (d) Contingency;
 - (e) Staff costs supply cover (maternity scheme)
 - (f) Staff costs supply cover (trade union)
5. Note the education functions projected budgets for maintained schools from the Schools Block detailed in **Table 3** (para 20).

That Maintained Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools members:

6. confirm whether they will buy into the following de-delegated services at the rates listed in para 16 and para 17:
 - (a) Contingency; and
 - (b) Staff costs supply cover (Maternity Scheme)

(Voting: maintained special and nursery school members, by phase)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

7. Schools Forum approved the LA proposed budgets for the 2025-26 Central School Services Block (CSSB) and Schools Block (SB) top slice alongside centrally retained budget rates for de-delegated funding and education functions from the Schools Block on 12 December 2024.
8. At that time, confirmed CSSB and SB allocations had not been published by the DfE and final projected budgets, based on the total CSSB allocation and the October 2024 pupil numbers for SB centrally retained budgets for de-delegated funding and education functions, can now be presented to Schools Forum for noting.
9. In addition, decisions in respect of maintained nursery and special schools buying back into the contingency and maternity cover de-delegated services were deferred until the January meeting.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Central Schools Services Block

10. The on-going responsibilities funding is calculated on a per pupil basis and the final CSSB allocation is £2.092m an increase of £170k from the 2024-25 allocation and higher than what was estimated based on the May 2024 census with no uplift in the per pupil rate (£1.805m).
11. This increase is due to the:
 - inclusion of funding in respect of pay and pensions costs for centrally employed teachers, which was previously allocated to LAs through the Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grant (TPECG) and Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG);
 - increased cost in copyright licences;
 - inclusion of four years olds in the pupil numbers used to calculate the final allocation; and
 - year-on-year gain at the highest affordable rate of +2.98%.
12. **Table 1** summarises the LA revised CSSB allocations, with the additional funding being held to support additional staffing costs incurred in respect of the TPECG and CSBG and additional statutory duties for all schools as well as increasing the commitment for copyright licences.

Table 1: CSSB

Budget	2025-26 Agreed Allocation	Proposed Change	2025-26 Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000
DfE licenses & subscriptions	287	20	307
Admissions	481	-	481
Independent school fees (non-SEN pupils)	112	-	112
Servicing of schools forum	15	-	15
LA duties for all schools			
Education welfare	260	-	260
Asset management	74	-	74
Statutory & regulatory duties	406	-	406
TPECG and CSBG	-	133	133
Additional statutory duties for all schools	170	133	303
Total	1,805	287	2,092

13. The Schools Forum makes the decision on the increased total contribution to ongoing responsibilities that LAs hold for all schools. No approval is required for the budgeted level of funding for copyright licences.

Schools Block – de-delegation

14. On December, maintained schools members of the Schools Forum agreed the relevant rates for de-delegated funding to support non statutory services for primary and secondary schools; and the former general duties element of the ESG that funded LA responsibilities for their maintained schools.
15. **Table 2** provides the LA proposed allocations for de-delegated services for maintained primary and secondary schools.

Table 2: SB de-delegated services budgets for maintained mainstream schools

Budget	Basis	2025-26	2025-26	2025-26
		Primary Rate £	Secondary Rate £	Proposed Budget £'000
School improvement (Primary)	Per School	7,344.00	N/A	360
School improvement (Primary)	AWPU	14.00	N/A	177
Contingency	AWPU	36.80	36.80	516
Behaviour support – Summerhouse	FSM E6	250.17	N/A	1,312
Free school meals eligibility (Primary)	FSM E6	6.64	N/A	35
Staff costs supply (Maternity Scheme)	AWPU	27.11	27.11	380
Staff costs supply (Trade Union)	AWPU	4.07	4.07	57

Total				2,837
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16. Special schools and nursery schools can buy into the Contingency fund at rates per pupil of £178 and £68, a small reduction to reflect the Internal Audit reduction (2024-25 rates: £190 and £72, respectively) and these schools are requested to confirm they will continue to buy into this service at this rate.
17. Special schools and Nursery schools can buy into Maternity leave supply cover fund at rates per pupil of £96 and £14 (a small reduction from the 2024-25 rates: £97 and £15, respectively) and these schools are requested to confirm they will continue to buy into this service at this rate.

Education functions – schools block and high needs block

18. LAs hold additional responsibilities for their maintained schools and can fund these services from maintained primary, secondary, and special school budget shares.
19. The agreed 2025-26 rate of £26.27 per pupil, in maintained primary, secondary and special schools and the PRU, translates into a final budget of £381k with £368,122 and £13,371 supported by the Schools Block and High Needs Block, respectively.
20. **Table 3** summarises the LA proposed allocations.

Table 3: SB Education functions for maintained schools

Budget	2025-26 Estimated Budget	Change	2025-26 Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Central support services	111	-7	104
Statutory & regulatory duties	246	-16	231
Monitoring national curriculum assessment	4	-	3
Asset Management	-	-	-
Education welfare	47	-3	44
Total	407	-26	381

CONCLUSION

That the Schools Forum:

21. Note the final Central Schools Service Block allocations
22. Approve the total contribution to ongoing responsibilities for all schools
23. Note the de-delegated services proposed budget
24. Note the education functions for maintained schools proposed budget
25. Confirm Maintained Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools will buy into specific de-delegated services