

Schools Forum

4th July 2022

Response to Special Schools and PRU

This report is for Information

1. Recommendations:

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 Note the contents of the report in relation to the response to Special Schools and PRUs

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide schools forum with information in relation to the query raised by Special Schools and Prus in relation to finance

3. Query by Special Schools and Prus

- 3.1 In March 2022, Special Schools and PRUs submitted a paper for discussion at Schools Forum around their budgets. This paper was submitted too late for discussion and it was agreed that this was to be forwarded to the meeting in June 2021.
- 3.2 The Special Schools and PRUs feel that the consultation on the HNB held in December 2021 omitted a proposal to increase top up funding to Special schools and PRUs only by 2%
- 3.3 The Special Schools and PRU have not had an increase in top-up funding for 5 years despite the HNB receiving significant increases. They feel that contextual information around their funding was not presented.
- 3.4 The Special Schools and PRUs would like to be consulted on how the Special School Supplementary Grant will be distributed and receive a 4% increase.
- 3.5 Local Authority Response
- 3.6 The proposals within the SEND and HNB consultation in December 2021 were formulated through initial steering group meetings with Primary, Secondary and Special School / PRU / FP

schools. These proposals were then further refined and ratified by a steering group from Schools Forum. The Schools Forum steering group consisted of Head Teachers from a mainstream Secondary School, a mainstream Primary School, a mainstream Secondary School with Focus Provision, a Special School and 2 PRUs. The steering group considered the inclusion of a proposal whereby the top-up funding for pupils in Special Schools and PRUs only would increase. This proposal was voted on by the group and was discounted from the final consultation.

- 3.7 Although the total funding provided by the HNB has risen over the last 5 years the additional funding has been used on supporting the increasing numbers of C/YP with EHC Plans, increasing specialist places and increasing access to SEN Support. Surplus monies will be used to further support the increase in Specialist Places going forward and prevent the HNB from going into deficit.
- 3.8 An independent review of HNB funding in May 2022 used a benchmarking exercise to measure Special School funding in Sandwell against similar special schools nationally. It found that Sandwell special schools had a comparatively high spend per head compared to national. Suggesting that Special Schools still receive adequate funding to provide for their students.
- 3.9 Moving forward the LA will await the results of the DfE SEND and AP Green paper consultation before reviewing the banding structure for Special School top-up funding. The SEND and AP Green Paper is consulting on introducing a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for funding, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the new national standards. This would impact on all additional funding received by all Special Schools including academies and independent schools.
- 3.10 Schools supplementary grant is awarded to Special Schools and PRUs through an increase in the HNB funding (2.3 million). Unlike mainstream schools, there is not a formula to base distribution on. Local authorities can choose how they allocate funding. In Sandwell, this was done through consultation with Special Schools and PRU. The schools were provided with different models to base the funding allocation (FTE staff, NOR etc) and they voted on a final model.

- 3.11 Each Special school and PRU received more than a 4% increase to their total budget through the supplementary grant.
- 3.12 Further methods of distribution will be reviewed and agreed next financial year.

Date: 04/07/22

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