

Report to School Forum

18 March 2024

Subject:	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023/24 High Needs Block Budget Monitoring (Period 10)
Director:	Interim Director of Children and Education Sally Giles
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1 Recommendations

1.1 The Schools' Forum is requested to note the report.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Schools' Forum Regulations 2012 requires that the Schools' Forum meets regularly and is consulted by the local authority concerning the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), including budget and various related matters. The High Needs block (HNB) is one of the four blocks of funding within the DSG.

2.2 The Schools' Forum is requested to comment and note the contents of the report in relation to the 2023/24 HNB budget monitoring for period 10 (April 2023 to end of January 2024 projected to the end of March 2024).



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people Delegated grant funding of High Needs in support of children with early identification of SEN, and to ensure they are ready for school, and schools being ready for children and families including suitable provision within schools in the community and being able to support that readiness and long term promotion of becoming good citizens within the community. Delivery of programmes that specifically address language development within the borough, working with schools and families.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities Enhancement of existing green spaces, by creating new places to play and commitment of planting a tree for every child starting school up to 2030.</p>
	<p>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods Ensure new quality homes being driven by our inclusive Economy principles benefit local people but communities having access to suitable good schools, health services and local amenities.</p>
	<p>A strong and inclusive economy Delivery of new major education facilities and aspiration for SEN children and young people to achieve own goals working with education providers in ensuring good jobs.</p>

4 HNB Budget 2023/24

- 4.1 The gross 2023/24 HNB allocation is £71.499m, taking account of recoupment (£4.190m) by the Department of Education (DfE) for academies, free schools and post-16 commissioned places, leaves a net grant of **£67.309m**.
- 4.2 Forecast spend at the end of period 10 (October 2023), projected to 31 March 2024 is £67.104m which represents an in year surplus of £0.205m.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 shows the 2023/24 High Needs Block budget, the 2023/24 Spend as at 31 January 2024, the forecast outturn to 31 March 2024, the monetary and percentage variance from the budget. It also shows the



movement from the figures reported to Schools' Forum in December 2023 (period 7).

4.4 The HNB balance as at 31 March 2023 is £5.709m.

4.5 The variances are explained below as detailed in appendix 1:

Variation 1 – Independent Schools £138k Deficit

Placements in Independent schools shows a pressure of £138K against the budget. This is primarily due to children and young people with SEN in Sandwell requiring suitable specialist provision. There is a shortage of suitable SEN places in borough, therefore out of borough settings are currently used in support and to fulfil our statutory responsibilities. The budget of £10.371m included a provision of £1.051m for new placements during the year. This provision has been exceeded by £138K.

Variation 2 – Mainstream Schools Top up funding Delegation £950k Deficit

Increases in the number of EHCPs issued has resulted in a pressure of £950k. The budget of £13.421m included a provision of £2.5m to support the increases in EHCP assessments. There has also been a significant increase in funding for early years pupils in school-based nurseries.

Variation 3 – Focus Provision Place and Top up Funding £199k Deficit

Increases in the number placements in Focus Provisions and the SEN Unit have resulted in an overspend against the budget. The budget is based on full capacity, but some provisions have exceeded agreed placements.

Variation 4 – Early Years Private Providers £210K deficit

There has been an increase in the number of providers requesting funding for pupils in the private provider sector.

Variation 5 – Alternative Provision £250K Surplus

There has been an decrease in the number of pupils supported in alternative providers following the requirement for all requests to be presented at the Alternative Provision Panel



Variation 6 – SEN Support Services & Support for Inclusion £272k surplus

The total variances equate to a saving of £272k across 9 service areas. These are mainly due to staff turnover, maternity leave, opting out of the LA superannuation scheme and full-time budgeted posts covered by staff on reduced hours.

Variation 7 – SEN Developments £1,204k saving

This Budget is for any expansions that are awaiting full approval, changes in the HNB grant notified by the DFE and the initial surplus calculated at budgeting stage where total budgets prepared are less than the grant.

Variation 8 – Exclusion and Integration £17k overspend

The overspend is due to staff turnover and additional costs for a temporary officer.

5 Implications

Resources:	As presented in this document.
Legal and Governance:	The schools' forums (England) regulations 2012 govern the constitution and conduct of meetings of the forum. The schools finance (England) regulations 2012 determine those matters on which the local authority must or may consult the schools' forum and those in respect of which the schools' forum can make decisions. These regulations make provision for the financial arrangements of local authorities in relation to the funding of maintained schools and providers of prescribed Early Years provision in England.
Risk:	None
Equality:	None
Health and Wellbeing:	None
Social Value:	None
Climate Change:	None
Corporate Parenting:	None



6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – High Needs Block Outturn (period 10) 2023/24

7. Background Papers

None.



Appendix 1
HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2023/24 FORECAST OUTTURN

	BUDGET ALLOCATION 2023/24 £	SPEND as at 31/10/23 LEDGER REPORTS £	FORECAST END OF YEAR OUTTURN £	VARIANCE FROM BUDGET £	% VARIANCE FROM BUDGET	VARIANCE REF IN REPORT	COMMENTS	Predicted Outturn 20/08/23 (P7) £	Movement from Previous Report (P5) £
1 Out of Borough Placements									
Independent schools	10,371,000	5,514,918	9,967,426	-403,574	-3.9%	1	Lack of Provision in Borough has meant more Independent Placements are being made at approx 3 per week with slippage.	-593,900	190,326
OLA Maintained & Academy Schools	1,823,000	-804,217	1,823,000	0	0.0%	1	OOB placements in OLA maintained and academy mainstream and special schools now reflects Phase transfers	0	0
Alternative Providers	340,000	136,576	340,000	0	0.0%	1	This is for Pupils with EHCPs that attend NTAS and Trageted Provision which are tuition services	0	0
Other associated costs	40,000	0	40,000	0	0.0%	1	Room hire for the support of Students receiving NTAS support while awaiting a school placement	0	0
	12,574,000	4,847,277	12,170,426	-403,574				-593,900	190,326
2 Pupil Top up & Place									
Mainstream Schools	13,421,400	-	13,421,400	0	0.0%	2	Top up funding above notional budgets in schools	0	0
Focus Provisions	3,499,533	-	3,504,200	4,667	0.1%	2	Assumes full occupancy	4,667	0
Special Schools	20,016,800	-	20,016,800	0	0.0%	2	Special school place plus top up funding	0	0
Primary PRU	572,000	-	572,000	0	0.0%	2	Pupil Referral Unit - Primary provision	0	0
Secondary PRU	2,772,100	-	2,772,100	0	0.0%	2	Pupil Referral Unit - Secondary provision	0	0
High Point Free Special School	1,397,267	-	1,385,600	-11,667	-0.8%	2	Increase in pupil numbers from Sept 2022	-11,667	0
Elm Tree Free Special School	778,400	-	778,400	0	0.0%	2	Special Free school	0	0
Early Years Private Providers	730,000	477,338	730,000	0	0.0%	2	This is offset by support from EYS funding	0	0
Early Years Grant	-480,000	-	-480,000	0	0.0%	2	EYS income/grant	0	0
Other Support	205,000	139,751	205,000	0	0.0%	2	Other	0	0
Post 16 Colleges & Specialist Providers	3,058,700	246,309	3,058,700	0	0.0%	2	Post16 demand usually in total by January 24	0	0
Alternative AWPU Prov	270,000	12,400	270,000	0	0.0%	2	AP AWPU	0	0
Recoupment	-1,564,800	8,910	-1,564,800	0	0.0%	2	This is recoupment of top up for OLA pupils placed in Sandwell Schools. The increase is due to an increase in OLA pupils placed in Sandwell schools.	0	0
	44,676,400	884,709	44,669,400	-7,000				-7,000	0
3 Albright Education Centre	1,608,600	-23,450	1,608,600	0	0.0%		SEMH and Medical provision (in-borough)	0	0
4 SEN Support Services	559,000	255,900	543,600	-15,400	-2.8%	3	Maternity Leave, staff turnover and reduced hours and other associated expenditure following COVID	-15,400	0
5 Support for Inclusion									
Lace	419,000	235,025	405,831	-13,169	-3.1%	4	Full time Budgeted post but post holder reduced hours	-17,900	4,731
Inclusion Support	1,182,500	637,068	1,177,000	-5,500	-0.5%	4	Staff turnover	-5,500	0
Sensory Support Team	974,600	505,347	958,100	-16,500	-1.7%	4	Staffing turnover	-16,500	0
CCD Team	544,500	335,811	580,600	36,100	6.6%	4	Staffing turnover	16,100	20,000
Early Years Admin	765,600	322,197	682,000	-83,600	-10.9%	4	Materniy Leave and 0.5 vacancy	-83,600	0
Preventing Primary Exclusions team	237,500	82,984	204,100	-33,400	-14.1%	4	Staff turnover	-33,400	0
SEMH Team	696,900	362,723	702,500	5,600	0.8%	4	Full time Budgeted posts but post holders reduced hours	5,600	0
Fair Access Reintegration Officers	164,400	71,671	153,000	-11,400	-6.9%	4	Vacant post	-11,400	0
	4,985,000	2,552,824	4,863,131	-121,869				-146,600	24,731
6 SEN Dvelopment	1,802,967	108,676	1,043,467	-759,500	-42.1%	5	Initial Surplus on calculation of budgets was £630K and additional grant received of £370K	-759,500	0
7 Other SEN Funding									
Central Recharges	508,500	0	508,500	0	0.0%	6	Corporate recharges	0	0
OT & Physio & SALT SLA	73,100	40,495	80,100	7,000	9.6%	6	Demand led budget	7,000	0
Equal Pay other SS	50,400	0	50,400	0	0.0%	6	Earmarked budget	0	0
Mediation	30,000	2,906	30,000	0	0.0%	6	Mediation budget	0	0
Hospital Recoupment	30,000	3,178	30,000	0	0.0%	6	Hospital provision and recovery	0	0
Medical Malpractice	15,000	0	15,000	0	0.0%	6	Medical budget	0	0
ITT Staff Contribution	25,000	0	30,000	5,000	20.0%	6	Recharges	5,000	0
Joint Commissioning Sensory Pilot	72,500	15,394	72,500	0	0.0%	6	JCS Pilot	0	0
	804,500	61,973	816,500	12,000				12,000	0
8 Exclusions & Reintegration	172,900	73,736	121,200	-51,700	-29.9%	7	Vacant post	-51,700	0
Additional grant	125,942	0	-	-125,942	-100.0%	8	Additional grant 23/24 as per published tables		-125,942
TOTAL	67,309,309	8,761,644	65,836,325	-1,472,984	-2.2%	9	Forecast underspend (p7) HNBlock	-1,562,100	89,116
check	67,309,309	8,761,644	65,836,325	-1,472,984			check		
	0	0	0						

