
Growth Fund 2023/24 Payments

Report being considered by: Schools Forum on 22nd January 2024

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Item for: Information **By:** All School representatives

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Schools Forum of payments recommended to be made from the Growth Fund budget in 2023/24.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To note the payment of £105.3k to Trinity School

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Growth funding is allocated by the Department for Education (DfE) by formula and forms part of the Schools Block DSG allocation. The funding can either be used to form a growth fund, or it can be added into the school formula. The Schools Forum must be consulted on the total size of the growth fund and criteria for use.
- 3.2 The purpose of the growth fund is to support maintained schools and academies which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the authority, and to meet the cost of new and reorganised schools including pre-opening and diseconomy costs. It can also fund schools where very limited pupil number growth requires an additional class as set out by infant class size regulations. It cannot be used for general growth in pupil numbers.
- 3.3 The growth fund is also to support new schools with pre-opening costs and diseconomies of scale.
- 3.4 Following the receipt of the final October 2023 Census data, all schools were invited to make a funding request if they felt that their circumstances met the growth fund criteria. To support their applications, schools were asked to submit information regarding increases in class and teacher numbers between the two academic years. Only growth in relation to basic need requirements in the area (and thus increases in PAN or bulge years approved by the local authority for this purpose) qualifies for this funding.

4. Applications Made 2023/24

- 4.1 The only school to apply for growth funding was Trinity school.
- 4.2 For the academic year 2023/24 Trinity have been required to accommodate a bulge year, with an increase of 30 students in year 7. This is to meet basic need in the area. The increase in pupil numbers at Trinity has impacted upon the curriculum structure and support staff requirements. Trinity have employed an extra Humanities teacher, an additional MFL teacher as well as a Literacy/phonics specialist HLTA to help in the running of two phonics groups in year 7.

5. Payments 2023/24

- 5.1 The Interim Head of Education is satisfied that the relevant criteria have been met & therefore payment will be recommended to the Schools Forum.
- 5.2 The school advised that the required change to the curriculum structure has been costed as £125,100. Funding of up to £105,300 is available for secondary schools for each additional class. Academies' financial year runs from September to August, therefore, academies receive a full 12 months of growth funding. The payment of £105,300 will be paid to Trinity in two instalments, 7/12ths to cover the period Sept – March and the remaining 5/12ths to be paid in April. This additional 5/12ths element will be reimbursed by ESFA to the LA's Dedicated School's Grant 2025/26.
- 5.3 In 2023/24 and 2024/25 it was agreed that the projected balance of the growth fund was sufficient and both allocations were to be added into the school formula. It has been agreed by Schools' Forum that any unspent balance on the growth fund will be carried forward.
- 5.4 The table below shows the forecast balance on the growth fund including an estimated payment of £105,300 to Trinity.

	Diseconomies of Scale	Growth	Balance
Balance 31.03.23			-996,735
<i>Highwood Underwriting</i>	80,950		-915,785
Trinity		61,425	-854,360
Est Balance 31.03.24			-854,360
Trinity		43,875	-810,485
<i>Highwood Underwriting</i>	58,300		-752,185
<i>Contingency</i>		132,765	-619,420
Est Balance 31.03.25			-619,420