

Dorset Schools' Forum

Date of Meeting:	3 July 2026
Report Title:	HIGH NEEDS ALLOCATIONS FUNDED BY BLOCK TRANSFER
Executive Director:	Paul Dempsey, Executive Director for People - Children
Corporate Director:	Jen Furnell, Director for Education and Learning
Presenting Officer:	Ellen Eager Sufficiency & Funding Manager
Report Status:	Public
Reason for Submission to Schools' Forum:	For APPROVAL & CONSULTATION as detailed in the report Under Forum power/responsibilities: 2b) iv) administering the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the local authority. and 2d) such other matters concerning the funding of schools which the LA sees fit and 2f) The establishment of priorities where the draft budget strategy indicates that additional money is expected to become available or where a shortfall compared to the current financial year is anticipated.
Recommendation(s):	That the Schools' Forum: 1. That Schools Forum members consider options A and B and give feedback to the LA on the most appropriate distribution method.

Reason for Recommendation(s):	
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Schools' Forum members are reminded of their responsibility to make a declaration of interest in any agenda item in which they have an interest, to the Chair or the Clerk, preferably in advance of the meeting.

1. Executive Summary

As you will be aware, £1.3 million was transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2026–27. At the time of presenting the Schools Block budget to the Schools Forum on 16 January 2026, the white paper titled “Every Child Achieving and Thriving” had not been published. The LA felt it was necessary to transfer 0.5% from the schools' block to the high needs block to secure future DfE contributions to the HNB deficit.

By the time the white paper was published on 23 February 2026, the Secretary of State had already approved the disapplication request and the APT submitted to the DfE could not be amended. At the Schools Forum meeting on 28 March, it was agreed to pay the £1.3m back to mainstream schools to support the embedding of inclusive practice in line with the white paper aims and objectives.

Officers are presenting two options for returning the £1.3m.

- Preferred Option A: Uses the inclusive mainstream fund (IMF) methodology with scaled back values to equal £1.3m. Within the available funding, schools could be paid:

	IMF	HNB trf
Lump sum	£3,000	£2,520
Primary	£16	£13
Primary LPA	£79	£66
Secondary	£14	£12
Secondary LPA	£88	£74

- Option B: Uses pupil factors from the October 2025 census to distribute £1.3m to schools. This uses basic per-pupil funding (age weighted pupil unit), Free school meals, IDACI deprivation measure, low prior attainment (LPA), English as an additional language and mobility. Just using pupil factors gives lower funding to schools with lower pupil numbers.

Option A is our preferred option as it aligns to the DfE's own methodology for the IMF allocations.

Expectations for use of funding

Our expectation is that any redistributed funding is used alongside the government's announced Inclusive Mainstream Fund to strengthen whole-school inclusive practice and to support children and young people with additional needs early and effectively in your mainstream settings.

This expectation reflects the direction set out in the Department for Education's SEND reform programme and the Schools White Paper Every Child Achieving and Thriving. The aim is to reduce escalation to specialist provision where needs can be met well in mainstream, while ensuring that children who require specialist support can access it appropriately.

Embedding inclusive practice

We expect schools in Dorset to use this funding to embed inclusive practice in line with the DfE's seven principles of inclusion:

1. Ambitious leadership and governance that embeds inclusion as a core whole-school priority
2. Evidence-based support prioritising early intervention, particularly for commonly occurring and predictable needs
3. High-quality teaching with a curriculum designed for all learners, reducing barriers to participation and progress
4. Accessible and enriching provision beyond the classroom, including pastoral, social and wider curricular opportunities
5. A safe and respectful culture that fosters belonging, positive behaviour and good attendance
6. Strong partnerships with families and wider services, recognising that effective inclusion is built on trust and collaboration
7. Inclusive environments with continuous improvements to accessibility, both physical and curricular

Schools retain professional autonomy over how this funding is deployed. However, it should be used to strengthen universal and targeted provision, in line with the DfE's examples of best practice [Inclusive mainstream fund: best practice for schools - GOV.UK](#).

Accountability and next steps

As with the Inclusive Mainstream Fund, schools should be able to articulate how this funding is being used to improve inclusive practice and outcomes.

2. Financial Implications

To support the safety valve program, a transfer of 0.5% of the schools block to the HNB had been requested through a disapplication request, equating to £1,348,041.

The concerns expressed by Schools Forum members that schools are being asked to contribute whilst contributions by the DfE and Dorset Council are paused are understandable.

Following the publication of the white paper titled "Every Child Achieving and Thriving", it was agreed at the March Schools Forum to pay the £1.3m to schools to embed inclusive practice.

3. Well-being and Health implications

Not applicable

4. Climate Implications

Not applicable

5. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

6. Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

7. Not applicable

8. Appendices

Appendix A: Comparison of Options A and B by school

9. Background Papers

Footnote:
Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Appendix A

		Option A	Option B	
LAESTAB	School Name	Inclusive Mainstream fund methodology	Add back 0.57% to actual APT pupil led factors	Option A-B
		£1,348,041	£1,348,041	
8382000	Trinity Church of England First School	£5,597	£3,227	£2,370
8382001	Bovington Academy	£8,162	£4,866	£3,297
8382002	Downlands Community School	£9,425	£4,739	£4,686
8382003	Bridport Primary School	£12,999	£7,435	£5,565
8382004	Beechcroft St Paul's CofE Primary School	£9,508	£5,717	£3,791
8382005	Broadmayne First School	£7,406	£3,664	£3,741
8382006	Beaminster St Mary's Academy	£6,262	£3,899	£2,363
8382007	Dunbury Church of England Academy	£6,809	£3,282	£3,527
8382009	Cheselbourne Village School	£3,888	£1,146	£2,742
8382010	Loders CofE Primary Academy	£4,624	£1,530	£3,093
8382011	Colehill First School	£6,564	£3,714	£2,849
8382012	Pamphill Church of England First School	£4,103	£1,710	£2,394
8382013	Wool Church of England Primary School	£6,528	£2,609	£3,918
8382014	Portesham Church of England Primary School	£4,436	£1,257	£3,179
8382015	Damers First School	£21,699	£13,369	£8,329
8382016	St Andrew's Church of England Primary School	£9,960	£5,857	£4,103
8382017	Gillingham Primary School	£10,161	£6,387	£3,774
8382018	St Andrew's Church of England Primary School	£5,917	£2,726	£3,191
8382019	Bere Regis Primary and Preschool	£6,417	£2,688	£3,729
8382020	Ferndown First School	£13,782	£9,427	£4,355
8382021	Sixpenny Handley First School and Nursery	£4,146	£1,438	£2,708
8382022	Hazelbury Bryan Primary School	£4,975	£2,413	£2,562
8382024	Lytchett Matravers Primary School	£15,927	£10,690	£5,237
8382025	Manor Park Church of England First School	£14,656	£9,201	£5,455
8382026	Upton Infant School	£10,532	£6,775	£3,756
8382027	Milborne St Andrew First School	£4,804	£1,335	£3,470
8382028	Charmouth Primary School	£6,033	£2,215	£3,818
8382029	Sherborne Primary School	£12,731	£8,592	£4,139
8382030	Stower Provost Community School	£5,002	£2,320	£2,682
8382031	St Michael's CofE Primary School, Lyme Regis	£5,136	£1,726	£3,410
8382032	Sturminster Marshall First School	£4,032	£1,377	£2,655
8382033	Wyke Primary School	£8,228	£4,326	£3,902
8382034	William Barnes Primary School	£7,763	£4,526	£3,237
8382035	Swanage Primary School	£8,605	£5,214	£3,391
8382036	St Gregory's Church of England Primary School, Marnh	£4,345	£1,438	£2,907
8382037	Thorncombe, St Mary's Church of England Primary Aca	£3,261	£639	£2,623
8382038	Three Legged Cross First and Nursery School	£5,193	£2,086	£3,106
8382040	Wimborne First School and Nursery	£12,576	£9,563	£3,013
8382044	Upton Junior School	£13,955	£9,579	£4,375
8382045	Parley First School	£15,219	£8,428	£6,791
8382048	Hillside Community First School	£9,983	£5,862	£4,121

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8382050	Rushcombe First School	£9,302	£7,624	£1,678
8382053	Oakhurst Community First School	£7,394	£3,958	£3,435
8382054	Hayeswood First School	£6,910	£3,655	£3,254
8382201	Chickerell Primary Academy	£14,512	£10,670	£3,843
8382209	Wyke Regis Infant School and Nursery	£8,922	£5,103	£3,820
8382213	Bincombe Valley Primary School	£12,529	£8,096	£4,433
8382214	Radipole Primary School	£16,528	£11,534	£4,994
8382216	Southill Primary School	£8,564	£5,544	£3,020
8382246	St Ives Primary & Nursery School	£7,245	£5,297	£1,948
8382257	Henbury View First School	£6,897	£3,690	£3,207
8382262	The Prince of Wales School	£7,790	£4,065	£3,726
8383000	St James' Church of England First School and Nursery,	£4,936	£2,260	£2,675
8383001	Stoborough Church of England Primary School	£8,284	£4,991	£3,293
8383002	Archbishop Wake Church of England Primary School	£15,840	£10,245	£5,595
8383004	Milldown CofE Academy	£9,302	£5,671	£3,631
8383005	St George's Church of England School, Bourton	£7,288	£3,078	£4,210
8383006	Bridport, St Mary's Church of England Primary School	£11,254	£5,875	£5,379
8383007	Burton Bradstock Church of England Voluntary Control	£4,578	£2,299	£2,280
8383009	Cerne Abbas CofE VC First School	£4,903	£1,638	£3,266
8383010	Corfe Castle Church of England Primary School	£5,667	£1,903	£3,765
8383017	St James Church of England First School	£5,382	£2,816	£2,566
8383021	Maiden Newton, Greenford Church of England Primary	£7,362	£3,883	£3,479
8383024	Frome Valley CofE VA First School	£6,639	£3,254	£3,385
8383026	Puddletown Church of England First School	£7,466	£3,379	£4,088
8383028	Sherborne Abbey Church of England Primary School	£16,346	£9,710	£6,636
8383032	Wareham St Mary Church of England Primary School	£9,185	£4,664	£4,521
8383042	St John's Church of England First School, Wimborne	£7,257	£4,092	£3,165
8383045	All Saints Church of England Voluntary Controlled Prin	£6,787	£3,355	£3,432
8383047	Pimperne Church of England VC Primary School	£8,469	£4,838	£3,631
8383049	St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Bradford	£4,720	£2,187	£2,533
8383050	Buckland Newton Church of England Primary School	£6,285	£2,423	£3,862
8383051	Broadwindsor Church of England Voluntary Controlled	£5,521	£2,352	£3,169
8383052	Shaftesbury Church of England Primary School	£15,345	£9,800	£5,544
8383053	Verwood Church of England First School	£11,161	£6,793	£4,367
8383055	St Mary's CofE First School & Nursery	£6,406	£3,399	£3,007
8383058	St Andrew's Church of England Primary School	£6,839	£2,861	£3,978
8383157	St Mary's Church of England First School, Charminste	£7,901	£3,807	£4,094
8383202	Wyke Regis Church of England Junior School	£14,985	£9,752	£5,233
8383304	Blandford St Mary Church of England Primary School	£8,485	£5,756	£2,729

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8383314	St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Child O	£6,253	£3,228	£3,025
8383317	Cranborne Church of England First School	£4,586	£1,627	£2,959
8383319	Durweston Church of England Primary School	£6,876	£3,362	£3,514
8383321	Sticklands Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary	£5,292	£1,969	£3,323
8383323	Milton-on-Stour Church of England Primary School	£6,880	£3,170	£3,710
8383325	Hampreston Church of England Voluntary Aided First S	£6,367	£3,520	£2,848
8383331	St George's Church of England Primary School, Langto	£4,394	£1,810	£2,583
8383332	Thorner's Church of England School, Litton Cheney	£5,736	£2,624	£3,112
8383338	Marshwood CofE Primary Academy	£3,755	£1,213	£2,542
8383342	Parrett and Axe Church of England Voluntary Aided Pri	£7,610	£3,628	£3,981
8383343	Motcombe CofE Primary School	£8,532	£4,069	£4,464
8383345	Salway Ash Church of England Voluntary Aided Primar	£6,537	£2,811	£3,726
8383350	Piddle Valley Church of England First School	£3,989	£948	£3,041
8383352	Powerstock Church of England Voluntary Aided Primar	£4,437	£962	£3,475
8383363	Swanage St Mark's Church of England Primary School	£6,292	£2,948	£3,344
8383364	Symondsbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Prim	£6,604	£2,886	£3,718
8383367	Thornford CofE Primary School	£5,288	£2,580	£2,708
8383369	Trent Young's CofE Primary School	£5,542	£3,562	£1,981
8383372	Sandford St Martin's Church of England Voluntary Aide	£13,625	£9,033	£4,592
8383376	Wimborne St Giles Church of England First School and	£4,085	£1,550	£2,535
8383377	Winterbourne Valley Church of England Aided First Sc	£5,350	£1,633	£3,717
8383379	Witchampton Church of England First School	£4,037	£1,177	£2,860
8383400	St Catherine's Roman Catholic School	£5,729	£2,752	£2,977
8383401	St Mary & St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	£5,342	£2,149	£3,193
8383402	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Marnhull	£4,733	£1,958	£2,776
8383403	Spetisbury CofE Primary School	£8,915	£4,979	£3,935
8383404	St Mary's Catholic First School, Dorchester	£6,315	£3,787	£2,527
8383406	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Swanage	£8,593	£4,732	£3,860
8383407	St Mary the Virgin Church of England Primary School	£9,279	£5,345	£3,934
8383408	Conifers Primary School	£15,248	£9,773	£5,474
8383652	St Nicholas and St Laurence Church of England Primar	£11,033	£5,888	£5,145
8383655	St John's Church of England Primary School	£10,340	£5,909	£4,432
8383670	St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Weymouth	£8,691	£5,513	£3,178
8383693	The Abbey CofE VA Primary School, Shaftesbury	£8,766	£5,428	£3,338
8383700	Holy Trinity Church of England VC Primary School & Co	£16,901	£12,447	£4,455
8383701	St George's Foundation Primary School	£17,929	£11,872	£6,057
8383702	Lulworth and Winfrith CofE Primary School	£6,196	£2,823	£3,373
8384000	All Saints' Church of England Academy	£9,673	£25,189	-£15,517
8384001	The Swanage School	£6,874	£14,674	-£7,800
8384002	The Sir John Colfox Academy	£10,462	£26,179	-£15,717
8384003	Dorset Studio School	£6,648	£14,192	-£7,544

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8384004	Wey Valley Academy	£14,238	£41,302	-£27,064
8384005	Budmouth Academy Weymouth	£17,308	£50,179	-£32,871
8384006	St Osmund's Church of England Middle School	£16,549	£22,506	-£5,957
8384007	Atlantic Academy Portland	£17,636	£29,277	-£11,641
8384009	Emmanuel Church of England Middle School	£12,112	£13,434	-£1,322
8384020	Cranborne Middle School	£7,718	£8,640	-£922
8384022	Ferndown Upper School	£13,299	£36,984	-£23,685
8384024	The Purbeck School	£12,891	£34,241	-£21,350
8384029	Allenbourn Middle School	£11,379	£15,206	-£3,827
8384031	Dorchester Middle School	£13,228	£17,289	-£4,060
8384033	West Moors Middle School	£7,703	£8,119	-£415
8384034	Lockyer's Middle School	£12,198	£13,004	-£806
8384035	Lytchett Minster School	£17,784	£49,946	-£32,162
8384179	Sturminster Newton High School	£9,091	£21,975	-£12,884
8384184	Ferndown Middle School	£15,897	£19,711	-£3,813
8384503	Gillingham School	£19,024	£53,771	-£34,746
8384504	Queen Elizabeth's School	£14,726	£40,741	-£26,014
8384505	Beaminster School	£9,917	£24,117	-£14,200
8384510	The Blandford School	£14,266	£38,542	-£24,277
8384511	Shaftesbury School	£10,909	£28,417	-£17,508
8384512	The Gryphon School	£16,603	£46,564	-£29,962
8384604	St Michael's Church of England Middle School, Colehill	£14,580	£17,616	-£3,036
8384615	The Thomas Hardy School	£18,444	£54,652	-£36,209
8384802	St Mary's Church of England Middle School, Puddletown	£10,977	£14,012	-£3,035
8385201	Stalbridge Church of England Primary School	£9,926	£5,240	£4,686
8385203	Shillingstone Church of England Primary School	£6,007	£2,865	£3,142
8385401	The Woodroffe School	£11,355	£28,483	-£17,128