

# Dorset Schools' Forum

|                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>                         | <b>25 September 2026</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Report Title:</b>                            | <b>ALLOCATION OF THE FALLING ROLLS FUND</b>                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Executive Director:</b>                      | <b>Paul Dempsey, Executive Director for People - Children</b>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Corporate Director:</b>                      | <b>Jen Furnell, Director for Education and Learning</b>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Presenting Officer:</b>                      | <b>Vanessa Eddey<br/>Team Manager – Schools, Finance &amp; Support</b>                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Report Status:</b>                           | <b>Public</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Reason for Submission to Schools' Forum:</b> | <p><b>For APPROVAL &amp; CONSULTATION as detailed in the report</b></p> <p><b>Under Forum power/responsibilities:</b></p> <p>Centrally retained schools block budget requiring schools forum approval</p>                       |
| <b>Recommendation(s):</b>                       | <p>That the Schools' Forum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Schools Forum members consider the proposed distribution method for the falling rolls fund of £300k.</li> </ol>                                  |
| <b>Reason for Recommendation(s):</b>            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>                 | <p><b>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.</b></p> |

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## 1. Executive Summary

1.1 DfE allocate funding based on falling rolls within local authorities' schools block Dedicated Schools Grant (DGS) allocations, alongside growth funding. The Schools block covers the age range 4 to 16.

1.2 In 2025-26, £300k of falling rolls funding was allocated and agreed at the January 2025 Schools' Forum meeting, as part of the process for agreeing the Schools Block budget for 2026-26. The funding was not spent in 2025-26 and carried forward to 2026-27 and no new allocation was made from 2026-27 funding. Falling rolls funding is targeted at pupil number reductions in the year groups Reception to Year 11.

1.3 The distribution method for falling rolls funding should be based on the reduction in pupil numbers that local authorities experience for each year. It is based on the observed differences between the primary and secondary numbers on roll in each local authority between the October school censuses. Schools' Forum should agree the criteria for allocation.

1.4 The criteria for allocating falling rolls funding should contain clear objective thresholds for qualification and a clear formula for calculating allocations. Differences in allocation methodology are permitted between phases.

1.5 The proposed distribution method in Dorset takes in to account the reduction in pupil numbers (in the age range from Reception to Year 11) over the two-year period between October 2023 and October 2025. Two years have been used as funding relates to 2025-26 and 2026-27 and demonstrates a consistent falling roll.

1.6 A two step process is proposed. Step 1 determines if a school qualifies and step 2 calculates the funding due to the qualifying schools.

1.7 In order to qualify for funding, schools must meet the following criteria, which is different for primary and secondary schools:

- Primary – an average drop of total pupil numbers of over 10% over the two-year period.

For example, a primary school with pupil numbers of 225 in October 2023, 203 in October 2024 and 174 in October 2025 has an average reduction of 12.03% over the two years. The table below illustrates this:

|        | Total Pupil Numbers<br>(Reception to Yr6) | Reduction | % Reduction | 2-year average |
|--------|-------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| Oct-23 | 225                                       |           |             | 12.03%         |
| Oct-24 | 203                                       | 22        | 9.78%       |                |
| Oct-25 | 174                                       | 29        | 14.29%      |                |

- Secondary – a reduction in pupil numbers in the year of entry compared with the Published Admission Number (PAN) of at least 30% over the two-year period.

The table below shows the comparison of the entry year to PAN for the two secondary schools that qualify:

|                          | PAN<br>2024 | Actual<br>Year 7<br>Oct 24 | Diff | % Diff | PAN<br>2025 | Actual<br>Year 7<br>Oct 25 | Diff | % Diff | Combined<br>%<br>reduction<br>over 2 years |
|--------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|------|--------|-------------|----------------------------|------|--------|--------------------------------------------|
| All Saints' Co E Academy | 180         | 108                        | 72   | 40.0%  | 120         | 87                         | 33   | 27.5%  | 33.75%                                     |
| The Woodroffe School     | 174         | 113                        | 61   | 35.1%  | 174         | 115                        | 59   | 33.9%  | 34.48%                                     |

1.8 Different qualifying criteria are proposed for primary and secondary to target the funding towards schools with the greatest need. As secondary schools are working with larger numbers of pupils, the percentage method does not recognise a significant reduction in pupils.

1.9 The rate of funding is based on the 2026-27 amount of basic entitlement included school funding. For primary schools it is £4,033.32 and secondary schools £5,930.49 (which is a combination of 3/5ths of the KS3 rate and 2/5ths of the KS4 rate). There is not enough funding to pay all qualifying schools at the full basic entitlement rate. Allocation rates are scaled back by 89.696% to be able to pay all qualifying schools.

1.10 The scaled back primary rate is £415.605 per pupil and the scaled back secondary rate is £610.939 per pupil. The rate of funding is multiplied by the combined reduction in pupil numbers over the two-year period.

1.11 A full list of proposed allocations is shown in Appendix A. This includes 12 primary schools and 2 secondary schools.

## 2. Financial Implications

### 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: Proposed distribution of falling rolls funding.

### 9. Background Papers

[Growth and falling rolls fund guidance: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

[Pre-16 schools funding: local authority guidance for 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

### 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 – Proposed Distribution of Falling Rolls Funding

|                                          | Oct 25<br>Reduction<br>of Pupils | Oct 25<br>Reduction<br>% | Oct 24<br>Reduction<br>of Pupils | Oct 24<br>Reduction<br>% | Combined<br>Reduction | Combined<br>2 year<br>Reduction<br>% | Primary<br>Rate | Secondary<br>Rate | Falling<br>Rolls<br>Funding |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| All Saints C of E                        | -105                             | -15.00%                  | -55                              | -7.28%                   | -160                  | -11.14%                              |                 | £610.939          | -£97,750                    |
| Downlands Community                      | -29                              | -14.29%                  | -22                              | -9.78%                   | -51                   | -12.03%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£21,196                    |
| Piddle Valley CE First                   | -2                               | -5.56%                   | -8                               | -18.18%                  | -10                   | -11.87%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£4,156                     |
| Portesham CE Primary                     | -13                              | -23.21%                  | -3                               | -5.08%                   | -16                   | -14.15%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£6,650                     |
| Powerstock CE VA Primary                 | -4                               | -10.26%                  | -19                              | -32.76%                  | -23                   | -21.51%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£9,559                     |
| Sixpenny Handley First                   | -7                               | -10.94%                  | -7                               | -9.86%                   | -14                   | -10.40%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£5,818                     |
| St Gregory's C of E Primary              | -10                              | -16.67%                  | -7                               | -10.45%                  | -17                   | -13.56%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£7,065                     |
| St Marks CE VA Primary                   | -26                              | -21.67%                  | -20                              | -14.29%                  | -46                   | -17.98%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£19,118                    |
| St Mary and St Joseph's Catholic Primary | -38                              | -31.67%                  | -20                              | -14.29%                  | -58                   | -22.98%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£24,105                    |
| St Michael's CE Primary                  | -14                              | -19.44%                  | -15                              | -17.24%                  | -29                   | -18.34%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£12,053                    |
| Sturminster Marshall First               | -15                              | -22.06%                  | -15                              | -18.07%                  | -30                   | -20.07%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£12,468                    |
| The Woodroffe School                     | -48                              | -6.10%                   | -64                              | -7.52%                   | -112                  | -6.81%                               |                 | £610.939          | -£68,425                    |
| Thorncombe St Mary's                     | -6                               | -20.69%                  | -4                               | -12.12%                  | -10                   | -16.41%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£4,156                     |
| Three Legged Cross First                 | -8                               | -9.52%                   | -10                              | -10.64%                  | -18                   | -10.08%                              | £415.605        |                   | -£7,481                     |
|                                          | -325                             |                          | -269                             |                          | -594                  |                                      |                 |                   | -£300,000                   |