

Criteria for in-year budget allocations to schools experiencing significant growth in pupil numbers

This element of the Growth Fund is ring fenced so that it is only used for the purpose of supporting growth in pre-16 pupil numbers to meet basic need¹. The fund will be for the benefit of both maintained and Academy schools. For Academy Schools, the funding is for an academic year.

The Growth Fund shall include funding for an allocation to those schools that experience exceptional increases in pupil numbers between the October census used for funding original budgets and actual pupil numbers on roll on the following October census

To assist schools in meeting the additional costs arising in such circumstances, an in-year budget addition will be made where the whole school number on roll from Reception up to Year 11 increases up to the point that significant additional costs are expected to be incurred.

The relevant thresholds for additional funding are:

- less than 2 FE schools = 10
- 2 FE schools = 20
- 3 FE and above schools = 25

With the exception of less than 2 FE schools, the amount of additional funding is calculated from the cost of appointing a teacher on Main Scale Point 6 – salary and employer on-costs - for the period September to March.

Less than 2 FE schools will be funded at half the value of other schools sizes, to reflect the lower additional costs expected to be incurred i.e. it is not expected that such schools would ever need to open a new class and recruit a new teacher.

To calculate whether a school is eligible, the following checks will be carried out:

- For the year of entry, the calculation of additional pupils will be capped at the lower of the actual number admitted or the Published Admission Number (PAN), other than where the need to exceed PAN is agreed in advance with the LA.
- Pupil admissions from parental appeals, LAC pupils and pupils with an EHCP are included in the number on roll when checking that a school has not exceeded its PAN in year of entry; these admissions are generally known by May preceding the start of the academic year.
- Schools can request that the Assistant Director: Education and Learning of Education considers additional funding in exceptional circumstances. These will be considered on an individual case basis.
- An appeal to a decision of the Assistant Director: Education and Learning can be made to the Executive Director: People, whose decision will be final.

¹ The DfE define basic need as the statutory duty on local authorities to make sure there are enough school places for children in their local area. This requirement does not extend to individual planning or school designated areas within an authority.

For schools that qualify for this factor the calculation is unchanged from the current methodology that compares the total NOR for statutory aged pupils on roll for the October census in the current financial year with that of the October Census number on roll in the previous financial year.

Where a school does admit pupils above PAN without agreement of the LA, the calculation for a significant growth in pupil numbers will exclude pupils in the year of entry.

There are 2 exceptions to the general policy.

1. This relates to schools that agree with the LA to open a 'surge' class – i.e. one additional class to accommodate up to 30 additional pupils – where additional funding will be allocated irrespective of the actual number of pupils admitted, if the pupils in the 'surge' class are admitted after the census used for funding purposes. The funding allocation will be calculated in the same way as for general in-year growth, applied from the beginning of the term that the 'surge' class is open, [i.e. rather than against the number of months the 'surge' class is open].

Where a 'surge' class opens after the census point used for calculating the school's budget for the next financial year, a further funding top-up will be made to cover the full year cost of a teacher on Main Scale Point 6 and a Learning Support Assistant on Bracknell Forest pay point 12 for the relevant financial year. This funding will be made available for one year only at the commencement of the relevant financial year.

2. This relates to those schools that expand by a whole form of entry. As the current calculation is based on the form of entry at admission, it assumes those schools expanded by a whole form of entry are immediately admitting to all year groups at the increased capacity, when in reality, the increased capacity starts in the entry year, and takes 7 years (5 for a secondary school) to work through the school until admission to full capacity is possible. In order to make a fair calculation of the threshold to be used to calculate in-year growth allowances in these circumstances, the threshold to be used to calculate a growth allowance is calculated on the number of classes available at the census point used to calculate the original budget.

For example, a primary school moving from a 2 form to 3 form entry school has 3 classes in reception in the first year after expansion, and 2 classes in other year groups. The funding threshold for a 2-form entry school is 20 with 25 used for 3 form entry schools. In the first year following expansion, eligibility to growth allocations would be calculated on reception classes at the 25-number threshold, with all other classes at a threshold of 20. For the second year, Reception and Year 1 would be calculated on a 25 threshold, all other year groups on 20 and so on. A full illustration of the calculation is set out below and shows how the funding threshold rises gradually, in line with the phased increase in pupil numbers, starting at 21, and rising to 25 after 7 years.

Approved by the Schools Forum on 15 July 2021