



NORTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date of meeting:	Thursday 21 November 2024
Title of report:	2025-26 School Funding: De-Delegation – School Improvement
Type of report: Delete as required	For decision
Executive summary: Including reason for submission	The report provides LA proposals requesting de-delegation of funding (buy back for maintained nursery schools, special schools and PRU) from school budgets in the 2025-26 financial year to fund statutory services for the provision of school improvement core activities to maintained schools.
Budget / Risk implications:	Potential risk to the school improvement services and resources provided to schools from April 2025.
Recommendations:	As detailed in Section 5 in relation to voting on the options for the de-delegation of funding for LA maintained primary and secondary schools and buyback options for maintained nursery schools, special schools and PRUs for the provision of school improvement core activities to maintained schools for the 2025-26 financial year.
Voting requirements:	De-delegation (buy back for special schools and PRS): LA maintained primary, secondary and special schools and PRS only (in relevant phase)
Appendices:	N/A
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Presenting officer: If not the originator	Louise Wilson



1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents proposals for the de-delegation of funding in relation to the provision of LA core school improvement statutory functions for the 2025-26 financial year. These services were fully funded from de-delegated funds in the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years as a result of the removal, by the DfE, of the LA School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant from the 1st April 2023.
- 1.2 The Schools Forum is asked to consider the report. Relevant phases of LA-maintained schools are asked to vote on recommendations for the de-delegation of funding from school budgets / buy back (for special schools and PRS) for the 2025-26 financial year to fund statutory service provision for the delivery of school improvement core activities.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On the 29th October 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) launched a consultation “Reforming how local authorities’ school improvement functions are funded”. The consultation proposed a 50% reduction to the LA School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant for the 2022-23 financial year, followed by full removal of the Grant in the 2023-24 financial year. The consultation also proposed making provisions within the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations for the 2022-23 financial year to allow local authorities to fund all of their school improvement activity (including all core school improvement activities) via de-delegation from schools’ budget shares. In January 2022, the DfE subsequently confirmed their intention to implement the consultation proposals for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years.
- 2.2 The local authority received £843.4k of funding through the School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant in the 2021-22 financial year. The Grant was reduced to 50% (£371.7k) in the 2022-23 financial year and fully removed for the 2023-24 financial year. The North Yorkshire Schools Forum approved the de-delegation of funding for the 2023-24 financial year to fund statutory service provision for core school improvement activities for maintained secondary and primary schools, and the request for a buy-back arrangement for special schools, PRS and maintained nursery schools.
- 2.3 De-delegation applies only to LA-maintained schools. Where services are able to be de-delegated, the budget is, technically initially delegated to all schools and academies. Services for de-delegation have to be approved by Schools Forum and, if approved, the funding is removed from maintained schools’ budgets before final school budgets are issued.
- 2.4 The amount that can be de-delegated depends on the number of academy conversions; if there are more conversions of schools to academies the total sum de-delegated will reduce.

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- 3.1 The School Improvement de-delegated funding for primary and secondary schools for the 2024-25 financial year is £703.4k. A further £36.9k has been provided through the buy-back of the core School Improvement service by special schools, PRS and maintained nursery schools. The total core School Improvement de-delegated and buy-back funding for the 2024-25 financial year is £740.3k.
- 3.2 The NYC School Improvement (SI) Service is structured to enable all LA maintained schools to receive a core allocation of adviser days to focus on school improvement. In September 2024, there are 198 LA maintained schools; each school is categorised according to the level of risk of 'not' reaching or maintaining a Good or Outstanding judgement at its next inspection. With the categorisation comes an allocation of Senior Education Adviser (SEA) days. Those schools deemed to be least at risk are allocated 6 days of core SEA monitoring, challenge and support time, and the ones most at risk are allocated 12 days of core adviser time. In total, following categorisation in summer 2024, there are 1,524 adviser days allocated to schools. The 13 SEAs are managed by three Principal Advisers (Monitoring) who are in turn line-managed by a Head of Service. In addition to managing the school-based SEAs, the Head of Service and Principal Advisers (Monitoring) have oversight of service priorities and specialist teams including early years, safeguarding, attendance and PSHE and well-being. The SI Service also provides strategic oversight of the Professional Governance Service.
- 3.3 In addition to core school improvement work, the service supports the LA to meet its statutory duties in relation to early years, assessment and moderation, SACRE, and attendance. Beyond this, SEAs support headteacher recruitment and performance management. The service offers a menu of traded activity through NYES. At all levels, advisers work alongside other council services, acting as a link to schools, for example in strategic planning, schools finance, schools HR, Health and Safety, SEND and Inclusion and the Virtual School. Members of the SI service support the work of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NYSCP) through their attendance at sub committees and linking their monitoring activity to the partnership's Section 175 audit process. Advisers and SI leadership work alongside Ofsted, DfE, four Diocesan bodies, MAT leaders and the range of other stakeholders and system partners across the county.
- 3.4 The delegated funds form a significant part of the income associated with managing the service. Additional income is also received through the Early Years DSG, public health funding as well as previously agreed de-delegated funding to support schools causing concern and an allocation from the council's net budget.
- 3.5 The proportion of North Yorkshire schools and academies judged good or better by Ofsted has improved strongly since the school improvement strategy was introduced in its first iteration in September 2021. As at 31 August 2024, 88% of state funded schools in North Yorkshire are good or better compared to 84% in August 2023 and compared to just 81% in October 2021. This equates to a 7% increase in the proportion of state funded schools in North Yorkshire judged good or better in the period since October 2021. The proportion of North Yorkshire primary schools judged good or outstanding as at 31 August 2024 is 89%; the figure is 79% for secondary schools. Both figures represent an improvement on the October 2021 position. Furthermore,



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100% of PRUs have been judged good by Ofsted in their most recent inspections and 100% of LA maintained nurseries settings have been judged good by Ofsted in their most recent inspections. There has been strong improvement in the proportion of special schools judged good or outstanding as at August 31 2024; all six LA maintained special schools remain good or outstanding.

In addition, no schools were judged ineffective for safeguarding in the 2023/24 academic year, for the second consecutive year, and no safeguarding concerns have been identified in schools judged inadequate as a result of ineffective safeguarding arrangements prior to September 2022 in subsequent S8 Ofsted monitoring visits.

3.6 The table below provides a summary of the proportion of schools and settings by type that have been judged good or outstanding in their most recent Ofsted inspection:

North Yorkshire	Phase	England
100%	Nursery	97%
89%	Primary	92%
79%	Secondary	84%
82%	Special	91%
100%	PRU	86%

Ofsted Monthly Management report as at 31 August 2024

4.0 DE-DELEGATION PROPOSALS FOR STATUTORY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT CORE SERVICE PROVISION

4.1 LAs are required to make a clear statement of how the funding is applied for a de-delegated service. The Schools Forum considered the methodology to be adopted for the de-delegation of funds for the 2024-25 financial year. The following principles were adopted in the decision of the approved methodology:

- The de-delegated funding recovered from each sector broadly reflects the costs of service delivery to the sector i.e. there is no funding cross subsidy between the primary and secondary sectors.
- The de-delegation funding recovered reflects, as far as possible, the standard core school improvement services that each school receives irrespective of phase or size.
- The level of de-delegation funding recovered has some regard to the size of school i.e. funding recovered has a degree of proportionality to the size of the school.
- The de-delegation methodology complies with DfE prescribed funding requirements. These requirements do not allow for the LA school improvement risk rating for a school or a school’s Ofsted rating to be used as the methodology for de-delegation. They also do not allow a percentage “top slice” to be applied to schools’ budgets as the de-delegation methodology.

4.2 The following methodology was adopted for the de-delegation of funds for core school improvement service statutory functions for the 2024-25 financial year:

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	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Lump Sum Per School	£3,200	£3,200
Amount Per Pupil	£2.35	£2.86

4.3 The DfE schools’ revenue funding operational guidance states that de-delegation does not apply to special schools, maintained nursery schools, or PRUs. Where de-delegation has been agreed for maintained primary and secondary schools, the DfE presume that the local authority will offer the service on a buy back basis to those establishments that are not covered by the de-delegation. For the 2024-25 financial year buy-back of the core school improvement statutory service was offered on the following basis:

- Maintained nursery schools – Primary methodology
- Special Schools and PRU – Secondary methodology

4.4 The local authority proposes to de-delegate the funds for the core school improvement statutory service provision for the 2025-26 financial year based on the methodology and funding levels agreed by the Schools Forum for the 2024-25 financial year.

4.5 Having kept the lump sum and pupil funding unit values in 2024-25 at the same values as in 2023-24, it is proposed to increase the de-delegation unit values and per pupil amount by 2.5% - please see table below:

	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Lump Sum Per School	£3,280	£3,280
Amount Per Pupil	£2.41	£2.93

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 LA-maintained primary sector Schools Forum members are asked to approve the de-delegation of funding for the statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2025-26 financial on the basis of a lump sum per school of £3,280 and a per pupil amount of £2.41.

5.2 LA-maintained secondary sector Schools Forum members are asked to approve the de-delegation of funding for the statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2025-26 financial on the basis of a lump sum per school of £3,280 and a per pupil amount of £2.93.

5.3 LA maintained school members of the Schools Forum are asked to support the LA requesting maintained nursery schools to approve the buyback charge based on the Primary School de-delegation methodology for the statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2025-26 financial year.

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- 5.4 LA maintained school members of the Schools Forum are asked to support the LA requesting special schools and PRS to approve the buyback charge based on for the Secondary School de-delegation methodology for statutory service provision of school improvement core activities for the 2025-26 financial year.

STUART CARLTON

Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service