



CESSATION OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MONITORING AND BROKERING GRANT (LAM GRANT).

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Early Years & Schools Forum (the Forum) with an update on the funding and position of the Education Improvement Service (EIS) provided by the Local Authority to maintained schools.

Information and Advice

2. The Government consulted on the ultimate removal of this grant to Local Authorities (LA's) by 1 April 2023 and the grant has been halved for the financial year 2022-23. The grant allocation for 2021-22 was £642,941. As this calculation is based on the number of pupils attending maintained schools, the forecast for the 22-23 financial year is £279,084; final confirmation will be in the Autumn term.
3. Due to Covid and the inability to actually spend the grant, there is £974k of unspent grant in reserve as at 31st March 2022. £518k of this is earmarked to be spent in 2022-23 to cover the grant reduction and maintain the current structure.
4. The Government consultation ran concurrently with a DFE proposal to alter the schools' financial regulations to allow LAs to agree with Schools Forums the delegation on a per pupil basis for school improvement from the maintained schools' budgets. Information about the consultation outcomes can be accessed at the following link: [Government response - Reforming how LA SI functions are funded \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-how-la-si-functions-are-funded)
5. This Government decision is aligned with the proposals outlined in the Education White Paper 2022 which aims to have secured a largely academised education sector by 2030. At that point the responsibility for school improvement will sit with multi academy trusts. However for the next 7 years, at least, Nottinghamshire will continue to have statutory responsibilities for the significant number of pupils attending maintained schools and who deserve a good or outstanding education.
6. The Education Improvement Advisers currently support and intervene in maintained schools at risk of being judged to be less than good to secure rapid improvement. In addition, this team coordinates and quality assures the support brokered for Requires Improvement (RI) schools and also provides essential intervention to maintained schools in crisis.

7. In living memory, there has always been significant active involvement of this team in maintained schools technically judged to be good and outstanding but at risk of special measures or serious weaknesses. Good or better schools are deemed to be self-improving with the limited available school improvement resource targeted at RI schools and those transitioning to a sponsored academy because of an adverse Ofsted judgment. Further details about the service and success of the EIS can be found in **Appendix A**.
8. The funding for the LA's EIS (1 x Team Manager; 6x Advisers; 2 RR consultants) comprises:-
- £117K of LA revenue budget
 - £106k from the sold service to schools
 - £28K from the DSG (Former ESG funding)
 - £497K from the school improvement grant
9. This issue is being faced by LA's across the country and there are a range of options which we could take to raise the £497k per year required to maintain the current service :-

Option 1

De-delegate the entire amount on a per pupil basis for maintained schools budgets. This would equate to approximately £13.24 per pupil (based on latest pupil no's). For context we currently de-delegate £8.24 per pupil generating £314,741K to cover costs around: crisis comms, FSM eligibility, Trade unions, EAL.

Option 2

The LA would need to increase its contribution from £117K to £614K (£497k increase).

Option 3

If the full costs of the EIS service were to be proportionately divided between LA and maintained schools, the burden on both the LA and maintained schools could be. For example, a 50:50 split between the LA and de-delegated from the schools budgets would cost the LA £248k and £6.62 per pupil.

10. Without the additional funding identified the service would have to be reduced or cease. The income generated by the Team would be reduced / lost. There are a number of reasons why this is not considered a good option:-
- The expertise and capacity (by reducing the team) would be lost so the Authority would need to be externally procure these skills. This could be expensive and potentially cause delays in getting help to the school.
 - It is not in the interests of the children to wait until the school performance has become inadequate before there is any intervention to raise standards and ensure safeguarding.
 - Pupil outcomes would be adversely impacted by the delayed intervention process.
 - The Local Authority would still require staff to co-ordinate the procurement of support for inadequate schools.
11. It should be noted that when a maintained school goes into an adverse Ofsted category, there are additional support costs which have been covered by this grant. Once the grant has ceased, consideration will need to be given to costs arising from schools in an adverse Ofsted

category. Whilst, in principle, these costs could be transferred to the actual school (schools are required to cover significant costs from their own budgets), it should be noted that a feature of failing schools is often a weak budget position. The Secretary of State for Education retains a responsibility to convert the poorest performing maintained schools (that Ofsted has judged as “inadequate”) into academies, therefore some funding is available to support the transition. When a school academises, any negative budget deficits, remain with the LA and any surpluses transfer to the new academy.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Early years and Schools Forum:

- 1) Consider the options to de-delegate (maintained sector only) and this to form part of the consultation process at the November Early Years and School Forum meeting.

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Appendix A

The work of the Education Improvement Team is crucial to ensuring that our maintained schools are supported and challenged to deliver a good or outstanding education to the pupils of Nottinghamshire.

In 2021/22 the Education Improvement Service provided intensive coaching and challenge primarily to those LA maintained schools judged to be requiring improvement or those vulnerable to an adverse judgement as a result of declining provision. There were 39 section 5 inspections of LA maintained schools and the impact of the strong partnership working of EIS and schools is clear:

- 13 of these inspections were of RI schools and 9 moved to good
- only one received a lower judgement at inspection
- Of the 13 RI schools only 3 remain RI
- EIS advisers provided direct support during each inspection, speaking to the lead inspector attending feedback and immediately adjusting support.

As a result of these improved outcomes:

- 2,699 children now attend a good LA maintained school which was previously judged to be RI
- 2,072 more children attend an LA maintained school judged to be good compared to 20/21.

The Education Improvement service ensures the LA meets its statutory duties in assessment, recruitment, and formal interventions:

- Providing moderation of key stage tests and teacher assessments
- Fulfilling the role of director's representative during the headteacher recruitment process for LA maintained schools (more than 20 recruitments this year).
- Recommending, issuing, monitoring, and lifting warning notices to governing bodies as appropriate.

The Education Improvement Service also provides a universal support offer to the 170+ schools that are currently Local Authority maintained:

- 26 good/outstanding schools had a review by EIS this year with recommendations and guidance given for improvement, 23 retained their good judgement at inspection
- The service is also responsible for running the East Midlands Education Support service which provides competitively priced CPD matched to the needs of Nottinghamshire schools which is accessed through a comprehensive website. All of the LA maintained schools accessed at least one event this year with the majority accessing 3 or more.