

## ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM

**Date and Time:-** Friday 27 March 2026 at 8.30 a.m.

**Venue:-** Rockingham Professional Development Centre,  
Roughwood Road, Rotherham. S61 4HY

The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

### AGENDA

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Welcome by the Chair and introductions by all Forum Members present.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies from any Forum Member who are unable to attend the meeting.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

To invite Forum Members to declare any interests they may have on agenda items to be considered at this meeting, to confirm the nature of those interests and whether they intend to leave the meeting for the consideration of the item.

**4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 11)**

To receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

**5. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

To consider and report on any matters arising from the previous minutes.

**6. Membership and Constitution of the Rotherham Schools Forum (Standing Item)**

To consider any updates or amendments to the membership of the Schools Forum.

**7. Schools Budgets 2025-26 - Latest Position (March 2026) (Pages 13 - 17)**

Report from the Principal Finance Officer (CYPS).

**Recommendations:**

That Schools Forum:

1. Notes the latest DSG funding for schools for the 2025/26 financial year.
2. Notes the forecast positions of Rotherham's maintained schools and the centrally retained DSG budgets for the year.

**8. High Needs Budget and Funding Arrangements 2026/27 (Pages 19 - 29)**

Report from the Head of Finance (CYPS).

**Recommendations:**

That Schools Forum:

1. Notes the high needs funding settlement for 2026/27.
2. Notes the proposed funding requirements across the range of SEND provision and the number of commissioned SEND places for 2026/27.

**9. Falling Rolls and New Housing Developments (Pages 31 - 37)**

Head of Service - Access to Education to report.

**Recommendation:**

That Members of Schools Forum receive and note the update.

**10. Schools Forum Forward Plan (Pages 39 - 42)**

To consider the attached Forward Plan of agenda items and receive any updates.

**11. Any Other Business**

To receive any other items of urgent business.

**The next meeting of the Rotherham Schools Forum will  
be held on Friday 12 June 2026  
commencing at 8.30 a.m.  
in Rockingham Professional Development Centre.**



John Edwards,  
**Chief Executive**

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM  
FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 2026**

Present:-

Mark Windle – Badsley Primary (Primary Maintained) (in the Chair)  
 John Barnett – Thorogate Junior and Infant (Primary Maintained)  
 Kate Blythe – Rawmarsh Ryecroft Infant (Primary Maintained)  
 Carol Brookes – Wales High School (Academy)  
 Simon Currie – School Governor Representative (Primary Maintained)  
 Lynsey Hadfield - Executive Head, Arnold Nursery (Maintained)  
 David Horrigan – Maltby Learning Trust (Primary Academy)  
 Colin Price – NEU Representative  
 Mark Ryan – RNN Group  
 Karen Smith - Nexus MAT (Special Academy)  
 Nevine Towers - Head of Business and Operations (Primary Academy)  
 Paula Williams – Special School Governor Representative (Special Academy)  
 Joel Wirth – Principal TRC and Deputy CEO Inspire Trust (Secondary Academy)

Joshua Amahwe – Head of Finance (CYPS)  
 Aileen Chambers – Head of Service – Early Years and Childcare  
 Mark Cummins – Transformation Lead Officer (CYPS)  
 Niall Devlin – Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion  
 Louise Keith – Principal Finance Officer (CYPS)

Apologies were received from:-

Councillor Victoria Cusworth – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People  
 Paul Higginbottom – Swinton Queen Primary (Primary Academy)  
 Lee Morritt – Rotherham Aspire (PRU)  
 Steve Scott – Happy Kids (PVI Nursery)

**36. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to today's meetings and introductions were made.

**37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**38. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

**39. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

No matters arising arose during the consideration of the previous meeting minutes.

**40. MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION OF THE ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS FORUM (STANDING ITEM)**

Consideration was given to the membership and constitution of the Schools' Forum and suggested changes were put forward for the Forum's approval.

**Resolved:**

That the resignation of Sarah Philips, representing Primary School Governors be received.

**41. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT / SCHOOLS BUDGET UPDATE 2025/26**

The Principal Finance Officer presented a report on the latest position of the schools' budget for 2025/26 and commented on the following:

- The latest confirmed DSG funding position, which included a reduction to the Schools Block following a maintained secondary school academisation and a small increase to Early Years funding reflecting updated pupil premium and entitlement data
- The latest forecasted position for the Centrally Retained Schools Block and the factors that were attributable to the variance.
- The anticipated DSG reserves deficit, which differed from the balanced position expected under the final year of the Safety Valve Agreement and reflected cumulative SEND demand and cost pressures in recent years.
- The extension of statutory DSG deficit protections, which provided the Council with flexibility to carry forward the forecast year-end deficit, and the DfE's request for a new five-year DSG plan setting out the financial trajectory beyond the Safety Valve Agreement and demonstrating medium-term sustainability.
- The latest delegated schools budget position for maintained schools, which showed an overall increase in balances, driven by rises in

nursery and PRU balances, but partly offset by reduced primary balances and the impact of a secondary school converting to academy status.

- The latest position of the three schools operating with licensed deficits, all of which remained on track to return to a sustainable financial position and continued to be closely monitored.
- The 2025/26 February monitoring returns from local authority maintained schools which would be submitted to the Council on 6 February 2026.

It was also noted that the meeting date stated in the report title was incorrect and should read 16th January 2026.

**Resolved:**

That the Schools Forum:

1. Noted the latest DSG funding for schools for the 2025/26 financial year.
2. Noted the forecast positions of Rotherham's maintained schools and the centrally retained DSG budgets for the year.

**42. SCHOOLS FUNDING SETTLEMENT (2026/27)**

The Head of Finance provided details on the 2026/27 schools funding settlement for Rotherham, as announced by the Department for Education in December 2025.

The total provisional Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation for Rotherham amounted to £391.148m representing an overall increase of £23.505m compared with the previous year. The DSG continued to be made up of the Schools, High Needs, Early Years, and Central Schools Services blocks and funding allocations were noted as follows:-

- Schools Block funding £271.959 million
- Central Schools Services Block funding £2.488 million
- Early Years Block funding £49.712 million
- High Needs Block funding £66.989 million

Attention was drawn to the rationale for the various increases in funding with particular attention drawn to the continued fall in pupil numbers, which was directly impacting the Schools Block despite overall funding increases.

The Head of Finance went on to explain that this was a year of national transition, with the High Needs National Funding Formula suspended and

major SEND reforms expected in 2026. Early Years funding had risen significantly due to the Government's expansion of childcare entitlements, while the High Needs Block continues to face the greatest financial pressure, intensified by the forthcoming end of Safety Valve support.

The Forum was advised that Pupil Premium Grant allocations for 2026/27 were still to be confirmed, and that forthcoming national changes to free school meal (FSM) eligibility from September 2026 would significantly widen entitlement. The PE and Sport Premium was expected to continue at similar levels to 2025/26, with allocations based on pupil numbers recorded in the January 2025 census.

The Forum discussed the suspension of the High Needs National Funding Formula and the challenges this presented for planning a longer-term strategy.

Members queried the potential impact of future changes, and it was noted that significant national reform was expected, with the forthcoming publication of the SEND White Paper.

The Forum also considered the continuing fall in overall pupil numbers alongside rising numbers of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). It was confirmed that the reduction of 467 pupils related to total school-age population within the Schools Block and did not include special schools. High Needs demand was expected to continue rising, including within mainstream settings.

Questions were raised regarding the forthcoming widening of FSM eligibility from September 2026 and specifically implications for special schools. It was noted that no specific funding guidance had yet been issued for special schools, and indicative analysis had identified that the changes may not lead to a significant net increase in eligible pupils due to transitional protection changes. Funding arrangements for free school meals would be managed separately and would not form part of the DSG.

Members also sought an update on potential High Needs top-up rate increases from April. It was confirmed that the High Needs budget was still being developed and would be reported to Schools Forum in March. Given rising EHCP numbers and bespoke cost pressures, no indication of uplift levels could yet be provided, and further internal discussions remained ongoing.

The Forum was advised that a discussion with the DfE had been arranged to consider approaches to deficit management and longer-term financial planning.

**Resolved:**

That the Schools Forum noted the content of the report.

**43. SCHOOLS BLOCK DSG BUDGET (2026/27)**

The Principal Finance Officer presented an overview of the 2026/27 Schools Block allocation, noting that the overall budget had increased, largely due to rolled-in grant funding and national uplift adjustments.

Reference was made to the National Funding Formula per-pupil funding rates for both primary and secondary pupils, and it was highlighted that, despite a reduction in pupil numbers, the overall funding position remained broadly consistent with the national settlement.

Rotherham's local formula continued to move closer to the National Funding Formula, with uplifts applied to the basic entitlement and additional needs factors.

The Minimum Funding Guarantee had been set at 0%, ensuring that no school would see a reduction in per-pupil funding. Seven schools would receive protection through the MFG, representing a significant decrease from the previous year.

To manage affordability, capping and scaling measures had been applied, and funding for growth and falling rolls would continue to be administered outside the main formula. Reference was also made to the agreed transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block as agreed by the Schools Forum at its previous meeting.

Forum Members discussed the proposed de-delegated funding, with a particular focus on the contingency budget allocation which had increased despite falling pupil numbers. The Head of Finance explained that changes across some budget lines were largely due to a reduction in the number of maintained schools and ongoing academisation. The contingency amount reflected the level of support anticipated for schools expected to experience financial pressures in the coming year.

Forum Members also discussed the wider challenge of forecasting financial pressures, noting that fluctuating live birth rates and changing pupil numbers made forward planning increasingly difficult. This was emphasised as a particular concern for infant schools managing high levels of SEND within a small and variable pupil cohort.

The maintained Primary and Secondary school representatives undertook a formal vote on the de-delegation proposals set out in the report. All four representatives eligible to vote participated and unanimously supported the proposals.

**Resolved:**

That the Schools Forum:

1. Noted the Schools Block DSG allocation for 2026/27 and the

implemented changes to the local schools funding formula as outlined in paragraphs 7 to 19 of this report.

2. Noted that the proposed 2026/27 schools funding formula incorporates a funding transfer of 0.5% to the high needs block (as approved by the Forum on 5th December 2025).
3. Approved the funding for maintained primary & secondary schools outlined in paragraph 22 to be de-delegated and retained by the Council to fund schools related expenditure.

#### **44. EARLY YEARS BLOCK DSG BUDGET (2026/27)**

The Head of Finance (CYPS) outlined the proposed funding arrangements for Rotherham's Early Years Block for 2026/27.

Rotherham's provisional settlement for the 2026/27 early years block was £49.7m which represented an increase of £7.3m. The increase was driven by expected growth in take-up of entitlements, particularly for two-year-olds and under-2s, alongside national increases to funding rates.

The Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) continued to underpin allocations, with 2026/27 funding rates rising by 5.3% for 3–4-year-olds and 4.3% for under-2s to reflect cost pressures across the sector. The significant growth in funding for two-year-olds and under-2s, reflected the full-year effect of the entitlement expansion.

Grants including National Insurance and teachers' pay grant had been rolled into the Early Years DSG to simplify the funding model. The Forum's attention was drawn to the DfE's move to a termly funding system which would represent a significant change to current arrangements. The new model was expected to provide more accurate in-year allocations compared with the previous system, which often lagged behind actual participation.

Reference was made to the consultation undertaken with Early Years providers on the proposed funding changes, including the Government's increase in the pass-through requirement from 96% to 97%. Feedback from providers had been generally supportive of the proposals.

Attention was also drawn to the draft Early Years budget for 2026/27 as set out in paragraph 6 of the report.

As part of the next steps and in line with statutory requirements, all Early Years providers would be informed of their confirmed base rate by 28 February 2026.

Forum Members went on to discuss the use of the EY Journal Tool within the ISG Tier 2 and Tier 3 processes. The methodology for Tier 3 funding distribution was currently under review, with a finalised approach still to be

confirmed. Tier 2, which covered low and emerging needs, was aligned with government guidance, and the local approach was designed to move increasingly towards this national position.

Forum Members noted that only four maintained schools had responded to the consultation and expressed concern regarding the low response rate. Although all schools with Foundation Stage 1 provision had been contacted, the reasons for the low level of response remained unclear. The local authority confirmed that substantial efforts had been made to promote the consultation, including four virtual information sessions and engagement through cross-sector groups.

The Early Years team was commended for the quality of its service; however, Forum Members remained concerned about the low level of school engagement with the consultation and agreed that the approach to issuing future consultations should be reviewed to improve participation.

**Resolved:**

That the Schools Forum:

1. Noted the provisional DSG funding settlement for the early years block for Rotherham for 2026/27.
2. Noted the proposed arrangements for allocating the early years funding to providers for 3 & 4 year olds, 2 year olds and under 2's.
3. Endorsed the proposed early years funding rates to providers for the 2026/27 financial year.

**45. CENTRAL SCHOOL SERVICES BLOCK DSG BUDGET (2026/27)**

The Head of Finance (CYPS) presented the Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) budgets for 2026–27. It was noted that the CSSB provided funding to the local authority to deliver statutory and regulatory education functions on behalf of all schools, with allocation levels driven by pupil numbers and a nationally applied funding rate.

The confirmed allocation for 2026/27 was broadly in line with the previous year, with only minimal variation once rolled-in grants had been taken into account.

Forum Members were advised that the allocation was divided into two categories: services that do not require Schools Forum approval, and those that do. Ongoing commitments requiring approval included school admissions, Schools Forum administration, SACRE, safeguarding duties, retained duties, and other statutory responsibilities. No significant changes were proposed to those budgets other than a small increase to the school admissions budget to reflect pay and National Insurance cost pressures, with all other budget lines remaining at 2025/26 levels.

Eligible members voted on whether the Schools Forum agreed with the proposed 2026/27 funding arrangements for ongoing commitments as set out in paragraph 16 of the report and unanimously supported the proposals.

**Resolved:**

That the Schools Forum:

1. Noted the DSG Allocation for Central Schools Services Block for 2026-27.
2. Approved the proposed 2026-27 budget allocation as outlined in the table in paragraph 16 of the report.

**46. SEND SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY MID YEAR UPDATE**

The SEND Transformation Project Lead presented an update outlining the development of the new SEND Sufficiency Strategy, which will replace the current strategy delivered through the Safety Valve programme when it concludes at the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

The new strategy aligned closely with the Rotherham SEND Strategy *My Life My Rights* and supported the continued ambition to enable more children to be educated within their local communities.

Significant progress had been made under the current strategy, including the creation of additional resource provision places and growth in specialist school capacity. Demand continued to rise, with 4,065 children holding an EHCP, increasing pressure on specialist settings which are already operating over capacity.

Place planning data indicated that Rotherham currently provided more special school places than national averages, while fewer children with EHCPs are educated in mainstream compared to national levels, although this gap has narrowed significantly.

The new strategy would continue to develop local provision across mainstream, specialist and independent sectors, with a stronger emphasis on the graduated response, outreach support, and ensuring sufficiency at pre-16 and post-16 phases.

Stakeholder consultation had informed the development of the strategy, which sets out seven key aspirations for strengthening local SEND provision. Progress will be overseen through the SEND Sufficiency Board, the SEND Executive Partnership Board, and through annual Scrutiny and Cabinet reporting. A formal decision on the approval of the new strategy was scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in February.

Forum Members discussed the sustainability of new resource provisions, emphasising the importance of ensuring the right level of support to ensure models remained effective and sustainable.

The Forum noted the ongoing gap between local and national levels of mainstream inclusion, with further work required to increase the proportion of pupils supported in mainstream settings. Members also acknowledged the strong partnership working between the local authority and special schools, and emphasised the importance of clear pathways, effective transition planning, and ensuring that internal resources are appropriately supported.

**Resolved:**

That the Schools Forum received and noted the update.

**47. SCHOOLS FORUM FORWARD PLAN**

The current version of the Forward Plan was reviewed by the Forum and Members were invited to suggest any relevant issues they felt should form the basis of a future report.

**Resolved:**

- That any additions to the Forward Plan be submitted to the Secretary of the Forum for consideration and inclusion.

**48. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Induction for New Members

It was agreed that a Working Group would be established (via the Clerk) to consider arrangements for the induction of new Forum members.

**49. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Resolved:**

1. That the next meeting of the Schools' Forum takes place on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 at 8.30 a.m. at Rockingham PDC.
2. That the dates proposed for future meetings as listed on the agenda be agreed.

The Chair of the Forum concluded business and thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

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<b>REPORT FOR SCHOOLS FORUM</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Schools Budgets 2025-26 – Latest Position (March 2026)</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Corporate Services</b>

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the schools funding for 2025/26 and the latest monitoring position for the Local Authority maintained schools budgets and centrally retained Dedicated Schools Grants (DSG) budgets.

**2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 **Note the latest DSG funding for schools for the 2025/26 financial year.**
- 2.2 **Note the forecast positions of Rotherham’s maintained schools and the centrally retained DSG budgets for the year.**

**3. LATEST DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2025/26**

- 3.1 The latest confirmed DSG funding allocation for Rotherham for 2025-26 is £118.098m, which includes a total of £25.758m in Schools Block funding for the LA maintained schools.

	Nov 2025 Allocation (£m)	Jan 2026 Allocation (£m)	Change (£m)
Schools Block	25.758	25.758	-
Central Schools Services Block	1.794	1.794	-
Early Years Block	42.395	42.395	-
High Needs Block	48.151	48.151	-
<b>Total DSG</b>	<b>118.098</b>	<b>118.098</b>	<b>-</b>

**4. UPDATE ON CENTRALLY RETAINED DSG BUDGETS**

- 4.1 These relate to budgets for schools’ expenditure that are retained centrally and where it is cost effective to be managed by the council. It comprises in the main, elements of the schools’ block, early years, and the high needs DSG blocks. The table below summarises the latest forecast position across all the centrally retained DSG budgets.

	Budget 2025/26 (£m)	Feb 2026 Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
Schools Block	0.36	0.29	-0.07
Central Schools Services Block	1.79	1.78	-0.01
Early Years Block	42.39	41.68	-0.71
High Needs Block	49.45	53.06	3.61
<b>Total DSG</b>	<b>93.99</b>	<b>96.81</b>	<b>2.82</b>

### Schools Block

- 4.2 The centrally retained schools block budget of £355k represents the amount de-delegated from maintained schools' funding and managed centrally by the council. Overall, the budgets centrally managed by the council are showing an overall forecast underspend of £0.07m for 2025-26. This is driven by lower than anticipated commitments against the Falling Rolls fund £50k, and School Improvement £14k, Schools in Financial Difficulty of £5k and Growth Fund of £1k.

	Budget 2025/26 (£m)	Feb Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)
<b>De-delegated Budgets:</b>			
School Improvement	0.15	0.14	-0.01
Trade Union Facility Time	0.02	0.02	-
Schools in Financial Difficulty	0.04	0.03	-0.01
<b>Centrally retained budgets:</b>			
Growth Funding	0.10	0.10	-
Falling Rolls	0.05	-	-0.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>0.07</b>

### Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

- 4.3 The DSG allocation for CSSB remains unchanged at £1.794m for the year. The CSSB DSG funding is used to support ongoing commitments such as SACRE, Teachers Pensions costs, Schools Forum admin costs, Schools Admissions and Copyright Licensing. A balanced budget position is currently forecast for the year across the CSSB budgets.

### Early Years Block

- 4.4 The Early Years block is currently reporting an underspend of £0.72m. This is primarily driven by Early Education Funding, particularly the increased entitlement for 2-year-olds and under-2s following the Autumn Term Adjustment and the Spring headcount. Work is ongoing to refine the year-end forecast using updated headcount data for 3- and 4-year-olds, 2-year-olds, and under-2s (including the expanded entitlement). The final position will be reported at the June meeting, alongside the projected clawback for the July adjustment relating to 2025–26.

### High Needs Block

- 4.5 A cost pressure of £3.61m is currently forecast for the High Needs block and mainly relates to SEND provision and support. The latest forecast is an increase compared to the planned approved deficit for 2025/26 of £2.5m. The forecast deficit is mainly due to the following; inflationary costs; increase in EHCP pupils in mainstream and special schools; and continuing placements in out of authority independent settings (although it should be noted that placements in out of borough schools have stabilised).
- 4.6 It should be noted that DSG deficits would need to be managed within allocated DSG funds, as LAs are not allowed to cover DSG deficits using their General Fund resources. The Safety Valve Programme, which is the framework for managing the demand challenges and cost pressures in the high needs block comes to an end on 31 March 2026. Going forward, the expectation is that ongoing financial sustainability issues would be addressed as part of the implementation of the SEND reforms and detailed in the SEND Action Plans to be submitted by the Council.

### Overall DSG Reserves position

- 4.7 An overall deficit is currently anticipated in the DSG reserves (£3.6m) in 2025/26 compared to a balanced position assumed in the signed Safety Valve Agreement. It should be noted that 2025/26 represents the last year of the Safety Valve Agreement / programme. The forecast deficit in the DSG reserves in 2025/26 is due to the cumulative impact of demand challenges and cost pressures facing the SEND system over recent years.

4.8 The current statutory deficit protections has been extended by the Government for another 2 years to 31 March 2028 (originally planned to cease by the end of the current year). This would now provide flexibility for the Council to carry forward the 2025/26 year end DSG reserve deficit of £3.6m.

4.9 A High Needs Stability Grant has been announced to support LA's with DSG unusable reserves deficits. The grant will only be available to authorities with a deficit at the end of 25/26. The grant will cover 90% of the deficit built up by LA's by 25/26, the calculation has been set to not disadvantage authorities who gained support through the safety valve. Financial support will be subject to approval of local SEND reform plans.

## 5. UPDATE ON DELEGATED SCHOOLS BUDGETS

5.1 The forecast net balances as reported by 19 LA maintained primary, secondary and special schools and nurseries in their December budget monitoring statements are shown below.

	2024/25 Outturn (£m)	2025/26 Original Budget (£m)	2025/26 Latest forecast (£m)	Variance (£m)
Nursery	0.806	0.666	0.764	0.098
Primary	1.223	0.790	1.007	0.217
Secondary	0.509	0.126	-	-0.126
PRU	-0.182	-0.358	-0.215	0.143
	<b>2.356</b>	<b>1.224</b>	<b>1.556</b>	<b>0.332</b>

5.2 Main highlights from the above:

- The Feb forecast positions indicate a decrease in surplus balances of £800k compared to the 2024/25 final outturn position. Of this, £537k is attributable to schools that have converted since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and the remaining £263k is mainly due to the increased financial pressures faced by schools.
- When compared to the original budget, the Feb monitoring position shows a net increase in reported balances of £332k. Primary school balances have increased by £217k, Nursery schools balances have increased by £98k and the PRU by £143k.
- The latest position includes a total of 3 schools operating under a licensed deficit for 2025/26, of which 2 schools will receive funding through the Schools in Financial Difficulty (DSG) fund. All schools in deficit have budget recovery plans in place to return their budgets to a sustainable position with an agreed timeframe. The following detailed the latest position for those schools with deficit balances

	Original budget	Feb 2025 position	Comments
Aston Fence J&I	-£0.034	-£0.022	
Wales Primary	-£0.045	-£0.035	£20k SIFD funding
Rawmarsh Ryecroft	-£0.026	£0.013	£12k SIFD funding

- Local Authority maintained schools will submit their 2025/26 Final outturn monitoring at the end of March 2026.

### **NAMES & CONTACT DETAILS**

Louise Keith  
Principal Finance Officer (Schools Finance)  
Tel: 01709 822786  
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<b>REPORT FOR SCHOOLS FORUM</b>
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1.	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b>
2.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>High Needs Budget and Funding Arrangements 2026/27</b>
3.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Corporate Services</b>

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- The purpose of this report is to inform the Forum of the funding arrangements of the high needs funding block and the approach to determining the 2026/27 budget.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- It is recommended that the Schools' Forum:
  - Note the high needs funding settlement for 2026/27.**
  - Note the proposed funding requirements across the range of SEND provision and the number of commissioned SEND places for 2026/27.**

**BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**2026/27 High Needs Funding Allocations

- The high needs funding system supports provision for pupils and students with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), from early years to age 25. The high needs funding block provides local authorities with resources for place and top-up funding for institutions, and for high needs services delivered directly by the local authority or under a separate agreement with providers.
- The table below outline the level of high needs funding available for 2026/27 compared to the current year:

<b><u>RESOURCES</u></b>	<b>2025/26 £'000</b>	<b>2026/27 £'000</b>	<b>Change £'000</b>
Baseline HN DSG funding	62,459	66,989	4,530
Adjust for DFE funded places	-14,308	-15,787	-1,479
Block funding transfer to HNB	1,298	1,352	54
<b>Total High Needs Budget</b>	<b>49,449</b>	<b>52,554</b>	<b>3,105</b>

5. The confirmed high needs block funding for 2026/27 is £66.989m (before adjustment for DFE funded places in academies). The funding increase of £4.530M is wholly attributable to previous grants rolled into the HN allocations in 2026/27.
6. The high needs funding allocation for Rotherham is adjusted for high needs places funded directly by the DFE in academies, non-maintained special schools, and post 16 places. The forecast adjustment amount is £15.787m (actual recouped funding will be confirmed in summer 2026).
7. The block funding transfer reflects the 0.5% funding transfer from the schools block to the high needs budget as agreed by Schools Forum in December 2025.

### 2026/27 High Needs Funding Framework

8. The government published the revised 2026/27 high needs operational guidance in December 2025. The following sets out the key highlights of the high needs funding system for 2026/27:
  - the high needs national funding formula used in previous years to calculate funding allocations has been temporarily suspended for 2026/27.
  - High needs allocations for 2026/27 are based on 2025/26 levels, with adjustments. The methodology for allocating high needs funding would be reviewed so that it supports the SEND reforms.
  - An import/export adjustment continues to reflect pupils educated in or out of area.
  - Funding continues to be split between place funding (core) and top-up funding (to meet additional education needs).
  - A 0% minimum funding guarantee continues for special schools and special academies based on 2025/26 baseline funding.
  - Some previous grants are now rolled into the DSG with the expectation that this funding are passported to eligible special and Alternative Provision schools and settings.
  - The regulations would allow local authorities to use their high needs funding to fund LA central support services and to provide additional or targeted support for children and young people with SEND.

### Legacy Funding or Rolled in grants

9. For 2026/27, some funding streams that were previously paid as separate grants are now built into the DSG high needs block allocation (including the 2025/26 Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG) and earlier teachers' pay/pensions and other legacy funding).

10. Although they are now part of the overall DSG allocation, the guidance makes clear this funding should still be passed on to eligible settings as a separate, additional stream based on the number of SEND places. It must not be used to reduce the place funding or top-up funding of special and AP schools, and it is separate from the special schools MFG calculation.
11. The total rolled in grants within Rotherham's HN allocation is £5.044m comprised of the Teachers Pension Grant (£0.917m) and the full year effect of the Core Schools Budget Grant (£4.127m).

### Schools White Paper and SEND Reforms

12. Rotherham as a safety valve authority has been implementing actions and measures over the past 5 years aimed at managing the demand and financial pressures in the SEND system.
13. The Schools White Paper sets out the intended direction of travel for SEND reform with clear focus on the following: Overall, the aim is to improve children and young people's educational progress, participation and preparation for adulthood, while bringing greater financial stability and predictability to high needs spending.
  - Earlier identification and support, so needs are met sooner and escalation is reduced.
  - A stronger focus on inclusive mainstream provision, with clearer expectations of what should be ordinarily available.
  - More consistent decision-making through national standards and clearer local pathways.
  - Stronger accountability across education, health and care partners for planning and delivery.
  - Improved transitions and preparation for adulthood, including better joined-up support.
  - Managing costs more sustainably by strengthening local provision and reducing reliance on high-cost placements where needs can be met locally.
14. Local areas are required to produce a Local SEND Reform Plan, setting out how they will move to a new special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system with increased focus on early intervention and inclusion in mainstream settings. LAs are expected to set out a clear pathway towards an inclusive system in line with the wider vision for SEND reform.

### **High Needs Budget Requirements 2026/27**

15. The context for budget planning for 2026/27 is one of increasing demand and financial pressures – a recurring theme over the past few years and is anticipated would continue into 2026/27 and the medium term. A forecast outturn of £3.609m above the £49.449m High Needs budget is currently anticipated for 2025/26.

16. The increasing number of (as well as cost of supporting) pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools and requiring specialist support in special and independent schools continue to exert pressures on the high needs budget. This is in addition to a challenging economic landscape of rising inflationary cost pressures.
17. The table below shows the proposed 2026/27 High Needs budget and the number of planned EHCP numbers and SEND places for the year.

	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2026/27 Budget £m	Planned Nos 2025/26	Planned Nos 2026/27
Special Schools	18.279	21.821	1,330	1,323
Resource Provision	1.551	1.212	210	201
Mainstream Schools	9.676	9.980	1,349	1,349
Early Years Settings	0.000	0.235	-	-
Alternative Provision	4.214	4.624	177	177
Independent Special Schools	8.643	9.344	128	121
Independent Specialist Provision	3.705	3.815	172	157
Post 16/FE Colleges	1.564	1.337	358	364
Other LA Schools	1.151	1.039	74	74
Other SEND Services/Costs	4.276	4.673	11	11
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>53.059</b>	<b>58.080</b>	<b>3,809</b>	<b>3,777</b>

<b>HNB Allocation</b>	48.151	51.202
Transfer from Schools Block	1.298	1.352
<b>Total HNB Budget</b>	<b>49.449</b>	<b>52.554</b>
<b>Total HNB Deficit</b>	<b>3.609</b>	<b>5.526</b>

18. The total funding requirement is £58.080m – this is more than the available resources of £52.554m resulting in a planned projected deficit of £5.526m.
19. The block funding transfer from Schools (based on 0.5%) dampens the in-year financial pressures by £1.352m and supports the need to avoid a significant increase in the DSG deficit in 2026-27. The following sections explain the key planned expenditure commitments and the underlying assumptions.

### Legacy funding to special & AP schools

20. In line with the guidance, the 2026/27 budget requirement includes the distribution of legacy funding (i.e. previous grants rolled into the HN allocation) to eligible special and AP schools. Allocated grant has been determined by applying the unit grant rate to pupil numbers for April to August 2026 and planned numbers for September to March 2027.
21. The table below shows the pupil numbers and allocated legacy funding included in the core funding to special and AP schools for 2026/27:

Provision Type	25/26 Pupil Nos	26/27 Pupil Nos	Teachers Pensions Grant (£660)	Core Schools Budget Grant (£3,048)	Total Legacy Funding 2026/27
Special & AP schools	1,354	1,461	£0.934m	£4.317m	£5.252m

### Top Up funding – pre 16 mainstream schools

22. High needs top-up funding provides additional support beyond schools' core budgets to meet the needs of pupils with EHCPs. The 2026/27 requirement has been forecast based on current EHCP pupil numbers and the existing top-up funding assigned to each child, using the most recent monthly payment schedules to schools.
23. The proposed budget also reflects an increased level of top-up funding for pupils with more complex needs. In addition, enhanced funding—based on 2025/26 expenditure—has been provided to specific schools to support pupils with identified high-level needs within mainstream settings, helping to avoid unnecessary moves to higher-cost specialist provision.
24. A new threshold descriptions framework will be introduced in 2026/27. A separate report will be presented to Schools Forum outlining the framework and its funding implications. No financial impact is expected, as funding will be aligned to the new thresholds based on current levels of support.
25. The table below summarises the 2026/27 top-up funding requirement for pre-16 mainstream schools. The increase in budget reflects the full-year cost of existing EHCPs.

	2025/26 Forecast Outturn	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Change
No. of EHCP pupils	1,349	1,349	0
<b>Proposed budget (£m)</b>	<b>9.676</b>	<b>9.980</b>	<b>+0.304</b>

### Specialist Resource Provision (SRP)

26. The funding approach for Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) in 2026/27 will remain broadly unchanged from 2025/26. Pre-16 places continue to be funded at £6,000 per place, with additional top-up funding provided to meet pupils' individual needs. All SRP top-up rates have been uplifted by 1.5% for 2026/27. Schools and academies will continue to receive £4,000 per pupil through their core funding to contribute towards meeting the needs of pupils with EHCPs.
27. Fourteen SRP settings are planned for 2026/27, providing 201 places—nine fewer than in 2025/26. The reduction reflects updated local demand and the outcomes of the High Needs Change Notification process. The table below summarises planned places and forecast funding requirements (net of DfE-funded place allocations to academies):

<b>Resource Provision planned places:</b>	<b>2025/26 Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>2026/27 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
Planned places	210	201	-9
Place funding* (£m)	0.573	0.435	-0.138
Top up funding (£m)	0.978	0.777	-0.201
<b>Proposed budget (£m)</b>	<b>1.551</b>	<b>1.212</b>	<b>-0.339</b>

\* Excludes place funding provided directly by the DfE to academies

28. Although the planned number of SRP places decreases by nine, additional in-year funding will continue to be provided where actual pupil numbers exceed commissioned levels.
29. A total funding requirement of £1.212m—covering both place and top-up funding—has been included in the proposed 2026/27 High Needs budget to meet these commitments.

### Local Special Schools

30. The funding arrangements for local special schools and academies in Rotherham remain unchanged for 2026/27. Special academies continue to receive £10,000 per place directly from the DfE, with the Council providing top-up funding for each RMBC pupil on roll, adjusted in-year to reflect actual numbers..
31. A total of 1,323 planned places have been agreed for 2026/27, based on the High Needs learner return submitted to the DfE in November 2025. An average funding uplift of 1.5% has been applied for 2026/27, in line with DfE operational guidance, which requires Councils to apply a 0% minimum funding guarantee and allocate consolidated legacy funding:
- A minimum funding guarantee (MFG) of 0% to be considered for 2026/27.
  - Allocation of the consolidated legacy funding in 2026/27

32. Current pupil numbers in special schools are higher than the planned places for September 2026. Additional funding will be provided to schools where actual numbers exceed the commissioned place levels. The table below sets out the planned specialist places for 2026/27 and the associated funding requirement:

	<b>2025/26 Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>2026/27 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Special school places</b>			
Pupil numbers/Planned places	1,330	1,323	-7
Place funding* (£m)	1.440	0.271	-1.169
Top up funding (£m)	15.999	16.814	+0.815
Consolidated Legacy Funding (£m)	0.840	4.736	+3.896
<b>Proposed budget (£m)</b>	<b>18.279</b>	<b>21.821</b>	<b>+3.542</b>

\* excludes place funding provided directly by DFE to academies

### Alternative Provision

33. Alternative Provision refers to educational settings for pupils or the provision of education to pupils who cannot be placed in a mainstream school. It relates to educational arrangements outside mainstream schools / settings that cater to the education needs of students with SEND and includes the following:

#### Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

34. The Council's provision is delivered by the Aspire Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). The following table details the number of planned PRU places for 2026/27 and forecast funding requirement:

	<b>2025/26 Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>2026/27 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>AP PRU places</b>			
Annual planned places	139	139	0
Place funding (£m)	1,390	1,390	0
Top up funding (£m)	1.551	1.586	+0.035
Consolidated Legacy Funding (£m)	0.078	0.516	+0.438
<b>Proposed budget (£m)</b>	<b>3.019</b>	<b>3.492</b>	<b>+0.473</b>

35. An average overall funding uplift of 1.5% has been provided for 2026/27. The funding uplift has been determined based on the DfE Operational Guidance that requires Councils to ensure the following:

- A minimum funding guarantee (MFG) of 0% to be considered for 2026/27.
- Allocation of the consolidated legacy funding in 2026/27

### Outreach Services

36. In addition to the PRU, Aspire delivers a Primary and Secondary Outreach Service funded through the High Needs budget. The service provides tailored support for pupils excluded from, or at risk of exclusion from, mainstream schools. The 2026/27 funding requirement is **£0.779m**, which includes an inflationary uplift to cover pay costs.

### Other Alternative Provision

37. The 2026/27 High Needs budget also includes funding for other forms of Alternative Provision, including Education Other Than at School (EOTAS), Medical Home Tuition, exclusions-related provision, and support for pupils in Elective Home Education. The total funding requirement for these services is **£0.353m**.

### **Other Local Authority schools**

38. This area also includes pupils placed in special schools (58) and academies (16) in other local authorities, for whom the Council is responsible for paying top-up funding. The 2026/27 requirement of £1.039m reflects the full-year cost of 74 existing placements and represents a reduction of £0.112m from the 2025/26 forecast due to revised funding assumptions.

### **Early Years Settings**

39. All local authorities must operate a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) to support early years children with emerging SEND who are eligible for early education entitlements. In Rotherham, lower-level needs are supported through the Inclusion Support Grant (Tier 2), funded from the Early Years Block. Early Years funding cannot be used to support children with complex needs.
40. It is proposed that support for early years children with high-level, complex needs and an EHCP is funded through the High Needs Block in 2026/27 at a cost of **£0.235m**. This funding was previously met from DSG surpluses, a position that is no longer sustainable.

### **Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS)**

41. SEND pupils with complex needs that cannot be met locally are placed in independent and non-maintained special schools (INMSS). Independent schools are fully funded by the Council for both place and top-up costs, while non-maintained special schools receive £10,000 per place directly from the DfE, with the Council providing the required top-up funding.

42. Financial pressures in this area continue to increase due to both the number of young people requiring specialist placements and the high cost of these settings.

	<b>2025/26 Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>2026/27 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>INMSS</b>			
Forecast learner nos.	128	121	-7
<b>Proposed budget (£M)</b>	<b>8,643</b>	<b>9,344</b>	<b>+0.701</b>

43. The 2026/27 budget is based on the full-year cost of the current 128 INMSS placements, with an assumed net reduction of seven placements during the year due to anticipated leavers and increased local provision. The budget also includes a 2% inflationary uplift on current costs.

### **Post 16/FE Colleges/Independent Specialist Providers**

44. This area covers a range of post-16 providers, including FE and sixth-form colleges, independent specialist providers (ISPs), and voluntary or commercial training organisations. Post-16 providers receive place funding directly from the Government, while the Council funds top-up support for individual learners.
45. The 2026/27 funding requirement for Independent Specialist Provision is £3.818m, reflecting the full-year cost of current placements and an assumed net reduction of 15 learners due to anticipated leavers and the development of additional local provision. The budget also includes an assumed 2% inflationary increase on current costs.
46. The budget for mainstream post-16 college provision is £1.337m, representing a reduction of £0.227m. This change reflects higher place funding being paid directly to colleges through the High Needs Notification process and the full-year effect of growth that occurred during 2025/26.

	<b>2025/26 Forecast Outturn</b>	<b>2026/27 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Post 16</b>			
Independent Specialist Provision	172	157	-15
Mainstream Colleges	358	364	+6
<b>Proposed budget (£M)</b>	<b>5.269</b>	<b>5.152</b>	<b>-0.117</b>

**SEN support services & other funding**

47. This mainly relates to the SEN support services provided by the Council and funded through contributions from the high needs budget. These services mainly provide support and guidance to schools/academies in relation to pupils with SEND and includes the following: Hearing and visually impaired teams; specialist inclusion team; Portage; Exclusion Team; Post 16 Transition teams; Speech & Language Therapy; SEN Equipment; etc.
48. The proposed budgets/funding contributions from the HNB for 2026/27 for the above services are **£4.673m**.

**Managing the financial risks / accumulated DSG deficit**

49. The table below shows the updated projected DSG reserve position.

<b>Latest DSG Reserve Position</b>	<b>2025/26 £m</b>	<b>2026/27 £m</b>
Opening Reserve Position	2.476	3.626
HNB Planned Contribution to/from Reserves	3.609	5.526
Safety Valve Contribution	-2.000	0
Planned Use of Reserves	-459	0
High Needs Stability Grant	0	-996
<b>Closing DSG Reserve Position</b>	<b>3.626</b>	<b>8.156</b>

50. An accumulated DSG deficit of **£8.156m** is currently forecast at the end of the 2026/27 financial year and is comprised of the following:
- £3.626m forecast deficit brought forward from 2025/26
  - £5.526m planned in-year deficit forecast for 2026/27
  - £0.996m forecast High Needs Stability Grant in 2026/27
51. The government remains committed to supporting local authorities with accumulated DSG deficits during the transition to the reformed SEND system. From 2026/27, all authorities with a SEND-related DSG deficit will be eligible for the High Needs Stability Grant, which will cover 90% of the DSG deficit accrued up to the end of 2025/26. Access to this funding will be conditional on each authority submitting a Local SEND Reform Plan and securing approval from the Department for Education.
52. The Statutory Override, which allows DSG deficits to be held separately from councils' wider financial positions, will remain in place until 31 March 2028. After this point, any remaining deficit must be met from the Council's own resources. Local authorities will therefore need to plan ahead and begin setting aside sufficient reserves to meet any residual deficit from 2028/29 onwards.

53. The government acknowledges that full implementation of SEND reform will take time and that local authorities may continue to face financial pressures during the transition period. Support will continue in 2026–27 and 2027–28, although it will be proportionate and not unlimited. Authorities are expected to maintain strong financial management and ensure that children and young people with SEND continue to receive appropriate, high-quality support. The development and delivery of approved Local SEND Reform Plans will remain central to this approach.

### **NAMES & CONTACT DETAILS**

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<h1 style="margin: 0;">BRIEFING</h1>	<b>TO:</b>	Rotherham Schools' Forum
	<b>DATE:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
	<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Christopher Stones Principal Officer School Organisation
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Falling Rolls and New Housing Developments

## 1. Background

**1.1** In England, the number of primary pupils increased in each academic year between 2009/10 and 2018/19, before beginning to decrease after 2018/19. The population attending primary schools peaked in 2019 and the figures have been gradually falling since then. This is primarily due to the number of births generally falling since 2012.

**1.2** Rotherham Births: -

Birth Year	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Admission Year	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30
Grand Total	3039	2994	3000	2719	2796	2898	2794	2765	2864

**1.3** The number of secondary pupils decreased in each academic year between 2009/10 and 2014/15, before beginning to increase after 2014/15. Since 2018, the population in secondary schools had been steadily increasing by around 2% a year until 2023 where it then slowed down to a 1.3% increase in 2024. The latest census shows a 0.1% decrease in 2025. Projections data indicate that the secondary school population is likely to have plateaued between 2024 and 2025, will remain at a similar level until 2026, and is then projected to start declining slowly.

**1.4** Pupil forecasts should only include expected pupil yields from housing developments that have a high probability of being delivered within the period of the forecasts. In most cases such developments will have full planning permission.

**1.5** New housing developments may generate additional pupil forecasts, but we need to be careful to avoid double-counting pupil yields which are already factored into our forecasts by default through cohort progression or migration. In addition, as part of our forecast, we should consider what proportion of the pupil yield may come from within the same planning area as the development. Housing developments can have a significant impact on the demand for places in individual planning areas, or across our entire local authority.

2. Key Issues	
2.1	In forecasting for housing developments, we would consider patterns of movement to these developments. We consider if new developments are likely to be populated by families moving in from outside our local authority. If so, it is important to ensure that we only count these pupils once and are not added both as part of our 'housing yield' calculation and as inward migrants, where these are counted separately.
2.2	If new developments are more likely to be populated by local families moving a short distance, we consider who will fill the houses they move out of. If there is a lot of local movement, consider that some of the pupils who move into the new developments might remain in their existing school places. This could mean the effect of the new development on school place need is spread over a wider area.
2.3	One thing to consider is the rate at which houses are built in the area. If this is fairly steady over time (i.e. housing stock increases by x% each year) then it is likely that the pupil yield will already be captured in a migration factor or cohort progression rate. It is only if the speed of house building changes (up or down) that we may need to adjust our forecasts to take account of this.
2.4	Where there is a demonstrable increase in the rate at which new housing is being delivered, we would determine an appropriate additional yield figure above that already included in the forecasting models.

### 3. Key Actions and Timelines

3.1	<p>RMBC Planning Department notify School Organisation with details of new developments including number of dwellings proposed. The DfE provide calculators via the Pupil Yield Data Dashboard for potential pupils generated and these are factored into future Projections: -</p> <p>Latest Pupil Yield split by School phase and School type for England.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Academic Year</th> <th>Local authority</th> <th>School type</th> <th>Early Years</th> <th>Primary</th> <th>Secondary</th> <th>Special Schools/AP</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>England</td> <td>Mainstream</td> <td>0.0631</td> <td>0.2528</td> <td>0.1252</td> <td>z</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>England</td> <td>Special School</td> <td>z</td> <td>Z</td> <td>z</td> <td>0.0089</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This chart shows Pupil Yields for number of bedrooms set to all, housing type set to all and tenure set to all for properties completed up to 2021/22.</p>	Academic Year	Local authority	School type	Early Years	Primary	Secondary	Special Schools/AP	2021/22	England	Mainstream	0.0631	0.2528	0.1252	z	2021/22	England	Special School	z	Z	z	0.0089
Academic Year	Local authority	School type	Early Years	Primary	Secondary	Special Schools/AP																
2021/22	England	Mainstream	0.0631	0.2528	0.1252	z																
2021/22	England	Special School	z	Z	z	0.0089																
3.2	In some cases, the local school and planning area would be able to absorb the additional pupils generated. Where they cannot, a S106 Education request is made in order to generate funding to aid future pupil places. However, this funding does not always cover the costings involved in creating additional school places. Also, developers can use viability in order to negate Education and other stakeholder funding requests being ratified.																					
3.3	Annually, the LA complete the DfE's School Capacity Return (SCAP) which projects future pupil numbers, along with School Capacity data. This year's SCAP return will be completed in Summer 2026 and is used to inform sufficiency data for pupil places across the Borough. Where potential issues are projected, relevant schools are contacted regarding any proposed impact in the learning community. Highlights from SCAP 2025 are included at <b>Appendix 1</b> .																					

**4. Recommendations**

<b>4.1</b>	That Schools Forum note the content of the briefing and consider any additional actions required.
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## **Appendix 1 – Additional Information taken from SCAP 2025**

Rotherham has 12 Planning Area's for Primary and uses the same 12 Planning Area's for Secondary:-

Aston, Bramley/Wickersley, Brinsworth, Dalton/Thrybergh, Dinnington, Maltby, North & West, Rawmarsh, South & East, Swinton, Wales and Wath.

Forecasting of Primary Reception School numbers comes from our Early Years' Service. This is children who are known to The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT) 0-19 Service. This data provides details identified by postcode which can then be placed into planning areas and catchment areas to provide projection statistics for all schools. The starting point with forecasting Secondary School numbers is with the planning area statistics for all those pupils currently attending Primary Schools in Rotherham. The School Census in January is used to aid both Primary and Secondary predictions. Also, the Summer Census is used to look at the number of pupils living in Secondary catchment areas. We also use current Numbers on Roll data and new housing pupil yields. Each planning area has historical net gain / loss of pupil's data which is again used as part of the projection process. The Authority continues to collate this statistical data to inform future projections. One of the main drawbacks is the gap between birth and entry (5 years). Movement of families during this period is inevitable and this affects some schools much more than others. Rotherham continues to be a net importer of extra district pupils with current numbers on roll for Primary +846 (7 higher than last year), and Secondary +2711 (399 higher than last year) from neighbouring authorities. This equates to 8.2% of the total school population in the borough and an increase on last year (7.5%). Rotherham is a Net Importer of extra-district pupils from Barnsley, Derbyshire, Doncaster, Nottinghamshire, and Sheffield in particular. Using the latest Cross border movement data from October 2024 there were 1325 pupils living in Rotherham who attended schools outside of the Authority and 3204 pupils living outside Rotherham whilst attending a school within Rotherham Authority.

### **General LA overview indicating LA wide trends.**

Primary – The number of pupils applying for places in Foundation Stage Two Classes across the Authority has currently stabilised. This is not proportional across the Authority, and we have pockets where demand is higher than capacity whilst at the same time, we have other pockets with surplus places. Previous Primary School expansions have addressed capacity concerns presently across the planning areas. Birth data from GPs shows falling rates up to 2024/25 with a slight increase of births year on year up to 2026/27 (2898) intake before another slight fall in births in 2027/28 (2794) and again in 2028/29 (2765). The latest figures now added show a small rise in 2029/30 (2864).

Secondary – Demand for Secondary school places continue to rise, as previous high Primary cohort numbers move through to Secondary education. One of the biggest challenges facing the Authority is the number of in-year transfer requests received by applicants from new arrivals to the Borough, from overseas and more recently from extra district migration who have recently settled within the Authority and because of new low-cost housing. Most of the EU Migrant children are living within the private housing sector and the LA has little control over where they live.

Primary	Capacity May 25	Spring 25	Surplus		Projected 28/29	Surplus
Aston	2310	2089	221		2238	72
Bram/Wick	2384	2061	323		2003	381
Brinsworth	1780	1413	367		1336	444
Dalt/Thryb	1495	1023	472		981	514
Dinnington	1936	1491	445		1436	500
Maltby	1920	1558	362		1470	450
North West	3587	2927	660		2750	837
Rawmarsh	1785	1493	292		1369	416
South East	3917	3537	380		3220	697
Swinton	1365	1200	165		1152	213
Wales	1825	1579	246		1481	344
Wath	2290	1919	371		1593	697

Secondary	Capacity May 25	Spring 25	Surplus		Projected 28/29	Surplus
Aston	1801	1516	285		1510	291
Bram/Wick	2196	2005	191		2027	169
Brinsworth	1652	1386	266		1383	269
Dalt/Thryb	868	562	306		558	310
Dinnington	1380	1015	365		1114	266
Maltby	1357	1125	232		1140	217
North West	2591	1935	656		1944	647
Rawmarsh	1225	1094	131		1047	178
South East	3293	3003	290		3074	219
Swinton	1320	1001	319		738	582
Wales	1792	1821	-29		1794	-2
Wath	2851	2751	100		2868	-17

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### Rotherham Schools Forum Forward Plan 2025/2026

Date of Meeting	Agenda & Reports Publication Date	Issues for Consideration	Lead Officer(s)
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	(a) Dedicated School Grant (DSG) and Schools Budgets 2025-26 Forecast Outturn  (b) High Needs Budget Block (2026/27)  (c) School Capacity / Place Planning Analysis	Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith  Joshua Amahwe  Sarah Whitby

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## DRAFT Rotherham Schools Forum Forward Plan 2026/2027

Date of Meeting	Agenda & Reports Publication Date	Issues for Consideration	Lead Officer(s)
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	(a) Schools Budget - 2025-26 outturn and 2026-27 latest update  (b) Scheme for Financing Schools Update  (c) SEND Sufficiency Strategy Annual Update	Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith  Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith  Mark Cummins
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2026	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2026	(a) Dedicated Schools Grant / Schools Budget Update 2026/27  (b) Schools Budget Planning & Funding 2027-28  (c) Exclusion and Suspensions Annual Report  (d) Reduced Timetables Annual Report  (e) Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) Update	Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith  Joshua Amahwe  Sarah Whitby  Sarah Whitby  Cary-Anne Sykes
Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2026	Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> November 2026	(a) Dedicated Schools Grant / Schools Budget Update 2026/27  (b) Local Schools Funding Formula Consultation ( <i>this matter will require a vote and the meeting must be quorate</i> )  (c) Early Years Annual Update  (d) Safeguarding in Schools Annual Update	Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith  Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith  Aileen Chambers  Lindsay Wootton Ashforth

<b>Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2027</b>	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2027	<p>(a) Dedicated Schools Grant / Schools Budget Update 2026/27</p> <p>(b) Schools Funding Settlement (2027/28)</p> <p>(c) Schools Block Dedicated Budget (2027/28)</p> <p>(d) Early Years Block Dedicated Budget (2027/28)</p> <p>(e) Central School Services Budget Block (2027/28)</p> <p>(f) SEND Sufficiency Strategy Mid Year Update</p> <p><i>(items' c, and e may require a vote and the meeting must be quorate)</i></p>	<p>Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith</p> <p>Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith</p> <p>Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith</p> <p>Joshua Amahwe/ Aileen Chambers</p> <p>Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith</p> <p>Mark Cummins</p>
<b>Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2027</b>	Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2027	<p>(a) Dedicated School Grant (DSG) and Schools Budgets 2026-27 Outturn</p> <p>(b) High Needs Budget Block (2027/28)</p>	<p>Joshua Amahwe/ Louise Keith</p> <p>Joshua Amahwe</p>