

7 December 2023

**Item 8****TITLE OF REPORT: Growth Fund Application****Purpose of the Report**

1. To bring to Schools Forum an application for Growth Funding from Thorp Academy and Brighton Avenue Primary School.

**Background**

2. Schools Forum approved the creation and the criteria of a Growth Fund for mainstream schools (appendix 1), which was last updated November 2020. Both schools have been working with the Local Authority to increase capacity in their area due to basic need.

**Thorp Academy**

3. Thorp Academy submitted a growth fund application following several consecutive years of being a growing school. The table below shows the growth in year 7 to 11 pupil numbers and year 7 admissions from October 2019 census to October 2023 census and estimated numbers to October 2025.

Increase in Thorp Academy Pupils		
Census	Yr 7 to 11	7yr
Oct-19	905	220
Oct-20	1029	275
Oct-21	1138	261
Oct-22	1278	307
Oct-23	1312	274
Est Oct-24	1426	310
Est Oct-25	1473	310

4. Pupil numbers are also expected to continue growing with year 7 admissions forecast to increase and maintain levels for the next few years at 310 pupils.
5. The growth in pupil numbers from October 2022 to October 2023 is 34 pupils and as academy funding is lagged by a full year for the academic year 2023/24 the school has been funded on 34 pupils less than are in school.

- The Gateshead Growth Funding Procedure was developed to provide additional funding for growing schools. The growth fund does state that the growth fund for secondary schools is for schools that have grown over 40 pupils or 8%, however even though growth is only 2.7% due to the size of the school, the make up of the year groups will mean that the school will require additional teachers and teaching time (as per attached application).

## Proposal

- Although the growth for the academic year 2023/24 does not meet the growth fund criteria, it is proposed that the significant growth Thorp Academy has seen over recent years should be taken into consideration.
- On that basis it is proposed that Thorp Academy is awarded Growth Funding of 34 multiplied by KS3 AWPU of £4,749 giving a total allocation of £161,466, capped at £111,400.

## Brighton Avenue Primary School

- Brighton Avenue Primary School has submitted a request for grow funding after several years of growth. The current classroom capacity of the school had been reached and the school has been and continues to work with the Local Authority to create additional classroom space to provide additional school places in the Bensham area of Gateshead. The below table shows the increase in pupil numbers.

Census	Year Group							Total	Difference
	R	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Oct-21	49	43	39	42	42	37	41	293	
Oct-22	49	50	48	42	40	44	44	319	26
Est Oct-23	50	50	50	52	46	47	47	337	18

- The school was asked to create an additional class for September 2023, and works will be undertaken within the school to create an additional classroom for an additional class for September 2024.

## Proposal

- It is proposed that Brighton Avenue Primary School be allocated growth funding as the school has been working with the Local Authority to increase capacity due to basic need and the growth for September 2023 is above 16 pupils as set out in the growth funding procedure.
- The amount of growth funding to be allocated is calculated at 18 pupils multiplied by the primary AWPU of £3,369 = £60,642, capped at £40,000.

## Recommendations

- As both schools are working with the Local Authority to increase capacity in their geographic area due to basic need it is recommended that Schools Forum approves the allocation of £111,400 of growth funding for the additional 34 children from October 2023 at Thorp Academy and £40,000 for Brighton Avenue. The total growth funding to

be allocated is £151,400, which exceeds the £23,993 held centrally growth fund, therefore it is recommended that the allocation above the growth fund be funded from DSG reserves.

**For the following reasons: -**

14. To provide funding for increased pupil numbers from September 2023 for Thorp Academy and Brighton Avenue Primary School.

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**CONTACT: Carole Smith ext. 2747**

## Appendix 1

# GROWTH FUND PROCEDURE Updated for 2020/21

## INTRODUCTION

### GROWTH FUND INTRODUCTION

From 2019/20 the Dedicated Schools Grant contains a formula for growth funding in schools by comparing the most recent October pupil numbers to the previous October pupil numbers at the middle supper output level to calculate the growth in pupil numbers. Local authorities are able to either use some or all of this growth funding or add additional funding from the schools block to create a Growth Fund to support schools which are required to provide extra places in order to meet basic need within the authority or new schools. The Growth Fund can also support pre-opening and reorganisation school costs. The Growth Fund may not be used to support schools in financial difficulty. As the Growth Fund is within the schools block it is only available for pupils aged 5-15 in mainstream schools. It cannot be used to support growth for under-5 or post-16 pupils or special schools.

The Growth Fund is ring-fenced so that it is only used for the purposes of supporting growth in pupil numbers to meet basic need for the benefit of both mainstream maintained schools and academies. Any funds remaining at the end of the financial year can be rolled forward into the following year's growth fund.

**Any growth or expansion due to parental preference will not be eligible to be funded from the growth fund, i.e. if pupils could be accommodated in another primary school within a 2 mile radius of the growing primary school, secondary schools to be reviewed on a case by case basis.**

### GATESHEAD CRITERIA FOR ACCESSING GROWTH FUNDING

A growing school is defined as: -

- A school where there is a planned increase in Planned Admission Number (PAN), and which has not had the full set of admission in-take. For example, an increase in PAN in September 2019 may still be having an impact in 2025/26.
- A school where the capacity has been increased, with planned expenditure on buildings, which has been agreed/supported by the Local Authority.
- A school where an increase in pupil numbers has been agreed with, and specified by, the Local Authority as a consequence of a delay in the opening of a new school or implementation of a capital programme that would have increased the size of a neighbouring school.
- A school/academy carries out a formal consultation at either the request of or supported by the Local Authority to increase their PAN.
- A school that admits pupils above their PAN to accommodate pupil numbers within the Local Authority at the request or supported by the Local Authority
- Schools that admit pupils in year groups other than reception or year 7 because of a closing school at the request of or supported by the Local Authority

- A new school that has been created with the support of the Local Authority and takes children in for the first time in either reception or year 7

## PREDICTED OR ACTUAL GROWTH

Where the predicted numbers for a Primary School (excluding nursery classes) for the following September show an increase of more than 16 pupils or 10% of their total roll, due to basic need, that requires the running of an additional class, schools may be able to access additional funding.

Where the predicted numbers for a Secondary School for the following September show an increase of more than 40 pupils or 8% of their total roll (excluding Post-16), due to basic need, that may require the running of an additional class or higher than anticipated staffing levels, they may be able to access additional funding.

Where reception or year 7 numbers increase to the extent that an additional class or classes are required. These instances will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Where a school takes pupils not in reception or year 7 due to a closing school at the request of or supported by the Local Authority, there will be no lower limit on this number.

Where a school takes pupils over their PAN in reception or year 7, historic patterns of year 7 intake will be considered as well as children from other LA's.

Children moving school on a nonstandard date, (Start of the autumn term for all schools and start of spring term for reception age children), as these children will be captured in a schools mobility data.

## LEAD IN COSTS

New schools will be allocated an amount of £68,700 (2021/22) that can be used as the governing body see fit to fund any lead in costs and initial resources. This funding is in addition to the lump sum included within each school budget share.

To recognise that schools may require this funding prior to opening, funding is available to schools up to one year (three terms) in advance of the planned opening date. The funding will be phased as follows or paid in the term before opening as one payment:

- £20,000 three terms prior to opening
- £20,000 two terms prior to opening
- £28,700 the term before opening

In the event that the academy trust does not proceed with the new school and withdraws academy sponsorship, then any allocation made should be repaid in full to Gateshead Council within 10 working days of notifying Gateshead Council that the sponsor has withdrawn.

## FUNDING A NEW SCHOOL – BUDGET SHARE METHODOLOGY

To calculate the pupil led factors for a new school's budget share, data relating to pupils attending an existing local school deemed most suitable will be used. It could either be a school

with the same or a similar catchment area or a school with anticipated similar characteristics. Business Partner – Schools in consultation with Education Gateshead and Schools Forum will decide the most appropriate data set to use.

## FUNDING FOR GROWTH

When applying for growth funding, schools will be required to provide evidence that an additional class or tutor group would be required to meet increasing numbers. (Views will also be sought from appropriate Education Gateshead officers).

Allocations will be calculated per additional pupil using the applicable AWPU rates for Primary, Secondary KS3 and Secondary KS4 pupils.

Amounts payable to maintained schools will be pro-rata for the 7/12th period September to March. Amounts payable to academies will be for the full academic year as academy budgets run from September to August. For new schools this will be dependent on their opening date.

An upper threshold will also be applied so no primary school can receive more than £40,000 and no Secondary schools more than £68,500 for the 7/12th period September to March and no Primary academy can receive more than £65,000 and no Secondary academy more than £111,400 for the full academic year.

For school receiving funding for taking pupils from closing schools not in reception or year 7 funding will be based on the average per pupil funding of that school. Maintained schools will receive 7/12<sup>th</sup> funding and academies for the full academic year.

Initial growth funding allocations would be based on admissions data and demographic forecasts to aid schools with budget setting (May/June). Where there is uncertainty or disagreement around the predicted pupil numbers, funding will not be allocated until receipt of the actual October census data.

The LA will undertake a mid-year review, based on the October Census, but no additional funding would be allocated to schools where funding had already been agreed unless actual growth was at such a level that significant additional costs had been incurred. In instances where schools had not qualified for additional funding based on the original estimates, additional funding would only be allocated if the school could demonstrate additional costs had been incurred to support the additional pupils.

In instances where actual growth was at lower levels than original estimates schools will not be subject to claw-back on any funding already allocated.

Where the growing school numbers require more than one additional class (numbers over 50) funding caps will be doubled.

## AMENDMENTS

It is possible to amend the criteria for allocating growth funding during the year where this becomes necessary, however the revised criteria must be submitted to the EFA for compliance checking and must also be approved by Schools Forum before the revised criteria can be implemented.

## **Appendix A – Examples**

### **Primary School A - Growth Funding Example**

October Census 2018 195 pupils  
Predicted September 2019 Numbers (Based on Admissions data and Demographic Forecasts)  
216 pupils  
Increase 21 pupils in reception  
Increase % 10.8%  
Growth Funding Allocation per Pupil £2,817.22  
Estimated Additional Funding (7/12ths- Sept 19 to Mar 20)  
£34,510.95, therefore would be funded at £34,510.95

### **Primary Academy B - Growth Funding Example**

October Census 2018 225 pupils  
September 2019 Numbers (Based on Admissions data and Demographic Forecasts)  
251 pupils  
Increase 26 pupils in reception  
Increase % 11.5%  
Growth Funding Allocation per Pupil  
£2,817.22  
Additional Funding (Full academic year) £73,247.72, therefore will fund at £73,247.75.

### **Secondary Academy D - Growth Funding Example**

October Census 2014 1,374 pupils  
  
October 2018 Numbers (Based on Admissions data and Demographer's Forecasts)  
1,415 pupils  
Increase 41 pupils  
Increase % 3%  
Increase in KS3 31  
Increase in KS 4 10  
Growth Funding Allocation per KS3 Pupil £3,841.81 = £119,096.11  
Growth Funding Allocation per KS4 Pupil £4,385.81 = £43,858.10  
Additional Funding (Full academic year)  
£162,954.21  
Capped to overall limit  
£111,400