

Supplementary Information for Agenda Item 5 - Mainstream School Funding 2026-27

Outcome of consultation with all schools

Background

Consultation was emailed to all schools on 7 January 2026 with the closing date for responses by noon on 16 January. A draft of the Schools Forum paper at agenda item 5, which considers mainstream school funding for 2026-27, was used as the basis of the consultation as this detailed the reasons for the NFF funding shortfall, summary of options, and impact across schools.

The timescale for consultation was short due to the DfE release of information and the modelling tool, the local authority proforma tool (APT), on 17 December 2025 and the APT being required to be submitted to the DfE by 22 January.

The consultation gave schools the opportunity to express a preference for how the NFF should be scaled back to be affordable. It also enabled schools to raise questions directly in seeking clarification on their individual school information, the proposals generally, why there was a funding shortfall, as well as consideration of pupil growth, falling rolls and other potential formula options not included in the modelling.

Summary of Responses

Of the 90 mainstream schools, 64 are included in the feedback, representing 71%.

The preferences expressed are summarised as follows:

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Alternative	Total
Adjust Basic	Adjust MFG	Apply Cap	See below	
18.5	27.5	14	4	64

One academy Trust representing all their schools and one individual school were indifferent between options 1 and 2 with 50% support allocated to each option in the table. In this scenario there was strong opposition to option 3.

The alternative option in the table was proposed by a group response. This was similar to option 2 (MFG reduced) but followed by capping to balance the shortfall rather than reducing the basic entitlement to enable more schools to remain as close to the NFF as possible.

Support for option 1 (basic entitlement reductions) was on the basis that this was generally fairer.

Support for option 2 (negative MFG) included that funding would move towards being more reflective of demographic changes, or that it was generally considered to be fairer.

Support for option 3 (capping increases) included that it was considered fairer, enabling more schools to receive their NFF allocations in full, providing greater stability. A further response considered that capping the highest growth rather than reducing funding for all schools or targeting a small group with negative MFG, option 3 spreads the adjustment more proportionately. It ensures that schools benefiting from larger increases contribute to balancing the overall funding shortfall without disadvantaging schools with modest growth or higher needs.

There was strong opposition to option 3 by some schools, noting this was more significant for some schools compared with other options and it was felt that more schools would select this as they would not be impacted. Implementing other options would mean more schools cover the shortfall.

Some responses stated that they had selected the best option for their school or Trust overall, rather than based on principles.

It was queried if any unspent funding transferred to high needs in 2025/26 could be used.

Schools Responding

Mudford Community Infants School

Coastal Learning Academy Trust for the following schools:

Baden Powell and St Peter's CofE Junior School, Bethany CofE Junior School, Courthill Infant School, Heathlands Primary Academy, Heatherlands Primary School, Lilliput CofE Infant School, Longfleet CofE Primary School, Oakdale Junior School, Old Town Infant School and Nursery, Queens Park Infant Academy, St Clement's and St John's CofE Infant School, St Luke's CofE Primary School

Stanley Green Infants Academy

Plymouth CAST for - St Mary's (Poole), St Joseph (Poole) and Christ the King

Burton CoE Primary

Magna Academy

Livingstone Academy

Ocean Academy

Jewel Academy

Bourne Academy

Bishop Aldhelm's CE Primary

Grammar School group response - Poole Grammar, Parkstone Grammar, Bournemouth School, Bournemouth School for Girls

Bearwood Primary and Nursery

Highcliffe St Mark Primary School

TEACH - Canford Heath Infant, Canford Heath Junior, Ad Astra Infant and Haymore Junior

Twin Sales Infant and Nursery

Hamworthy Park Junior

Somerford Junior

Mudford Junior

St. Mark's CoE

St Katherine's CE (VA) Primary

St Joseph's Christchurch

Kingsleigh Primary

Muscliff Primary

St Michael's Primary

Moordown St John's Primary School

United Learning - Avonbourne Boys and Girls Academies, Avonwood Academy, Glenmoor Academy, Winton Academy, The Cornerstone Academy

Springdale First

The Grange

Twynham

Poole High

Authentic Education - Queen's Park Academy, King's Park Academy, Kinson Academy, Manorside Academy, Elm Academy, Bayside Academy, Oak Academy, LeAF Studio and St Aldhelm's Academy.