
York Schools Forum

4th July 2024

Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Skills

York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) annual report

Summary

- 1 This paper provides a summary of the use of centrally retained School Improvement (SI) funding allocated to support city wide priorities and the support for schools causing concern allocated by the York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) during the academic year 2023-24.

Background

2 The York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) was formed in 2017. Its purpose has been to act as a strategic forum to bring together the key partners in the city's diverse state school system. The original aims of YSAB were to maximise outcomes and improve life chances for children and young people, promote inclusion and reduce inequalities. To ensure that no school and no child or young person in York will be left behind. The Board has brought together the Chief Executives of the City's seven multi-academy trusts with senior council officers representing local authority maintained schools. The terms of reference (Annex A) provide an articulation of the focus of the Board, which is to recognise the positive difference that can continue to be made to the lives of children and young people in the City through a focus on a shared moral purpose and commitment to collective action.

3. The School Improvement funding which has been used by YSAB is a historical element of the Dedicated School Grant (DSG) which, prior to 2015, supported the salaries of school improvement professionals in the local authority (LA). These posts were removed when the LA moved to system led / school to school arrangements. The funding sits outside the National Funding Formula (NFF) and was not taken into account in the DfE determination of the funding now allocated to York schools and cannot be allocated directly to them. Over the last couple of years the Department for Education has been reducing the historical commitments within the central services block by 25% a year. This means that overtime the funding available to YSAB has been reducing and will continue to reduce. It is likely to disappear completely from the central services block of the DSG in the next 18 months. It is therefore important that the used of resources by the Board are carefully considered during 2024/25 to ensure that they have maximum benefit for the York school system as a whole and that they can also generate a lasting legacy.

3. The Board has met for its annual cycle of half termly business meetings to consider priorities for the York school system and to allocate funding for support to schools causing concern. The impact of funding allocations has been evaluated through progress reports to the board. The use of the centrally retained funding continues to be well governed by the York Schools and Academies Board and as the number of schools causing concern has diminished, has been increasingly directed towards system leadership priorities.

School Improvement Priorities during 2023-24

4. During 2023-24 the board allocated money from the School Improvement Commissioning Fund to support the delivery of whole system priorities these priorities have included:

- Evaluation of the Attendance project (£3,375) by Huntington Research School.
- Support 'More Talk for York' rollout with 6 primary schools (£12K) – 1 year.

Allocation of schools causing concern funding

5. Funding for extension and development of the York High School alternative provision centre - £79K This has allowed the centre to become established as the INSPIRE centre at York High School. This has had a positive impact on reducing permanent exclusions during 2023-24.
6. Support for Lakeside Primary School - £29, 080.80K. Support employment of additional teacher, 3 days a week for 35 weeks

Other funded projects

7. £105K is retained annually to support the School Wellbeing worker service.
8. During 2023/24 £25K was allocated to support school improvement in local authority maintained schools. This has supported the development and implementation of headteacher peer review and primary subject networks.

End of year balance and future commitments

9. Taking in to account the 25% annual reduction in funding over the last two years on the annual YSAB budget of £400K the end of year balance for 2023/24 for centrally retained YSAB commissioning fund is £284,000. The board has yet to consider commitments for 2024/25.

Future arrangements for YSAB

10. The board continues to keep its terms of reference, membership and priorities under review and in 2023-24 and has identified the following system leadership priorities for 2024/25:

- SEND and alternative provision
- School Place Planning
- Improving school attendance
- Poverty proofing school

11. During 2023-24 YSAB has published regular updates to provide all headteachers with information about the work of the board and the progress of YSAB funded projects and workstreams.

Recommendations

12. The forum is asked to note the contents of this report.

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