
York Schools Forum**2nd July 2026**

Report of Assistant Director, Education and Skills

Title: Update on the Disapplication of funds from the Schools Block

Summary

1. This report provides the members of School Forum with an update on the proposed use of the funding disapplied from the Schools Block for 2026/27. At their October 2025 meeting the members of School Forum agreed to support the local authority request for a 0.5% disapplication from the Schools Block.

Main Report

2. This report provides an update on the use of the disapplication in 2026/27. The forum has previously received reports which focused on the commissioning of 18 additional places at INSPIRE independent special school which is run by Excel Multi- academy trust. These places will create additional capacity to focus on the needs of a small but significant cohort of young people with challenging behaviours who despite the adaptations being made by secondary schools remained at significant risk of permanent exclusion. It was felt that 2 places for each of the city's 9 secondary schools at a total cost of £475K (25K per place) would provide the additional capacity needed to meet the needs identified.
3. To support early intervention in primary schools it was suggested that each of the four neighbourhood clusters would be allocated £45K to support the development of team around the cluster interventions targeted at communication and interaction and SEMH needs. This would also be used to support the development of pooled resources in each cluster in line with the requirements of the SEND Reform plan.

Developing additional places at INSPIRE

4. In order to deliver additional spaces at INSPIRE a capital project is needed to create additional classroom space. Excel multi-academy trust have developed the capital plan to deliver this and the local authority is supporting the plan through the allocation of SEND capital to support the project.
5. The timeline below provides an update on the actions to deliver the additional places at INSPIRE:

May 2026	Capital funding for INSPIRE agreed by the Executive member
September – December 2026	Recruitment of INSPIRE staff to support new places
January 2027	Funding for new provision released to INSPIRE
January – February 2027	Induction and training of new INSPIRE staff
February 2027	Admissions panel to identify first cohort
March – April 2027	Outreach from INSPIRE to first cohort in their current school
April – May 2027	New provision begins at INSPIRE

6. The status of INSPIRE is independent special school which means that the school is governed by the independent school standards. To ensure that the admissions criteria and process is being applied consistently applications for places need to be done through completion of Inspire Admission Paperwork. In order to ensure consistency and transparency it is proposed that a five person admissions panel whose membership would be the Head of INSPIRE, an Excel Trust representative, an LA representative and two rotating secondary headteachers allocate places. The head of INSPIRE will have the right of veto but this will be used very rarely and reported/monitored by Schools Forum/SEND and AP Board. The veto will be triggered by known peer relationships which would adversely impact on the mix of students at INSPIRE.
7. The places at INSPIRE can be used by non-EHCP and EHCP students. Key Stage 3 placements will be for a maximum of a term with reintegration support provided by INSPIRE. Key Stage 4 placements will be full time and permanent.
8. For Key Stage 3 turnaround (tier 2) placements if the student has an EHCP then no changes will be made to section F of the plan – this will better support reintegration planning. KS3 students will be dual registered unless INSPIRE has been named in section I of their EHCP.
9. INSPIRE is to be regarded as offering a similar provision to the Danesgate Community. In order to build greater resilience in the local offer work needs to take place to build the relationship between Danesgate and INSPIRE to focus on mutual support with cases of highest need across provisions. Both provisions need to ensure that students who go there through a permanent placement should stay there with no moves to another provision. Both INSPIRE and Danesgate have an

important role to play in the implementation of the city's tiered approach to AP which is being developed through the local area SEND Reform plan (LARP).

10. A service level agreement/contract is being put in place to provide the necessary governance of the use of public funding to create additional places at INSPIRE. Schools Forum will receive project highlight reports at their meetings throughout the academic year 2026-27.

Neighbourhood cluster model

11. An important workstream during 2026-27 will be to develop and implement the neighbourhood cluster model to support mainstream inclusion. York has been divided into 4 neighbourhoods and these are being used across services as a focus for the deployment of staff and the delivery of services across education, health and care. Central to the Schools White Paper and the SEND reforms has been the expectation that schools will work more closely in area partnership and that these partnerships will be used to pool resources. The delivery of the national SEND reforms sees pooling resources as a core strategy to create a more efficient, collaborative system. By bringing together funding, expertise, and staff across local partnerships—including schools, local authorities, and health services—the goal is to improve early intervention, strengthen inclusion in mainstream settings, and prevent needs from escalating. The pooling of resources allows schools to collectively commission services, share assistive technology, and pool specialized staff rather than trying to secure resources individually.
12. In order to develop the model in York it is proposed that each of the school neighbourhood clusters is allocated a budget to pump prime the development of the inclusive mainstream pooled resource. The use of the resource will be data led and focused on improving mainstream inclusion. York Schools and Academies Board are being asked to give strategic oversight to this workstream during 2026-27 and impact reports will be provided the School Forum.

Recommendations

13. This paper is for information and discussion

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