
York Schools Forum**2nd July 2026**

Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Skills

School Improvement Commissioning 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 2025-26.

Background

2. The School Improvement Commissioning Fund was created in 2015 following the restructure of the City of York Council's retained School Improvement team. Since 2015 the funding from the central services block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) which previously supported posts in the council's education team has been used to support sector led improvement.

3. Over the last 11 years this funding has been used to:

- commission support from the city's teaching school alliances, teaching school hub and research school
- support schools causing concern through funded school to school support plans
- fund cluster improvement plans
- support the commissioning of city-wide projects/resources e.g. Early Talk for York and the School Wellbeing Service

In 2017, the York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB) was formed and YSAB have allocated, monitored and evaluated the use of the School Improvement Commissioning Fund since that time, with annual reports being presented to School Forum to account for its use.

4. The School Improvement funding which has been used by YSAB is a historical element of the Dedicated School Grant (DSG). 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 through the Schools Block. 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 2026/27. It is therefore important that the use of the remaining resources are carefully considered to ensure that they have maximum benefit for the York school system as a whole and that they can also generate a lasting legacy.

5. In 2024 YSAB changed the annual schedule of meetings from 6 times a year to 2. This has allowed a focus on identifying city wide task and finish workstreams to ensure that resources can be focused on system leadership priorities.

School Improvement Priorities during 2025-26

6. During 2025-26 the board allocated money from the School Improvement Commissioning Fund to support the delivery of whole system priorities these priorities have included:

- Delivery of the Poverty Proofing audits in partnership with Children North East and the Research School, £32k
- The city workstream on Traveller Education
- Support for the remodelling of Danesgate outreach, £85k

Other funded projects

5. £105K is retained annually to support the School Wellbeing worker service.
6. During 2025/26 £25K was allocated to support school improvement in local authority maintained schools. This has continued to support the implementation of headteacher peer review and continuing professional development.

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 the end of year balance for 2025/26 for centrally retained YSAB commissioning fund is £235K. The board has yet to consider commitments for 2026/27, however, delivery of the neighbourhood cluster model, review of the school wellbeing service and mainstream inclusion are whole system priorities for the academic year 2026/27.

Future arrangements for YSAB

10. The board continues to keep its terms of reference, membership and priorities under review and will confirm whole system priorities for 2026/27 when the board meets on 6th July 2026.
11. During 2025-26 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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