

# BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND UNIT PROVISION 2015/16  
**DATE:** 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015  
**RECIPIENT:** SCHOOLS FORUM

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## THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

### SUMMARY:

1. This paper outlines the proposals for the funding for Special Schools, units in Maintained Schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) from April 2015.

### BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

2. Special Schools, Special Free Schools and Special Units

The local authority has identified, based on current profile, the number of places required at the five Special schools, four Special units and one Free school in the 2015/16 financial year.

School	Places April 2015	Places Sept 2015
Springwell School	112	128
Great Oaks School	162	170
The Cedar School	70	70
The Polygon School	55	55
Vermont School	28	32
Rosewood School	32	32
Tanners Brook Primary School	14	14
Redbridge Community School	7	7
Bitterne Park School	8	8
Compass School	160	160
<b>Total</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>618</b>

3. Special schools, Special Free Schools and maintained schools with a special unit are funded on the basis of a flat £10,000 per place plus a per pupil top-up. Schools only receive top-up funding for the actual numbers of pupils in their school.
4. Whilst there is not a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) for Special school and units, there is a requirement that the top-up element of the funding is set at such a level that, if all the places were filled and the pupils came from the maintaining authority, the school's budget would reduce by no more than 1.5%.
5. Considering the pressures on the High Needs Block for 2015/16 and the subsequent requirement to transfer over £1.8M of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, the top-up rates set for 2015/16 reflect the MFG described above. This is consistent with the change of funding in mainstream schools to accommodate the transfer of funding between blocks.

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6. Note that it is the special school top-up rate that has been amended for the MFG and so schools with an increasing number of pupils will still see an overall increase in funding.
7. It is planned for a paper to come to Schools Forum in the Autumn Term to put forward proposals on a review of Special Schools Funding.
8. Pupil Referral Unit – Compass School

The PRU will be funded for 160 places. This year the DfE have implemented an increase in place funding. Each place will attract a base level of funding of £8,000 per annum from the High Needs Block for the period to September 2015. From September onwards this increases to £10,000 per annum. This creates an average for the financial year of £9,167.

The DfE has stated that this increase in place funding is to be offset by reductions in top-up funding so that the overall levels of funding remain the same (assuming no changes in overall place numbers).

This has meant a reduction in top-up costs for both the LA and the school but does the setting greater certainty over a larger proportion of its income.

Top-up funding per pupil will be paid by the commissioner of the place (either the local authority or a school) on the basis of three place types – Band 1, 2 and 3. It should be noted that for Higher Needs Pupils, that would otherwise require placement within a special school setting, top up funding will be paid on the basis of the Polygon top up rates.

## **Appendices/Supporting Information:**

### Appendix 1 2015/16 Special School and Unit Provision – Top Up Rates

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