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Department  
for Education

Guidance

# Pension grant methodology

Updated 27 February 2020

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## Introduction

We calculate the total cost to schools of the increase in employer contributions to the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) from September 2019 to March 2020 to be £848 million, and we are providing this amount of funding through a grant and a supplementary fund. We will provide £1.5 billion per year to continue funding these additional pension costs from April 2020.

The TPS data does not give us information about individual schools' contributions to the scheme, since most schools are part of a local authority or multi-academy trust. Therefore, to match the funding as closely as we can to costs, we are allocating the funding for the teachers' pension employer contribution grant (TPECG) using a per-pupil formula. This guide explains the methodology we are using.

We are accompanying this per-pupil formula grant with a supplementary fund. Schools and local authorities (on behalf of their specialist institutions) will be able to apply to the fund if their grant allocation falls short of their actual pension cost

increase between September 2019 and March 2020 by more than 0.05% of their budget for this period, and they will be reimbursed for costs above that threshold. They will also receive a further supplementary fund payment to cover the period April to August 2020. We provide [guidance on how the fund will operate](#) which also includes information on pension funding for local authority centrally employed teachers and music education hubs.

## Eligibility for the grant

### Mainstream institutions

We pay the grant based on the number of pupils aged 2 to 19 in:

- maintained nursery schools
- primary, secondary and all through maintained schools
- primary, secondary and all through academies and free schools
- 16 to 19 maintained schools
- 16 to 19 academies

For mainstream institutions with fewer than 100 pupils, we allocate funding as if they had 100 pupils.

### Specialist institutions

We pay the grant based on the number of places in:

- maintained special schools
- special academies and free schools
- pupil referral units
- alternative provision academies and free schools
- hospital schools
- non-maintained special schools

For specialist institutions with fewer than 40 places, we allocate funding as if they had 40 places.

### Independent settings

We provide funding to local authorities for pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans who are educated in independent settings, based on the number of such pupils in their area.

## Paying the grant

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) pays the funding for maintained mainstream schools to local authorities, who are required to pay it to individual schools at the rates published.

ESFA pays funding at the published rates directly to mainstream academies.

ESFA pays funding to local authorities to distribute, according to local circumstance, for:

- institutions who provide for children with high needs
- pupils with EHC plans who are educated in independent settings

The exception to this is non-maintained special schools. ESFA allocates funding directly to non-maintained special schools.

ESFA made payments covering September 2019 through to March 2020 to local authorities at the end of October 2019, and to academies in early November 2019. View the [allocations for schools and local authorities](#).

Local authorities will receive payments to cover April to August 2020 at the end of April 2020, and academies will receive their payments at the start of May.

## How we are dividing the funding

From September 2019 the employer contribution rate of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) increased from 16.4% to 23.6% .

We calculated the total cost of this increase to schools from September 2019 to March 2020 to be £848 million, and are making this sum available. Before dividing this funding, we set aside £22 million, in order to provide money for the supplementary fund.

We are providing the equivalent amount, pro rated, for the second instalment during this academic year, which will cover the period from April to August 2020.

## How we have divided the funding

We are dividing the total amount between:

- primary (including early years provision in primary schools, and maintained nursery schools)
- secondary (including school sixth forms)
- special schools
- local authority centrally employed teachers

We are doing this based on the size of the teacher wage bill for each sector. This is to take into account, for example, that special schools generally spend more on staff per pupil.

We also assume that all:

- mainstream schools have at least 100 pupils
- high needs institutions (with the exception of independent institutions) have at least 40 places

We are also providing funding for pupils with EHC plans educated in independent settings. This group is relatively small, and is funded at the special rate, distributed to local authorities based on the number of pupils with EHC plans in their area who are educated in independent settings.

We then divide the amount of funding for each sector between the number of pupils or places, to generate a per-pupil or per-place rate.

## Pupil numbers used to calculate the rates

We used the data below to calculate the rates at the start of the academic year 2019 to 2020.

For mainstream schools we used the following data.

Age range	Data source
2 to 4 year olds (i)	Headcount of funded places from January 2019 census
5 to 16 year olds (ii)	Headcount from October 2018 census
16 to 19 year olds (iii)	Pupil numbers from 2019 to 2020 academic year allocations

(i) excluding 4 year olds in school reception classes; 'funded places' means each 3- and 4-year-old pupil taking up the universal free entitlement and recorded on the January 2019 school census, and each 2-year-old taking up the free entitlement for disadvantaged 2 year olds and recorded on the January 2019 school census

(ii) and 4 year olds in school reception classes

(iii) for 16 to 19 year olds, we have converted the data into a full time equivalent (FTE) based on the number of hours each student attends the school, as shown below. Band 1 students are shown on an FTE basis in the funding allocations, so we have used this directly.

Band	Number of hours	FTE
5	540-600	1
4	450-539	0.825
3	360-449	0.675
2	280-359	0.533

For special schools we used the following data:

School type	Data source
Maintained	Place numbers from the 2019 to 2020 financial year budget returns (section 251)
Academy	The published high needs place numbers for 2019 2020 academic year

## Adjusting for location

We are applying an area cost adjustment (ACA), which takes into account higher teacher wages in London. The ACA uses 4 rates:

- inner London
- outer London
- London fringe
- the rest of England

## Rates

### Per-pupil rates for primary schools

Region	September 2019 to March 2020 rate (£)	April to August 2020 rate (£)
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Inner London	92.20	65.86
Outer London	85.29	60.92
London fringe	79.85	57.04
Rest of England	77.50	55.36

## Per-pupil rates for secondary schools (applies to all 11 to 19 year olds)

Region	September 2019 to March 2020 rate (£)	April to August 2020 rate (£)
Inner London	135.71	96.94
Outer London	125.55	89.68
London fringe	117.53	83.95
Rest of England	114.08	81.49

## Per-place rates for special and alternative provision schools and EHC plans in independent settings

Region	September 2019 to March 2020 rate (£)	April to August 2020 rate (£)
Inner London	336.53	240.38
Outer London	311.33	222.38
London fringe	291.44	208.17
Rest of England	282.89	202.06

Rates for the 5-month period from April to August 2020 have been calculated as five-sevenths of the 7-month rates for September 2019 to March 2020.

## How we calculate allocations

To calculate a school's grant, we take the relevant rate, and multiply it by the pupil numbers.

### **Example**

For an inner London primary school with 100 pupils, the calculation for April to August 2020 would be:

$$£65.86 \times 100 \text{ pupils} = £6,586$$

For the September 2019 to March 2020 allocations, we multiplied the rates by the pupil numbers from the data sources above. For the payment covering April to August 2020 in the spring, we will use updated pupil number data, including October 2019 data for 5 to 16 year olds and January 2020 data for 2 to 4 year olds.

## **New and growing schools**

Schools which opened between October 2018 and September 2019 did not appear on the census data used for the September 2019 to March 2020 allocations. These schools therefore received funding allocations based on a minimum level of:

- 100 pupils for mainstream schools
- 40 places for high needs institutions

New schools will receive an update to their September 2019 to March 2020 allocation in spring 2020 based on their 2019 to 2020 pupil numbers.

Schools that were not fully open in October 2018, and are still growing by adding year groups, will also receive an updated September 2019 to March 2020 allocation in spring 2020 to reflect that growth. Further details of these updates will be included alongside the spring 2020 allocations.

## **Multi-academy trust pooling**

As the TPECG and supplementary fund are intended to support costs which are normally funded through the general annual grant (GAG), a multi-academy trust (MAT) should treat the grant in the same way as they would GAG, in accordance with the [Academies Financial Handbook](#). This means they may amalgamate grant payments for its academies to form one central fund, on the same basis as GAG. This can be used to meet the running costs at any constituent academies within the trust.

As with GAG pooling, we would expect the MAT to consider the funding needs and allocations of each constituent academy, and to have an appeals mechanism. An appeals mechanism should allow an academy to appeal to the trust if a constituent academy's principal feels the academy has been unfairly treated. If the

grievance is not resolved, then we would expect the mechanism to include the option of appealing to the Secretary of State, via ESFA, whose decision would be final.

To maintain parity with maintained schools, applications to the supplementary fund use academies' published TPECG allocations, and their budget as defined above. Any redistribution of funds by the trust is not taken into account. However, MATs will be able to take any redistribution into account by pooling supplementary fund payments.

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