



Bryan Slater
Director of Education

REF: MI 28/00

FINANCE

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

SUBJECT: Infant Class Size

WORKING TITLE: Process for allocating grant payable from September 2000

DATE PUBLISHED: 4 February 2000

DATE EFFECTIVE: Immediate

DISTRIBUTION: Headteachers of all schools with infant pupils.

FORMAT:
MI Sheet plus letter

SUMMARY: The attached letter sets out the way in which revenue grant for the period September 2000 – March 2001 will be distributed. This grant is for the sole purpose of allowing schools to employ additional teachers in order to reduce infant class sizes to 30 or below.

ACTION REQUIRED: None at present.

DATE DOCUMENT OBSOLETE: 31/03/01

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS: MI Sheet 121/99

RELEVANT ASPECT OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN OR OFSTED LEA ACTION PLAN:

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2 February 2000

Headteachers
all schools with infant pupils

Dear Colleague

ALLOCATION OF CLASS SIZE GRANT FROM SEPTEMBER 2000

This letter is mainly concerned with the distribution of revenue grant to support additional infant teachers in schools. However, some schools may also benefit from capital grant to allow the construction of additional class bases. The DfEE is expected to make decisions about capital grant in February. Schools affected by this will be notified individually.

Management Information Sheet 121/99 showed how revenue grant for the academic year 1999/2000 was being distributed. This grant covers the period up to the end of August 2000. From April 2001 it is expected that grant will be distributed as part of formula funding. The process for doing this was outlined in the Scheme for Financing Schools consultation document last Autumn (MI sheet 183/99). There is thus a remaining need to decide on the allocation of grant from September 2000 – March 2001. The allocation is particularly important this year because the LEA has agreed with the DfEE to ensure that there are **no** infant classes greater than 30 from September 2000. Although the LEA's agreement is conditional upon sufficient resources being available, the DfEE have made clear that whatever funding we do receive will be at risk if there are **any** infant classes above 30.

The timetable for allocating grant this year will be as follows:

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28/02/00	<p>Schools currently receiving grant will be notified whether this grant is likely to continue in the papers accompanying their resource allocation for 2000/2001. The notification will be based on the pupil estimates for the 2000/2001 academic year sent to the LEA along with the Form 7 return. The notification could be one of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) grant is likely to continue and schools should include the estimated value of the grant in their budget plans; or (ii) grant is not likely to continue and no amount should be included in budget plans; or (iii) grant may or may not continue and schools should draw up alternative budget plans including and excluding the estimated value of grant. <p>Where possible a definite indication will be given. However, in cases where grant depends on the continuation or arrival of a very small number of pupils, it would be unreasonable to give this level of certainty.</p>
March 2000	Distribute criteria for grant, likely funding levels, advice on admissions and pro-forma to be completed by all schools who may need grant (including those schools currently receiving grant and those schools who do not currently qualify, but who may be subject to a late influx of pupils).
31/03/00	Initial deadline for parents to request admission to a particular primary school.
14/04/00	Pro-forma to be returned to the LEA.
By 12/05/00	All schools with an initial entitlement to grant notified by telephone.
19/05/00	List of grants allocated to each school distributed to all schools via schools' post.

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The criteria for entitlement to grant from September will be a simplified version of those used last year. These criteria were set out in MI Sheet 68/99. Given the LEA's commitment to ensuring that all infant classes are below 30 from September 2000, schools that meet the criteria can expect to receive some grant. However, the exact level of grant given to a school will depend not only on the school's individual situation, but also on the amount of funding given to the LEA by the DfEE. We are currently expecting to receive notification of our grant from the DfEE by the end of February. Details of the criteria and the level of class size grants will be sent to schools in March with the pro-forma for applying for grant.

Last year the LEA allocated all available grant by the end of the first half of the Summer term. This may not be possible this year because of the potential need for extra staff in schools who receive additional pupils after the initial allocation of grant. It is likely that the DfEE will hold some contingency funds that we may draw upon to help such schools. However, if such a central contingency appeared insufficient for the likely needs of schools, the LEA would need to form its own contingency. The amount of DfEE contingency available and any grant being retained as a contingency by the LEA would be published with the school by school list of initial entitlement to grant.

If you have any enquiries about the process please contact my colleagues Matthew Rathbone (01603 222469) or Heather Lindsay (01603) 223469.

Yours sincerely

Chris Wilson-Town
Senior Education Officer (Premises)