



Department of
Education

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**HR Services – Pay, Terms and Conditions (Teaching)
People Directorate**

By E-mail: 1@eani.org.uk

24 February 2026

Dear

**ST PAUL'S HIGH SCHOOL, BESSBROOK – RETROSPECTIVE REQUEST TO
INCREASE FTE FOLLOWING REDUNDANCY**

I have considered the information provided on 19 January and 20 February 2026 regarding the request by St Paul's High School, Bessbrook to increase its FTE following a period of staff reduction through the redundancy scheme. I note the circumstances of the case which include an increase in enrolment numbers.

It is concerning to note that, while the school submitted its request to an increase in FTE in December 2024, it has taken over 12 months for this request to be formally submitted for Departmental approval.

I acknowledge that EA and CCMS have provided the Department with an explanation for the delay, the school, by only submitting its request in December 2024, three months into the 2024-25 academic year, was also at fault on this occasion.

On the recommendation of CCMS and the Education Authority, I am content to retrospectively approve the request to increase the teaching staff complement by **8.9 on a permanent basis**. As a result, the FTE for the 2024-25 academic year will increase to **118**.

Given the budgetary deficit in the school, my approval is given on the clear understanding that the CCMS and the EA continues to work with the school and the situation is kept under review.

Any future request will be subject to an updated affordability assessment. CCMS should ensure that any such request is submitted **well** in advance of the commencement of the academic year in question.

I would be grateful if you could convey this decision to the school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

cc

ASSESSMENT BY TNT OF REQUEST TO INCREASE FTE FOLLOWING REDUNDANCIES

SCHOOL:	St Paul's High School, Bessbrook
<u>School Ref. No.</u>	<u>523-0157</u>
Employing Authority:	CCMS
REQUEST:	<p>Retrospective approval is requested to an increase in FTE at the school by <u>8.9 FTE</u> for the 2024-25 academic year bringing the FTE at the school to <u>118</u>.</p> <p>CCMS and EA have provided the relevant timeline of this application from the date the principal had signed it on 11 November 2024 until receipt at DE on 19 January 2026 (ED1/26/26032 refers).</p> <p>Regardless, the application is still a retrospective request as school should have submitted its application well in advance of the 2024/25 academic year, not three months into the academic year when teachers were already in place.</p> <p><i>On querying why the FTE on the 3-year financial plan submitted the school advised the following:</i></p> <p><i>"Our application to increase our FTE, which we are still awaiting approval for, was submitted on 11 November 2024. This application was based on our staffing needs for the 2024–25 academic year, which required an FTE of 118, and this figure was reflected in our 2024–27 financial plan.</i></p> <p><i>Following our curriculum audit and increased admissions for the 2025–26 academic year, our staffing requirement has risen to 118.5 FTE. This updated requirement is included in our 2025–28 financial plan. We are currently awaiting approval for the original request for 118 FTE before submitting a new application".</i></p>

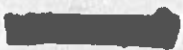
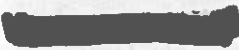
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SUBJECT AREAS:	<p>Permanent:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Release of Specialist Provision 2. Art & Design and Technology & Design 3. P.E. with Science 4. Mathematics 5. PAL, LLW & Healthy Lifestyles 6. Religious Studies with General Studies 7. English with General Studies 8. Sociology, Health and Social Care with Home Economics <p>Part-time</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Music (0.5 FTE) 2. Sociology, Health and Social Care with Home Economics (0.4 FTE)
REASON FOR INCREASE:	Increased Enrolment
Background:	<p>There are 204 additional pupils in the school in 2024 compared to 2017, representing a 12.8% growth in enrolment.</p> <p>The school has sought to incrementally increase its approved permanent FTE on an annual basis to manage this demonstrable growth, eg, In 2021 the school sought approval and was granted an increase of 3.0 permanent FTE (to 104.1 FTE). An application was submitted in June 2023 to increase its FTE by 6.7 to 115.8. Further to this in March 2024, the Department of Education normalised the school's approved enrolment and admission numbers thus recognising that the continued growth is sustainable.</p> <p>As the first 'larger intake' has now reached post-16, the school's curriculum audit and staffing analysis has identified a need to increase its permanent approved FTE to 118, specifically to provide growth in provision in the curriculum areas of English, Mathematics, and other specialist subject areas, eg</p>

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	<p>Sociology, Health and Social Care, Home Economics, PE, Religion, Art & Design, Technology & Design and Music. The increase is not solely contained within the KS3 and KS4 curriculum but recognises the first larger intake now reaching post-16.</p> <p>The school continues to work closely with School Development Service (SDS) personnel in Education Authority and with colleagues in CCMS to ensure that its curriculum audit is being utilised to maximum efficiency and the school has completed training in ICFP (Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning) software which clearly demonstrated an efficient timetable model with particular regard to percentage contact time, average class size and pupil teacher ratio.</p> <p>The increase in FTE will lead to the maintenance of the school's sector-average PT. This will ensure a parity of access to the curriculum and will allow the school to protect and improve its performance at key benchmarks. The increase in FTE will allow for the broad and balanced curriculum offer at St Paul's to be delivered across all key stages and ensure the school's continuing adherence to the demands of the Entitlement Framework, and, critically, to meet the curricular demands of an increased enrolment by at least 121 additional pupils in September 2024.</p>						
<p>AFFORDABILITY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School in surplus / deficit (enter figures)</i> • <i>In line with the schools 3 year financial plan?</i> 	<p>Updated financial plan provided (ED1/26/26032 refers) School is currently in deficit. Information March 2026 to March 2028 is as follows:</p> <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td>- £ 3,761,394</td> <td>- 47% (March 2026)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- £ 4,742,749</td> <td>- 66% (March 2027)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>- £5,725.127</td> <td>- 91% (March 2028)</td> </tr> </table>	- £ 3,761,394	- 47% (March 2026)	- £ 4,742,749	- 66% (March 2027)	- £5,725.127	- 91% (March 2028)
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<p>SUPPORTED BY EDUCATION AUTHORITY</p>	<p>This request has been supported by the Education Authority.</p>						

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	<p>The School Development Service have stated:</p> <p>"I approve the application for an FTE increase in St Paul's HS, Bessbrook, as outlined. Rationale is, as indicated by the school:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an expansion in pupil numbers over the years, now deemed sustainable by DE 2. progression into post-16 of the first larger cohort of pupil intake and the associated need to meet growth in particular subject areas with adequate staffing 3. the continued engagement of school leadership with EA SDS to undertake the Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP) process, in order to review and plan for a balanced, cost-effective curriculum". 	
<u>Recommendation:</u>	<p>On the basis of the information provided, it is recommended that retrospective approval is granted to the increase in FTE at the school by <u>8.9 FTE on a permanent basis</u> bringing the <u>total FTE to 118</u> for the 2024-25 academic year.</p>	
Prepared By:		23 January 2026
Checked & Approved By:		<p>24 February 2026 (clarification on difference in FTE of 118 and 118.5 only provided on 20 February 2026 hence delay in issuing approval).</p>