

Europa School UK – Non-funding Issue

Europa School UK in 2023 is a successful and oversubscribed bilingual all-through school in Oxfordshire. The school is completing significant curriculum change after the ending of its accreditation as a European School because of Brexit. We are now an International Baccalaureate World School for the IB and MYP Diploma. The school has completed two years of IB Diploma results with an 99% pass rate and average IB marks of 35 & 36. Over our two Diploma sessions 55% of subject entries were graded the equivalent or A or A* – an outstanding achievement for the school.

The Governors and the Senior Management are continuing to raise the issue of the non-funding of the top class in our third stream of entry. Put simply, the school has three forms up to and including Year 8 but only two forms from Year 9 for the academic year 2023-24. With the standard lagged funding applicable in 2023-24, it means that 30 pupils known to be in the school will receive no funding each year until this third class reaches the end of year 12 in 2027-28.

It may be helpful to set out the context around the creation and growth of the school.

Europa School UK was created in 2012 and started as a small primary school with a unique bilingual model and the strategic intent to create an all-through school to replace the existing European School which was scheduled to close in 2017. Its core educational objectives were to deliver a broad and bilingual curriculum. Originally there were two language streams (French and German). A third language stream (Spanish) opened in 2015 and is driving the growth in pupil numbers from its current 1000 pupils to its funding capacity of 1176 by 2027-28.

In 2017, Europa agreed to the transfer of pupils from the closing European School Culham into a new secondary phase. The formation of the all-through school created significant financial pressures due to the increased costs of the premises and a change in the basis of funding from pupil estimates (for a growing Primary School) to a lagged funding model. This was because the school was classified as “full”, with students populating each year cohort.

The impact of lagged funding is that the school only receives funding for the number of students in the previous autumn census. In the case of a growing school the top class in a growth stream will never be allocated any funding for the entirety of its time in school despite it being entirely predictable and a considerable increased cost compared to pupil growth due to infilling.

The school submitted a business case in 2019 to the ESFA to address the issue and the response was a decision to fund Europa through an in-year adjustment for academic years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

In September 2022, the school therefore reverted to a lagged funding basis. This meant that the top class of the Spanish stream which is only in year 7 has lost its funding. The school has therefore five further years of GAG funding leaving this top class to be funded entirely by the school to the inevitable detriment of all other pupils.

Recent business plans to address this issue (submitted in Spring 2022 & 2023) were rejected by the ESFA given their evaluation of the improved financial situation of the Trust. This was due to several years of strict financial controls and an active parental fundraising campaign which was never intended to be used to support core funding.

The annual shortfall in GAG income for the non-funding of the top class of the third stream is worth **£162K per academic year**. The break-even reserve position does not allow the Trust to subsidise the funding of this stream until S5 / Year 11.

Our goal is to extend the period of in-year adjustment for the academic years 2023-28.