

Mainstream Inclusive Fund 2026 to 2027

An executive guide to the methodology, allocation, and strategic implementation.

An overview of the Mainstream Inclusive Fund

£500m+

Total annual fund duration of the three-year spending period

£400m

Allocated directly to state-funded mainstream schools

5 to 16

Target age range for mainstream primary, secondary, and all-through schools

The Objective: To support a systemic shift towards practices that are inclusive by design.

The Mechanism: Providing early, targeted support directly to children without requiring a diagnosis or statutory process.

The Scope: Works alongside core funding allocations (including notional SEN budgets) to remove commonly occurring and predictable barriers to learning.

Transitioning to an education system that is inclusive by design

From state

- Reactive interventions
- Diagnosis-dependent support
- Reliance on statutory processes



To state

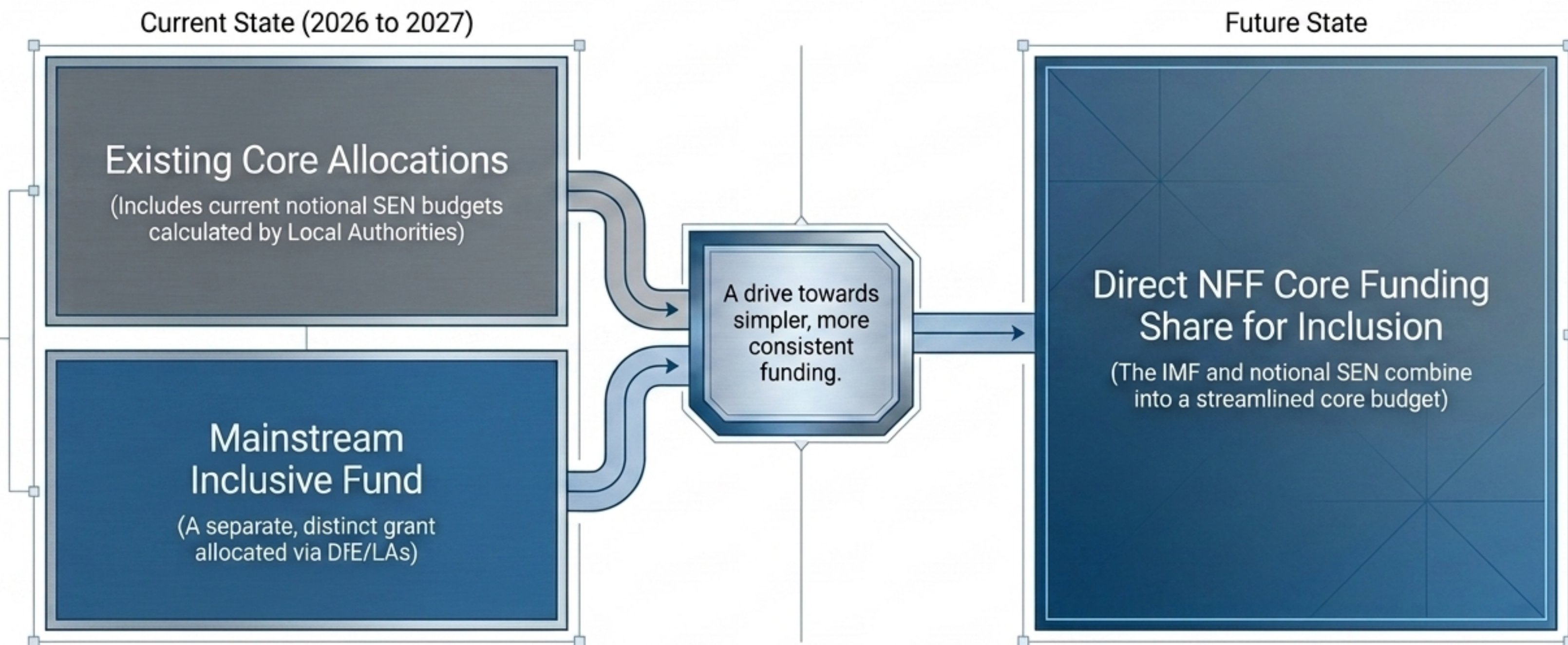
- **Proactive, universal practice**
- **Targeted, evidence-based early support**
- **Meaningfully embedded inclusion removing predictable barriers**

1. Improve children's attainment

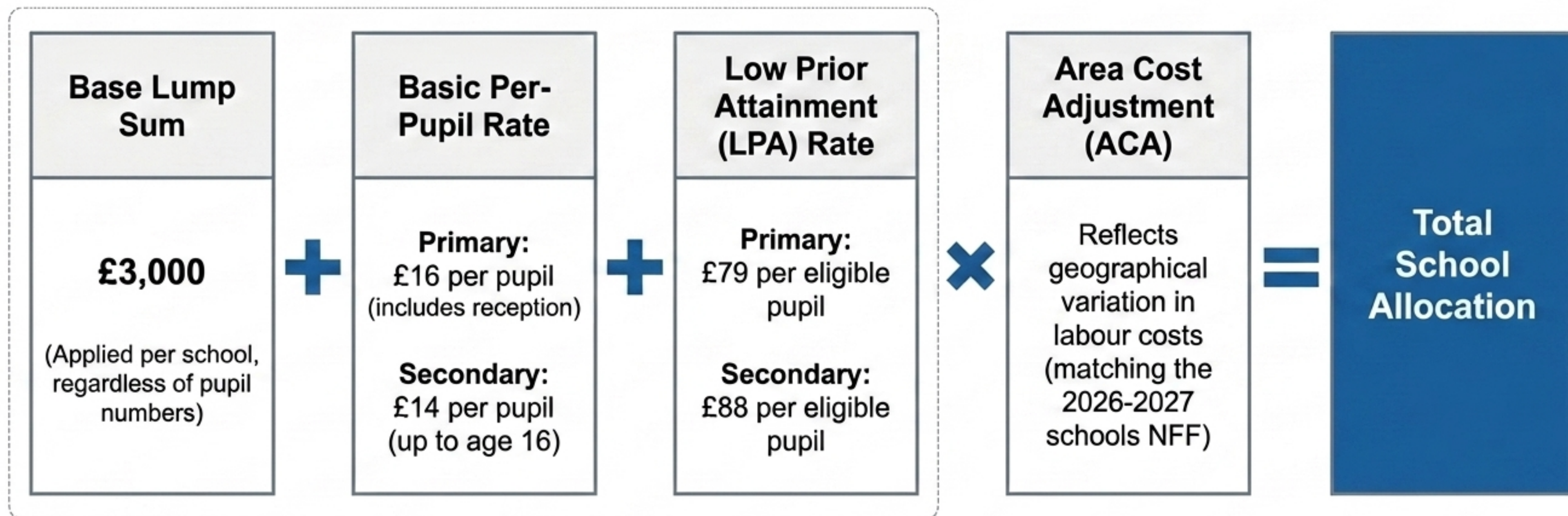
2. Enhance pupil wellbeing

3. Increase parental trust and confidence

Connecting the fund to the National Funding Formula

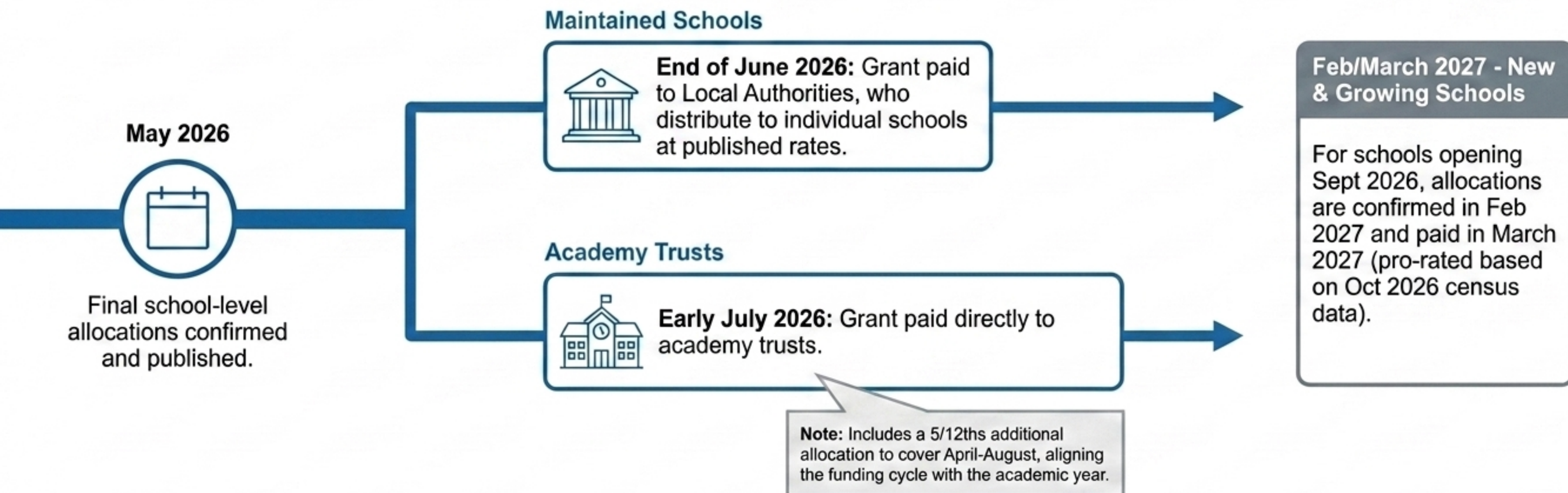


Anatomy of an allocation calculation



Calculations utilise pupil counts from the October 2025 census and LPA proportions from the 2025-2026 Authority Proforma Tool (APT).

Allocation timeline and payment distribution



A framework for permitted expenditure



Strategic Note: The IMF is systemic funding, not a personal budget for individual pupils. Allocation depends on assessing overall cohort needs against this framework.

Accountability requirements and the Inclusion Strategy

Overview: Schools must publish an annual strategy detailing how overall funding (IMF + notional SEN) meets cohort needs.

Mandatory Deadline

31 December 2026

(Timed to allow schools to assess the needs of their new September intake).

Governance Requirements

- ✓ - Published as a clear, accessible statement on the school website.
- ✓ - Refined through scrutiny by governors and trustees.
- ✓ - Available to Ofsted inspectors when evaluating inclusion.

Required Contents

1. Cohort Needs:

Identification of predictable needs and barriers to learning.

2. Financial Mapping:

Detail of current inclusion spend and planned IMF investment aligned with the 7 themes.

3. Strategic Action:

Specific evidence-based activities and approaches undertaken to deliver high-quality ordinarily available provision.

Next steps for school leaders and trust executives

