

WIRRAL COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN

Proposal for Increase in SEND Places for 2018-19

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines a proposed organisational change to increase the number of specialist places in Wirral. The changes will be considered by the High Needs Working Group, prior to the Forum's next meeting in July. The places proposed are at a range of schools (both mainstream and special) and enable those with identified need to be effectively supported. This will enhance existing provision and ensure that there is a sufficient supply of places in specialist provision in Wirral.

The increase in places is being considered at a time when an external review of mainstream provision for special educational needs will be undertaken. For this reason, any agreed changes are for a one-year period only.

2.0 PROPOSALS TO INCREASE SPECIALIST AND BASE PROVISION

Wirral's SEND population has been increasing in recent years and this has been regularly reported to School's Forum. The number of children and young people placed in special schools has risen throughout 2017-18. During 2017-2018 there have been pressures on the Local Authority to place children following an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment in special schools with the majority having limited capacity to admit children over their place numbers. The pressures were particularly noted in the primary special school sector, in schools catering for Complex Learning Difficulties and Social Emotional, Mental Health Difficulties.

As initial assessments are nearly completed the Local Authority has a clearer picture of places required for 2018-2019 and current indications are that there will be a need to create extra capacity for September 2018.

The illustrative full year cost is outlined below.

SPECIAL SCHOOL FIGURES

Primary School	Admission Number	April 2018 Numbers	Sept 2018 Numbers	Additional places required	Proposal to increase place funding	Increase in funding per place	Top Up Funding
Elleray Park	110	115	128	18	128	£180,000	£92,300
Stanley	120	132	141	21	141	£210,000	£106,500
Foxfield	133	134	138	5	138	£50,000	£35,500
The Observatory	55	57	76	21	76	£210,000	£170,100
Total	418	438	483	64	483	£650,000	£404,400

The proposals have recently been discussed with relevant headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies. Following the meeting and further communication from the two schools funding has been agreed for The Observatory and Foxfield School. Elleray Park and Stanley School are holding further discussions regarding the funding that will be required and will report back to the Local Authority.

Interim Pilot Schemes (utilising the 0.5% top slice from school budgets)

The following proposals arise from the initial review of High Needs provision and should also be considered by the High Needs Working Group. These are all new provision and have been agreed because of demands faced by the LA and a commitment to develop inclusive provision.

School Pilot Provision	Admission Number	April 2018 Numbers	Sept 2018 Numbers	Additional places required	Increase in funding per place	Additional Top Up Funding
Woodslee SEMH Base	8		8	8	£48,000	£48,000
The Observatory Y5/Y6 Base	8	8	6	6	£60,000	£36,600
Oldershaw Year 7 Base	9		9	9		£72,000
Oldershaw Increase in numbers (inc y7 base)	20	20	25	5	£30,000	
Hilbre Year 7 Base	10		10	10		£80,000
Hilbre Increase in numbers (inc y7 base)	30		31	1	£6,000	£6,000
Ridgeway						£20,000
Mosslands						£20,000
Total					£144,000	£282,600

The rise in children being identified as having complex learning difficulties has challenged the Local Authority in placing children in the two schools during 2017-2018. Numbers for September 2018 are currently being finalised and likely to be in the region of 269. Current places commissioned are 230. An additional 39 places will be required. This number does not take account of any additional children being identified by early years settings as possibly having complex learning difficulties.

The proposed increase in numbers will put pressure on the current accommodation in both schools. However, there are inclusive opportunities in the mainstream setting that are currently being explored and this would enable the children to receive the expertise of the special school/ mainstream staff whilst being on the roll of the special school. No major capital investment is planned at either school in light of the external review taking place.

Foxfield School

The growing number of children with complex learning difficulties in the primary sector is now impacting upon numbers required in the secondary sector. An additional 5 places will be required by the Local Authority for September 2018.

The Observatory School

The school is currently funded for 55 places. Historically the school has started the beginning of the academic year at a figure lower than the agreed 55 places (In September 2017 it was 50) and then other pupils join during the academic year, increasing the pupil numbers to 60+ pupils. The identified number for September 2018 is 76, requiring the LA to increase place funding by 21.

Pilot Schemes

The Observatory School Y5/Y6 Base

The school has designed provision for Key Stage 2 year 5- year 6 pupils for 8 pupils, who were out of school. This has been in operation since 1st April 2018 and has been an unqualified success. All the pupils in the provision were non-attenders at other schools but in the last couple of months there has been 100% attendance apart from medical appointments. This provision has ensured that the Local Authority has not had to utilise very expensive out-of-borough provision.

The top up funding that has been allocated for this base is £6,100 per pupil.

Woodslee SEMH Base

Woodslee Primary School is currently working with Alison Grimshaw and Dr Tina Goodson (Clinical Psychologist) to design a specialist base for KS1/ lower KS2 for children with Social, Emotional, Mental Health. The base will be established using the 'Nuture' principles and provide a high level of support for those children who are currently finding it difficult to access mainstream provision. The aim is to re-integrate these pupils into mainstream provision.

The top up funding that has been allocated for this base is £6,000 per pupil.

Oldershaw

The number of pupils in the Resource Provision at Oldershaw continues to grow. This year the school has agreed to offer provision for 9 year 7 pupils who historically would have attended a Special School. This group of pupils have been identified as benefitting from mainstream provision but will need a primary delivery for part of their educational provision. This group of children increases the number in the base from 20 to 25.

Place funding has been agreed for those 5 additional places at £6,000 per place (this takes account the AWPU received)

The top up funding that has been allocated for this primary designed base is £8,000 per pupil, one the highest Top Up bands. These top ups will be reviewed in 12 months time as pupils become more settled within the school.

Hilbre

The number of pupils in the Resource Provision at Hilbre is above the places commissioned. This year the school has agreed to offer provision for 10 year 7 pupils who historically would have attended a Special School. This group of pupils have been identified as benefitting from mainstream provision but will need a primary delivery for part of their educational provision. This group of children increases the number in the base to 31.

Place funding has been agreed for the 1 additional place at £6,000 (this takes account the AWPU received)

The top up funding that has been allocated for this primary designed base is £8,000 per pupil one the highest Top Up bands. These top ups will be reviewed in 12 months' time as pupils become more settled within the school.

Ridgeway/ Mosslands

Ridgeway and Mosslands are setting up a pilot for year 7 pupils who require an enhanced transition into secondary school and will required small group delivery that mirrors the primary model.

These two projects are 1-year pilot projects and will be evaluated by both schools during 2018-2019.

£20,000 will be committed from the Local Authority to each school to support the initiatives.

Financial Implications

The exact financial implications arising from these proposals will be considered by the High Needs Working Group and will be brought to the next Forum meeting in July. The changes described would commit the High Needs DSG Reserve and introduce the needed additional provision funded by the top slice.

Funding for provision in later years is an area that has been included as part of the externally commissioned review of High Needs. This will be the subject of ongoing discussions, together with a consideration of the estimated numbers for future years.

Recommendations

Following consideration by the working group the views of the Forum are sought on this report.

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