

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2017 the Schools Forum agreed to increase the number of places at Emslie Morgan Academy (EMA) from 80 to 100 funded from the High Needs budget. This request was proposed because the number of permanently excluded pupils attending the pupil referral unit (EMA) had been over the admission number for some time.

Since September 2017 other provision has been set up, the Progress School and Progress pathways which has resulted in fewer students attending EMA full time. The proposal is to reduce the funding from high needs for EMA to 80 and use this 20 place funding reduction to develop Progress Pathways. The funding comprises of £10,000 base funding plus £3,000 top up for 7/12s of the financial year 2019/20 and totals £151,667.

2. BACKGROUND

Emslie Morgan Academy was inspected in November 2017 and judged inadequate. The report stated that there were very few opportunities for students to reintegrate back into mainstream secondary schools. Attendance of student was well below the national average for pupil referral units. The Ofsted report stated that attendance was poor, with almost half the school population persistently absent. The curriculum was described as disorganised. Leaders have not given enough thought to its design and implementation. As a result, the curriculum does not meet pupils' needs, hampering their progress.

The Local Authority sought to provide alternative solutions to placing permanently excluded at EMA. This approach was adopted for a number of reasons:-

- a) EMA was over the numbers of students
- b) Once a student was attending EMA very few managed to be reintegrated back into a mainstream secondary school
- c) Students were refusing to attend EMA which could have been a potential safeguarding risk
- d) The result of the sparse curriculum offer at EMA and poor quality teaching in students becoming NEET post 16.

An organisation called Progress Schools was commissioned by the Local Authority to provide education from the sixth day of a permanent exclusion for the majority of Key Stage 3 secondary school students. The Progress School was commissioned to provide a twelve week programme of education and support so that these students could be successfully reintegrated back into another mainstream school. The Fair Access panel determined the new school each student should attend to avoid some schools taking significantly more students than others. The provision started in September 2017 and was based at The Hive in Birkenhead. Twenty three Key Stage 3 permanently excluded students attended the Progress School the majority of which now attend a mainstream secondary school. 15 students who had attended EMA for some time were given the opportunity to attend the Progress School to determine their suitability to transition back into mainstream. Very few of this cohort were deemed ready for mainstream due to endemic poor behaviour. It was concluded that the Progress School Birkenhead programme had successfully reintegrated the majority of pupils back into mainstream, so reducing the overall number of students on roll at EMA.

3. THE FUTURE

Whilst reflecting on the emerging success of the Progress School focus turned to the Key Stage 4 students attending EMA, as well as the Key Stage 4 students permanently excluded during the summer term 2018. A pilot project "Progress Pathways" starts in September 2018. Student participants either have attended EMA or were in the process of being admitted to EMA. Progress Pathways is a commissioned service for a maximum of 20 students. The provision is a blend of academic qualifications/functional skills and vocational qualifications which aim to lead to students successfully enrolling on apprenticeships or further education programmes post 16.

The result of these two initiatives means that there are currently 50 students on the roll of EMA. This is the lowest number of students on roll in September for at least 4 years.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Schools Forum agree to reduce the high needs funded places at EMA by 20 to 80 from September 2019.
- b) The allocated high needs funding is used to offset the costs of the Progress Pathways provision.
- c) A review of Progress Pathways to take place in 2019 with secondary headteachers to determine future viability/growth of the provision

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