

## **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

### **SCHOOLS FORUM – 30 June 2020**

#### **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION**

Title Foxfield School Change to Place Funding (increase +6)

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#### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Schools Forum is being asked to agree an increase in place funding for Foxfield School from September 2020. An increase from 141 places (on roll as at 06.03.20) to 147 places (from 01.09.2020). This will require all 147 places from the High Needs Funding Block of the Designated Schools Grant to be funded at £10,000 per place + Banding per place.
- 1.2 In January 2020 it was brought to the attention of the local authority that the Governors of Foxfield School (secondary special) were amenable to discussions around increasing places at the school. These types of discussions had previously been undertaken over several years between the local authority and school.
- 1.3 The main difference this time appears to be the (a) increase in numbers of children and young people (C&YP) requiring specialist educational provision and (b) the severity and range of special educational provision identified and assessed as a need.
- 1.4 Foxfield School can meet the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of children & young people (C&YP) who have complex and profound learning difficulties. This is also known as severe learning difficulties (SLD).
- 1.5 Most Children who attend Foxfield School in Year 7, Key Stage 3, have previously attended Elleray Park School (Community special school) or Stanley School (Community special school).

#### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The increasing number of pupils who will require provision in Wirral's secondary schools for pupils who have complex learning difficulties has been a cause of concern for Governors and the local authority for a number of years and so the Head of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) & Inclusion went to discuss with the Governors of Foxfield School the possibility of increasing places. The discussions were frank.

##### Number on roll

- 2.2 At present (March 2020) Foxfield has 141 pupils on roll and began this academic year 2019 – 2020 with 142 pupils. The Indicative Budget 2020/21 information sent to the school clearly states Places – 140 at £10,000.

In the Spring term 2020 Foxfield School had the following numbers:

Spring term 2020 number on roll:	141
Current number of places funded at £10,000 per place:	140
Current number of places <b>not</b> funded at £10,000 per place:	1

In the Spring term 2020 Foxfield had the following pupils on Top up Banding:

Top Ups band 3 = 119 pupils x £7,100 Banding  
Top Ups band 4 = 13 pupils x @ £8,100 Banding  
Top Ups band 5 = 9 pupils x £16,100 Banding

Total top ups funded = 141

Therefore all 141 pupils receive Top up Banding

- 2.3 There are 19 leavers in July 2020 and Foxfield Governors are provisionally supportive of accepting 19 new Year 7 pupils plus an additional 6 Year 7 pupils to offer 25 new places in total in Year 7. The Governors expect that the Local Authority would then fully fund all the pupils on roll from September 2020 (the whole school population). This means funding 147 pupils in both their place funding and the level of top up funding each child is allocated for their SEN Band.
- 2.4 Governors strongly believe that fully funding every pupil placed at Foxfield is essential in order that the school can meet their special education and safety needs. A reasonable level of staffing is required for this. As a new Key Stage 3 class will need to be created for September 2020 to accommodate these additional pupils Foxfield report that they cannot employ staff for this without the funding to do so.
- 2.5 The school budget has carried forward a deficit balance. The local authority has previously issued a notice of concern.

#### Health and Safety

- 2.6 If the number on roll at Foxfield increases by 6 pupils in September 2020 a new class group will need to be created. The Governors have identified a suitable classroom for this within the Key Stage 3 department and school leaders will consider and plan for the health and safety implications of this in the operation and organisation of the school. Class based issues will also be considered including a safe staffing level. Governors have requested that a relevant Local Authority officer with Health and Safety expertise, also assesses the impact of creating this additional class at Foxfield, given that this will mean the number of pupils on roll will become greater than this building was designed and built to accommodate.

#### Accommodation

- 2.7 Foxfield's Governors are extremely concerned about the future accommodation needs of the school given the forecast growth in the demand for places. They expect to remain a popular and essential part of Wirral's special school provision but the school's physical capacity to offer more places is limited. From 2022 there will be a clear lack of physical places available at Foxfield School.

## High Needs Places

- 2.8 Places in specialist provision within Local Authority areas continue to be determined by each local authority in consultation with schools and providers. There is flexibility to make adjustments so that places more broadly reflect take up by pupils. In January 2019 it was reported to Schools Forum that additional complex learning difficulties (CLD) places will be required from September 2020, although the number required at that time was unknown. For 2020-21 an amount equivalent to 40 places has been set aside for this purpose.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Agree an increase in funded places for Foxfield School from September 2020 from 141 places to 147 places, i.e. six additional places
- 3.2 Agree 147 Foxfield School places receive a base level funding of £10,000 per place from September 2020 + Banding per pupil
- 3.3 That the additional six funded places be included in the deadline for the high needs place change notification process in November 2020.

**Tarun Ghosh**

**Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities & Inclusion**

**Paul Boyce**

**Director for Children, Families and Education**