

16 June 2014

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, STANDARDS AND INCLUSION

PROPOSALS FOR ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF DERRYMOUNT SPECIAL SCHOOL BY USING THE SITE OCCUPIED BY DAYBROOK LEARNING CENTRE FOLLOWING ITS CLOSURE IN AUGUST 2014

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Committee approval to increase the capacity of Derrymount special school in order to develop specialist arrangements for pupils with complex social emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) associated with autism. The Committee is also asked to note the potential for further developments at other special schools.

Information and Advice

Context

2. On 10 February 2014 two reports were approved by the Children and Young People's Committee. The first report related to the closure of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) known as Daybrook Learning Centre, located in the south of the County, with effect from 31 August 2014. The second report made recommendations for the development of specialist SEBD provision in Nottinghamshire. The report included proposals to identify special schools in the County with the capacity to develop discrete provision for young people with additional complex needs and who are on the autistic spectrum and whose difficulties in social interaction result in a high risk of permanent exclusion.
3. Since February, discussions have taken place with four Nottinghamshire special schools about the collaborative development of specialist SEBD provision. These schools are: Derrymount (Gedling), Beech Hill (Mansfield), Orchard (Newark) and St Giles (Bassetlaw). This report is concerned with a proposal to develop specialist provision in collaboration with Derrymount special school.
4. Derrymount school has developed expertise and specialist provision which is able to meet the needs of pupils with complex communication and interaction disorders. Whilst these pupils typically have academic potential, they

experience difficulties managing social interactions in school and in the community and are at risk of permanent exclusion.

5. The approved closure of the Daybrook Learning Centre has now presented an opportunity to develop specialist provision on the Daybrook site for the south of the County. This report describes the context, the rationale and a proposal for the use of the premises currently occupied by the PRU, and how it will be converted into specialist provision. The proposal is part of the Local Authority's overall strategy to develop a graduated range of provision for pupils with SEBD and has been developed through collaboration with the head teacher, staff and management committee/ governors of both the PRU and Derrymount school.

Proposal for specialist provision on the Daybrook site

6. The number of pupils currently on roll at Derrymount is 66. Of these pupils, 62 have a primary need which has been identified as autism. The school is currently full and demand for places exceeds the level of provision available. There is no physical space within the school to further develop this site and increase the number of pupils on roll. The availability of the Daybrook site has offered the opportunity to expand Derrymount school across two sites and increase the number of available school places.
7. There has previously been a history of collaboration between the PRU and Derrymount school. There has been a pattern of placements of pupils on the roll of Derrymount school who have transferred from Daybrook PRU where the needs of the pupils attending the PRU have matched the profile of pupils attending Derrymount.
8. It is proposed to increase Derrymount's capacity by 30 places over a three year period (10 places per year) in order to make provision for young people with autism who are at risk of permanent exclusion. It is proposed that in September 2016, the capacity of Derrymount will increase to 96 pupils. In order to accommodate this number of pupils, it will be necessary to increase the number of classroom spaces available to the school. This will be achieved by developing the provision over two locations which will be established at Derrymount's existing site and at the Daybrook site. As a result the Daybrook site will become part of Derrymount school.
9. In addition to the proposal to increase provision for young people with autism it is intended to:
 - offer facilities on the Derrymount site to be used as a social services contact point for families
 - continue to provide facilities at Daybrook for the local youth club known as 'Daybrook Crew'.
10. It is also intended that the school will organise the provision in two phases i.e.

- a lower school located at Derrymount's existing site which will be known as Derrymount Churchmoor site
 - an upper school located at the Daybrook site which will be known as Derrymount Sherbrook site.
11. Meetings have taken place between the Local Authority and representatives of the school and the PRU in order to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements. In order to avoid the risks associated with an unoccupied building, it is proposed that the County Council expedites planning in order to ensure that the new arrangements are in place prior to the closure of the PRU in August 2014.
12. It is proposed that the following key actions should be progressed:
- all equipment and resources will transfer from Daybrook to Derrymount school
 - four pupils currently attending the PRU will transfer to the roll of Derrymount school
 - home to school transport will be re-organised to accommodate new split-site arrangements
 - admission to the new provision will be in line with existing arrangements i.e. via an Education, Health and Care Plan
 - a communication plan has been established which will ensure that parents, governors and the community are appropriately informed
 - the Governors of Derrymount school will give consideration to the redeployment of the remaining staff who have been displaced following the closure of the PRU.
13. It is also proposed that further potential opportunities to develop similar provision in other areas of the County will be explored in collaboration with the following special schools:
- Beech Hill
 - Orchard
 - St Giles.

Other Options Considered

14. Alternative uses of the premises vacated by Daybrook Learning Centre were:
- selling the site for development
 - refurbishing the premises for alternative use by County Council services.
15. These options were not pursued for the following reasons:

- the County Council has recently invested considerable resources into the Daybrook site which continues to offer a high quality educational setting.
- the County Council has approved the expansion of its specialist provision and Daybrook is an ideal site which would avoid the expense of developing costly alternatives.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

16. Derrymount school has a reputation for managing pupils with complex communication and interaction disorders. The continued use of the site represents a cost effective way of meeting needs for which there is no other local provision. This development forms part of the implementation of the strategy previously agreed by the Children and Young People's Committee to develop specialist provision.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Crime and Disorder Implications

18. The Daybrook site will be at risk of being vandalised if the premises are left unoccupied.

Financial Implications

19. Interim funding of £155,000 has become available from September 2014 – April 2015. This has been secured from savings made from the closure of the PRU and is available to reinvest in specialist provision.
20. Longer term the funding required to increase capacity at Derrymount will be secured from the High Needs block of funding centrally retained by the Local Authority. The level of funding will be determined by the normal formula funding arrangements for special schools.

Human Resources Implications

21. Derrymount will need to increase staffing levels and will consider the redeployment of existing staff at Daybrook displaced by closure of the PRU.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

22. The increased provision at Derrymount school will reduce the risk of permanent exclusion for this group of vulnerable learners.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

23. An existing school site will be utilised to maximum effect.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) the proposal to increase the capacity of Derrymount special school in order to develop specialist arrangements for pupils with complex SEBD associated with autism be approved
- 2) the potential for further developments at other special schools be noted.

John Slater,
Service Director, Education, Standards and Inclusion

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Chris Harrison
Group Manager, SEND and Provision
T: 0115 9773384
E: chris.c.harrison@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (NAB 02/06/14)

24. The Children and Young People's Committee has authority to consider and approve the recommendations set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (KLA 29/05/14)

25. The financial implications of this report are set out in paragraphs 19 and 20 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Proposal to close Daybrook Learning Centre – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 10 February 2014
Specialist provision for children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD): options and recommendations – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 10 February 2014

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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