

Impacts and Outcomes Expected of the school inclusion initiative Plymouth Commission - Strand 3.1 Reducing Pupil Mobility

11/12/2020

Plymouth City Council recognises that the majority of children are best served when their education provision is delivered by their mainstream school, with their peer group, accessing the breadth of curriculum and opportunities available. This should be achieved with minimum pupil mobility is the influx then exit of children at often random points during the school year and for a variety of reason. For the few who require alternative provision or off site support the best practice is where schools, as the education experts, work collaboratively to develop local arrangements, design provision and make decisions regarding intervention which meets the needs of the children they serve.

Therefore the report that is presented to the School Forum today describes a pivotal project that is expected to lead to a significant remodelling of the City's commissioning of alternative provision. The project will be served as a pilot to refocus High Needs Block's Alternative Provision funding on early intervention and inclusion work in mainstream schools so that the need for AP places and school exclusion will be reduced.

The local authority recognises the need to have expected outcomes of and strength of this strategic remodelling and, as such, will have a QA Panel to assess the impact of the initial projects of Plymouth Commission on reducing the need for AP places and exclusion. If the expected initial impacts are achieved, it is the strategic vision of the City Council that as next stage of the reform, we will explore devolving a proportion of High Needs funding for alternative provision to the cluster-based inclusion initiatives within mainstream schools. Plymouth Commission is served as a pilot of this strategy.

It is clear in our long-term strategic vision that schools are expected to work collaboratively and will use their allocations flexibly to meet the needs of all the children within their cluster or hubs, including those of primary school age and those challenging learners awaiting the outcome of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment.

Plymouth City Council have a legal duty to provide full-time and suitable alternative education for pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or are unable to attend school due to physical or mental health conditions. Currently 200 AP places are commissioned to fulfil this statutory duty.

Moving forward:

On 10th June 2020 Schools Forum agreed the following recommendation from High Needs Block Budget Modelling Group:

- 1. £0.600m is ring-fenced as a commitment to fund proposals for improving the Alternative Education offer and reducing exclusions within the City. Once proposals have been approved, this funding will be distributed on an equitable basis between*

Primary and Secondary phases. Work is still ongoing for both phases, BMG requests that all finalised proposals should be received by the end of October 2020 so that details can be reported back to Forum and plans can be factored in to the 2021/22 DSG budget setting.

Budget Modelling Group are progressing the review of the proposals around an Alternative Education Offer for both Primary and Secondary phases, including consideration of the sustainability of proposals.

There is a need to progress this work in order that pupils benefit from the new ways of working as soon as possible. Therefore we would propose that the proposals are established as one-year pilots in order to progress this work.

In order to do this the following actions will be required:

- An Inclusion Project Board will be established in partnership with schools (primary, secondary, special and AP) and the local authority.
- This Project Board will oversee the development of this work, including the vision, outcomes to be achieved, KPI, impact evaluation and final costings of the projects.
- The Project Board will monitor the evaluation of the pilots and coordinate the proposals of sustainable provision.
- Future High Needs Funding requirement proposals will be reported back to Schools Forum in order to be considered within the HNB Budget Modelling Group plan for 2021/22.

Appendix - Plymouth Commission - Strand 3.1 Reducing Pupil Mobility, A Summary of the Work so Far and a Proposal to be Presented to Schools Forum, 11 November, 2020 by Richard Woodland (rwoodland@westst.org.uk)

Ming Zhang
Service Director of Education, Participation and Skills