

North Yorkshire County Council

Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee

7th November 2019

School Exclusions and The Grove PRS update

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on school exclusions in the locality and the current position with regards to The Grove Academy.

2. Background

2.1 The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility under the Children and Families Act 2014 to keep its special educational provision under review, to ensure sufficiency in placements to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), working with parents/carers, young people and providers.

2.2 In order to meet this responsibility, the Local Authority has developed the Strategic Plan for SEND Education provision 0-25 (the Strategic Plan) to address the needs of children and young people with SEND in North Yorkshire. This plan includes changes to the Pupil Referral Service (PRS).

2.3 In January 2019 the Council Executive approved plans to change the funding model for all PRS across North Yorkshire to place based funding. The Executive agreed to:

- Proceed with the development of a revised model of Alternative Provision (AP) in localities in collaboration with secondary and PRS Head teachers and to finalise the new model by July 2019 with implementation from September 2020
- Phase the reduction in discretionary funding by continuing to pay 50% of discretionary funding from April 2019 until September 2020 to reduce the impact of the budget changes on the PRS/AP provision and provide greater organisational stability whilst the transition to the new model is implemented
- Continue to fund AP places at £19K until September 2019 and then £18K in line with national average
- Securing a saving from the discretionary funding to offset the pressure on the high needs block budget by between £1.3m and £1.5m
- Reallocating a proportion of discretionary money (£771,000) directly to locality education boards

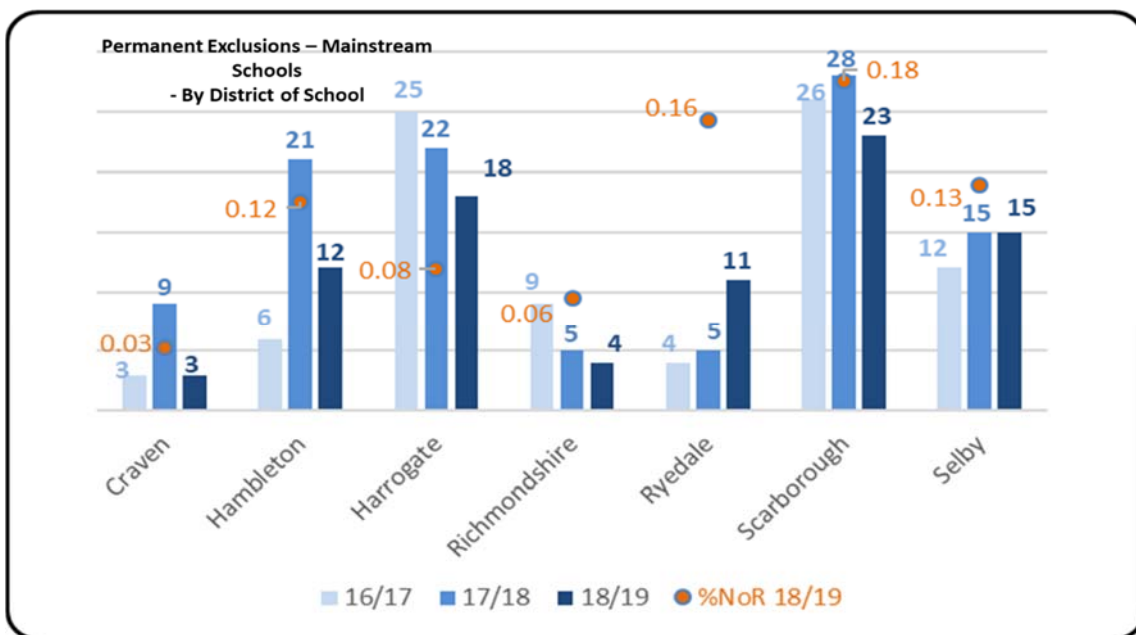
3. Exclusions in the locality

3.1 23% of the county’s fixed term exclusions happen in Harrogate, Ripon and Knaresborough. In 2018/19 this equated to 1327 fixed term exclusions of children and young people from mainstream schools. This number is similar to 2017/18 at 1329 but considerably higher than in 2016/17 which stood at 911.

3.2 There were a total of 436 children fixed-term excluded from mainstream schools (primary or secondary) in Harrogate in the 2018/19 academic year, approximately 2% fewer than the previous year (445). This was 22% of the North Yorkshire total for mainstream schools in 2018/19.

3.3 436 represented 1.92% of the mainstream school population in Harrogate in 2018/19, the North Yorkshire rate was 2.5% in this period.

3.4 There were a total of 18 permanent exclusions from mainstream schools (primary or secondary) in Harrogate in the 2018/19 academic year, approximately 22% fewer than the previous year (22). This was 21% of the North Yorkshire total for mainstream schools in 2018/19.



4. Progress to date

4.1 Work has been undertaken with local head teachers and PRS in partnership to develop new models of alternative provision across the county. The new models have been designed to be more flexible and offer preventative placements so that schools do not need to permanently exclude to access support. Approval to implement the new models was given by the Executive on 24th September 2019.

4.2 Models have been developed based on the following agreed key principles:

- Young people remain part of their local home school community
- Home schools retain responsibility for young people on AP overseeing engagement and progress
- All children and young people on AP are entitled to high quality, full time and relevant education which enables them to fulfil their potential
- AP should be used proactively to personalise the learning programme of young people disengaging from a more traditional mainstream curriculum
- Young people on AP should receive high levels of pastoral and learning support and access to a broad social curriculum that prepares them for adulthood
- Young people on AP programmes should have access to qualifications appropriate to their abilities and that wherever possible contribute to Progress 8 performance

4.3 In all other localities a new model has been agreed. Progress in transforming the model of Alternative Provision in Harrogate has not been made at the same rate as in the other four localities. The status of The Grove and its ability to remain open has been the subject of significant speculation throughout the process.

4.4 The current Pupil Referral Services remain central to the delivery of the new AP models.

4.5 Delta Multi Academy Trust are in advanced discussions with the Regional Schools Commissioner to re-broker the sponsorship of The Grove to another MAT. At no stage has any approach been made to the RSC to close the academy.

4.6 An established MAT with a track record in special school and alternative provision have confirmed their interest and been approved to take over the sponsorship of The Grove under the new funding arrangements. They are now in negotiation with Delta and the RSC on finalising the transfer of the academy.

4.7 The LA are continuing to work with local school leaders in Harrogate and surrounding areas on developing new arrangements for how young people access the support they need from alternative provision. The prospective new MAT are committed to working closely with the LA and local schools as soon as arrangements over sponsorship are finalised.

4.8 The funding model agreed includes an additional £5k contribution from schools to jointly commission preventative places with the LA and local PRS. This is in addition to the standard place funding of £18k per place provided by the LA.

4.9 The LA have agreed to 'front load' the place funding to aid budget stability at each PRS and AP. This means that the LA's place funding will be made available in its totality at the outset of each financial year.

5. Implementation September 2019 to September 2020

- 5.1** Locality meetings have been established throughout the next academic year to work with school leaders and the local PRS to implement transition arrangements.
- 5.2** Local protocols are being developed and will be agreed in the locality forums to ensure equity of access and ensure the new provision is able to have most impact.
- 5.3** Transport has been highlighted as a significant barrier to schools to be able to access provision. The LA are undertaking detailed modelling of options with the aim of reducing the burden of travel costs for young people to access places preventatively.
- 5.4** In preparation for the launch of the new models from September 2020, it is intended that the title Pupil Referral Service is replaced with a new title that reflects the new designation of the PRS and to remove the stigma associated with provision for excluded children and young people.
- 5.5** A full review of all young people currently accessing PRS provision is being undertaken. This review will assist the LA and PRS to work with young people and their families to ensure they have the most suitable provision for their needs.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1** It is recommended that members note the report on exclusions in the locality and the work underway to implement new models of provision for those at risk of exclusion.

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