

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**16 FEBRUARY 2022**

### **STATEMENT OF EDUCATION & SKILLS PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

#### **School funding**

Schools Block funding allocations were announced by Department for Education in late-December 2021 with a net additional c.£8.5m taking the funding total for North Yorkshire schools to £392m. A number of primary schools, in particular, will benefit from increases in sparsity funding. Individual schools will be notified of their allocations during February 2022. In respect to the national funding formula, the spending review confirmed additional funding for schools over and above the DSG settlement. The indicative supplementary funding allocation for North Yorkshire is £11.28m and is intended to support schools with the Health and Social Care Levy and wider cost pressures.

The local authority continues to lobby for a fairer funding deal for schools in North Yorkshire and, in 2022-23, the local authority will provide exceptional one-off funding of £50,000 to two small, rural secondary schools.

Additional funding for high needs and SEND has been estimated at £5.7m with a further £2.63m grant funding announced in December 2021. However, in line with the national trend, North Yorkshire continues to experience significant financial pressure in High Needs.

North Yorkshire will also benefit from an increase in the early years funding rate of 17p per hour for three and four year olds and 21p per hour for vulnerable two year olds. We are currently consulting the early years' sector on proposals to distribute the funding in 2022-23.

#### **Baldersby St James CE Primary School**

The School is an academy and has been subject to a closure process managed by Hope Sentamu Learning Trust and the DfE.

On 25 January 2022 the Minister confirmed the School will close in August 2022. There will now follow a consultation concerning the future treatment of the Baldersby catchment area from September 2022. This will be undertaken by the County Council and in conjunction with Elevate Multi Academy Trust who operate two of the local schools.

#### **Woodfield and Grove Road Community Primary Schools, Harrogate**

A proposal that the two schools should amalgamate with effect from September 2022 has been developed by members of the school governing bodies and LA officers. The proposed amalgamation would be achieved through the technical closure of Woodfield School, and the enlargement of Grove Road CP School through future use of the Woodfield site. The two governing bodies carefully considered the proposals last year, and both agreed to ask the County Council to start a consultation.

The consultation closed on 28 January and the Executive will now be asked to publish statutory proposals at its meeting on 22 February 2022 which would allow a further four week representation period.

## **Weaverthorpe CE (VC) Primary School**

The School is subject to a Directive Academy Order following an 'Inadequate' Ofsted judgement but no academy sponsor has been identified due to viability concerns. LA officers, together with the Church of England Diocese, have explored opportunities for collaboration with other schools but regrettably no acceptable proposal has been identified. As a result the Executive Member for Education & Skills approved consultation on a school closure proposal on 7 December 2021. The consultation period is currently underway and closes on 18 February 2022. The Executive will then be asked to consider publishing statutory proposals at a meeting in March 2022.

## **Changes to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Provision**

As reported in my November statement to Council, work is continuing to keep our SEND provision requirements under review. As part of this review process it is important that the provision commissioned within the authority is reflective of current and future needs. Proposals have been brought forward in relation to both of the County's residential special schools. Consultation was undertaken last autumn in regard the future of residential at Welburn Hall School and a report will be presented to the Executive in March 2022. A public consultation has also begun on a proposal to cease residential provision at Brompton Hall School and change the designation of the school from boys only to co-educational. The outcome of the consultation will be presented to the Executive in April 2022.

## **Schools**

During the autumn term the School Improvement Service undertook significant engagement and mapping with schools to plan and agree approximately 1,500 days of support to 235 maintained schools across North Yorkshire. This exercise has enabled the service to better understand the specific priorities for individual schools. By developing an improved collaborative approach the service is able to work proactively, rather than reactively, to identify areas for development at an earlier stage and support schools to make necessary improvements. Over 600 face to face monitoring and support visits have taken place in the autumn term, including approximately 100 each on safeguarding and governance – two key priorities across the county this year.

The current performance of schools in North Yorkshire judged to be Good or Outstanding is 81%, this remains below the national average (currently 87%). Recent inspections have demonstrated that the LA and schools' focus in safeguarding this academic year is effective in the majority of schools.

## **Covid in schools**

Attendance in schools last term was something of a rollercoaster in terms of the number of students testing positive for Covid-19. September started from a very low base, with only 246 confirmed or suspected cases at the start of the term, rising to an average of almost 2500 students with, or suspected of having, Covid-19 on any given day by the third week in November, before falling steadily over the last few weeks before the Christmas break. Since the New Year case numbers have risen so that over 3000 children have been absent for covid related reasons on any day over the last few weeks; this often was matched by over 300 staff

absences at the same time. Schools are working hard to ensure they remain safe, and open, for all pupils and staff and that the children's education faces the least disruption as possible. Closures that have taken place have been for short periods, and only when operational reasons leave no other option for the school.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR PATRICK MULLIGAN