



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - 19 JANUARY 2015**

UPDATE ON OAKFIELD SHORT STAY SCHOOL

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee about developments at Oakfield Short Stay School over the last twelve months and the potential future plans for sustaining a strong system of support for primary aged pupils who present challenging behaviour and may be at risk of exclusion.
2. Oakfield School (and behaviour support for primary schools) is the subject of an all member briefing ahead of this meeting at 10.00am.

Background

3. Oakfield Short Stay School is a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) meeting the Education Act 1996 Section 19 duty on local authorities to provide education otherwise than at schools for young people who cannot attend mainstream school because of behavioural difficulties.
4. Oakfield has undergone significant change in the past two years. The future of Oakfield School was the subject of a public consultation for 14 weeks over the summer of 2013 that ended in October 2013. As a result of this consultation, Key Stage 3 funding was devolved to the secondary behaviour partnerships and Oakfield focused purely on primary aged children.
5. The reasons for change are threefold. Firstly, the changing national policy framework resulting from the review of PRU and Alternative Provision published in March 2012, known as the Taylor Report; second, concerns about the potential cost of the provision under new funding arrangements for high needs provision; and third, concerns about the quality of provision which was judged by Ofsted to require special measures in May 2012.
6. Following a re-inspection in May 2014 Oakfield is now judged to be offering good provision and good leadership and management. This, in turn, means that pupils are making good and often excellent improvements in their behaviour and learning. The inspection report highlighted the very positive views of parents: *One parent commented on the 'amazing communication between home and school'. Another's recommendation*

was *'just keep up the great work'*. Other comments were similarly positive. (Extract from Ofsted report May 2013).

7. The inspection report highlights a number of key strengths across the board. Of particular note is the strength of governance. The management committee has been strengthened to include primary headteachers, including National Leaders in Education, school governors, including a National Leader of Governance and parents. There are now fewer local authority governors and more practising community governors. Through the management committee reconstitution there is now representation from headteachers across all areas of the county and from a range of Teaching School Alliances and partnerships, including Schools Forum.
8. Other key factors that have brought about this rapid change have been:
 - (a) The appointment of a new headteacher who has worked closely with behaviour partnerships, special schools and primary schools to establish effective working relationships;
 - (b) Devolving funding for Key Stage 3 and 4 to secondary behaviour partnerships where exclusions are reducing and there is increased autonomy and control of the commissioning of Alternate Provision. **Appendix 1** provides additional information about the current performance of the partnerships;
 - (c) Strengthening links with early help teams, particularly Supporting Leicestershire Families.
9. Alongside the devolving of funding for behaviour partnerships to secondary schools, school funding reform in 2013/14 required centrally retained funding for behaviour support to be delegated to schools. Following consultation with schools all behaviour support funding was delegated to schools in April 2013. Although some schools, including groups of schools, have taken the opportunity to begin to build local capacity and expertise, others have not developed such strong systems and have been unclear about where to access support when they have a child with challenging behaviour.
10. During this period of change there have been ongoing discussions with members of Leicestershire Primary Heads, Oakfield school management committee and the ex-chairs of primary behaviour partnerships. The purpose of these meetings has been to gather views about how a structured, graduated framework can be developed that ensures that schools are supported to deal with challenging pupils through early identification and intervention.
11. There is a clear need to continue to strengthen the system to support schools in reducing exclusions and promoting positive behaviour management to address needs and ensure an equitable approach across mainstream settings.

12. Since April 2014 discussions have taken place with primary headteachers, colleagues in early help and secondary behaviour partnership Chairs. As a result of these discussions, three key areas were identified as critical to developing a more graduated approach to provision and realising the aspiration for a long term expectation, as outlined in the Taylor Report, for schools the take control of commissioning and reduce the pressure for places at a pupil referral unit. These are:
- (a) **Ensuring a fair admissions process:** since the disbanding of local primary partnerships, the gate-keeping process has been removed;
 - (b) **Sharing information, advice and guidance:** schools requested that local partnerships are established where there is an opportunity to share issues, access expertise, signposting and guidance which would reduce the demand for places at Oakfield;
 - (c) **Access to expertise:** Oakfield staff has a wealth of expertise and experience which could support schools in building local capacity and expertise. Developing outreach and a training programme would support the principles of a self-improving school system.
13. These key areas have been the focus of development work for leaders at Oakfield. The aim, in a self-improving school system, is to enable schools to develop their own capacity to help children with challenging behaviours, and to seek support from other schools in their networks. Through this approach more children should be able to stay in their local mainstream school receiving the help and support they need to access their learning. The overall graduated approach which is aligned to the County Council's target operating model is outlined in **Appendix 2**.

Current Developments

Oakfield Performance Summary

14. Oakfield is now a 30 place primary school with provision for children with social, emotional or behavioural needs that make it difficult for them to learn in a mainstream setting. Most children are placed at the school on a 'dual registration' in agreement with parents and carers, with the aim of a return to mainstream education if this is the most appropriate place for them to learn. This approach reduces permanent exclusions and ensures that pupils remain on roll of a mainstream school. The school also caters for pupils who have been excluded from mainstream school. Analysis shows that the majority of pupils spend more than one year at the Short Stay School and the majority are transferred to special school, unit or independent specialist provision for pupils with social and emotional and behavioural difficulties.
15. As of 4th December the school has 24 pupils on roll: 2 pupils are due to move into specialist provision in January and 8 pupils are being

considered for a dual registered place at Oakfield for the start of January 2015. There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions from Oakfield in the last twelve months.

16. Leaders at Oakfield monitor the progress that pupils make in a number of ways, looking at academic, social and emotional development. Detailed analysis of a range of information takes place and pupil, class and school level every half term (approximately 6 weeks). Any sticking points in learning are identified and actions are put in place and then monitored carefully to ensure that pupils get back on track.
17. Tools for tracking social and emotional development are a key feature of the school's wider support for pupils. The profile that emerges for each pupil identifies strengths and areas for development which then form the basis for curriculum planning and individual target setting.
18. Pupil progress during the first term is usually slow as pupils settle into their new routines and environment. From the second term onwards, progress typically accelerates and pupils make better progress than their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2. The current cohort of pupils is making good progress from their starting points and this is evidenced in the school's tracking information.

Developing wider support and fair access for schools

19. Since the beginning of the autumn term 2014 a new model of support to schools has been introduced which streamlines the process for accessing places at Oakfield. This model has focused on two of the three areas of need identified by headteachers. Firstly the introduction of a gate-keeping function called a 'One Stop Shop' to oversee fair access to Oakfield. Secondly, the implementation of Primary Behaviour Forums which provide opportunities for teachers and leaders in mainstream settings to seek advice and support from colleagues at Oakfield. Schools were informed about these two developments at the beginning of term through headteacher briefings and information posted on EIS (Education Information System).
20. The One Stop Shop 'gate keeping' process is now in operation and meetings are scheduled on a monthly basis. A panel of 3 people, two senior leaders from Oakfield and where possible, an Educational Psychologist considers a range of evidence about each case which is collated in a referral form which is discussed at the meeting. The referral process is set out in this way to ensure that schools have explored other options for more localised support before a place at Oakfield will be considered.
21. The Primary Behaviour Forums are school-led and have been scheduled over the autumn term, taking place on a monthly basis at Oakfield.. The focus and intention of these sessions is to offer expert knowledge and advice to schools so that they can meet the needs of individual children

who are presenting challenging behaviour. This, in turn, reduces the pressure for places at Oakfield but, more importantly, children are able to learn in a mainstream setting with their peers and with minimum disruption to their education.

22. The school is also offering telephone advice to schools. The aim for Oakfield is to respond to the calls within 24 hours. If a school is calling regarding advice then it is suggestive that there is a risk that the young person may be permanently excluded from the school. The calls are currently being returned by one of 3 members of the Senior Management Team (SMT). Each call can last for around 20 minutes. Equally email contact can be made and similar time measure can be deployed. Following the telephone/email contact the school is invited to attend the Primary Behaviour Forum if that is appropriate.
23. The table below shows the number of interactions during the first term of implementation. It should be noted that in some instances, schools seek advice about several pupils at the same time, especially at the telephone stage.

Locality	Telephone Advice Sought	Primary Behaviour Forum Attendance	One-Stop Shop Attendance	Places Offered	Further Action/ seeking support
Coalville	7	2	2	1	2
Loughborough	3	2	2		1
Melton	4	5	2		1
Hinckley & Bosworth	9	9	7	1	3
South Leicestershire	7	7	6	1	3
Out of County	5	N/A	N/A	2	1
Total No of Schools	35	25	19	5	10

24. Since September the telephone advice has focused primarily on managing behaviour, ranging from advice and support for aggressive behaviour towards staff, dealing with safeguarding and signposting to alternative support.
25. Two behaviour forums have taken place. Prior to attending the forum schools have contacted Oakfield via phone or email so that staff can be prepared for the topics that need to be discussed. Where Oakfield staff are aware of support through the Teaching School Alliances, schools are signposted towards alternative support that is available. In the main, those schools contacting Oakfield have already accessed this support and are requesting further advice and more specialist support back in their

schools. A key theme that is emerging is support required for young people with social, emotional and mental health issues within schools' local networks. This is combined with the theme of assessing pupils with special educational needs, particularly during this period of introducing new systems and processes as part of the reform of special educational needs and disability provision. Staff at Oakfield are working with SENA (Special Educational Needs Assessment) to ensure that during this period of change, the needs of all pupils and their parents are met.

26. The One Stop Shop meetings have considered 19 cases and as a result 3 pupils have been offered a place at Oakfield. The panel challenged 16 cases and agreed that, based on the evidence and discussion, schools could undertake further action, supported by Oakfield in implementing new strategies.
27. Where locality teams have requested, Oakfield staff have provided tailor made support. For example, 13 schools in Hinckley attended training to learn how to use specific tools to support social and emotional needs assessment.
28. In addition to the support for schools, leaders at Oakfield are increasingly working with other locality support networks. They have established links with teaching school alliances, secondary behaviour partnerships and early help teams. Of particular note is the joint working with Supporting Leicestershire Families. For example, Oakfield held an open afternoon for Supporting Leicestershire Families outreach workers, where Year 6 pupils were the tour guides and where there was an opportunity for information exchange and to plan more joint working with families. Feedback from this session was extremely positive:

Fantastic School inspiring and wonderful tour guides.

I am so impressed. Good to hear of the support to schools too. I just feel there is a lot I don't know and would like to be informed to support parents and schools we work with.

I was impressed at the caring way the children were being supported. The work books were excellent and showed how hard the children work.

Fantastic work being done here can we have some sharing of skills and resource from your team please.

A fantastic environment where young people are thriving and achieving. The staff seem passionate in creating opportunities for positive outcomes.

Next Steps

Strengthening the graduated approach

29. The next stage of development is to build upon this emerging model and explore a range of options that will create a sustainable and inclusive system which achieves the overarching ambition to keep all children in mainstream education where their needs are met. It has become evident from feedback from the behaviour forums and One Stop Shop meetings

that there is a need for this system of support across Leicestershire. Early indications are that this approach has been well received by schools.

30. In order to achieve this, the work at Oakfield needs to be focused on:
- (a) Building capacity and expertise within the school system to reduce demand at Oakfield;
 - (b) Linking to early help locality hubs within each area so that families who are being supported by different services receive an integrated approach;
 - (c) Support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs which would include working with any other services who are involved, for example CAMHS and the Education Psychology Service;
 - (d) Alignment with the reform of special educational needs and disability so that assessments lead to swift diagnosis and the most appropriate provision;
 - (e) Working closely with secondary behaviour partnership teams so that pupils' needs can be tackled early enough to prevent escalating needs as they move from one phase to another.
31. To expand the current model and meet the identified needs of a group of pupils who, with the right kind of support at the right time, have a better chance of staying in mainstream education, requires additional resource. In the first instance, this would be an increase in staffing so that queries can be answered and meetings can be co-ordinated and evaluated systematically. The next stage would be to establish a co-ordinated programme of professional development which is built in partnership with key partners.
32. The school is located at the Blaby site and the devolution of the secondary provision raised the issue of re-location as a standalone facility. Since September 2014, changes to the usage of the building have resulted in significant financial savings and improvement to the overall environment is leading to further improved outcomes for pupils. It is evident that the site has many advantages in planning alternative learning experiences, for example 'Forest Schools' (add footnote). However, there is still a need to monitor the running costs and consider any other options that may arise in future.

Resource Implications

33. Schools Forum in September 2014 supported the provision of funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant reserve would be made available for part time administrative support and an additional teacher up to 31 March 2015 in order to establish the new arrangements for primary schools. Up to now

this has facilitated the initial 'One Stop Shop' approach and the monthly behaviour forums. However, if the capacity and skills of key staff within schools are to be increased there is a need for them to have access to training and development which will require further staff resource. It is intended that this will be funded as part of school to school support in the first instance.

34. Arrangements from 1 April 2015 are being developed in conjunction with schools. This transition period will continue over the summer term with additional resource funded through the Education Quality budget. This will offer a bought service for schools provided through Oakfield which will be fully funded from income generated from trading activities with schools.
35. School leaders understand that funding for targeted intervention has now been devolved to individual schools so to sustain a future service will require a subscription or service level agreement. Some early modelling has taken place which has looked at differentiated levels. This now needs to be fully costed and the market tested. This work is planned for the spring term in readiness for implementation in the autumn term.
36. It is intended that any developments at Oakfield are a key part of the work to remodel the education of vulnerable groups which is a key priority of the education programme of transformation (T20). Locating the work here means that there will be stronger alignment with the wider departmental transformation where focus is on introducing the whole system change based on user needs and outcomes and integrated service commissioning.

Conclusion

37. In the last eighteen months significant progress has been made to secure better education for those at risk of exclusion from mainstream education. Taking into account the broader improvements in secondary behaviour partnerships, improved access to Oakfield and the emergence of primary behaviour forums, there is clear evidence of a shared commitment to ensure that, at a time of change, the shift towards consistently good provision and outcomes is not lost.

Background Papers

Oakfield Inspection report May 2014

Taylor Review, March 2012:

<http://education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/b00204776/taylor-review-of-alternativeprovision>

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Mr G. Welsh CC

Officers to Contact:

Lesley Hagger, Director of Children and Family Services
Tel: 0116 305 6340 lesley.hagger@leics.gov.uk

Gillian Weston, Assistant Director of Children and Family Services,
Education and Learning and Skills
Tel: 0116 305 7813 gillian.weston@leics.gov.uk

Chris Connearn, Interim Head of Strategy, Vulnerable Groups
Tel: 0116 305 6445 chris.connearn@leics.gov.uk

Alison Bradley, Headteacher, Oakfield School
Tel: 0116 275 9150 alison.bradley@leics.gov.uk

Equality and Human Rights Implications

38. The progress that has been made at Oakfield Short Stay School has ensured that pupils at risk of falling behind in their educational progress, emotional health and well-being and safety are in a much better position to realise their potential. Analysis shows that those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium are making better progress than their peers and are therefore narrowing the achievement gap.

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