

**THE PROVISION FOR EXCLUDED PUPILS LIVING IN  
WELWYN, HATFIELD AND HERTSMERE**

*Report of the Director of Children Schools and Families*

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**1. Purpose of the Report**

To provide Members with information about the provision available for excluded pupils living in Welwyn, Hatfield and Hertsmere, in response to a request from County Councillor Mays [through the Group Spokesman.]

**2. Summary**

- 2.1. This report indicates that The Park ESC, located on the New Barnfield site in Hatfield, provides education for secondary-aged pupils who are in Key Stage 3, live in Welwyn, Hatfield or Borehamwood and have been permanently excluded from school.
- 2.2. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who have been permanently excluded from school and who live in Welwyn, Hatfield and Borehamwood are provided with 10 hours tuition per week at The Park ESC and a programme of education for 15 hours per week with the Youth Programmes Unit (YPU).
- 2.3. Primary-aged pupils who live in the area and have been permanently excluded from school are allocated a place at an EBD unit attached to a mainstream school where a managed move to another local school has not been possible.
- 2.4. In the event of a place being unavailable at either the ESC or EBD unit, then home tuition should be provided by the ESC until another pupil being reintegrated into a school can release a place.

**3. Conclusions**

The Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and any action that it deems necessary.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 There are currently 8 Education Support Centres (ESCs) in Hertfordshire, providing about 180 places and they have 2 key roles:
- a. Providing an outreach service for primary and secondary-aged pupils at risk of exclusion.
  - b. Providing education for pupils who have been permanently excluded from school comprising :-
    - Key Stage 3 pupils receive their full-time education at the ESC.
    - Key Stage 4 pupils, who are linked to a Youth Programme Unit (YPU) receive 10 hours at the ESC and 15 hours with YPU undertaking vocational and social education.

It should be noted that Key Stage 2 pupils are allocated a place at an EBD Unit if an alternative primary school is not appropriate.

In the case of any of these children, if there are difficulties with placement, the ESC normally organises tuition at home.

- 1.2 With the exception of Three Rivers and Hertsmere, there is an Education Support Centre in each District Council area (The Park serves Welywn and Hatfield). Pupils who have been permanently excluded and live in:
- the Three Rivers area are educated at Chessbrook in Watford
  - the Bushey area of Hertsmere are educated at Chessbrook
  - the Borehamwood/Potters Bar area of Hertsmere are educated at The Park at the New Barnfield site in Hatfield.
- 1.3 Section 5.1.10 of The Behaviour Support Plan (2001-2004), agreed in April 2001, states that “consideration will be given to the development of an additional centre to cover the Hertsmere District Council area from September 2002 bringing the total number of Education Support Centres (ESCs) to 9 ....”
- 1.4 A bid for £750,000 to establish a new ESC in Hertsmere was considered but was not included in the 2002/03 capital programme. A sum of £75,000 was, however, allocated for feasibility and design work. The revenue costs of the ninth centre were to be met by transferring resources from Chessbrook and The Park which are currently serving Hertsmere. Section 2 of this report explains further the reasons for not pursuing the additional centre in Hertsmere.
- 1.5 The legislative requirement to provide all permanently excluded pupils with full-time education from September 2002 led to a review of ESC accommodation in January and February 2002. From September 2002, in line with the recommendations of the ESC review and the Behaviour Support Plan (2001-2004), primary-aged pupils, who have been permanently excluded from school, are no longer educated on the site of an ESC.

- 1.6 The review of ESC accommodation concluded that, even with the implementation of the full-time requirement, the service should be able to meet the demand for places in terms of overall accommodation available. It was recognised, however, that not all ESC accommodation was up to the standard required to provide full-time education and that demand for places might sometimes exceed availability in a particular area. The Park was identified as a centre which would face this sort of pressure.
- 1.7 The requirement to provide full-time education has led to a review of practice at some centres and a reorganisation of provision. For example, at Stevenage and The Park, in order to maximise the provision, Key Stage 3 students receive education for the first 5 hours of each day and Key Stage 4 students, linked to Youth Programme Unit provision, for the final 2 hours.
- 1.8 The introduction of full time education was accompanied by an increase in funding for secondary aged pupils. Outreach work from ESCs to prevent exclusions has continued to be funded separately.

## **2. Current Position at The Park ESC**

- 2.1 The review of ESC accommodation was carried out in January and February 2002 against the standards of DfES Building Bulletin 77, which reflects the size of accommodation required in an EBD school. There is no separate national guidance or standard for Pupil Referral Units, which is the classification applied to Hertfordshire's ESCs.
- 2.2 The review highlighted concerns at the Park about indoor recreation facilities, outdoor play space and general teaching space. Following consultation with the Headteacher of The Park, it was agreed that the capacity should be set at 16, allowing for students to be taught in groups of 4, rather than 8 as indicated by Building Bulletin 77. The headteacher has asked that the capacity of the Centre be reviewed again, and this review is planned for later in the term.
- 2.3 Following further work on behaviour and achievement, the Achievement Panel on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2002 supported the development of more Learning Support Units within secondary schools. It is envisaged that as a result of the development of this type of preventative provision, the number of permanent exclusions from secondary schools will fall. It is anticipated that the required places at ESCs will fall from the current 180 to around 150.
- 2.4 In the light of this development and the difficulty in identifying a suitable site for an ESC in Hertsmere, it was decided to refurbish The Park and to increase its capacity using the £75,000 originally intended for feasibility and design work. Preliminary discussions have also taken place with Hertswood School about the possibility of establishing a Learning Support Unit. It is anticipated that the combination of a strengthened facility at The Park and a new resource at Hertswood would address the issues raised in the strategic ESC review, which formed part of the development work for the Behaviour Support Plan.

The refurbishment and development of ESCs is also part of a Private Finance Initiative bid currently being developed by CSF.

- 2.5 A mobile classroom is to be provided on site of The Park in order to provide further teaching accommodation and to increase its capacity. This will be funded from the 2003/04 capital programme and is planned to arrive before the start of the next academic year in September 2003. Further discussions are planned with the Head of Centre to plan the most effective use of resources, building on experience elsewhere.
- 2.6 There are currently 8 Key Stage 3 pupils on the role of The Park who receive full-time education at the centre and 8 Key Stage 4 pupils who receive 10 hours provision at the centre and 15 hours with YPU. A further 2 Key Stage 3 students will take up places within the next week.
- 2.7 The number of permanent exclusions of pupils residing in the Welwyn, Hatfield and Borehamwood areas in each of the last three years, broken down by Key Stage, is as follows.

	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>
<b>Key Stage 1</b> (up to 7 years)	1	2	1
<b>Key Stage 2</b> (7-11 years)	2	6	9
<b>Primary total</b>	3	8	10
<b>Key Stage 3</b> (11-14 years)	9	14	28
<b>Key Stage 4</b> (15-16 years)	10	12	10
<b>Secondary total</b>	19	26	38

The rate of exclusions per thousand of the school population in this area of Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils is 5.10 and is the highest in the county. The average for the county over the last 3 academic years has been 3.01 pupils per thousand.

- 2.8 Not all pupils excluded permanently, who live in this area, have been excluded from schools in the area. This year, for instance, 5 pupils from the area have been excluded from St. Albans Schools.
- 2.9 Where demand for places at ESCs exceeds availability for a period of time, it may be necessary to utilise spare capacity at neighbouring ESCs, particularly if students have been excluded from schools in the area covered by the preventative work of that ESC.

### **3. Financial Implications**

This report has no financial implications. £75,000 has been allocated from the approved budget to improve accommodation facilities at the Park and increase its on-site capacity.

#### **Background information referred to by the author:**

Behaviour Support Plan

Achievement Panel 4 July 2002 : Achievement and Behaviour of Children and Young People

DfES : Building Bulletin 77