

Hunters Hill School

Update for Education & Children's Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee

19th May 2021



Agenda

- Background
- Staff Consultation
- School Site and Buildings
- Equipment Disposal
- Pupil Placements & Pupil Voice
- Next Steps

Background

- Hunters Hill is scheduled to close at the end of the 2020/2021 academic year.
- It currently provides school places for 70 (67) pupils in years 8 to 11. The numbers on roll have reduced over time (there were 84 on roll in September 2020).
- On reopening in March 2021 following national lockdown, there were serious issues that prevented pupils returning to the school site including positive covid-19 cases, ICT failure and rodent infestation.
- SENAR have been working with Hunters Hill leadership and staff to facilitate interim placements in appropriate settings for all pupils.

Staff consultation

- Following the determination to close Hunters Hill at the end of the 2020/21 academic year a redundancy consultation process commenced.
- The formal consultation concluded on 4 May 2021.
- As per the consulted timeline notice has since been provided to all employees advising that their employment will terminate on 31 August 2021 for reason of redundancy.
- *Regrettably there is no mobility clause in the contract of employees at Hunters Hill, and therefore during the period of temporary placement is it not possible to compel the employees to move with the pupils to offer continuing teaching, learning and assessment. This is only achievable through voluntary agreement; which has not been forthcoming.*
- Where students continue to access education at their temporary placement location teaching staff can contribute to delivery as appropriate through remote teaching, learning and assessment and through other activities as identified by the head teacher.
- All staff will also need to be involved in preparing the site for closure in terms of appropriately contributing to and organising related resources for transfer, retention or destruction and ensuring the site is left in a condition fit for handover.

School Site & Buildings (1)

Decommissioning of buildings

- The Cropwood House building and the residential buildings are no longer in use by the school and are closed to pupils and staff.
- Ground floor windows and doors have been boarded up of all water systems have been drained down and gas and electricity supplies disconnected.
- The rodent infestation is being managed by a professional pest control company who are undertaking a schedule of pest control measures including regular attendance to monitor the issue. This needs to be in hand before the buildings can be fully decommissioned.
- This process will continue with the other buildings that are no longer used moving forward.

School Site & Buildings (2)

Site Security and Future use

- The Information technology systems are critical to onsite security and communication systems and the spike in the electricity supply continues to be investigated and managed by the school's electricity supplier.
 - Cropwood Trustees have been kept up to date and any future use of the site is referred to them for approval e.g. the annual Blackwell festival held on the grounds of HHC by the village.
 - We will continue to work with the trust to finalise the options appraisal for the future use of the site with Birmingham Property Services ensuring correct governance is observed in implementing the preferred option.
 - In the meantime, we are in the process of confirming security arrangements once the site is vacant.
 - In the meantime, support has been provided via EDI and Acivico to ensure all necessary compliance and safety checks are in place.
 - All items previously identified by the school such as fire doors, windows, external areas that were deemed unsafe and needed rectifying have been completed.
 - Although the site is now accessible for staff and pupils to attend, with pupils either having secured permanent or temporary placements in advance of the permanent closure, onsite provision will only be utilised as a last resort to minimise transitions in the best interests of pupils.
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Equipment disposal

An inventory has been created of all loose furniture and equipment and items will be categorised:

Targeted disposal

- Items that are no longer usable or are unsafe to be skipped
- Items that are usable and can be removed - capital team has identified other schools/settings that would benefit from the available resources
- Items have been identified that can be moved to the new Lea Hall Academy site (relocation of Skilts School)
- Equipment that can be transferred with pupils (laptops and specialist equipment)

Planned disposal to educational establishments

- Items that can be released to other schools/settings at the end of the term
- An inventory will be made available to all schools and settings to express an interest in available resources
- Resources will be earmarked on first come first served basis

Planned disposal to non-educational establishments

- Items that are not of an interest to schools and settings and can be released to other educational services as well as charities

Disposal to generate income for site upkeep

- Anything that has a value and can be sold to generate income (motor vehicles, scrap metal, specialist equipment etc.). Any potential income will go towards the security costs.

Pupil Placements - Progress to date

- At the start of the academic year there were 84 pupils on roll at Hunters Hill. Since then 14 (17) appropriate permanent places have been secured and pupils are attending these new placements
- Out of the remaining 70 (67) pupils currently on roll, we have identified and offered interim placements for 66 (63) pupils
- It is anticipated that the large majority of these interim placements will become permanent with a significant number already secured and others subject to confirmation of parental preference, formal consultation with Governing Boards and the necessary amendment of EHCPs – **current confirmed permanent placements = 36**
- Attendance is being monitored on a daily basis and 50 (48) pupils are regularly attending their interim placements. Work is ongoing to finalise start dates and secure consistent attendance in respect of the remaining 16 (15) pupils with identified placements
- Individual case work via dedicated SENAR officers in conjunction with Hunters Hill staff and relevant agencies is being conducted in respect of the 4 remaining pupils where it has not yet been possible to identify interim or permanent places
- For those pupils who are not yet attending an interim placement or receiving home tuition, a remote learning offer is in place either online or via provision of appropriate work packs

Pupil Placements – Cost & Transport

Costs of Placement

- The costs of interim placements have previously been provided and range from £18.5k to £28k, per pupil, per annum. This equates to just over £23k per annum on average which is consistent with current funding levels at Hunters Hill.
- As most interim placements have been sourced with providers at the lower end of the costs scale, the average per pupil expenditure for the summer term is a little over £7k.

Transport

- Interim placements all took account of relationship to the pupil's home address. In many cases the placement agreed has been nearer to the family home.
- Travel Assist have worked closely with SENAR, families and providers to arrange appropriate transport for pupils when required. Where possible, existing providers have been used to ensure consistency.

Pupil Voice – feedback from 12 pupils

Year Group of pupil	Yr11	Yr11	Yr11	Yr11	Yr10	Yr10	Yr9	Yr9	Yr9	Yr9	Yr8	Yr8	Ave
Q1. How well have you settled at school? (/10)	10	10	9	7	10	10	10	6	9	7	10	9	8.9
Q2. How supportive are staff towards students? (/10)	10	9	10	8	10	10	10	5	8	7	10	5	7.7
Q3. How safe and comfortable do you feel in your new learning environment? (/10)	10	10	10	8	8	10	9	7	9	9	10	9	9.1
Q4. How effective are the staff in catering for your individual needs? (/10)	10	10	10	8	10	9	10	6	5	9	9	9	8.8
Q5. How would you rate the overall learning environment? (/10)	10	10	9	9	10	10	9	6	9	10	10	10	9.3
Q6. How well does the school support the different needs of students? (/10)	10	10	10	7	9	10	10	5	7	10	9	7	8.7
Total /60	60	59	58	47	57	59	58	35	47	52	58	49	53
%	100	98	97	78	95	98	97	58	78	87	97	82	89

Pupil feedback comments

- “Most of the teachers make a good effort at making lessons enjoyable and make me feel motivated and welcome” – year 9 pupil
- “I like the food and people” – year 11 pupil
- “I get on with everyone and I feel comfortable here” – year 11 pupil
- “Teachers are here for me and I have strong bond with them” – year 8 pupil
- “Because the staff are kind and supportive, it’s quieter and I can concentrate” – year 11 pupil
- “I think the support they give students is the best thing about this school” – year 8 pupil

Case Study

- Year 11 pupil previously travelling 24.4 miles to school. Now travelling 1.7 miles – a reduction in travel time of 80 minutes per day
- Has been attending interim provision regularly since 24 March 2021 – this has improved in a key transition year
- Pupil feedback from interim placement is extremely positive – feels comfortable in school and likes the staff
- Post 16 college placement allocated in accordance with first preference for permanent placement from September 2021

Summary – key issues and mitigations

- **Issues**

- Ofsted judgement – pupils making poor progress, disadvantaged pupils not achieving, attendance low, safeguarding a concern
- Site not providing high quality locality offer
- Ongoing site issues - interim placements required
- Alternative placements require agreement of families

- **Mitigation – locality/preference/quality/cost**

- Dedicated team of officers to procure sufficient placements via maintained, alternative provision, and independent settings
- Secured as close to home as possible, in agreement with families costs comparable to existing
- Minimised transition via conversion to permanent placements where appropriate and agreed

Moving Forward – next steps

- SENAR officers, in conjunction with school staff and families, to secure offers of appropriate placements for the remaining 4 pupils by half term (28 May 2021) and ensure effective transition during the second half of the term
- SENAR and Home Bridging Team to continue to monitor pupil attendance and engagement for all pupils in interim placements or receiving home tuition
- LA officers to continue to hold weekly meetings with the school, the IEB and the Project Board to track progress on all aspects of closure including pupil placements, staff consultation, site issues/buildings and pupil/staff information etc
- A regular update on pupil tracking and school organisation is also provided to the DfE
- SENAR officers, in conjunction with school staff and families, to agree permanent placements for all pupils prior to September 2021 and to carry out associated work to amend and finalise EHCPs accordingly
- SENAR to coordinate ongoing tracking and monitoring of pupils post closure, supported by relevant professionals



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