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Introduction

Welcome to the new normal – living with Covid-19. The LA has seen a steep decline in the number of new cases of Covid-19 (down by 891 cases between 26th Jan to February 23rd). This is a particularly steep decline in comparison with neighbouring boroughs. The infection rate also remains significantly lower than the surrounding boroughs. It is however still the case that Enfield lags behind other parts of London and the UK in the numbers of individuals who are 12+ who have had both Covid-19 vaccination jabs. However Covid-19 continues to disrupt education at Oaktree School with 6 students absent last week with Covid-19 and 3 staff who have been absent over the last 3 weeks after positive LFT tests. This can mean that staff can still be absent from work for up to 10 days (which presents a significant challenge to cover, particularly as some members of staff may have several occurrences of Covid-19 this year. We await the government's updated advice on the 1st April to see if there are any alterations to the guidance.

The School has now begun training for parents on the new EFL parent app. So far, over 40 parents have accessed the app and are now using it. We will need to persuade more parents to make use of the app – Sam has agreed to provide some after school training to help facilitate parent uptake.

For the past 2 weeks 6S have had the opportunity to participate in some outdoor education sessions at Herts Young Mariners Base, in Cheshunt. So far the group have taken part in sessions of Bell Boating and rafting. During these sessions students have been given individual and group challenges to complete, whilst aboard the boat/raft. The sessions have focused on promoting teamwork and the importance of communication as well and as importantly they have all thoroughly enjoyed it!

Alongside our 2 school therapists (Paul and Nicole) we also now have two volunteer mentors who are working closely with students. Louis is working with the Anna Freud Enfield Tailored Support programme which will include: How to establish a collaborative working environment between school and mental health services, the structures currently in place to support shared planning and collaborative working, developing a plan to create a structured environment which supports shared planning and collaborative working and embedding a whole-school approach to mental health.

Child Bereavement UK provided training to staff on Monday 21st February and Lisa Dodd, Lead Play & Bereavement Specialist for Enfield, has spoken with PJ, our RSHE and Food Tech lead about support for students who may be struggling with grief and loss. We are also working with Child Bereavement UK to embed bereavement and grief support within our PSHE/RSHE curriculum.

Olga Kontou has now organised with Ricardo Grant Lee daily morning sensory circuit sessions (9:05 to 9:25) for 6 to 8 students to support emotional regulation for the day.

Curriculum

We have had a very pleasing report from our Challenge Partners review (please see the report on Governorhub which has been available to all governors. It should also be noted that the Challenge Partners team met with Alex and Sam as part of the review. The review was led by Lynda Walker, The executive Headteacher of Oak Lodge trust and an experienced Ofsted Inspector as well as Siobhan Cheadle, Head of Learning at Silverwood School in Wiltshire. The entire review took 2 ½ days and was very thorough.

Here are the summary points from the report (I am not going to go through each point in exhaustive detail as the report was posted on Governorhub over a month ago:

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The headteacher has been in post for 18 months and has worked tirelessly with his leadership team, governors, staff and parents to ensure that 'Preparation for Adulthood' is at the centre of all the school offers. This has led to a seven vocational pathway curriculum. This is structured around meeting the individual EHCP targets that enable students to develop and build on relevant and meaningful life skills that are tailored to their own aspirations.
- Governors are very conscious of their responsibilities to steer the strategic direction of the school. They are actively involved in both challenging and supporting the work of leaders in order to secure the best possible outcomes for the students. All governors have a specific role and carry out focused visits half termly and report back to the board so that every governor has a clear oversight of every aspect of the work of the school.
- The headteacher has invested heavily in the continuous professional development (CPD) of all staff. As part of succession planning, two of the senior leaders have recently completed the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) and other members of the team are part of a leadership coaching programme to support reflective leadership practice. In addition, there is

A structured in-house training programme, partly based around the Sutton Trust 'What Makes Good Teaching?' report for both teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs). This is linked to targets both in the school development plan and within individual professional development. This has led to teachers and LSAs being more confident in implementing new strategies and students being more enthused and engaged in their learning. Students told us that they liked Tuesday and Thursday afternoons best because they learnt about 'looking after animals and how to grow different things in the garden'.

- Leaders continue to embed a positive behaviour support (PBS) approach across the school and four staff are currently being trained as trainers. This approach, which focuses on all staff using

proactive strategies for supporting behaviour, has led to calmer focused learning behaviours being apparent across the school.

- Senior leaders have now clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders. As well as having responsibility for their subject areas, middle leaders have been encouraged, through their participation in national professional qualifications, to take a more strategic lead on implementing school wide initiatives.
- Leaders identified mental health and well - being as significant issues for both staff and students during the pandemic. As a result, the school now has a wider offer for counselling and general therapeutic support for students, a well- being programme for staff with access, for those who want it, to free trained counsellors.
- All students have access to breakfast whilst completing their 'reading half hour' first thing in the morning. This has improved engagement with reading and has seen students enthusiastically choosing their reading books. The Harry Potter books were very popular with a Year 8 student!
- While vocational learning is at the heart of the curriculum, the school continues to offer a broad curriculum and has an excellent arts, music and drama offer. Last year the drama group filmed two separate hour-long performances of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

... All staff fully embedded recently introduced initiatives into their everyday practice and leaders evaluated the impact of these on student outcomes, so that they can be refined and developed further.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- There is a very calm, purposeful atmosphere in school and in lessons. The trusting relationships that students have with staff are evident in the way that students respond to the high expectations for both learning and behaviour that staff have of them. Lessons are well planned and resourced and take place in a rich learning environment. Teachers and LSAs have a very well developed understanding of the learning needs of individual students. This means that students are supported well and make good progress. Teachers and LSAs use signing and symbols to augment communication where appropriate.
- Student engagement and enthusiasm for learning was evident in all classes visited. Routines are well established and, as a result, students move smoothly between the different activities. Learning has a strong functional focus, for example students grow their own vegetables which they later use to prepare dishes in the school café.
- Leaders have thought very carefully about, and planned for, the skills, knowledge and understanding that students need to move on to the next stage in their education. In particular, the vocational pathways have been crafted not only to teach these skills, but to also promote independence and provide meaningful work experience opportunities. An example of how successful this focus on skills for adult life has been is the number of students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form who can now travel confidently to school independently on public transport.
- The sixth form leader has recently trained as a careers adviser and is developing the careers programme across all pathways that meet the GATSBY benchmarks. This will help the students to make informed choices about their future. All students leave the school with relevant accredited qualifications and leaders track their progress for up to three years once they have left the school.
- The school now offers a variety of routes into reading, which is underpinned by research, and recognises that a variety of other approaches to teaching reading have to be used in addition to phonics if reading is to be enjoyable, meaningful and purposeful for every individual. Every student reads every day, one-to-one with staff members, and the functional reading folders demonstrate students' progress and how they use their skills in everyday life.

- Leaders have recently brought in a new assessment system which complements the 'Curriculum Ladders' used to track progress in all subject areas, Staff have been trained to use this system and so, on a weekly basis, collate and annotate evidence of students' achievement towards meeting their EHCP targets. Staff share this information, including visual images, with parents. A pilot programme with a group of parents has been operating since January 2022 so that parents can share how their child applies the skills that they have learned in school both within the home and a range of different contexts. This has enabled the staff to have a more holistic view of what students know, can do and understand. All parents will soon have access to this application.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

... Total communication strategies were understood and used by all staff to support learning.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- Although there are no noticeable differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers, leaders have a bespoke pupil premium plan that focuses on improving teaching and learning at all levels for all individuals across the school.
- Leaders recognised that many students struggled with learning over the period of the pandemic and so have instigated a 'catch up' and recovery programme with over 500 hours of one-to-one support being provided since September 2021. To date, 106 students have benefitted from reading and mathematics 'catch up' interventions and three post-16 students are now reading complete books for the first time!
- Mental health and well-being are seen by leaders to be central to academic and emotional development. To support this the school employs its own child psychotherapist and a music/play therapist. Students are offered open ended therapy sessions which are reviewed and progress reported on half termly. A mentor also works with students from across the school, providing planned emotional assistance to support their progress and engagement with learning.
- A family support worker has developed trusting relationships with families and supports parents in a variety of ways, including help to understand and obtain resources and benefits if required.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

... Leaders were able to assess the baseline for student well-being in order to plan more personalised effective interventions.

[Barney Geen's Notes of Visits](#)

Please see the 3 March visit observing reading and the 8th March visit observing maths and reading. Barney has made constructive points as to how we can continue to improve pedagogy in these areas which as a school we will take on board (The new reading test will however be after Easter now).

Training

We are continuing with the role of the LSA training programme with Sue Jones taking the Monday session this week on Autism. The Speech and language Team are running a Tuesday Makaton session and we are continuing to hold Total Communication sessions for next term as well as this term. We will also be continuing with more work with teachers around sequencing lessons, learning intentions and questioning.

Premises and Finance

Finance is covered under Brenda's report to governors. However in addition to her report I have reproduced in full Rik Boxer, the LA's consultant for Special School funding, final report as a footnoteⁱ

Below are the new proposed rates for all Enfield Special Schools

School	Basic top up	Pay & Pens	Total top up	Proposed new rate
Durants	£14,000	797	14,797	15,985
Fern House	£15,101	726	15,827	17,496
Oaktree	£9,496	726	10,222	10,433
Russet House	£12,875	781	13,656	15,001
Waverley	£15,478	726	16,204	17,802
West Lea	£8,781	803	9,584	9,798

I have placed on the Governorhub the phased implementation drawing plans which I will briefly explain.

HR

Ronald has now left the school to take up a position in the health service. We wish him well. Alexa has now taken up a position with the LA behaviour support team. We have now recruited 3 new members of staff. So a warm welcome to Mabinty, Danielle and Sandra who will be fully on board once their contracts with their agencies have expired.

Attendance

Attendance remains at over 90% in spite of the challenge of Covid-19. The percentage of students who are recorded as sick is 6.5 % with 4.5% of this directly related to Covid-19. Louis will talk about the school initiatives to support students with persistent absence back into school

Please see safeguarding report

ⁱ Special Schools & Pupil Referral Unit Funding Review

1. Background and current arrangements

Enfield has six special schools and a pupil referral unit. In 2013, an average cost model was introduced to calculate funding per place at each school and the pupil referral unit. For each school, the place funding calculation was derived by dividing the total funding delegated to the school by number of pupils on roll. This has resulted in each school having their own unique average cost per place. The average costs calculated in 2013 have remained at the same level. The special schools have sought a review of their place funding. In consultation with the Schools Forum, it was agreed that a review of special school place funding would be carried out during 2021/22.

Independent Consultants have been commissioned to carry out reviews of the place funding arrangements and assess the financial position and type of needs supported at each special school.

2. Principles

There is a case to move away from a historic funding model which has been in place since 2013. Options for an alternative funding model have been considered by the local authority in collaboration with special school headteachers and the PRU, with support from the independent consultant. The following guiding principles were agreed.

- ☑ Fairness – a fair distribution of funding across schools in accordance with a clear rationale
- ☑ Simplicity – easily understood and not time consuming to administer
- ☑ Transparent – clear to all concerned what funding is being provided for what purpose
- ☑ Aligned to pupil needs -takes into account the resources required to meet different types of need and able to be adjusted as the profile of needs changes
- ☑ Predictability – supports schools in their financial planning as well as assisting the management of expenditure within the High Needs Block

3. Funding for special schools

Following discussion of possible funding models, it was agreed that an activity based average cost model should be used as the basis for funding for special schools, based on:

- ☑ expenditure on classroom staffing requirements for pupils with different levels of need
- ☑ expenditure on other staffing including leadership teams and administrative staff
- ☑ non staffing costs, for example on premises and resources
- ☑ any significant school-specific costs

Modelling has been undertaken based on the profile of pupil needs at each school, assumptions about the adult/pupil ratio required for different levels of needs and analysis of current actual costs, moderated using financial benchmarking data for similar schools.

In addition to the six existing special schools, Salmons Brook school will open in September 2022. The funding arrangements for Salmons Brook will be calculated on the same basis in line with the principles and methodology outlined above. Further discussion between the local authority and the school will be required.

4. Individual funding for pupils outside of core budget

It should also be noted additional funding is provided for a small number of pupils in special schools whose needs are particularly challenging and fall outside of the normal range catered for by the school. The level of additional funding is determined on a case-by-case basis. During the academic year 2020/21, special schools received additional support for 19 pupils on a time limited basis. Spend on additional support has varied year upon year and is in the region of £300k to £500k per year.

During discussions with the special school headteachers, it was commented that this practice created a potential unfairness and lack of transparency within the system. It was requested that consideration is given to this issue as part of the review.

These individually negotiated funding arrangements have been tested against the funding principles set out in Section 2 above and have been found not to be aligned with the principles of fairness, transparency and predictability.

Therefore, following consideration of a number of options, it is recommended under this model that the projected spend on such individual support arrangements is built into core budget provision. This gives predictability of funding to schools and the ability to respond to needs flexibly, without the need to make a separate funding submission to the local authority.

Arising from this recommendation, any existing individual support agreements would come to an end from the point of implementation of the new funding model, as funding for the most challenging needs would be built into the base budget provision, and no new individual pupil funding agreements would be put into place.

5. Funding for the Pupil Referral unit

The PRU is currently funded on the basis of an indicative number of 100 places, although current numbers on roll are below this figure as permanent exclusions in Enfield have reduced. In addition to providing permanent placements, the PRU undertakes preventative activities to support schools and pupils at risk of exclusion, for example through short term placements at the PRU and supported reintegration.

The advantage of the indicative place model is that it gives predictability of funding in a context where there is a volatility of numbers on roll, with frequent in-year admissions and leavers, and enables budgetary provision to be made available for preventative work.

There is a clear case to reduce place numbers at the PRU. With the success of exclusion prevention interventions, numbers on roll have fallen significantly over the past three years.

Following discussion with the PRU, it is proposed that an indicative place model is retained but with reduced place numbers of 85, given the decrease in numbers on roll over recent years. It is also proposed that there are two distinct elements to the top-up funding to provide greater transparency.

The first element will be the 'base' top-up rate relating to the needs of students on the permanent roll of the PRU. It has been calculated on the basis of current top-up rate plus an enhancement for additional premises costs not currently accounted for.

The second element will reflect the additional per pupil costs for providing existing preventative interventions to assist in meeting the needs of pupils without recourse to permanent exclusion through the Turnaround project and Assessment Centre project. The services provided through this element will be subject to regular joint review between the LA and the school to ensure that they continue to meet local priorities. There is an expectation that the PRU will provide annual reports to the LA and the Schools Forum.

The table below summarises the use of these funding arrangements to inform the calculation of the base (element 1) and the additional interventions (element 2) top up for PRU.

Amount per place (£)
A Place funding 10,000
B Top-up funding (Base) 14,525
C Top-up funding(Interventions) 1,657
D Total top-up funding (B+C) 16,182
E Total place funding and top-up funding (A+D)
26,182

This funding model has been developed in consultation with the PRU over a series of meetings and, following discussion, it has been agreed in principle. It should be noted that a review of alternative provision arrangements in the authority is being undertaken in parallel with this funding review which may have implications for the future role of Orchardside and the range of preventative interventions undertaken.

It is recommended that the changes to funding arrangements at Orchardside are implemented from September 2022 and are phased in over two years.

Phasing the reduced place numbers will be implemented as follows.

100 places from April 2002

92 places from September 2022

85 places from September 2023

Confirmation is being sought on requirements for the application of the Minimum Funding Guarantee and final rates and arrangements will be confirmed. All changes to funding will be subject to the budget setting process and the associated financial regulations.

6. Other related work

As part of the review process, the following activities have also been undertaken:

- ☐ An audit has been carried out in each special school to assess the current range of needs met by the school against a set of agreed level descriptors. This audit was subject to quality assurance and agreed to be a fair and reasonable reflection of the range of needs at each school. The level descriptors will be attached as Appendix 1.
- ☐ Admission guidance has been developed, setting out the type and level of needs expected to be met by each school to help guide placement decisions. The admission guidance will be attached as Appendix 2.
- ☐ A special school headteacher consultant visited four special schools to review the current use of existing resources. This assisted the funding review by identifying the specific budgetary issues faced by each school, providing further information on the range of needs met by the school and examining how schools utilised their resources to meet needs.

☐ A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken to compare top-up values in Enfield with other local authorities who have agreed to provide data. However, it should be noted that the benchmarking analysis was inconclusive due to limited availability of data about top up values in other authorities on a school level and the difficulties in making meaningful 'like with like' comparisons with Enfield schools.

7. Financial implications- special schools

A first draft of financial modelling using the agreed methodology has been carried out for the 6 existing special schools.

The methodology used is as summarised in Section 3. Actual data on staffing and non-staffing costs across the six schools was used based on an expenditure analysis undertaken by an independent consultant in 2020/21, which is the most recent data available. An average classroom teacher salary of £57,502 (UPS1) and average TA salary of £24,705 was used as the basis of calculation. These are the local average salaries ascertained through the expenditure analysis. The model used does not

include funding from grants or commissioned services which are separate from place plus funding. A top-up figure for each level of need is calculated using the profile of needs for each school as ascertained through the audit.

Following the audit and in consultation with the schools, further consideration was given to other factors which may impact on the funding model. The final model includes the following adjustments:

(a) In line with practice in other authorities using a similar model, an adjustment has been made for small special schools (less than 80 pupils) who would otherwise be financially disadvantaged as small schools will receive a smaller contribution to their fixed costs from their place plus funding. To take account of this factor, a weighting of 1.05 is applied to Fern House.

(b) Similarly, an adjustment has been made for large special schools (more than 250 pupils) to take account of the economies of scale that can be achieved by a large school. A weighting of 0.95 was originally proposed for West Lea. Following further discussions with the school, and taking into account both fairness and affordability, the weighting was revised to 0.96.

(c) The issue of the additional costs of providing specialist equipment for pupils with complex physical and medical needs was raised by Waverley School. In response to this concern, a specialist equipment factor of 1.0075 has been included in the funding model.

(d) The needs audit process, using the level descriptors only identified 15 pupils, 9 at West Lea and 6 at Oaktree, at Level 1. Furthermore, the quality assurance carried out by special school headteachers and facilitated by LA officers raised questions as to whether pupils identified at Level 1 may better fit the profile of Level 2. In response to these issues the pupils originally identified as Level 1 have been re-assigned to Level 2 and the top-up funding for Oaktree and West Lea has been adjusted accordingly.

(e) There was also an issue raised in relation to damage to property arising from dealing with the needs of pupils with highly challenging behaviour. However, this is an unpredictable factor which should be dealt with separately from the funding formula and has not therefore been included in the final model.

Applying the methodology results in the following proposed changes to top up rates.

School	Basic top up	Pay & Pens	Total top up	Proposed new rate
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Oaktree	£9,496	726	10,222	10,433
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Waverley	£15,478	726	16,204	17,802
West Lea	£8,781	803	9,584	9,798

The above table shows that the application of this model results in a positive change for each school with uplifted top-up values

Salmons Brook, a new school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, will open in September 2022. The provision to be made at Salmons Brook and the associated funding implications are still subject to discussion and the final recommendations are therefore not included in this report.

8. Placement of pupils above funded place numbers

It is recognised that occasionally, during the year, pupils may be admitted to schools above the agreed funded place number. It is good practice, and in line with DfE expectations, for funding arrangements to be clarified in this eventuality. Following a review of arrangements in place in other local authorities, it was recommended that top-up funding only is paid for any pupil placed above the funded number up to a ceiling of 3% (i.e. if a school with 100 funded places admits pupils beyond that number, the first 3 additional pupils would be funded at top-up rate only). This is in line with DfE High Needs Funding operational guidance which advises that locally determined arrangements are put into place,

However, following discussions with the special school headteachers, it is recommended that this principle is upheld but that the ceiling is reduced to 1%. Placement of a pupil on roll above the 1% would trigger a discussion about the school's capacity, organisation and any additional costs involved. This would lead to a decision about whether some or all of the £10,000 place factor was required in addition to the top up.

9. Proposed implementation arrangements

It is recommended that the new arrangements should come into effect from September 2022. Furthermore, it is suggested that a review of funding arrangements should be undertaken on a three-year cycle. All changes to funding will