

# **Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

## **Warwickshire Pupil Reintegration Unit –Select Committee**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Recommendations**

##### **That the Cabinet**

- (1) Authorises the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families to take immediate action to
  - (a) restructure the whole of the PRU service including a reduction in the number of centres from 4 to 2 no later than the commencement of the September 2011 term. There should be one centre in the North and one in the Central area.
  - (b) consult with the Strategic Director of Resources to identify possible alternative sites, particularly for the Keresley Centre, and to bring proposals forward to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.
  - (c) secure proper provision for the teaching of science at all the PRU centres to ensure that pupils receive their educational entitlement.
  - (d) ensure there is provision for a hot meal at each of the PRU centres as a matter of urgency
  - (e) ensure that from September 2011 the 2 centres should be available for KS3 and 4 pupils only and have adequate provision for English, Maths and Science on site supported by adequate ICT facilities.
  - (f) come forward with recommendations to Cabinet for alternative arrangements as a matter of urgency to ensure that primary school children are not accommodated within the PRU from September 2011 onwards.
- (2) Asks the Lead Portfolio Holder Children, Young People and Families in consultation with the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families to put forward proposals to Cabinet before the end of January 2011 for a Strategic Plan to meet the needs of excluded pupils or those at risk of exclusion which includes different and separate alternative provision for excluded primary school children. The Strategic Plan should be supported by a business case and a plan for implementation
- (3) Authorises the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families to put in place arrangements in consultation with Heads of Primary and Secondary Schools and the Area Behaviour Partnerships to ensure in the short-term there are standing arrangements for
  - (a) A CAF to be carried out where a pupil is at risk of exclusion

- (b) the Head of PRU/Head of Centre to be invited to every CAF Assessment where there is the possibility of permanent exclusion
  - (c) the PRU has contact details for a person who can give an informed view of the pupil on the referral to the PRU following exclusion
- (4) Asks the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families to develop an information passport to improve the information being passed from schools to the PRU and from the PRU to schools.
- (5) Asks the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families to actively encourage the development of Learning Support Units in secondary schools in consultation with Headteachers and the Area Behaviour Partnerships
- (6) That progress on implementing these recommendations should be reported to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 6 months.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Warwickshire Pupil Reintegration Unit (PRU) was inspected by Ofsted in June 2010 and placed in special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.
- 1.2 The local authority was aware of problems with the PRU prior to the Ofsted inspection of June 2010 and had put in place an intensive support programme in November 2009 following a partnership review. Although there was some progress the improvements were insufficient to prevent the PRU being put into special measures.
- 1.3 The Ofsted report was unrelentingly critical, citing too many exclusions, poor attendance, poor behaviour-management strategies, ill-equipped staff, poor training, lack of teacher confidence, lack of pupil engagement, poor teaching standards, pupils ill-prepared for reintegration, pupils not receiving full entitlement of educational hours.
- 1.4 An Action Plan was agreed with Ofsted within 10 days following the inspection. The Action Plan was accepted as essentially fit for purpose in terms of immediate action. Ofsted is shortly due to re-inspect the PRU. Special measures means special support and the level of additional support going into the PRU currently is not sustainable in the long term.
- 1.5 Local authorities operate different models of PRU provision, developed to meet local circumstances and in line with local policies. Due to this varied framework cost comparisons between authorities are difficult. The comparative information that is available suggests the Warwickshire PRU costs more than similar provision elsewhere. Warwickshire's spending per capita (i.e. across all pupils in the area) on PRU provision is consistently

ranked in the top third of Upper tier authorities as well as our group of statistical neighbours. See Appendix 1.

- 1.6 A Select Committee was held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to assess the robustness of the action plan in securing adequate provision for pupils and whether there were other models which could better secure the educational outcomes for pupils and provide a financially sustainable base for any future service.

## **2 Key Findings**

### **Fit for Purpose?**

- 2.1 The issues which gave rise to the concerns identified by Ofsted are long standing and complex. A key theme of the evidence received was that the scale of the change required is so profound that it is unlikely that the overall provision will be judged satisfactory by Ofsted on re-inspection. Whilst the Action Plan deals with the immediate issues to be addressed this is a long way from developing a sustainable satisfactory provision which meets the needs of pupils.
- 2.2 There has been some positive progress, for example the level of inadequate teaching has moved from 44% in June 2010 to 22% in November 2010 (based on 18 observed lessons over 2 days). Pupils are now receiving their basic entitlement of 25 hours of teaching a week. Attendance has improved from 44% to 70%. Exclusions are down 50% from the same time last year and informal exclusions have been eliminated. The PRU was shortly due to complete individual assessments of all pupils to enable the development of personalised learning plans which met their individual needs. However the pace of change is simply not fast enough.
- 2.3 The Committee would wish to recognise the hard work and efforts put in by the new interim head, staff, the new management committee and local authority in providing support to the school. Staff morale was low following the inspection. However the teaching staff have generally responded positively to the training and changes being implemented and work is now being allocated to pupils that better matches their learning needs. However it is unlikely that the PRU will be fit for purpose in the foreseeable future. A much more fundamental change is required if the local authority is to secure a satisfactory entitlement for pupils within a reasonable time frame. Time is of the essence for these pupils.
- 2.4 One of the key issues inhibiting the pace of change is that the service is delivered across 4 sites. This creates difficulties in
- (a) the development of a common ethos and drive for change
  - (b) the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning
  - (c) liaison between management staff
  - (d) liaison between teaching staff within a subject area
  - (e) flexibility in the deployment of staff and physical resources

- 2.5 There is inequality of provision in the learning conditions and facilities at the various centres – for example
- (a) Facilities for teaching science are inadequate and there is a properly equipped science laboratory at only one of the centres (Merttens)
  - (b) Keresley Centre still has no outside facility (expected Spring 2011)
  - (c) Keresley Centre is an old building in considerable need of updating to provide the equivalent of a modern school environment
  - (d) Inadequate ICT provision to support personalised learning – lack of whiteboards, computers etc –although additional IT is in the process of being provided.
- 2.6 An immediate change which would foster a faster rate of progress and provide a more sustainable basis would be to reduce the number of sites to enable better co-ordination of resources and expertise etc. The Committee would recommend a maximum of 2 sites for KS3 and KS4 pupils. Cabinet may wish to consider an alternative site to the Keresley Centre with more up to date facilities. The focus at KS3 should be very much about re-integration into mainstream school. This becomes more problematic in relation to KS4 where the focus is more about preparing pupils for college or the world of work. There is debate over whether it would be best to have 2 separate centres for each Key Stage or to have a North and South provision catering for both key stages.
- 2.7 There is no provision for a hot meal at any of the PRU centres and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

### **Primary education**

- 3.1 The Committee was of the view that the PRU was not an appropriate environment for primary school children –particularly early years Year 1 and Year 2 children. Although attempts are made to segregate these children from the older pupils they are still within sight and sound of some of the altercations that take place between older pupils.
- 3.2 Alternative provision for primary school children needs to be tackled as a matter of urgency. This needs to be separate from the provision for older pupils. Action needs to take place on a number of fronts and the Committee would suggest the following for consideration
- Re-iteration to primary schools of all the additional support and advice they can access to ensure exclusion is a last resort
  - Encourage the use of managed moves in preference to exclusions
  - Ensure there is a CAF carried out before a managed move or exclusion
  - A requirement to involve Head of PRU/Centre before excluding
  - The development of Learning Support Units and or Nurture Groups in Primary Schools
  - The use of BESD provision for primary age children

- How the recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Review into Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services may assist in finding some solutions to better support children in mainstream schools. (The recommendations of this review will also be considered by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010.)

3.3 The Committee was also concerned about the length of time it took to obtain a statement of special educational needs which can lead to inappropriate referrals to the PRU. The Committee accepts there are a small number of very young children who exhibit extreme behaviour and for which off site provision may be the only alternative. Although it accepts that Warwickshire meets around 90% of the statutory targets for statements and that between 3-5% of children have a statement compared to 1% in other authorities. It may be that delay centres around identification of children early enough. Nevertheless the Committee would like to see further exploration of options for providing packages of support for young children at risk of exclusion whether or not they fulfil the formal criteria for formal assessment.

#### **4 Exchange of Information**

4.1 There is a problem throughout the whole schools system over the timeliness and quality of information which transfers when pupils move schools. Schools can experience very lengthy delays in the transmission of key information. This becomes particularly crucial for the PRU which is expected to accept a pupil 6 days after the exclusion. How do you put together an effective education package for a pupil experiencing this level of difficulty with inadequate information? What are the risks to staff and triggers for the behaviour? Only 10% of pupils will have formal statements and therefore the PRU is more dependent on other forms of assessment/information for most pupils.

4.2 The adoption of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has proved beneficial. This can help the school be more analytical about the behaviour and manage the behaviour more effectively potentially avoiding the need for exclusion. It also has the potential to provide some form of structured information about the pupil.

4.3 There are currently 500 open CAFs. There is no requirement for the Head of PRU or Head of a PRU Centre to be invited to any significant CAFs. Although the PRU does seek to be involved if they become aware of the situation. The Committee would recommend this should be standard practice where there is a significant risk of exclusion. In addition referrals to the PRU could be assisted by the inclusion of a key contact (who knows the child) on the referral to the PRU. Longer term the local authority should consider the development of an information passport that accompanies the pupil.

## **5 Alternative Provision –Secondary Education**

- 5.1 The Committee received a presentation from Herefordshire Council on the establishment of Learning Support Units (LSUs) within its secondary schools. The project has a 24 month time –frame and they are currently in month 17 of 24. Nine out of the fourteen LSUs have opened and are up and running. Cost was £1.7M capital funding and £400K revenue (£17-£18K per school). These are not replacements for PRUs but do have the potential to reduce significantly referrals to the PRU and the advantage of keeping most pupils within a mainstream setting. The sustainability of such units is dependent in the long-term on the commitment of heads and teaching staff in secondary schools to continual professional development. Schools have experienced benefits in the resilience of the school to manage behaviour and attendance. The Learning Support Units are not only supported by educational specialist provision but by a multi-agency approach deploying the skills of others.
- 5.2 Within Warwickshire we have 37 secondary schools of which 8 have Learning Support Units with 2 more schools expressing an interest in establishing such units.
- 5.3 The Cabinet should consider ways to further encourage the development and establishment of Learning Support Units in secondary schools. This should be supported by a proper business case to manage the transition period and unlock and redeploy resources.
- 5.4 Discussions should take place as a matter of urgency with Heads and the Area Behaviour Partnerships over the best ways to encourage these developments. We understand Academies will be required to co-operate with Area Behaviour Partnerships.

## Appendix 1

### 1. Some Facts and Figures

1.1 At the start of the Autumn term there were some 128 pupils on the roll.

Centre	Primary	Secondary	Notes
Keresley	5	46	
Pound Lane**	8	44	** includes Seymour Centre
Merttens	3	22	
Total	16	112	

1.2 The PRU cannot offer a full curriculum as there are insufficient resources but should at the very least be able to offer English, Maths and Science which are the key core subjects to enable pupils to re-integrate into mainstream schools. Similarly the PRU should be supported by similar IT facilities to those available in mainstream schools.

1.3 Warwickshire has a high exclusion rate as reported by the Scrutiny Review into School Exclusions (Cabinet 18/11/2010). We need to break the cycle, reduce the number of pupils permanently excluded, enable more pupils to remain in a mainstream environment and ensure our PRU provision is fit for purpose.

1.4 The current PRU GROSS budget is £4,560,000 funded as follows:-

Funding Source 2010/11	£000
Dedicated School Grant (DSG)	3,341
Direct Area Based Grant (ABG)	147
Internal Commissions (funded either via ABG or DSG budgets)	298
One –off contribution from School Forum	174
Contributions from Schools having excluded pupils (AWPU Transfer) This is not all AWPU	530
Other minor grants & Income	70
Gross Budget	4,560

1.5 It is very difficult to achieve a like for like comparison with other Local Authorities. However a 2007 Best Value Review undertaken by the Local Authority identified that the Warwickshire PRU cost more than similar provision elsewhere.

- 1.6 The PRU is forecasting an over commitment in excess of £449,000 for 2010/11. The expenditure consists of:-

Forecast Expenditure 2010/11	£000
Teaching Staff	3,405
Non Teaching Staff	280
Supplies & Services	450
Commissioning	431
Transport (staff and Pupil related)	380
Other	14
Under-achievement of Income	49
Gross Budget	5,009

- 1.7 Included within the forecast expenditure is approximately £180,000 of salary costs for three members of the previous leadership team, who were displaced in the restructuring of a management heavy structure. These staff are now undertaking early intervention work on behalf of the PRU and the Directorate Leadership Team have agreed these supernumerary posts until August 2012. Accommodation related costs of £72,000 are held by the directorate and are forecast to be within budget. Including these accommodation costs, the total gross expenditure figure is £5,081,000 compared to a total budget of £4,632,000, a forecast overspend of £449,000.

- 1.8 Staffing in Warwickshire PRU at the start of the autumn term 2010

Centre	Teachers (full-time equivalent)	Teaching Assistants (full-time equivalent)	Other Staff	Notes
Keresley	13.5*	11.6	3.8	*1.5 unqualified teachers
Pound Lane**	19.8	10	4.2	**includes Seymour Centre
Merttens	6.8	6.4	3.8	
Other	2	0		Head of PRU & Primary Strategic Lead
Total	42.1	28	11.8	
Ill health team	4.2	2.2		
Total	46.3	30.2	11.8	

- 1.9 The current teacher pupil ratio is between 1 teacher : 4/5 pupils but as there were 8 exclusions pending at the time of the select committee this could rise to 1:5 fairly swiftly. The number of pupils at any particular time in the centres varies according to where and when pupils are excluded. The PRU is obliged to accept any excluded pupil.



## **2 Unit Costs and Comparisons**

- 2.1 Although with the status of a school, a PRU is a very different organisation with sometimes much higher overheads. These relate to class size, transport and the personalised curriculum offered. Young people often come in and reintegrate out of the PRU and therefore present quite a different challenge to identify a fixed cost.
- 2.2 Data from the past 3 years' official January census of all schools pupils has registered the PRU with 191 pupils. In broad terms, the gross cost of £5,081,000 thus produces a per pupil cost of £26,600 per pupil.
- 2.3 To compare, Riverhouse School has a formula based budget for 2010/11 of £1,388,000 for 40 pupils, an average cost per pupil of £34,700. The average budgeted cost of a special school pupil within Warwickshire's formula is £16,165, while the average budgeted cost for a secondary pupil is £4,700.
- 2.4 Class size is based on 8 pupils to a teacher, however this will vary depending on the specific needs of the pupils. In the Warwickshire PRU there are students who have returned from out county. This is due to a current shortage of in county Social Emotional Behavioural Development (SEBD) placements. These pupils require one to one tuition and a very high staff ratio when in a group, similar to that of a special school.
- 2.5 Schools Forum funded 17 special 'progression' places for hard to place pupils returning from out of county to Warwickshire.
- 2.6 Local authorities operate different models of PRU provision, developed to meet local circumstances and in line with local policies. Due to this varied framework cost comparisons between authorities are difficult. However when comparing national returns from LA's (the Section 251 Budget Statement) Warwickshire's spending per capita (i.e. across all pupils in the area) on PRU provision is consistently ranked in the top third of upper tier authorities as well as our group of statistical neighbours. (7<sup>th</sup> out of 27 and 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 11, respectively) i.e. Warwickshire has proportionately higher unit costs per pupil than those of our statistical neighbours.