

Cabinet

17 October 2019

Alternative Model for Primary Aged Children at Risk of Permanent Exclusion

Recommendations

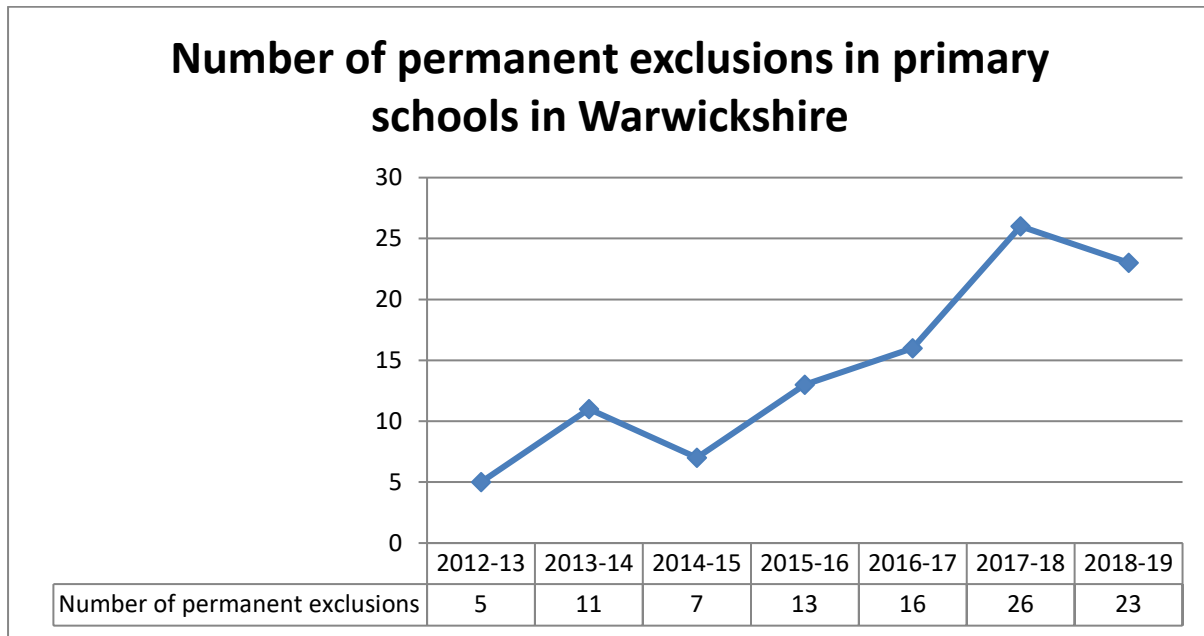
That Cabinet agrees that,

- 1) the County Council adopts the proposed new model for preventing permanent exclusions from primary schools.
- 2) the County Council engages with Head Teachers in Warwickshire to promote the new model of support for permanently excluded primary learners and those at risk of exclusion.
- 3) the County Council ceases placing any new pupils in the two 'Link' provisions with immediate effect.
- 4) the County Council commences consultation with current staffing of the Links, with a view to closing both sites at the end of the Spring Term 2020.
- 5) the Strategic Director for Resources, in consultation with the Strategic Director for People, is authorised to negotiate the inclusion of the Kingswood accommodation within the Inspire Education Trust lease with a view to ensuring that the site is used to enhance the Haven Communication & Interaction Specialist Resource Provision to ensure it can meet the needs as an all through Key Stage 1 and 2 primary resource and to complete any necessary documents to give effect to the agreed arrangements.
- 6) the County Council commissions 14 fte places across the County, each with an allocated key worker, for primary aged permanently excluded children and those at risk of exclusion. These will be time limited (one term), with a focus on nurturing restorative intervention to inform the identification of the child's next setting (mainstream or specialist). The commission will include transport and support for transition into the identified next setting.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 The number of permanent exclusions in the primary phase has increased significantly rising from 7 in 2014/15 to 23 in 2018/19. The local authority is

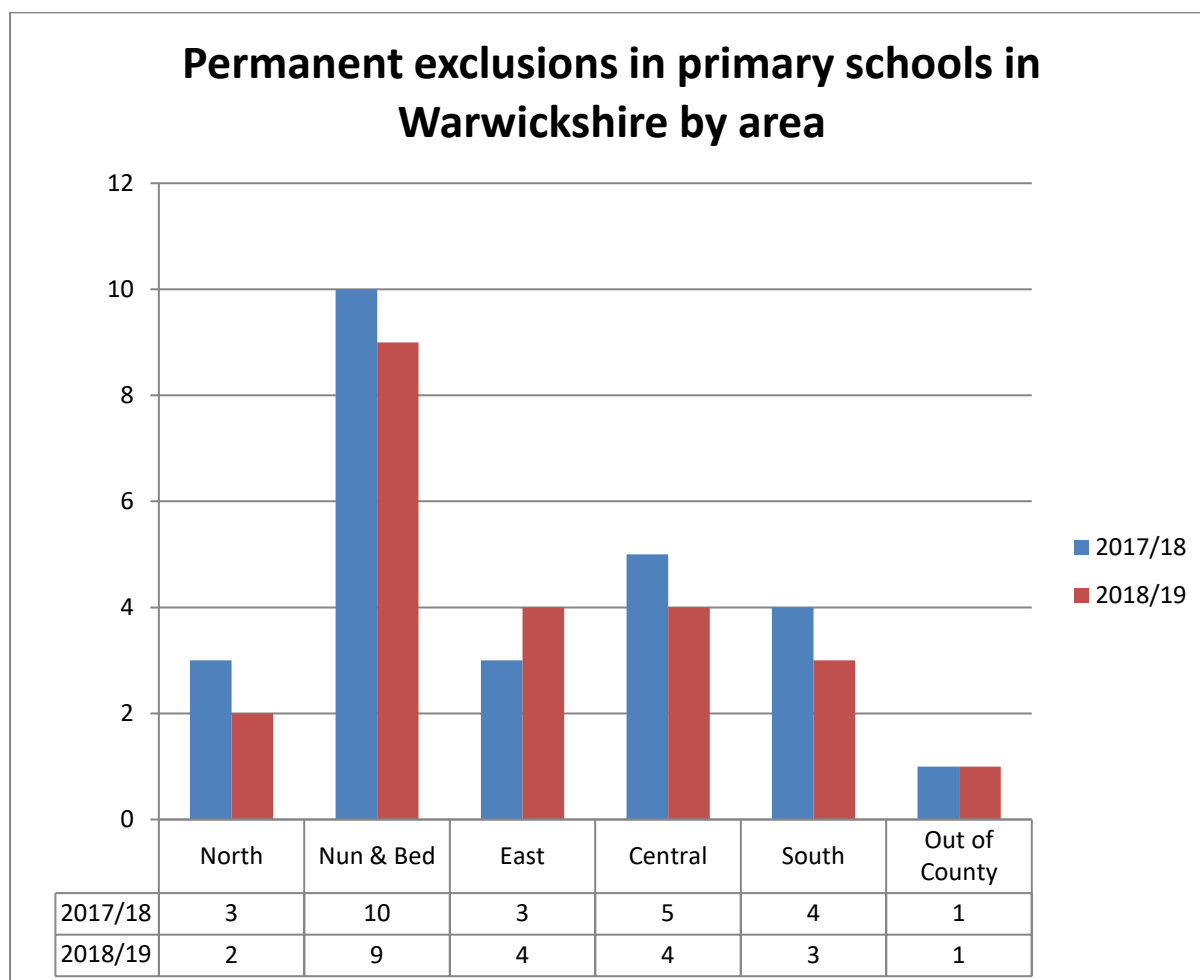
seeking to prevent permanent exclusion as research has shown the negative effects that a permanent exclusion has on a child's life chances. The local authority also has a statutory duty to ensure educational provision from the 6th day following a permanent exclusion. The increase in permanent exclusion, and the higher number at risk of permanent exclusion, has put significant strain on the existing arrangements.



- 1.2 To date, different models of provision for primary aged learners at risk of permanent exclusion have operated across the County. Across all areas, primary schools have been supported by Specialist Teaching Assistants (STAs) from the Specialist Teaching Service under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU sets out a list of expectations upon schools of the types of interventions that should have been undertaken, prior to seeking additional support from the local authority.
- 1.3 In addition to the above in Nuneaton & Bedworth since 2013-14, schools have been able to access support via two Link provisions, either at Kingswood, based on the Stockingford Primary site, or at the Wheelwright Lane Primary Link. The Links have provided a short to medium term intervention for learners who do not have Education, Health & Care Plans, but who are experiencing difficulties in their primary school placement and are at risk of exclusion. The pupils remain on roll at their home school, attending there at least one day per week for up to two terms. The Link bases are staffed and managed by the Specialist Teaching Service (STS).
- 1.4 Each Link provision has its own setting on each school site. The Wheelwright Lane provision was adapted from existing use without capital funding. The Stockingford Primary provision, Kingswood, received £300k capital funding as

part of the Education and Learning (Schools) Capital Programme 2016/17, approved by Cabinet on 4th July 2016.

- 1.5 Whilst Nuneaton and Bedworth remains the area with most pressure for permanent exclusions, there is also a growing number of exclusions in other parts of the County. The current model is not available in other parts of the County and the provision is relatively expensive for a small number of learners.



- 1.6 The cost of running the two Links, including a service level agreement with Educational Psychology for support and assessment, is £241,000 per annum; each Link is staffed by a Lead Specialist Teacher and two fte Specialist Teaching Assistants (STAs). Although each Link can accommodate 8 learners at any one time, since 2014 provision has been made for 45 pupils in total.

- 1.7 In addition, the Specialist Teaching Service has supported pupils in schools in all areas under the MoU, as well as providing for primary aged pupils who have been permanently excluded, utilising STAs at a cost of £700,000 pa:

Year	No of pupils supported under MoU by STS	No of pupils Permanently Excluded supported by STS
2016-17	50	24
2017-18	105	28
2018-19	73	21

2.0 Options and Proposal

Proposed closure of the Link provisions

- 2.1 As a result of SEND and Inclusion needing to save £1.5 million from Dedicated Schools Grant in 2019-20, the Local Authority consulted a number of stakeholders in 2018, including Schools Forum, in relation to possible options. These options included closing both Links, closing one Link and the option which was finally agreed, to keep both open, but that schools would need to contribute to the costs (Background Paper 1). In addition it was agreed that 29 fte Specialist Teaching Assistants from the Specialist Teaching Service would need to be made redundant to support the DSG savings plan, thereby saving £700k; these STAs left on the 19th July 2019.
- 2.2 Since this consultation with stakeholders and a consultation with STS staff in January 2019, Stockingford Primary, where the Kingswood Link is sited, has begun the process of academisation. There are a number of considerations to bear in mind before deciding the issue of transferring the accommodation to any new Academy. The Kingswood Link currently accesses caretaking, telephones, internet, alarm systems and school dinners from Stockingford Primary School. If the Link were to become a standalone entity there is a risk that these arrangements may not continue, resulting in increased costs in both setting up and running these services independently. Although the Link has its own access, this is also used by those accessing the Haven Communication & Interaction Resourced Provision, which is also run by the school, providing 8 specialist places for learners with EHC Plans.
- 2.3 Given that the Links are not available in other parts of the County leading to inequitable geographical access to interventions and support, the high cost for a relatively small number of learners based on average occupancy and more recently the academisation of Stockingford Primary, it is now timely to review the decision to keep both Links open.
- 2.4 The Links provide short-term interventions for learners with additional needs and pupils remain on the roll of their home school. Any existing programmes of support that are already in progress will be completed. The Specialist Teaching Service Manager will ensure any remaining pupils will have received the two terms' support as required and are supported to reintegrate back into school.
- 2.5 On closure it is proposed to transfer the financial savings to the Education Entitlement Team to ensure the Local Authority (LA) can meet its statutory duty to support pupils who have been permanently excluded Countywide, as

well as supporting those at risk of exclusion. This will result in more equitable access to provision regardless of where the learner is.

Proposed new model

- 2.6 It is proposed that Warwickshire adopts a new approach to preventing permanent exclusions in the primary phase. This will involve commissioning support through 14 hubs across the County, ensuring:
- the LA can meet its statutory duty to support pupils who have been permanently excluded;
 - support for those at risk of exclusion;
 - more equitable access regardless of where the learner is.
- 2.7 The 14 cross county hubs will be linked with the Children & Family Centres to facilitate access to Family Support Workers. Schools will provide one fte professional, a 'Significant Adult' for each of the 14 hubs. Each hub will provide a programme of support to both children and staff, for example, providing restorative work, working with parents and the child, supporting the transition into the next setting, identifying strategies that are successful and providing CPD opportunities for colleagues.
- 2.8 Each of the schools hosting this resource will be affiliated to a cluster of other local primary schools, who will have access to this resource in line with the Assessment Gateway. It is anticipated that an individual placement will be for one term whilst the next setting for the child is being identified and prepared.
- 2.9 The early identification of primary pupils at risk of permanent exclusion without an EHC Plan will be facilitated by a multi-agency partnership panel, the Fair Access Panel and the Assessment Gateway. Further information about the new model is in the Background Paper 2.

Kingswood site and SEND Resourced Provision

- 2.10 As well as the Kingswood Link, the LA also has a well- established Specialist Resource Provision for eight learners with EHC Plans for Communication & Interaction needs at Stockingford Primary, called The Haven. The staff managing 'The Haven' are struggling with managing both Key Stage 1 and 2 learners in their current accommodation; this has led to potential admissions from the area being turned down.
- 2.11 If the recommendations in this paper are accepted, it is proposed that negotiations are entered into with the Inspire Education Trust to include the Kingswood Link building in the lease on the understanding that the site is used to enhance 'The Haven' Communication & Interaction Specialist Resource Provision, both in terms of environment and the number of learners, to ensure it can meet the needs as an all through Key Stage 1 and 2 resource.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The proposal is cost neutral in terms of Dedicated Schools Grant; if the Links are closed at Easter as proposed the £241k would then transfer to the Education Entitlement Team to fund support for permanently excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion. There would, however, be the redundancy costs for the six staff, which would be covered centrally.
- 3.2 Appendix Paper 1 outlines the potential return on investment should the local authority include the Kingswood site in the lease on the basis that the site is used to enhance the Haven Communication & Interaction Specialist Resource Provision to ensure it can meet the needs as an all through Key Stage 1 and 2 resource.

4.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.1 From September 2019 the LA ceases to place any new pupils in the two 'Link' provisions with immediate effect and engages particularly with the Nuneaton & Bedworth Heads to promote the new model of support for permanently excluded primary learners and those at risk of exclusion. Heads wanting to make any new referrals to the Links will be referred to the Education Entitlement Team.
- 4.2 The two 'Link' provisions in Nuneaton & Bedworth close at the end of the Spring Term 2020 once learners currently receiving provision finish their programme of support.
- 4.3 The Council will undertake consultation with current staff of the Links, with a view to changes being implemented at the end of the Spring Term 2020.
- 4.4 From the Summer Term 2020 the savings from closing the Links transfer to the Education Entitlement Team to support the new model of preventing exclusions and working with permanently excluded pupils.
- 4.5 Negotiations are entered into with the Inspire Education Trust to include the Kingswood site in the lease on the understanding that the site is used to enhance the Haven Communication & Interaction Specialist Resource Provision to ensure it can meet the needs as an all through Key Stage 1 and 2 resource.

Appendices

- 1. Return on Investment: The Haven
- 2. Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers

1. Link Provision Options Appraisal
2. Education Entitlement Team's Business Case, March 2019.

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Jane Carter & Marie Rooney	janecarter@warwickshire.gov.uk Tel: 01926 742347
Assistant Director	Ian Budd	ianbudd@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Mark Ryder	markryder@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Colin Hayfield	

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/A

Other members: Councillors Chattaway, Dahmash, Morgan, Roodhouse, Chilvers, Williams, Hayfield and C. Davies