

**Item 6****TITLE OF REPORT: Funding for Pupils with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**

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**Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is;to bring to the attention of School Forum the increasing number of children and young people who are unable to access their educational provision due to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) to invite School Forum to consider a range of options to address the issue.

**Background**

Nationally UK literature reports that between 1 and 2% of the school population are absent from school due to emotional reasons (Elliott, 1999, Gulliford & Miller, 2015). This can often present as ongoing anxiety or Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and with support these issues can be managed within a mainstream school setting.

Over the past few years Gateshead has seen an increasing number of children and young people who are refusing to attend school due to EBSA. This is not just a mainstream school issue, as we also have children and young people with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) who are refusing to attend their special school placement as well as children and young people who have been taken out of school to be home educated due to mental health/anxiety issues.

This issue is complex and multi-layered, Kearney and Silberman's (1990) review of the literature indicates that there tends to be four main reasons for school avoidance:

- To avoid uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school, such as feelings of anxiety or low mood
- To avoid situations that might be stressful; such as academic demands, social pressures and/or aspects of the school environment
- To reduce separation anxiety or to gain attention from significant others, such as parents and/or other family members
- To pursue tangible reinforces outside of school, such as going shopping or playing computer games during school time

Given the complexity of the issues, the approach to addressing the needs of children and young people with of EBSA needs to be comprehensive and multi-layered. The attached paper (Appendix 1) sets out what we currently have in place and what work still needs to be undertaken to address the issues raised by EBSA.

A recent analysis of data suggests that during the 2019/20 academic year we will have at least the following numbers of pupils who have some type of EBSA, which is making attending school a challenge:

HINT

Y6=25

	Y7=12
LINT	24 (already have TA support)
EHE	20
Home and Hospital Tuition	25
SEND	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>

These numbers are a conservative estimate. In addition, there are 348 pupils with an SEMH for autism (who often have linked anxiety issues).

During the academic year 2018-19 there were 21 pupils who received 1-1 tuition due to anxieties and we are currently projecting at least 25 pupils this year (2019-20 academic year) who will need 1-1 tuition to continue with their education.

A conservative estimate of costs during the 2018-19 academic year for pupils receiving 1-1 home tuition is approximately £192,060, of which 70% of these funds were paid for pupils receiving home tuition due to anxieties.

The number of pupils who go back into their educational placement following home tuition for anxiety related issues is limited. During the last academic year it was 4% of the number of pupils that were being home tutored e.g. 1 pupil who returned to their mainstream school.

In order to address the issue of the limited number of pupils returning to their education placement the Education Support Service has been successful in securing £33,000.00 of funding to pilot the use of 10 AV1 Avatars across primary, secondary and special schools as a bridge to support pupils back into formal educational settings.

The AV1 Avatar is a telepresence robot designed to help children and young people with long-term illness reconnect with school and their social lives. It acts as their eyes, ears and voice, representing them wherever they cannot physically be, whilst at hospital or at home. The robot cannot record, screenshots are forbidden, and it is a one-user device.

However, given what we know about EBSA, it is felt that 1-1 and small group support would also be beneficial to aiding in the transition from home into the more formal educational setting of a school.

The proposal is that we employ 2 learning mentors to provide this 1-1 transitional support for pupils with EBSA. This would go alongside the AV1 Avatar pilot and the ongoing work to provide a comprehensive approach to supporting schools, pupils and their families as set out in Appendix 1.

Also at the end of appendix 1 are two links to online video's.

One of the learning mentors would be paid for out of the high needs block and 1 of the learning mentors would be paid for by schools/academies.

It is estimated that the cost of a grade H post with on costs, training and travel would cost approximately £50,000.

The benefit of both these posts to schools are:-

- Improved attendance as pupils are supported more effectively back into a school setting
- Possible reduction in school costs for alternative provision
- Schools supported with strategies and interventions to help the pupils transition back to school
- Future pro-active work with schools and pupils to prevent EBSA

## **Proposal**

It is proposed that Schools Forum de-delegate funding for 20/21 and special schools and academies agree to buyback this service at the same rate.

There are a number of options for schools to consider:-

- Option 1 - All schools for KS2, KS3 and KS4 buy back – which will include all primary secondary special schools and Pru
- Option 2 - All primary only including special schools
- Option 3 - All secondary schools including special schools and Pru

The proposed de-delegation values are based on estimated pupil numbers for mainstream schools and May 19 for special schools and the Pru as this census is more reflective of pupil numbers as the some schools especially primary and the Pru fill up over the academic year are: -

- Option 1 £2.77 per pupil – All schools
- Option 2 £5.69 per pupil – All Primary schools
- Option 3 £5.40 per pupil – All Secondary schools

Individual school information for the three options are in appendix 3.

## **Recommendations**

That School Forum provides feedback from all schools on the proposals, recommends an option and agrees to de-delegate for maintained mainstream schools for a Learning Mentor to support pupils with EBSA.

Academies and schools that cannot de-delegate agreed to pay towards the cost of a Learning Mentor to support pupils with EBSA.

## **For the following reason(s):**

To ensure that all children and young people in Gateshead receive an education that is suitable and appropriate to their needs and abilities.

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## Appendix 1

### Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Nationally UK literature reports that between 1 and 2% of the school population are absent from school due to emotional reasons (Elliott, 1999, Gulliford & Miller, 2015). This can often present as ongoing anxiety or Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and with support these issues can be managed within a mainstream school setting.

Over the past few years Gateshead has seen an increasing number of children and young people who are refusing to attend school due to EBSA. This issue is not just a mainstream school issue, we also have children and young people with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) who are refusing to attend their special school placement as well as children and young people who have been taken out of school to be home educated due to mental health/anxiety issues.

We know from work undertaken in West Sussex that any approach to meeting the needs of these pupils needs to be comprehensive and multi-layered. Much of the information in this paper has come from their work on EBSA.

Kearney and Silberman's (1990) review of the literature indicates that there tends to be four main reasons for school avoidance:

- To avoid uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school, such as feelings of anxiety or low mood
- To avoid situations that might be stressful; such as academic demands, social pressures and/or aspects of the school environment
- To reduce separation anxiety or to gain attention from significant others, such as parents and/or other family members
- To pursue tangible reinforces outside of school, such as going shopping or playing computer games during school time

According to this model the avoidance of the uncomfortable feelings or situations described in the first two points could be viewed as negatively reinforcing the EBSA, whereas in the second two points, the EBSA could be seen as being positively reinforced by factors outside of school (Kearney & Spear, 2012).

For some children and young people, the distress may be obvious and display itself in their presentation and in chronic non-attendance. For others this may not be the case, with distress displayed as sporadic non-attendance or only able to attend school with high levels of support.

The onset of EBSA may be sudden or gradual, although the literature suggests there may be trends corresponding to transition phases in schools (King & Bernstein, 2001). Some children and young people may appear to recover quite quickly from the initial upsets of school which can mean that the 'legitimacy' of EBSA may be questioned. It is worthwhile noting that in looking at the models of anxiety, it is not unusual for the anxiety to quickly dissipate once the perceived threat has been removed (Thambirajah et al. 2008).

## Contextual Information

A recent analysis of data suggests that during the 2019/20 academic year we will have at least the following numbers of pupils who have some type of emotionally based school avoidance, which is making attending school a challenge:

- HINT y6=25
  - Y7=12
- LINT 24 (already have TA support)
- EHE 20
- Home and Hospital Tuition=25
- SEND 28
- Total 134

These numbers are a conservative estimate. In addition, there are 348 pupils with an SEMH for autism (who often have linked anxiety issues).

The data indicates that is an issue that impacts on all schools, primary and secondary, academy or maintained, special or mainstream.

The **Education Inclusion Panel (EIP)** is the process by which Gateshead allocates a home tutor to work with a child or young person who is unable to attend their designated educational placement. The panel is a multi-agency panel with representation from education, health, including CYPS and 0-19 service, Early Help, Platform and social care. Their remit is to decide (with documentational support) the most appropriate provision for permanently excluded pupils and those who are unable to attend mainstream school due to medical reasons.

Once home tuition is agreed by EIP for those pupils who are medically unfit to attend mainstream school, pupils on average receive between 4 and 10 hours of home tuition per week, depending on their abilities to access the education on offer. Home tuition costs on average £192 per week; which equates to 6 hours of home tuition per week at £32 a session. This means that for full year the cost on average for home tuition is £7500 per child.

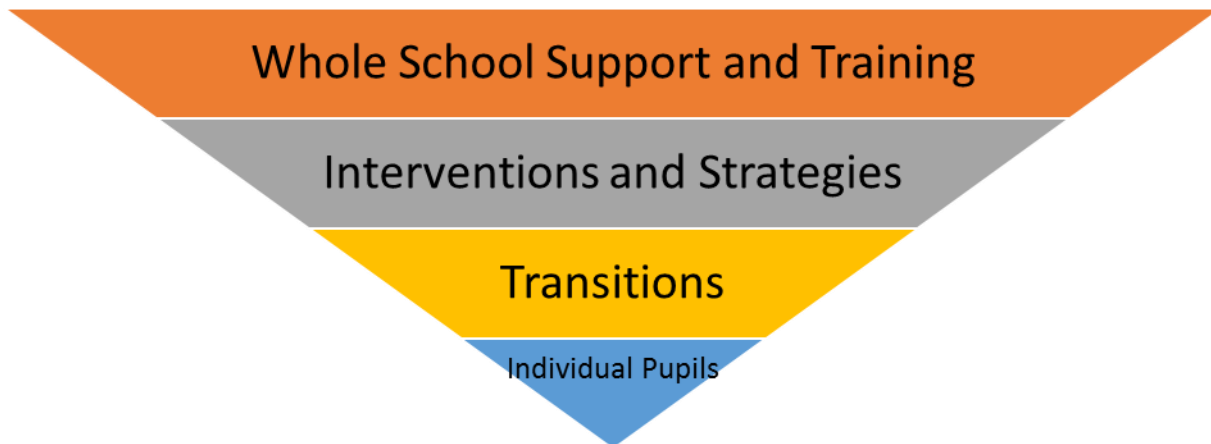
During the academic year 2018-19 there were 21 pupils who received 1-1 tuition due to anxieties and we are currently projecting at least 25 pupils this year (2019-20 academic year) who will need 1-1 tuition to continue with their education. The number of pupils who go back into their educational placement following home tuition for anxiety related issues is limited. During the last year it was 4% of the number of pupils that were being working with.

During 2018-19 a further 9 pupils were supported with home tuition with medically related issues (spinal surgery etc). These pupils are also socially isolated from school and their peers. These pupils usually return to school once their medical issues have been addressed so home tuition is for a much shorter period overall, 12 weeks on average, but there are more hours of tuition allocated per week e.g. 10 hours, so the cost is on average £3840 per child (10 hours per week x £32 an hour for 12 weeks).

A conservative estimate of costs during the 2018-19 academic year for pupils receiving 1-1 home tuition is approximately £192,060.

## Provision of Support for Pupils with EBSA

Given the complexity of the issues, the approach to addressing the needs of children and young people with of EBSA needs to be comprehensive and multi-layered. The following sets out what we currently have in place and what work still needs to be undertaken to address the issues raised by EBSA.



### **Whole school support and training**



Work needs to be undertaken to provide schools with training and support to better understand the needs of pupils with EBSA as well as providing them with a range of strategies which they can use in schools to support these pupils.

Training for school staff should include:

- A better understanding of EBSA and links with anxiety
- Risk and resilience factors of EBSA and the role of the school
- The push and pull factors relating to EBSA
- How to identify EBSA in children and young people
- How to gather information and what information needs to be gathered
- How to work with the child/young person to gather their views on the issues and what needs to be done

What we already have in place:

- ELSA training for staff
- EP training and support
- Fair Access Panel EP training to primary schools on
  - ACE's
  - Attachment
  - Mental health resilience in children
  - Managing strong emotions
  - The development of social and emotional skills
- Primary Behaviour Support work on whole school support for behaviour management
- EYSF training for staff in the area of behaviour
- HINT training on whole school inclusive practice

- Supporting Successful Transitions of Pupils with Autism and social communication Needs (for reception class teachers)

#### What we need to do

- Work with schools to take 'ownership' of pupils with EBSA
- Further develop packages of support and training
- Develop an overarching strategy to support pupils with EBSA

### **Interventions and Strategies**

## Interventions and Strategies

Work needs to be undertaken with schools to provide them with interventions and strategies to meet the needs of children and young people with EBSA. These interventions should be chosen following careful analysis of the school avoidance behaviour. Kearney and Silverman (1990) describe four types of variables which can maintain school avoidance behaviour; often these variables can be involved at one time:

- To avoid something or situations that elicits negative feelings or high levels of stress
- To escape difficult social situations
- To get attention from or spend more time with significant others
- To spend more time out of school as it is more fun or stimulating

Strategies and interventions need to include

- Strategies for working with the child/young person
- Strategies for working with the parents

#### What we have in place

- Primary Behaviour Support to work with schools on whole school and individual behaviour management
- HINT works with schools on providing support for pupils with ASD
- Primary Fair Access EP who works with schools and individual pupils

#### What we need to do

- Continue to develop a range of strategies to support individual pupils

### **Transitions**

## Transitions

Periods of transition can be particularly difficult for children or young people with EBSA. Schools need to be supported to better understand the impact that transitions can have on children and young people and how they can better make adjustments to the transition process while also supporting children and young people to make adjustments to fit in with their new environment

#### What we need to do

Transition work is being undertaken this year by the Primary Behaviour Support Team with support from primary schools, with a view to providing strategies to aid primary -secondary transition. This work will link with the work being undertaken by HINT on transition as set out below

Development of transition arrangements for pupils with Autism and social communication needs which includes

- Multi-agency pre-transition planning mtg
- Flexible transition programmes
- Opportunity to develop peer relationships
- 'Secondary ready' skills set list
- Key worker support (see pilot proposals)

## Individual work



### Individual Pupils

Evidence and experience suggest that children and young people with ASD are at increased risk of EBSA. Given the increased risk of a child or young person with ASD experiencing high levels of anxiety which may lead to EBSA, it is essential that early attention and intervention is given to building the child's social skills, emotional literacy, resilience and their ability to self-regulate.

This process should also apply to anyone who schools have concerns about in relation to mental health issues and/or anxiety related concerns.

For work with individual children and young people for whom school-based interventions and strategies have not been effective, schools currently have access to support from HINT and educational psychology.

In addition, schools can refer to the Education Inclusion Panel (EIP) for access to home tuition while they are unable to access education.

## Pilots

### Pilot (AV1 Avatar)

The AV1 avatar is a telepresence robot designed to help children and young people with long-term illness reconnect with school and their social lives. It acts as their eyes, ears and voice, representing them wherever they cannot physically be, whilst at hospital or at home. The robot cannot record, screenshots are forbidden, and it is a one-user device. See attached for more detailed information on the AV1 Avatar.

The cost of 1 AV1 avatar is £3,278.00, which is less than ½ the cost of what we are currently spending on 1 year of 1-1 home tuition.

We would like to purchase 10 AV1 avatars to pilot working with our schools and the families of our more socially isolated pupils to support them both while at home and also as part of the overall process to re-engage them back into their educational placement. The use of the AV1 avatar could potentially lead to an annual saving of 42,220.

Update on Proposal



We have been granted 33,000 out of ICT capital bid funding. We currently have 2 potentially 3 schools (primary, secondary and special) who are interested in the pilot and are also considering several home-educated pupils who we would like to move back into mainstream school

### Pilot (EBSA Learning Mentors)

One of the issues we face with those children and young people who have EBSA and who either refuse to attend or who are removed from school to be home educated is how we provide tangible support for their transition back into a full-time educational setting. Discussions have recently been had with a view to piloting 2 transition support workers (EBSA-Learning Mentors) to provide this support. Appendix 1 is the draft job profile at a grade H (40,245-43,967) which includes on costs of

The proposal is that these 2 staff are paid; for one from the HNB and 1 by schools through a discussion with school's forum.

The staff would be allocated through the Education Inclusion Panel who would decide who would be allocated to which child, what the remit of the work they would do would be and for how long. As CYPS are members of EIP, by EIP overseeing the work of the EBSA LM, this might also highlight the issues currently being raised that information we get from CYPS doesn't include what they are doing about meeting the EBSA needs of the child or young person.

The EBSA LM would be line managed by the Education Support Service who oversee the management of EIP and the provision of home tuition for these children and young people. However, the workers could also provide link support for pupils identified as having transition needs by other teams e.g. HINT, EPS etc.

### **Future Actions**

Future actions to include....

- Building on the good work of some schools, we need to work with all schools to ensure there is ownership of pupils with EBSA and that we can address the 'out of sight, out of mind' thinking that sometimes occurs in schools
- The development of an EBSA Strategy for schools and other services
  - Agree who would lead on the development and roll out of the EBSA strategy
  - Timeframe
  - What needs to be included in the EBSA Strategy (see document produced by West Sussex)
- The promotion of a resilience curriculum across schools
  - This links with permanent exclusions
  - Identify what a resilience curriculum looks like
- The piloting of the AV1 Avatar
  - Funding has been secured via the ICT Capital bid
  - Schools need to be identified
  - Criteria decided
  - 10 Pupils need to be identified (we currently have 3) identified
- EBSA LM pilot
  - Pilot needs to be agreed
  - Paper to school forum regarding funding
  - Appointing staff
  - Criteria for support agreed

- Pupils identified
  - Evaluation of project
- Discussions with CYPS regarding the information they provide when asking for a child to access home tuition
  - Letters need to be detailed about what CYPS are doing to support the mental health needs to enable them to better access their education provision
- Closer links with CYPS to ensure support is dovetailed
- Consider what options we have in place or need to develop, for those pupils who may never be able to access fulltime in a mainstream/special education environment?

Jeanne Pratt  
Service Manager  
Education Support Service

<https://www.noisolation.com/uk/av1/>

<https://www.noisolation.com/uk/news/av1-everton/>

## Appendix 2

### **Gateshead Council – Learning and Schools Job Profile Grade H**

**Job Title:** Learning Mentor

**Responsible for:** No line management responsibility

**Responsible to:** Team Manager

**Purpose of the role:** To work as a member of the Service, and in partnership with parents/carers and families, schools/settings, and other agencies to support children and young people who are struggling to access education  
To facilitate equality of access and provide high quality mentoring support to maintain children and young people within their educational settings or to aid the transition back into educational/alternative settings

**Main Duties:**

1. To work with identified children and young people in order to help overcome barriers to learning related to anxiety by facilitating access to learning and extended school activities.
2. To manage a caseload of pupils who require intervention, support and monitoring. To write reports which identify appropriate strategies and educational advice under the supervision of Appropriate professionals involved with the children/young people
3. To work in collaboration with a range of services to develop and implement specialist Learning Plans to address the social, emotional and mental health needs of individual pupils.
4. To plan, develop and deliver learning activities with a focus on social, emotional and mental health aspects of learning and responding to individual pupils needs following identification by appropriate professionals. To inform, develop and enhance the practice of schools and alternative educational settings staff through specialist coaching and modelling and promoting specific strategies to secure the effective learning of anxious pupils
5. To support the young person in their transition from home into the school/alternative setting
6. To establish productive empathetic relationships with children and young people, challenge and motivate them, promote and reinforce self-esteem, build resilience, act as a role model and set high expectations.
7. To mentor children and young people, out of the classroom, in order to support them in achieving their social/emotional aspects of learning targets.
8. To support transition of pupils between key stages and across educational settings and collaborate with appropriate agencies on further education/career opportunities.
9. To support transition of pupils between key stages and across educational settings back into their mainstream/special educational placement and collaborate with appropriate agencies on further education/career opportunities.

10. To research and develop appropriate resources in learning in personal development.
11. To work closely with parents and external agencies informed to ensure continuity of approach between home and school for children and young people.
12. To work within a multi-agency framework to support inclusion and access in accordance with the relevant legislation, guidance and local policies.
13. To maintain all records required by schools, settings, and the Local Authority in order to enable monitoring of quality, delivery and outcomes.
14. To select and prepare specialist equipment and resources to support learning activities that meet children and young people's social, emotional and mental health needs.
15. To lead INSET to raise awareness in schools/settings
16. To attend and contribute to plan-do-review process for individual children and young people in order to report on progress of social/emotional interventions and plan future targets.
17. To advise schools/settings, on access arrangements for internal/external exams and assessments.
18. To support and build pupils confidence and resilience in attending out of school activities including out of hours as required.
19. To undertake training relevant to the role
20. To adhere to the policies and overall ethos of each school and setting worked in.
21. To build on the work of and work in partnership with existing mental health services and projects including CYPSS
22. To understand, attend appropriate training and operate in accordance with safeguarding and child protection requirements.
23. To conduct, as required, any other tasks deemed appropriate to the post.

## Person Specification

### Learning Mentor for EBSA

#### Essential

##### Knowledge:

- Understanding of the impact of social, emotional and mental health needs on learning and development and access to the curriculum.
- Good understanding of the principles of child development, learning processes and barriers to learning.
- Working knowledge of national/ curriculum and other learning programmes and strategies including Post 16.
- Good understanding of special educational needs process
- Good understanding of social, emotional and mental health needs

##### Qualifications:

- Meet the Higher-Level Teaching Assistants Standards or equivalent qualification.
- Full driving license
- Training in relevant specialist skills

##### Experience of:

- Working with children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs and/or social and communication difficulties (ASD)
- Working within an educational setting
- The different key stages
- devising/planning and delivering successful 1-1 and small group activities in the area of SEMH
- The effective use of ICT to maintain records and to support learning.

#### Desirable

##### Knowledge:

- Ability to extend desirable learning outcomes to suit individual children and young people.
- Relevant legislation/codes of practice relating to safeguarding children and young people.
- Experience of working with anxious pupils and pupils who are out of their mainstream educational setting
- Excellent literacy and numeracy skills

##### Qualifications:

- A recognised mental health qualification or similar qualification and/or experience
- Full first aid qualification

##### Experience of:

- Clerical duties, report writing
- Supervising groups of children
- Coaching and modelling to other staff
- Working across the different key stages
- Working in both mainstream and specialist (SEMH) provisions
- Working independently and as part of a team

## Appendix 3

SchoolName	KS2 KS3 & KS4
Bensham Grove Community Nursery School	
Carr Hill Community Primary School	£472.56
Kelvin Grove Primary School	£525.06
South Street Primary School	£395.18
Bede Community Primary School	£292.93
Oakfield Junior School	£657.71
LARKSPUR COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL	£187.92
Oakfield Infant School	£0.00
Ravensworth Tce Primary School	£450.45
Kibblesworth Academy	£259.77
Portobello Primary School	£317.80
Birtley East Primary School	£339.91
Dunston Hill Community Primary	£596.92
Emmaville Primary School	£574.81
High Spen Primary School	£270.82
Swalwell Primary School	£262.53
Winlaton West Lane Primary Sch	£627.31
Greenside Primary School	£312.28
Blaydon West Primary School	£243.19
Front Street Community Primary	£638.37
Highfield Primary School	£176.86
Ryton Community Infant School	£0.00
Ryton Community Junior School	£428.34
Washingwell Community Primary School	£204.50
Bill Quay Primary School	£315.04
Falla Park Community Primary School	£353.73
Brandling Primary School	£234.90
Lingey House Primary School	£638.37
THE DRIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL	£287.40
White Mere Comm Primary School	£218.32
Clover Hill Primary School	£337.15
Crookhill Primary	£298.46
Riverside Primary	£337.15
Brighton Avenue Primary School	£447.69
Lobley Hill Primary School	£616.26
Wardley Primary School	£431.11
Glynwood Primary School	£635.60
Barley Mow Primary School	£268.06
Windy Nook Primary School	£467.03
Colegate Primary	£248.71
Roman Road Primary School	£303.98
Fellside Primary School	£334.38
Fell Dyke Primary School	£425.58
Caedmon Community Primary	£337.15

Kells Lane Primary School	£660.48
Chopwell Primary	£303.98
Park Head Primary School	£458.74
St Aidan's CofE Primary School	£312.28
Harlow Green Primary School	£596.92
Rowlands Gill Primary School	£389.65
WHICKHAM PAROCHIAL PRIMARY SCH	£326.09
Corpus Christi Catholic School	£303.98
St Joseph's R C Primary School	£273.59
St.Oswalds RC (Aided) Primary	£331.62
St Peter's R C Primary School	£345.44
St Anne's Catholic Primary School	£218.32
St Joseph's Catholic Junior School	£317.80
Birtley St.Joseph's Catholic Infant School	£0.00
St Agnes' R C Primary School	£331.62
St Joseph's R C Sch Highfield	£185.15
St Mary & St Thomas Aquinas	£337.15
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Byermoor	£353.73
St Philip Neri R C Primary Sch	£303.98
ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL	£331.62
St Mary's R.C. Primary School	£342.67
St Alban's Catholic Primary School	£323.33
Felling St.Augustine's R.C.P	£511.25
St Wilfrid's R C Primary Sch.	£187.92
Thorp Academy	£2,503.73
Heworth Grange School	£2,851.93
Grace College	£3,012.21
Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy	£3,495.83
WHICKHAM COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL	£3,617.42
Kingsmeadow School	£2,230.14
Cardinal Hume Catholic School	£3,495.83
St Thomas More School	£3,357.65
Cedars School Sports Colllege	£431.11
Furrowfield	£190.68
Gibside School	£234.90
Hilltop Secondary MLD School	£281.88
Dryden School	£71.85
Eslington Primary	£151.99
River Tyne Academy Gateshead	£254.24