

REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

14 March 2024

Item 7

**TITLE OF REPORT: Commissioning Arrangements for High Needs Places
2024/25**

Purpose of the Report

1. To bring to Schools Forum the proposed commissioning arrangements for High Needs Places for 2024/25.

Background

2. The Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations (England) require Schools Forum to be consulted on the commissioning arrangements for high needs places. This includes all places for special education needs (SEN) and alternative provision places commissioned by the local authority (LA), and the arrangements for paying top-up funding.
3. Not all places are currently agreed and therefore these numbers could be subject to change.

Commissioning Process for 2024/25

4. As in 2023/24, all special schools and the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) will receive funding of £10,000 per commissioned place. Additionally Resourced Mainstream Schools (ARMS) will receive £6,000 per place for a pupil that is main or current registered at the school and £10,000 for a vacant place or a pupil subsidiary registered at the school.
5. In addition to this and according to national funding policy, the LA will pay a locally agreed top-up to settings if and where they are necessary. The top-ups may vary between settings depending on the complexity of pupils' needs in the particular establishment. This top-up will only be paid for pupils on roll and will move in real time with the pupils.
6. The LA gathers data and intelligence to support the annual commissioning process by:
 - Looking at retrospective data and trends
 - Reviewing special schools' current pupils and pupils that will leave at the end of the academic year

- Discussion with school headteachers
- Estimating needs for new special placements by analysing information from:
 - the early years' service
 - annual moderation process
 - other intelligence from the casework officer team and other services

Commissioned Places

7. The below table shows the proposed commissioned places for 2024/25 within the LA.

Commissioned Places 2024/25				
Additionally Resources Mainstream Support Bases				
	KS1	KS2	KS3 & 4	Notes
Bede	8 + 8	8		
Swalwell	10			
Swalwell ASD	8			
Brandling	4	4		
Lobley Hill	8			
Rowlands Gill	10			
Whickham School			18	+3 Post 16
Thorpe Academy			13	+ 2 Post 16
Special Schools	Pre 16	Post 16		
Dryden	35	11		
Eslington	68			
Furrowfield	71			
Gibside	170			
Hill Top	88	17		
The Cedars	170	20		
Alternative Provision	Pre 16	Post 16		
River Tyne Academy	103			
Post 16				
Gateshead College		59		
Learning Skills		10		

Proposal

That Schools Forum notes the contents of the report and proposed commissioning of the above places.

Recommendations

8. Schools Forum notes the report.

For the following reasons:-

9. To adhere to the requirements of the Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations (England)

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