

GROVE SCHOOL STAFF CONSULTATION RESPONSE

We are in complete agreement that more localised provision for children with SEMH as their primary need is needed in the Berwick Catchment.

However we believe that pupils whose learning needs fall within the mainstream range should have the opportunity to learn within a mainstream school, with access to the appropriately trained staff to further their education but with appropriate accommodations made to support their SEMH needs.

We firmly believe that it would be inappropriate for those pupils to be expected to join our school, both under our current name or under a new name, and to not suffer emotionally or socially by being 'excluded' from their peers to a school who is well known in the area as a school who provides for pupils with PMLD and SLD. Our concerns are around school refusals and pupils not being given an outstanding opportunity to learn at their cognitive level.

Appropriately staffed, equipped and run 'hubs' within a first/middle/high or primary/secondary model would be a far more inclusive way to support these pupils. For parents, SENDCos and head teachers this would give a flexible and manageable way to support SEMH pupils to both be given support for their additional need whilst still being able to access their learning and to be able to encourage and support their re-integration into their mainstream setting.

As a staff we see our role in an advisory and supportive role to the other schools within the partnership, should they desire this, whilst still educating the PMLD and SLD pupils we are currently designated to support.

It should also be noted that any provision created for the pupils within our partnership may never meet the needs of all our SEMH pupils. Currently there are 2/3 pupils who are educated outside of our partnership who did attend our school but we were not able to meet their needs. A lack of dedicated provision is only part of the solution and there also needs to be a robust system of support for the pupils, families and schools from other professionals to fully provide for these young people.

In addition to appropriate provision made for SEMH under either a three tier or a two tier system in Berwick we feel strongly that a new school for the current pupils at the Grove School needs to be a priority. We are currently more than full, with class sizes larger than is appropriate for the needs of our current pupils, let alone the additional pupils who are currently in mainstream but whose needs would be met more appropriately in our school. Currently we have no break out spaces, no therapeutic spaces, a school hall that is not functional as it holds the equipment for our wheelchair using pupils, it has no green space, it has no communal spaces where the whole or even parts of the school can gather in celebration and it filters straight from the front door onto a busy street among many more problems.

I understand that the data does not seem to show that there is a need for additional PMLD or SLD places for our school, however we know that there are currently more than enough pupils in the Berwick Partnership to fill at least another class and that is before our current large class sizes are split. We are bursting at the seams and although doing all that we can to continue to provide an outstanding provision for our current pupils this is becoming more and more difficult as time goes by. The PMLD and SLD pupils of the Berwick Partnership deserve some serious consideration when improving and restructuring the education provision in our partnership.

Thank you for your consideration,

Grove School Staff