

Inclusion Review Phase 2: Recommendations from the Working Group

Strategic

1. York should adopt a set of **strategic principles** to inform its new framework. The suggested principles (appended) highlight the importance of *early intervention*, of thorough *evaluation* of new approaches, of *equity*, and of *co-production* with parents, carers and young people.
2. The strategy should embrace **all children with special educational needs**, from the most severe to the mild or temporary. In other words, it includes all those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those with a *My Support Plan*. Some will always be supported in mainstream schools, some may need a special or alternative environment, and some may move between the two. It extends from the early years through, in some cases, to age 25.

Provision and Resources

3. There is **increasing pressure on budgets**, especially the higher needs allocation, and the position is not sustainable. The development of new approaches to inclusion needs to tackle this, and to ensure that hidden costs such as transport are also taken into account.
4. In the short-to-medium term, York needs more of *every* type of provision. In common with most authorities, York is always likely to need a **mixed economy** of specialist provision, satellite units, ERPs and imaginative solutions within mainstream schools.
5. The immediate needs are to:
 - **ensure facilities at Hob Moor and Danesgate are appropriate for the cohorts with which they are currently dealing**, within a safe and productive educational environment;
 - **provide more resources within mainstream schools** – e.g. through commissioning additional satellite units or ERPs, to serve the whole city;
 - continue to improve **provision for older young people** who have passed through the phase of statutory school–age education.
6. In the longer term, York is going to continue to need to increase capacity and to provide a range of facilities across the city. We need to take account of:
 - a. the continuing rise in the numbers diagnosed with Autism, or with other social, emotional or mental health difficulties sufficient to require an EHCP;
 - b. a short-term bulge in the number of secondary places and a dip in the number of primary places, but...
 - c. ...in the medium term, a likely rise in the number of primary places too, as new housing developments (and possibly new schools) are built off the back of the Local Plan. This offers a strategic opportunity to incorporate enhanced provision, and/or satellites of the special and alternative provision schools, across the city.

7. In advance of this, and ideally over the 2018-19 academic year, York needs to undertake a further, thorough and impartial **evaluation of all current provision** to assess what is working well and what is less successful, recognising that one size will never fit all. Such a review should include all current provision including nurture groups. The evaluation will need to take account of a range of objective measures plus “soft” intelligence. It will also need to factor in the independent evidence that is already available, such as inspection reports for the special schools, Danesgate and ERPs.
8. **The Danesgate Community** is successfully dealing with a wide range of ages, behavioural issues and emotional difficulties; it is a huge asset to the city and indeed to the sub-region. However, numbers under the auspices of Danesgate have grown in recent years for a number of reasons including changes in the curriculum and accountability measures in mainstream schools, plus the rise in those with autism or SEMH at all ages. The Group has discussed a proposal to establish a new conceptual framework for the community involving a division into three discrete pathways:
- “Danesgate” – the Pupil Referral Unit
 - “Danesgate+” – formerly though inaccurately known as “EOTAS”
 - “Danesfield” – a specialised setting operating as a school for those with particular social, emotional or mental health needs, and with an EHCP.

A fuller outline of the proposal is available separately. The Inclusion Working Group endorses the proposed framework, which it believes will offer the educational community a much clearer understanding of who Danesgate/Danesfield is for, and the routes for accessing it, subject to further detailed refinement. Inherent in the proposal is greater outreach work and the development of alternative provision bases in localities; the group believes that these are to be welcomed on several grounds, including the fact that they will reduce budgetary pressures by cutting down on taxi fares.

Nevertheless, the group recognises that further discussion will be needed on a number of aspects of the proposal, including the notion that pupils will only be able to access Danesgate with a *My Support Plan* in place, normally evidencing the involvement of the Local Area Teams and relevant external agencies. It is also intended that pupils who do attend Danesgate will remain on the “home” school’s roll (with those attending Danesgate+ dual registered; and those attending Danesfield on the Danesfield role). The Group believes this is fair and transparent framework but acknowledges that others may want to discuss this further.

Further work will also be needed to refine the entry criteria for:

- Any new alternative provision hubs around the city;
- “Danesfield”, so that it is clear to all, including parents, what sorts of needs the provision is intended to cover.

It should be emphasised that the proposed framework is not intended to expand or radically alter Danesgate as it currently stands. The capital investment needed is relatively modest, especially if space can be found elsewhere in the city for behavioural hubs.

9. Investment is also needed in the **early years**. The Group entirely accepts the principle that investment in support for special needs in the early years normally leads to better outcomes, and saves money, in the longer term. Improvements are especially needed in speech and language support across the city, consistent with the social mobility pledge. There are also opportunities to share best practice across schools and settings, including those in the private sector, but investment may be needed to kick start this.
10. There also needs to be a continued focus on **post-16** provision, involving local Colleges as full partners. Additional provision is to be developed at Askham Bryan, in partnership with Applefields, which is very welcome; there will also be modest investment in improving facilities at the Blueberry Academy. More work is also needed, in conjunction with Adult Social Care, to improve young people's onward journey.
11. We need to recognise that increases in both need and provisions impact on **SEN agencies** that deliver services, and reflect this in our planning.

(C) Process and Next Steps

12. Work is currently under way to **review and refresh all parts of the present processes**, including the **BAP, EHCP/Combined Panel**, and the **Complex Needs Panel**, to see if we can make improvements in their **governance, accountability** and **transparency**. The intention is to build on the strengths of the present arrangements, but also recognise that improvements could be made, perhaps with a revised remit and with a credible QA process that operates across the whole system. There needs to be clearly agreed entry and exit criteria and transparent admissions arrangements for all provisions.
13. Consideration now needs to be given to governance of the wider inclusion-related processes from hereon in through a more **structured project format**. This needs to include links to other parts of the system (eg DMT, Schools Forum, YSAB, the Council [DCS, Lead Member and Executive as appropriate]), so that decision-making is transparent and fair. This will be particularly important in terms of overseeing the capital programme, where there may be competing pressures, and planning will be needed to ensure decisions are factored into the democratic decision-making process.

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City of York Council Inclusion Review: Strategic Principles

1. Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do, and this applies equally to all those who have, or may develop, special educational needs and/or emotional or mental health difficulties¹.
2. Equity underpins these principles. York promotes a culture of inclusivity and tolerance at all times and in all institutions.
3. Given that resources are finite and that there is growing pressure on budgets, value for money and sustainability are also legitimate concerns.
4. Where special educational needs are identified, or emotional/mental health difficulties first emerge, we will seek to intervene early, effectively, and locally².
5. Children, young people and their families will be engaged as equal partners in the design of services, support and interventions, both in terms of meeting the individual's needs, and when making decisions about the overall provision of services in York.
6. York welcomes new ideas and is willing to trial new approaches but will only adopt them city-wide where evidence-based research shows that they clearly improve outcomes.
7. York will promote strong, transparent governance arrangements to oversee the application of the fair access protocols, managed moves, and/or the involvement of specialist services. These arrangements will incorporate support and challenge, including peer challenge.
8. All children and young people with special educational needs will have the experience of a sophisticated, personalised curriculum and an appropriate environment for their learning which directly enables sustainable progression. Planning for the transition to adult life will begin as early as possible, in partnership with the young people and their parents or carers.
9. We will promote the professional development of teaching and support staff so that they are confident and skilled in supporting children and young people with special needs in the classroom wherever possible. Best practice will be shared widely, including the pooling of expertise between schools, the Danesgate community, and central support services.
10. The York education community shares responsibility for the outcomes and sustained progression of all young people with special educational needs, whatever the host education setting.

¹ For young people with Special Educational Needs and an Education, Health and Care Plan our responsibility extends to the age of 25, while they are in education or learning through an apprenticeship.

² This may mean in the child's home (eg through the Portage service in the case of pre-school children) or within the child's school or setting.