

School Organisation Committee

21 June 2006

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

PROJECTED SPECIAL SCHOOL ROLLS

Summary

1. This report shows the historical trend for special school numbers in the City of York and projects rolls through to 2013. The committee is asked to note the report.

Background

2. The local authority closed down the 4 special schools in the city in 2004 and replaced them with 2 new schools, both of which are now fully operational and in new premises. Both schools were built for rolls of approximately 120. Currently, there are fewer than 100 pupils at Hob Moor Oaks and over 140 pupils at Applefields. Members need to understand why this is the case and what action, if any, is required to address the capacity issues.
3. The data in Chart 1 clearly demonstrates that there has been a steady but significant reduction in the total number of pupils educated within day special schools from a high of 375 in 1998 to 225 in 2006. These figures reflect the successful implementation of the policy of inclusion, which of course involved reorganisation of special school provision from 4 school sites to the current 2. We have also been successful in making good provision for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties in both primary and secondary mainstream settings. We have also been successful in educating more pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties and other complex disabilities in early years settings and in primary schools. The impact of this has been reflected in the relatively low number of children in primary special school provision. At secondary level there has not been such a significant reduction in special school places for two main reasons:
 1. it has proved more difficult to support children with complex disabilities in mainstream secondary schools.
 2. relatively more pupils are staying on for years 12 – 14, rather than leaving school at year 11 (mainly to attend College based provision).
4. Chart 2 shows the number of children in special schools across each of the National Curriculum year groups. From this it is clear that the number of children in the secondary special school is not being replicated in the primary school, for the reasons given, above. On this basis, the roll at Applefields will

fall unless children move into the school from mainstream schools or from other authorities.

5. Charts 3 and 4 show the projected roll for Applefields over the coming 8 years, based on the assumption of no pupils arriving from mainstream schools and then based on the assumption that 4 pupils will transfer each year onto the roll of Applefields. Both models assume that all pupils on roll will move into the school's 6th form. Chart 3 shows that the school roll will grow to a peak in 2007 and will fall below the capacity figure from 2011. Chart 4 shows that the school will fall below its capacity figure from 2013. Neither model takes into account desirable changes in inclusion practice in mainstream secondary schools.
6. An analysis of current pupils in mainstream primary schools who may transfer to a special school with the designation of Hob Moor Oaks or Applefields shows that there are 8 pupils who are being closely monitored and who are considered to be suitable for places in special schools. This averages out at less than 2 each year group.
7. Both models also assume that there will be no change in placement practice from North Yorkshire and East Riding. There are currently 31 children at Applefields and 13 at Hob Moor Oaks from these authorities. We continue to receive new applications at the rate of, on average, 2 a year and at present there are no indications of this figure declining. No doubt NYCC would prefer to place pupils in its own special schools for reasons of cost (particularly transport), but parental preference is all important here. It is possible that the new provision at Hob Moor Oaks will attract more parents rather than less.
8. The reason for the bigger than expected roll at Applefields is made clear in Chart 5. This chart shows current and projected numbers in Years 12-14 at Applefields – post 16 provision. This clearly demonstrate a significant upward trend, assuming all pupils continue into this provision (this was the assumption made in Charts 3 and 4). When this information is compared with category of need data, it seems clear that the growth is accounted for by more pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties staying on than would have been expected under the previous arrangements. The total increase in numbers in the 3 core categories of need (ASC, SLD, PMLD) met by the two special schools is very small over the last 3 years – a growth of 13 pupils. In the past most of the pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties would either have left school at 16 or would have gone on to college placements. We do of course have to be careful in interpreting data about categories because the boundaries are imprecise and in any case it could well be argued that these children should be entitled to access special school provision up to 19. However it could also be argued that we are apparently expanding this kind of provision without specific planning or policy decision. Moving from 26 places in 2002 to a projected 68 in 2008 is a major increase with obvious financial consequences.
9. There are a number of existing or proposed actions which will impact on the capacity on the Applefields site. These include:

- Encouraging capacity in mainstream generally – part of the current inclusion strategy and enhanced by delegating SEN funding to schools.
 - Develop capacity in mainstream through enhanced resource schools – the most recent example being the opening of an ASC unit at Fulford School.
 - Establish satellite provision from Applefields in a mainstream school. New build opportunities may help this process but more detailed work would be required.
 - Encourage development of provision in York College, particularly for MLD. Preliminary meetings have been held with the college and there is scope for further work, particularly when the college is located on its new site.
 - Designate Years 12 – 14 provision at Applefields as available for PMLD/SLD/ASD pupils only.
 - Closely examine existing placement at Annual Review to consider possibility of reintegration into mainstream or College.
 - Encourage NYCC to develop provision in the Selby/Tadcaster area.
 - Turn down new applications on the grounds that the school is full (NYCC would then need to place their pupils elsewhere).
 - Purchase places for CYC pupils in NYCC schools.
10. The local authority, as admissions authority for Applefields School, could refuse future applications for places at the school, including those from Hob Moor Oaks, although legally we cannot treat pupils from North Yorkshire in any way differently to those from CYC.

Consultation

11. This report has been brought forward as a result of requests made by the governing body of Applefields school and through discussions at the Special School Headteachers group.

Options

12. This report is for information only.

Analysis

13. This report is for information only.

Corporate Objectives

14. This report is for information only.

Implications

15. This report is for information only.

Recommendations

16. The Committee is asked to note the report.

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Report Approved

Date

6/6/06

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *List information for all*

There are no specialist implications; this report is for information only.

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

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Annexes

Chart 1 – Number on Roll in Day Special Schools

Chart 2 – Number on Roll in HMO and Applefields May 2006

Chart 3 – Projected Roll of Applefields from existing HMO intake only; assuming all Applefields pupils stay on to Year 14 assuming no new entrants from mainstream or special

Chart 4 – Projected Roll of Applefields: including current HMO intake and cumulative effect of 4 additional places per year

Chart 5 – Number of pupils in Year Groups 12-14 at Applefields