

To: **Schools Forum**
16 November 2023

College Hall Update
Executive Director: People

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide an update to Schools Forum on developments at College Hall, following the last report submitted on the 22 June.

2 Supporting information

- 2.1 College Hall is a Pupil Referral Unit serving Bracknell Forest and the surrounding area. It is a local authority maintained provision providing 56 full time places for young people in key stages 3 and 4 who have experienced difficulty in maintaining a place in mainstream education. The school is based across two campuses with a range of provision to meet different needs, including:
- a) Permanently excluded from a mainstream school.
 - b) 'At risk' of permanent exclusion from a mainstream school and requiring a short-term intervention.
 - c) Medically unable to attend a mainstream school due to SEMH concerns.
- 2.2 Bracknell Forest has a Service Level Agreement in place with College Hall to provide these 56 places.

3 Ofsted inspection 11-12 July 2023

- 3.1 College Hall was subject to an Ofsted inspection on the 11th and 12th July. As forecast, the outcome of this graded inspection was that College Hall was judged to be inadequate in all areas and requiring special measures.
- 3.2 The Local Authority has produced, with the involvement of the school, a Post-Inspection Action Plan that includes actions, success criteria, timescales and targets with regard to:
- Ensuring that safeguarding is effective.
 - Ensuring that there is a clear plan for the school's vision and admission arrangements, and that leaders are effective in driving forward improvements.
 - Improving the assessment and teaching of reading, particularly for weaker readers.
 - Improving the curriculum so that it meets the needs of College Hall learners and prepares them well for the next stages in their lives.
 - Developing a cohesive enrichment programme to support College Hall pupils with their character development, life and employability skills.
 - Improving attendance, including supporting families to improve the amount of time pupils attend school.

4 Leadership arrangements

- 4.1 The Management Committee continues to demonstrate the capacity to deliver the necessary improvements at College Hall.
- 4.2 Since their appointment, the Management Committee has reconstituted, increasing to 14 members to allow representation from every secondary school in Bracknell Forest in the community governor category, and currently has 3 vacancies due to recent leavers. The Management Committee now consists of:

- a) One parent governor
- b) Two LA governors
- c) One staff governor
- d) One headteacher
- e) Nine community governors (7 from BFC secondary schools)

- 4.3 The current instrument of governance complies with The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 (as amended) which came into force in 2013 and includes PRUs; The Pupil Referral Units (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 1 September 2012, The Pupil Referral Units (Miscellaneous Amendments) (N0.2) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 1 April 2013 and Alternative Provision statutory guidance for local authorities dated January 2013.
- 4.4 The Ofsted inspection report noted that the Management Committee has begun to make effective decisions for the school.
- 4.5 Following the unexpected resignation of the Interim Headteacher in July, the local authority worked in partnership with the Management Committee to recruit a new full time Interim Headteacher to begin during the summer holidays. The new Interim Headteacher has been appointed to work full time on site at College Hall. He is highly experienced with a proven track record of securing improvements in similar settings.

5 Improvements to date

- 5.1 As a result of the joint working between the local authority and College Hall, a number of improvements were secured prior to the Ofsted inspection taking place. These were in relation to a number of safeguarding processes, school finance and securing support for pupils from wider partner organisations and agencies. The inspection also noted some strengths that were relatively recent developments, including effective careers education and independent academic and careers guidance.
- 5.2 Since the inspection in July, the following changes have been implemented:
- The appointment of the new Interim Headteacher.
 - The appointment of an external consultant for 3 days per week to support with the development of teaching, the curriculum and assessment.
 - Clearly defined roles for all staff to improve accountability.
 - A revised admissions policy.
 - Changes to the timetable to maximise learning time and reduce movement around the school.
 - The introduction of a robust programme of baseline and diagnostic assessments to identify the interventions pupils need, particularly in reading.
 - Phonics training has been implemented for all staff, and age appropriate accessible reading material in place.
 - The implementation of a more practical curriculum. Initial improvements have been made to the school's offer to increase access to subjects such as PE, cooking and art.
 - The creation of a new multi-sensory space.
 - The opening of a new nurture provision at a satellite site.
 - Implementation of a new behaviour policy.
 - Reduction in suspensions.
 - Improved systems and processes for monitoring and recording attendance.

- Improved attendance, particularly for more vulnerable pupils.
- Significant improvements to the physical environment, including new equipment in the outdoor space, improved classroom technology, relaunch of the library, and improved whole school displays.
- The introduction of a school dress code/uniform in order to support pupils' reintegration back to mainstream school and create a sense of belonging at College Hall.
- The decision to appoint a site controller, and a part time chef to provide hot meals at lunchtime for pupils at College Hall. The recruitment process for both of these posts is underway.

6 Academy order

- 6.1 As a school causing concern, College Hall is subject to an academy order as set out in the DfE's statutory guidance. The local authority is supporting the Management Committee, liaising with the Department for Education's (DfE) regional director (RD) to secure a sponsor for College Hall.
- 6.2 The selection of an appropriate sponsor is delegated to the regional director by the secretary of state for education, although the order transferring College Hall into an academy trust is usually signed by a DfE minister. However, the RD's officials have been working closely with LA officers about trusts being considered, and the good relations the council has with her office means that there will be full and meaningful consultation before a decision is made.

7 Equalities impact assessment

- 7.1 The need for an EIA is not considered necessary from this update report.

8 Strategic risk management issues

- 8.1 There is a risk that the sponsor will:
- not prove able to improve College Hall;
 - dispute top-up (per pupil) funding through the new funding system;
 - not commission to standards required by the council; and / or
 - be resistant to any proposed changes desired by the council and / or local schools and academies.
- 8.2 While all these potential issues can be addressed, it is harder and slower to do so where a trust runs the alternative provision (currently College Hall PRU), as the trust is accountable to the secretary of state for education.

Background papers

None.

Contact for further information

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