

Cordyce School Consultation

Email Submissions

31.8.17 – Comment

I whole heartedly disagree with section 2.5 that the main objective of this transformation has been to ensure that all of our children and young people have timeous access to an appropriate level of support to address their individual needs. Whilst this may have been the objective this has not been reached even partially. As a classroom teacher I can state that there is very little access to support of any kind within the classroom for those who need. This not only impacts the child with a need but the 30 odd others in the class, in turn this impacts grades at external examination level, the motivation of pupils and retention of staff.

In 2.6 you state you have worked with third sector partners to support the development of bespoke pathways for young people. As a classroom teacher and as such on the front line for learning and its promotion I do not even know who these partners are. I have seen no bespoke pathways for those in need.

To state you as a council are focused on the needs of individuals and consisting of a range of interventions and opportunities to promote learning and wellbeing, is just incorrect. The most basic of interventions of removing a pupil when they are in need of a change of situation has been removed. As teachers we see daily and deal daily with pupils who need a different route rather than mainstream. I agree that there has been a gradual reduction in the pupil roll at Cordyce School, and an increase in the number of children and young people in mainstream but their needs have not been met. We have limited staff, time and resources to deal with these pupils appropriately giving them the best outcome for life and the world of work. Although you state it is anticipated that this work will continue, it must be done now money and resources must be made available from the outset not piecemeal as usual.

10.10.17 – EIS Response

The EIS teaching union note this paper and would like to have this response appended to the paper as it progresses through the consultation process. We would like the following points to be taken into consideration.

2.6 – This refers to the reduction in the pupil roll at Cordyce. The EIS does not dispute this reduction. However, it came about because schools were suddenly unable to refer pupils to Cordyce as a possible option when considering alternative placements. Some individuals were able to have their needs met in a mainstream environment but there were, and always will be, some pupils who would benefit from the type of alternative provision that Cordyce could offer. Schools were told some time ago that this option was no longer available to them.

Does this mean that out of authority placements are the only route for these high tariff young people?

2.7 – It is **anticipated** that this work will continue.

The EIS would like to see a firm plan for how support for the most vulnerable young people will be taken forward. The “hub” provision which was first spoken about has now changed considerably and schools are unclear about what is actually available and the process by which resource can be accessed.

There have been no pupils enrolled at the school for some time now, not just since August 2017 and this is due to the fact that no enrolment process existed to allow schools to access Cordyce.

3.8 – How was the impact on schools measured? How was it determined that the impact on schools would be “small”? The EIS would disagree that the impact of creating bespoke mainstream pathways for our most vulnerable learners in a staffing crisis with limited budgets would be “small”.

Reference to the 2014 Review of Inclusion is unhelpful in this paragraph as hubs were part of the new approach proposed by this review and they currently don’t exist in the format that was recommended.

4.3 – A recent (2016) EIS survey on Inclusion in Aberdeen City highlighted that staff do not feel adequately trained to deal with the social and emotional difficulties presented by young people. They felt that there was little opportunity to engage in high quality training as a result of the staffing crisis and the fast paced implementation of presumption of mainstreaming. When asked what would help staff to address the issues they were finding most challenging almost all said that they required better training and staffing resources.

4.7 – The recruitment crisis is having an impact upon many schools in terms of the personalisation and choice that they are able to provide for young people. This is not an issue which is exclusive to Cordyce.

Cordyce would have found it difficult to attract skilled staff since the Inclusion Review because the future of the school became very uncertain at that point.

4.11 – The continuum of provision is reduced by the loss of Cordyce as some of the city’s most vulnerable learners may still require to access provision that is not part of a mainstream setting. They may require to do this for a longer period of time and the EIS questions that we have access to this type of support within the City. Ultimately this may mean that we are unable to reduce out of authority placements.

4.14 and 4.15 – The vision of satellite hubs has changed significantly from that recommended by the Review of Inclusion and subsequently presented to schools as the new way forward. Schools feel that their options have now been reduced further and that there are significant gaps in the provision available. The isolated “learning environments” which appear to have replaced hubs do not allow ACC to capitalise in access to technology, in-house therapeutic approaches and the wider curriculum for personalisation and choice as mentioned in 4.7 of the document. It is the opinion of the EIS that pupil needs will not be best met by this new approach and that flexibility will be reduced as a result of the fragmented nature of the provision.

The EIS wholeheartedly supports the inclusion agenda but recognises that the significant limitations placed on schools as a result of staffing shortages and budget constraints make the process much more challenging in reality. There will always be a small percentage of young people who cannot be supported in mainstream due to their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and it is vital that the type of

support that was provided by Cordyce remains an option for these pupils in an effort to avoid out of city placements.

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