

In making a contribution to this consultation I wish to declare an interest as a governor for Keyham Lodge and Millgate Schools (KLMS). I have over thirty years experience working with children with SEMH, both as an educational psychologist and as a teacher in a residential school for children with severe SEMH. As a city councillor, I am concerned not just about the effectiveness and economy of how public funds are spent, but also the efficacy of this spending i.e. is it the right thing to be doing in the circumstances?

As a councillor I can acknowledge that the local authority has had to incur overspend to meet SEND and that we can't fund this from general resources without permission from the Secretary of State. Even with additional money from government we will be in deficit again in 2020/21. So we have to consider economies. But I am not sure how that links to this proposal, which, as I understand it, is not to save money but to use a set sum of money for funding special schools, and to redistribute it fairly and equably. As a governor, I wish to contribute to discussions which seriously consider how to cut costs while maintaining a basic minimum of funding, not just to cut costs but **to ensure individual needs are met.**

The pupils at KLMS are there because they have severe SEMH. This is a double disability because it is invisible so does not invite sympathy, rather condemnation from many who do not understand its cause: early experience of all kinds of deprivation, neglect, hostility from families, unskilled management in mainstream schools. Such children can function effectively in a supportive environment such as these schools provide; but their behaviour can deteriorate without any warning to dangerous levels. This can be because something has happened at home, or in class and can't be predicted. But with skilled and expert leadership, it can be contained and remediated. So my first comment is this: it is incorrect to imply that leadership skills and staffing levels, as reflected in a "standardized level of non-teaching costs", are the same for every special school, because of the significant differences in the level of challenge presented by each cohort of students. **It would be better to remove this from the equation and increase the weighting of each band accordingly. Because Band 5 and 6 predominate in the KLMS cohort, it would provide additional funds to recruit and maintain leaders with that extra element of skill and expertise; and employ adequate numbers of staff.**

At present there is no moderation of how schools assign individual pupils to bands. It is entirely understandable that schools may assign pupils to an inappropriate banding to gain extra funds, so **effective moderation is essential.**

KLMS have conducted a highly effective project in helping pupils to overcome their difficulties and make the move into adult life successfully. If their budgets are cut to the point where the project is dismantled and pupils begin to fail, then the money given to these schools will in effect be wasted and these children will go on to be a burden to society, by failing to hold down a job or make positive and lasting relationships, by turning to crime; or suffering severe mental breakdown. Cutting our residential provision which provides essential respite care to children and families under severe stress will mean that the authority will have to seek and fund very expensive out county provision. This is **false economy**: an increased cost to the council and a long term cost to society, but with a severe personal cost to children who have to endure lifelong unremediated SEMH.

Lynn Moore
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