

Response to Special School Funding Formula Consultation Process.

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Response

The Governors for Keyham Lodge and Millgate Federated Schools cannot accept this funding review in its current form. The modeling is flawed; it is not equitable and is not based around the needs of individual children. It proposes to take money away from the poorest, most complex and deprived children in the city.

- As Governors, we feel privileged to be associated with these two outstanding, nationally recognised schools and we can't understand why it appears to us that the LCC is attacking its two best SEMH schools. We question the way the review has been conducted, it has ignored three of the City Special Schools and of the six included, only KLMS has had its budget cut and cut drastically.
- The children attending these schools rarely have stable secure backgrounds; they are born deprived and these schools are their last hope to improve their lives. These are the vulnerable children with mental health problems who get criminally and sexually exploited. Staff at KLMS provide security, stability, food and most importantly hope and aspirations for the future.
- Millgate Ofsted Dec 2019 reported *"Leaders are ambitious in their determination to prepare pupils for life and work as independent adults"* *"The quality of teaching that pupils experience during their time at the school is outstanding."*
- Keyham Lodge Ofsted March 2017 reported *"Keyham Lodge is an amazing place where pupils make excellent progress in their learning and develop into responsible citizens,"* *"Pupils enjoy their lessons and, as a result, achieve well."*
- The lives of SEMH children can be improved with skillful intervention by expert staff in order that they can become good citizens. So, cutting the funding to these schools is a false economy as society must then cope with the longtime fall out. But more importantly lack of expert intervention has a devastating lifelong impact on these children.
- If this review goes ahead in its present form, then we Governors must consider the schools' future structures, closing the residence and ending the mental health provision, which will affect the amazing impact the schools, have in reducing Youth Offending numbers, and increasing the numbers of students entering Social Care, NEET and Early Help.
- We know that eventually Covid will decline, but that the Labour run Leicester City Council in the middle of a National Pandemic, with high levels of unemployment and child poverty is setting

out to disadvantage the already disadvantaged is hard to believe. It was reported by Zoe Covid Symptom Study UK in conjunction with King's College London on November 7th 2020 that the highest numbers of symptomatic Covid cases are found in the lowest Socio-economic status groups

- Millgate residence has been found to be Outstanding at the last three of its annual Ofsted inspections and yet now the LCC are stating that they do not see the necessity for a residential facility. They do not appear to remember funding it and in this Review, have included the residential funding in the figures so that it appears that Millgate school is overfunded.
- The Children's Commissioner Anne Longfield OBE has just published a report "The Children who no-one knows what to do with" highlighting that "*the residential social care system is broken and failing many of the most vulnerable children*" with children being placed in very inadequate care homes often far away from their own homes. The Executive Headmaster has in the past offered to explore joint use of the residence with Social Care Services but, has met with no response. We are still willing to pursue this.
- The schools have readily responded to the requests from the Council to expand and take in more pupils including the expansion into Knighton Fields. With cuts in funding this will not, in future be able happen. Which will lead to expensive OOA placements, but more importantly it will impact on the lives of these difficult to place children who will face lengthy journeys every day to out of county schools.
- We cannot understand the weighting placed on leadership cost at the two schools, why was the mean salary scale not used which is similar across all the Special Schools in Leicester. National comparison sites show that SEMH schools employ more leaders than teachers so that they are not restricted in the hours they can work. All leaders at KLMS teach, they are experts in their field. The Head of Keyham Lodge has stated that "*Exclusions at Keyham Lodge School have dropped by 98% during the period from 2017/18 to 2019/20, physical incidents have reduced by 76%, persistent absentees have reduced by 36.2%, academic outcomes have improved in Maths and English by 35% and destinations improve each year and NEET has reduced by 40% over the same time.*" "*For each of these gains, a leader has developed the strategy, implemented the changes and worked at ground level to overcome what have seemed immovable obstacles.*"

The Way Forward

Whilst we cannot accept the findings of this review, we do recognise the need for a review of the funding formula and will cooperate with a new funding review which is timely, truly child centered and includes all the City of Leicester Special Schools.