

Most of the students have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences before they have come to Millgate coupled with highly complex needs and diagnoses. This places the students at a disadvantage already in society; as has been proved because they have been moved out of mainstream school into a special school. To then reduce funding to an already disadvantaged group sets them apart from achieving what they are capable of; with the right support which has been proved with Millgate being rated an Outstanding school. The specialist services we provide to students include enabling them to gain work experience placements which can lead to employment, residential care – which has stopped some students going into the care system completely and saved families from splitting up.

The idea that a special school can accommodate their additional needs with funding that matches the complexity of the needs of the students and the reduction of funding will impact on many areas in the school because students can not be banded under the same level of support. One student may be so dangerous to themselves or others they need more staff to deal with the dangers they impose. One size does not fit all.

Mental health support – of which we have two counsellors in school because we are an SEMH school - support ¼ of the school population at any one time with a permanent waiting list. With CAMHS waiting lists ever increasing and with some students not meeting CAMHS threshold, it is vital to providing the extra support for their mental health and well-being to support the whole child as well support them with their ongoing ACE's.

The lockdown has shone a light on Mental Health and its very negative impact on young people. Childline have reported 43,000 calls were made to them between March and January and Refuge an increase of 120% call relating to domestic violence. Millgate saw a rise in DV through Encompass and were able to provide support to student and families.

Millgate was seen to provide some of the best support to students in lockdown from a school both pastorally, academically and practically to students and families. To cut the level of funding when so much has been achieved and maintained – even during a pandemic – potentially will create more disadvantage instead of advantage that its strived to achieve; against many obstacles.

Family support offers support in the community and Millgate School builds amazing relationships with families that other services cannot always achieve which has proven to help reduce conflict in the homes; improve attendance and save families from eviction.

With extra specialist support this enables the students to manage better in the classroom and gain qualifications which Millgate has its best results of in the last year.

Funding enables students to become more well-rounded individuals; and the ability to better function in society and make a positive contribution; with giving these students better life chances overall. If the funding cuts come it will greatly impact on students leaving Millgate not as fully equipped as a whole individual and will only serve to create more expenditure in the youth sector that has already been cut and stretched.

Special schools are special because they serve a specialist client group and specialism costs but costs less in the long run if we are seen to be preventative instead of reactive.

Any cuts to funding will reduce the input and interventions that makes our setting an outstanding specialist setting, and will detrimentally effect the outcomes of our pupils. The support that is

offered currently addresses many aspects of need - from family support that enables and promotes a healthy home, to therapy for pupils who need help and support to manage their mental health needs, as well as outstanding residential care to embed key skills and nurture. The current ratio of staff, and the skill set they have, allow the development of essential relationships that nurture high expectations and a pathway to a successful education. Our role at the school is to prepare our pupils to be functioning and thriving members of society and, as a result of the adversity they will have experienced at the point of entering the school, a significant skill set is needed to respond to individual need and transform lives. Any reduction in funding will lead to reduction in provision and will disable the outstanding work done by this school.

There are many complex needs for pupils in a SEMH setting. Pupils who are identified through their EHCP to need specialist teaching and support need tailored interventions and teaching. Although there may be a comorbidity between the social, educational and mental health needs of a pupil, there is also great diversity in terms of pupil need. If all facets of SEMH are to be met, there needs to be specialist interventions offered in each distinct area. This cannot be met with reduced funding.

Nationally, mental health needs have never been more acute for young people, and in Leicester City, where children have been subject to more lockdown time than anywhere else in the country, we must acknowledge the need in our setting is only going to get more severe.

Main findings of NHS Digital (2020) found that 1 in 6 (16%) children were identified with a probable mental health disorder (raising from 1 in 9 in 2017), in addition 30% of children who have a parent who has psychological distress had a probable mental disorder (compared to 9% who did not). This national picture will undoubtedly be reflected in the lives of our pupils and mental health specialists, like professional counsellors will be needed to provide support. At Millgate 2 counsellors currently have full caseloads of pupils aged 7-16 who need a significant level of support. These pupils, and their families also need family support and after school provision in order to address their social, emotional and mental health needs.

In 2019 NAHT found that Just 4 per cent of school leaders agreed that CAMHS responds quickly to requests for support. Just 5 per cent agreed that children referred to CAMHS get help when they need it. This has led to the increase of school counsellors. In Leicester, CAMHS have an extensive waiting list. In a specialist setting like Millgate, where all pupils have complex needs, in house support and expertise is even more vital.

Ref:

<https://www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/press-room/huge-rise-in-number-of-school-based-counsellors-over-past-three-years/>

NHS Digital Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2020 Wave 1 follow up to the 2017 survey