



Making Learning Fun

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Wednesday 14th October

Special School Funding Consultation: Governor Response

Dear Councillor Cutkelvin, Richard & Clare,

We are writing in response to the Special School funding consultation, following the virtual Teams meeting held on 8th October and the request for initial consultation comments by 16th October.

Firstly, we would thank-you for recognising and responding to our long-stated concerns about the ongoing difficulties created by an historic funding system in the City that has not been fair or equitable for our children. We welcome this consultation and note the detailed work and process that has led to the final proposals. As a Governing body, we have discussed the details provided and we accept the principle of the proposed funding model. We understand how the projected figures have been calculated and appreciate that the figures relate to what has to be recognised and accepted as a finite sum available for allocation to all of the Special Schools across our City.

However, you will not be surprised that it remains a source of some frustration and irritation that the jointly recognised and agreed historic underfunding for Oaklands School still will not be addressed going forward. An issue we no doubt will raise again.

As indicated at the meeting, while accepting the principle, we are concerned that moderation of the Banding will not take place before the proposed implementation of the system in April 2021, and consequently seek assurance that this will be done within the first year (2021-22). You will be aware that the cohort that we used to calculate the Oaklands banding allocation included the "Oaklands at Barley Croft" children, who were children with more Moderate Learning Difficulties; and that the children who have just left are now replaced by children in Year 1 who have far more complex needs/adult support. This clearly means the initial banding funding will still not reflect current needs.

We understand that implementing the moderation for the current year may delay or prevent the proposed model being acceptable to the Department for Education and we have no wish to stop the process at this stage but we are adamant that there is a firm commitment to completing the moderation in the first year of banding to ensure that this is indeed the equitable and transparent model that the LA & Heads involved have aspired to create.

We would also like to ensure that any new pupil who starts between April 2021 and April 2022 will be funded according to their appropriate band rather than on the school average. We are not anticipating any increase in school numbers in that period, however, in the case of a new pupil admission due to a tribunal, we would want to ensure that we can effectively meet pupil needs without this having a further negative financial impact.

In our discussions, the question of the potential impact on the allocation of funds should one or more of the included Schools move to academy status was raised and we will be seeking a response and commitment from the LA to ensure any such move is not detrimental to Oaklands.

These are our immediate responses and obviously we may have further observations and comments as the consultation proceeds. Please let us know if you need further clarification or more detailed information.

Many thanks for your support,

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm Robbins
Chair of Governors

Sarah Osborne
Headteacher

Dr. Anne Chisnall
Vice Chair of Governors

Ashok Patel
Governor

on behalf of the full Governing body



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