

Teaching costs: Oaklands School

Currently, a child with autism and social emotional health difficulties may be funded at £18,000 if they attend one school but up to £37,000 if they attend one of the other special schools. This is clearly not fair to those children attending the lowest funded special schools. We agree with a Six band system for identifying pupil teaching need to ensure equity across the school. The proposed model will ensure that whatever the needs of a child, whichever school they attend, the funding allocated is fair, transparent and to the benefit of all our vulnerable children in Leicester City special schools. This will not rectify the historical underfunding, which means that some of the special schools like ours will continue to need to manage on depleted funds for some years to come. However, there needs to be a change *now*, that must not be delayed, to ensure that all children in the City have fair access to the high standards of support they need and deserve.

All children in Leicester City with SEND in special schools are vulnerable in different ways, those with SEMH needs and complex challenging behaviour, those with Autism and complex sensory needs, those with PMLD and complex medical needs; all should have access to the highest quality of education, at all stages, as they progress through their education to provide best lifelong outcomes. We can only do this with a fair system, that acknowledges the needs of all children in our City special schools.

We welcome the banding system, which will mean that the school can allocate staffing appropriately, according to needs, to maximise teaching & learning opportunities for every child, to achieve the outcomes set out in their EHCPs and effectively prepare them for life beyond Oaklands.

We are disappointed that the banding allocations which we were submitted by each school separately have not yet been moderated. However, we trust that once moderated, the system will lead to a fair process for individual children that in turn will see all schools with the funding appropriate to children's needs and based on their EHCP. This will ensure that every school can afford access to additional, high quality resources, staffing and specialist provision, which unfortunately, currently some schools do not have due to restricted budgets.

Due to under-funding currently, the school are working with minimal staffing across the school. With increased staff ratios, the school would be able to implement more specific interventions & therapeutic work with children, to focus on essential areas of their development and optimise outcomes. We need increased staffing to withdraw children for speech and language interventions, therapies such as Tac Pac, Lego therapy or drawing and talking therapy, but currently we cannot afford to staff these. We also need other high-quality resources, such as, more large sensory equipment for the school including playground equipment, which is a significant cost but essential for children's development and well being.

In the absence of a larger HNB budget and before any review of other HNB spending costs has taken place, with the requirement to review and redistribute equitably the available special school funding according to need, it cannot, and must not, remain that children with the same type of special needs are funded differently depending on which school they attend.

“Having attended a number of consultation meetings and read several documents I have been impressed with the work that has gone into this new funding model. I have been a governor at Oaklands School for eight years and for the first time I feel our children will have a fair share of funding. Thank you to the team who have worked hard on developing a funding model that is transparent and works towards equal shares for all children within the high needs sector.” School Governor Doctor Anne Chisnall