



**Agenda Item
10**

Commissioning Unit

Report to High Needs Block –

Report Status

For information/note
For consultation & views
For decision x

Report Title: The Grove as part of the boroughs profile of high needs special school places

Author: Vikki Monk-Meyer Head of Service SEN and Disability

This report provides a brief outline of the developing offer of The Grove Special School for children with Autism, as one of the boroughs new specialist offers of high needs places

Recommendations:

That forum notes the introductory information and agrees that the high needs block committee will monitor high needs place commissioning for quantity amount and value for money

1.0 Introduction - The Grove Special School

1.1The Grove caters for students aged 5–19 who have a primary diagnosis of autism. Many of the students may have additional needs including a cognitive impairment, speech and language difficulties or difficulties associated with social communication. Students may have co-morbid diagnoses of, SEMH, language, social & communication difficulties, sensory integration difficulties, ADHD or SpLD.

1.2 The offer is a complex one of primary, secondary and 6th form on the same site, with also a mix of students attending or two cohorts; those with

significant learning disabilities, and those who may be more high functioning. In order to meet this complex mix of needs, the parts of the school are separated both by age and by different abilities into 6 sections.

The school will open gradually over a 3 year period, with increasing cohorts of children attending each year.

1.3 The opening of the school both increases the boroughs much needed capacity, and also offers a model chosen by some families who might otherwise choose stand-alone special schools out borough.

1.4 The school will be developing its offer over the next 3 years, but is likely to focus on those children who have autism and mental health needs aswell as learning disabilities.

2.0 School Place Growth

2.1 The school has opened with 10 places in September 2018 at St Mary's Site. In Sept 2019 the 10 children will move to The new Grove site along with the 32 children from the heartlands unit.

2.2 The Grove PAN will then increase to 65 places, with the first class of higher functioning secondary students starting. In 2020 the PAN will increase again to 85 and then the school will be at full capacity in 2021.

3.0 Top Up funding

3.1 Due to the start up costs needed to establish the school, the school top up's are higher than the top ups paid to the special schools initially. The schools top ups will reduce over the three years to a more standard level as intake and class sizes increase.

3.2 Initial costs include headteacher, deputy, phase leads and curriculum leads. Inclusion of the higher functioning cohort of young people initially raises costs due to specialist teachers needed for topic specific teaching. The initial funding also includes some capital costs not covered by the Free School capital formula.

3.3. Fees include some services not covered by current commissioned services e.g. therapy costs such as speech and language and occupational therapy.

3.4 The top up costs and comparative value for money of the special school places in the borough will be monitored by the high needs block committee.

4.0 The Grove Intake is as follows:

4.1. 2018 - 42 places - Initially children who were awaiting special school places have taken the initial 10 places. Although costs were not saved, costs of independent special school places are avoided

4.2. 2019 - 65 places - This provides an additional 23 places for children for children requiring a school place, including those who may be moving from phase change e.g. reception to year 1/year 6 to year 7 or to 6th form. In this intake 2 children are moving from an independent school to the special school resulting in a saving of £40,00 in the first year.

4.3. 2020 – 85 places – This is an additional 20 places. The aim is to maximise the opportunity for children to move back to borough at phase changes e.g. secondary and 6th form transfer

4.4. 2021 – 104 places – additional 19 places with usage as outlined above.

5.0 Summary

5.1 All the special schools profiles, and overall high needs school places commissioned, will be influenced by the changing nature of the boroughs specialist offer e.g. development of provision through the alternative provisions review and opening of new course in the borough colleges

5.2 The boroughs high needs place usage will be kept under review to make sure the borough is making the most of the local offer to children in mainstream and special schools. The committee will lead on ensuring value for money, and make recommendations for commissioning and decommissioning school places where needed.

Vikki Monk-Meyer
June 2019