

Governors' Briefing

1 May 2022

Note from the Chair

Welcome to the start of the Summer Term. After a bit of a break and with lots of news, and as life starts to get back to normal post covid, we thought we would pick up again with our Governors' updates.

In this briefing we will outline some of the proposals in the key government White Paper and Green Paper issued this month, which may affect our pupils.

Everyone will be keen to know about the progress on the new College Building from the school's perspective.

We are always seeking to improve our links with parents, but know you have very busy lives, so we thought we would hold an "Ask the Governors" Teams meeting on line one evening, which will hopefully be more convenient – details to follow.

Parent Governor



We are looking for a second parent governor to join us. You are guaranteed a warm welcome.

Click on the U Tube link <https://youtu.be/sfk-uMR86wU> for a brilliant in-depth interview by Key Stage 5 students with parent governor Matt Stuart. He answers questions on the role of a parent governor and the vital contribution they make to the school.

If you think you might be interested or would just like a chat about the possibility, please contact our Clerk on LRydon@woodlandsmeed.co.uk.

New Government Policy documents which might affect our pupils.

Last month the Government issued two important policy documents. A white paper "Opportunities for all; Great Schools with Great Teachers for your Child" which relates to all schools and a Green Paper "Send Review: right support, right place, right time".

Technically a "white paper is an actual agreed policy document and a green paper is a consultation document. However, as many of the White Paper's proposals are broad proposals at a relatively early stage some commentators have described it as a 'White Paper with Green stripes'.

For the full documents see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/send-review-right-support-right-place-right-time>

Initial outlines of the proposals have been set out in the Appendix to this briefing. However, it will be noted that the SEND Green paper is a **Consultation Document**. The governors intend to make a submission to this consultation and **would like to hear the comments and views from parents**. Please contact us with your thoughts. We would be happy to hold an informal meeting with parents

to discuss the proposals and formulate our response. Please contact me on mwilcock@woodlandsmeed.co.uk with your thoughts and ideas.

New College Building

Everyone was extremely relieved when WSCC eventually signed a Building Contract with ISG for the new College Building (some weeks after the school was dragooned into signing a Development Agreement with the threat of withdrawal of funding).

We will start with some thank yous.



We need to say at the outset how very happy we are with ISG. They have proved to be considerate and efficient contractors working on a very constrained site (although the site manager did tell me they have worked on worse!). They have developed an excellent rapport with the school team and this is working well. They have worked really hard to ensure the inevitable disruption to pupils is kept to a minimum and we hope this will continue as the actual construction work starts shortly.



Thank you to Birchwood Grove School for agreeing to share some of their sports area with our pupils during the construction period, as the old playing field and MUGA are no longer available.



A huge thank you to Adam and his school team. They have repeatedly been provided with literally sheets and sheets of drawings and information (some documents 700pages long) at very short notice, and been required to provide feed back and make decision by return. This has involved them working evenings and during school holidays at the same time as managing running a school during a Covid crisis.

Although the school has not made public adverse comment, they have been working like swans (calm on the top, but paddling like hell underneath) to try to ensure that our pupils receive what they were promised. Thanks to their vigilance, the school identified a number of design decisions/errors which have now been corrected, but which would have had serious consequences for the college.

- The initial design for the hydrotherapy pool was little better than a large paddling pool and not suitable for disabled access. This has now been completely redesigned.
- WSCC refused to provide a calming room for SLD pupils, a serious H&S issue for staff and pupils. The was a redline issue for the school and after some weeks delay this was eventually included.
- The school identified that the ceilings in the classrooms were much lower than had been expected and much lower than those at the school, and as a consequence the hoists essential for use by our wheelchair and mobility limited pupils were inoperable. More weeks' delay ensued before this critical point was accepted by WSCC and the manufacturers will provide adapted hoists which should work as originally intended despite the low ceilings.
- Without notice WSCC changed the size of the two lifts to the first floor. The school pointed out that these were then too small to take any hygiene equipment for PMLD pupils making the first floor completely inaccessible to them. The original size of one lift has now been reinstated.

- Equipment for the outside sports area had been selected from a basic primary school catalogue and was totally unsuitable. Appropriate outdoor exercise equipment has now been agreed.
- Provision for the essential Sensory Room had been completely overlooked. This is currently being designed and agreed.
- Key to being permitted to build on the college playing field was the provision of an All Weather Pitch allowing use throughout the year and with a surface suitable for wheelchair users and those with mobility and stability issues. This was agreed as a Type 4 surface with DoE; Sports England and as part of the planning consent. This was as shown on the Stage 3 drawing approved by the school. Without notice, WSCC changed this to a tarmac surface as an unidentified change on one of 700-page documents forwarded to the school without covering letter or explanation. Extensive discussions have ensued, and we are pleased to report that WSCC have just notified us that this decision has been reviewed and the original specification will be provided.

The school have had to accept that only the basic minimum requirement for the provision of PV panels required under building regulations will be provided. However, the college will have extensive flat roofs and it makes economic sense to arrange for as much PV installation to be carried out at the same time. The school has asked for a quote for the installation of the additional PV which we will raise funds for, and on which we will be reporting in due course.

We are keeping an eye on the specification for the facilities being provided for the new school on the Burgess Hill Northern Arc.

It is extremely irritating to read in press releases referring to the new College as “state of the art”. It is not “state of the art”. The classrooms will be bigger because the present classrooms are too small to meet the standards; there will be new subject specific rooms because this statutorily required accommodation is not currently available as noted by Ofsted. The sports facilities will not be “state of the art”. The sports hall will be the minimum size to comply with statutory design requirements and please see paragraph above for WSCC attempt to downgrade the specification of the All Weather Pitch.

WSCC and F+G Project Managers have repeatedly stated at meetings in response to school requests that only the “minimum basic standards” will be provided. The new building will meet current standards for Send Accommodation, (subject to some derogations) - no more no less. It will be adequate which is a great improvement on the present facilities.



When you are next in college you might want to look at the inter active timeline maintained by students to monitor progress.

The students are also taking the opportunity to expand their Enterprise activities by organising a tuck shop for the construction staff, although following a survey to “meet customer needs”, they were rather surprised by the unhealthy choices of snacks including coca cola and lots and lots of chocolate !

The work during the break to demolish part of one of the portacabin classrooms and the provision of a new small temporary classroom has gone well.

The project is on time and we are very much looking forward to the start of the main construction stage.



- Details of Teams meeting “Ask the Governors” to follow.
- Let us know your thoughts on the SEND Green Paper
- The school website <http://www.woodlandsmeed.co.uk> is full of information about the school, activities and policies.
- A full list of the governors is set out on the school website with our photos, so that if you see us around the school or need to contact us, you will know who we are.

An overview of White Paper on reform of all schools – “Opportunity for all Strong Schools with Great Teachers for your child”.¹

The paper is divided into four chapters:

- An excellent teacher for every child
- Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance
- Targeted support for every child who needs it
- A stronger and fairer school system

The white paper is some 64 pages long but some of the key points include:

Teacher development – The single biggest programme of teacher development ever undertaken in this country, including 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities, the introduction of a specialist qualification for Leading Literacy and a £30,000 starting salary for teachers.

Achievement - 90% of primary school children to achieve the expected standard in Key Stage 2 reading, writing and maths by 2030.² Aims to see the national average GCSE grade in both English Language and maths increase from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030.

Curriculum – The introduction of a new arm’s-length national curriculum body which will create packages of expert-crafted optional, free, adaptable digital curriculum resources for schools to use.³

Uniformity of school hours – All schools will be expected to offer a minimum school week of 32.5 hours by September 2023.⁴

Attendance - New legislation to create new statutory guidance on attendance, including a requirement for every school to publish a clear attendance policy. Legislation to include new rules on recording attendance.

Targeted support – A ‘Parent Pledge’ that the Government, via schools, will identify children who need help and provide targeted support, including small group tuition. The Government has invested £1 billion to establish the National Tutoring Programme and promises to deliver up to six million tutoring packages by 2024.

SEND – A focus on ensuring that pupils with SEND have the same opportunities as their peers. The Government will be consulting on a new professional qualification for new SENCOs and promises to invest £2.6bn in support for high needs in next three years. More detail can be found in the SEND Green Paper released on 29 March 2022.

¹ Acknowledgement to article by Browne Jacobson published 31.3.22

² It is anticipated provision will be made for exceptions for Special Needs

³ Again – specific provision for Special Needs?

⁴ Please see comment from Adam on school hours and liaison with BWG & LM

Inspections - Ofsted will inspect every school by 2025, including the backlog of 'outstanding' schools that haven't been inspected for many years.⁵

Education Endowment Foundation - At least £100m will be made available to put the Education Endowment Foundation on a long-term footing so it can continue to evaluate and spread best practice in education across the country.

"A stronger and fairer school system"

What is now clear is that the Government envisages a move to a fully trust-led system with a single regulatory approach. It is claimed this will drive up education standards through the growth of strong trusts and the establishment of new ones, as there is much to be learned from strong trusts.

By 2030 all children will benefit from being taught in a school in (or in the process of joining) a strong trust. This will help transform underperforming schools and deliver the best possible outcomes for children.

Government will consult on moving schools that have received two consecutive below 'Good' reviews into a trust and on the circumstances in which a good school could request that the regulator agrees to the school moving to a stronger trust.

Government will introduce new powers enabling the Secretary of State to bring maintained schools into the academy system in certain circumstances.

Local authorities will be given legal powers to establish trusts and to request their non-academy schools join a trust, where that is the right approach for local schools. But Free Schools can start as single academy trusts.

Government will avoid converting schools as standalone academies but will consider bids for high-quality free schools to open initially as standalone trusts (although with the expectation that most trusts will serve a minimum of 7,500 pupils/10 schools).

The Department for Education will review how best to hold trusts accountable against a new 'strong' trust definition, focused on the quality and inclusivity of the education they provide, how they improve schools and maintain their local identity, how they protect value for money for the taxpayer and how they develop their workforce (regulatory review expected in May 2022).

£86m will be made available to grow and strengthen trusts over the next three years, with a particular focus on investment in 55 'Education Investment Areas' (and within that, 24 'Priority Education Investment Areas' where outcomes in literacy and numeracy are the poorest). Government will also introduce financial incentives for teachers to work in schools in those areas.

A breakdown of all proposals in the Green Paper on the SEND review⁶

This helpful article sets out all the proposals. Most of the proposals are across the board and appear to apply in the main to mainstream schools. There is little if any mention of the role of Special

⁵ So we can expect ours on or around completion of new building

⁶ Acknowledgement for article to TES magazine

Schools. This lack of inclusion of provision may form the basis of our consultation. However, we will be considering how these will impact on Woodlands Meed and Special School provision.

A single, national SEND and alternative provision (AP) system

Establish new, nationally consistent standards across provision, process and systems for how needs are identified and met at every stage.

Establish new local SEND partnerships across education, health, care and local government to produce a local inclusion plan setting out how each area will meet the national standards.

Review and update the SEND Code of Practice to ensure consistent systems.

Introduce a standardised and digitised EHCP process and template to minimise bureaucracy and deliver consistency.

Support parents and carers to make an informed preference for suitable placements for their child by providing a tailored list of settings, including mainstream, specialist and independent, that are appropriate to meet the child and young person's needs.

Streamline the redress process, including through mandatory mediation, and retaining the tribunal for the most challenging cases.

Support from early years to adulthood

Increase core schools' budgets by £7 billion by 2024-25, compared with 2021-22, as set out in the recent Spending Review.

Consult on the introduction of a new Sendco national professional qualification (NPQ) for school Sendcos and increase the number of staff with an accredited Level 3 Sendco qualification in early years.

Commission analysis to better understand "the support needed from the health workforce by children and young people with SEND need to inform strategic planning".

£2.6 billion over the next three years to deliver new and improve existing specialist and alternative provision.⁷

By 2030, all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools, with special and alternative provision part of a strong multi-academy trust.

Fund more than 10,000 additional respite placements and spend £82 million to create a network of family hubs.

Introduce common transfer files to improve transitions to further education.

Invest £18 million in the supported internships programme over the next three years.

Pilot the rollout of adjustment passports to prepare young people with SEND for employment.

Alternative provision (AP)

Make alternative provision an integral part of local SEND systems and require new local SEND partnerships to plan and deliver an alternative provision service focused on early intervention.

⁷ Available for WM ?

Give alternative provision schools funding stability by requiring local authorities to create and distribute an alternative provision-specific budget.

Build system capacity through plans for all alternative provision schools to be in a strong multi-academy trust, or have plans to join one, and open new alternative provision free schools where they are most needed.

Develop a bespoke performance framework for alternative provision schools, setting robust standards focused on children and young people's progress and re-integration into mainstream or post-16 education.

Launch a call for evidence on the use of unregistered provision before the summer to investigate existing practice.

System roles, funding and accountability

Deliver clarity in roles and responsibilities with every partner across education, health, care and local government having a clear role to play, and being equipped with the levers to fulfil their responsibilities.

Equip the DfE's new "regions group" to hold local authorities and MATs to account for delivery including through new funding agreements between local government and the department for high-needs funding.

Introduce a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for funding, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the national standards.

Introduce new inclusion dashboards for 0-25 provision, offering a picture of system performance at a national and local level across education, health and care.

Work with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on their plan to deliver an updated local area SEND inspection framework, with clear accountability in place showing where agencies can improve.

"Delivering change for children and families"

Stabilise local SEND systems by investing an additional £300 million through the 'safety valve' programme' and £85 million in the Delivering Better Value programme, over the next three years, to support local authorities with the biggest deficits.

Support delivery through a £70 million SEND and alternative provision change programme to test and refine key proposals.

Establish a new National SEND Delivery Board, bringing together relevant government departments and partners, to hold partners to account for delivery.

Publish a national SEND and AP delivery plan, setting out the government's response to the public consultation.

