

Report of the Interim Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be held on 10 April 2019

Subject:

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District Pupil Referral Unit

Summary statement:

Local Authorities are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who - because of illness or other reasons - would not receive suitable education without such provision. Full-time education for excluded pupils must begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion. Local Authority maintained provision for this purpose is known as a Pupil Referral Unit. In Bradford, District PRU currently provides places for young people who are permanently excluded and those who are at risk of permanent exclusion and are referred to the PRU through the Bradford Behaviour and Attendance Collaboratives (BACS) established in 2007.

District PRU was first established as a virtual school in 2008 and it opened on a fixed site at Anerley Street in September 2014. It was inspected in March 2017 and judged to be Inadequate and placed into Special Measures; this report outlines the progress made since the previous report to the committee in November 2018.

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Portfolio:

Employment, Education and Skills

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

This report is for information about District Pupil Referral Unit based on the Anerley Street site and known by students and staff as the Anerley Street Vocational Centre. District PRU was placed into Special Measures in March 2017 and has had one Section 8 monitoring visit by Ofsted in November 2017 due to safeguarding concerns and its first monitoring inspection since the PRU was placed into Special Measures in December 2018.

Admissions to the District PRU is not through the schools admissions process; the Local Authority must make provision for those pupils who are permanently excluded and there are also places which are commissioned from the Behaviour and Attendance Collaboratives (BACs) for young people who are at a high risk of exclusion; there are also a small number of young people who have Education Health and Care Plans. Unless a young person is permanently excluded then they are dual registered with the school that made the referral.

2. BACKGROUND - DISTRICT PRU

- 2.1 District PRU was originally set up in 2008 as a 'Virtual school/provision' commissioning places for young people who could not access mainstream provision and for those who were permanently excluded. In September 2014 it opened at a fixed site on Anerley Street and was funded for up to 160 places.
- 2.2 District PRU – as a 'virtual provision' commissioned places from over 20 different providers and on multiple sites including Independent schools and other Alternative Providers such as Bradford College, Keighley College, Leeds City College as well as JAMES, Prism, Ummid and All Star Entertainment.
- 2.3 It was previously inspected in January 2013 and was judged to be good overall and in all areas. In March 2017 it was inspected and found to be inadequate and requiring Special Measures to improve and subsequently given an academy order. See the report here <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/22/135732>
- 2.4 An Ofsted monitoring visit took place in November 2017 as Her Majesties Chief Inspector (HMCI) was concerned about safeguarding; safeguarding was judged to be ineffective.
- 2.5 There have been a number of further reports and audits, some commissioned by the Management Committee and some the LA, which continued to raise serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, teaching and learning and leadership and management. As a result of these, a number of significant changes have taken place which have led to improvements in the quality of education and learning at District PRU.
- 2.6 From April 2019 the number of places at District PRU is being reduced to 80 and these are for year 10 and 11 students. These are at Anerley Street and include 25 places at Keighley College as these partnership arrangements have been effective and continue to be so.

- 2.7 Since October 2017 there have been changes to the Management Committee who have challenged the leadership of the PRU, commissioned external consultancy support to mentor leaders, commissioned a safeguarding review, and sought to clarify the finances of the PRU and budgetary controls.
- 2.8 The Local Authority wrote formally in early June 2018, using the School Staffing Regulations 2009/2680 to the management committee of the District PRU to ask them to take urgent action to tackle the leadership and management concerns.
- 2.9 As a result of this, the management committee have taken a number of actions to make rapid improvements to the leadership and management of the PRU including:
- The appointment of an interim acting Headteacher;
 - An investigation into the former leadership and management of the PRU
 - The two co- Headteachers resigned in December 2018 and a recruitment process has now been planned to recruit a permanent Headteacher;
 - Securing additional leadership capacity through an external consultant.
- 2.10 An LA Scrutiny committee was set up in June 2018 to hold the leaders of the PRU and the management committee and the LA to account, for making rapid improvements to the provision; this meets regularly.
- 2.11 An announcement was made in late November 2018 by the Regional Schools Commissioner after a decision made by the Headteacher Board about the academisation of District PRU. The sponsor is Exceed Academy Trust which is now also the sponsor of the new Bradford AP Academy – Central, the former Central PRU. The provisional date for the conversion to an AP Academy is 1st September 2019. Exceed Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is currently undertaking its process of due diligence as part of the academisation process of District PRU - the Local Authority is working closely with Exceed and District PRU to ensure a smooth transition and to secure a permanent Headteacher.
- 2.12 Once a maintained school has converted to become a sponsored academy inspection takes place within three years and usually in their third year of operation.
- 2.13 As a result of a number of significant changes in District PRU since summer 2018, which not only include changes in leadership and management and governance, but also safeguarding, staffing structures, the curriculum, the use of teachers to teach to their specialisms, more effective support and challenge from the Local Authority, the recent monitoring inspection in December 2018 judged that leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of Special Measures.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Bradford Council received £65.88m High Needs Block (HNB) funding within our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocation in 2018/19. Bradford Council currently funds places at the PRUs from this HNB allocation at £10,000 a place.

- 4.2 The Local Authority will commission up to 50 places for secondary aged pupils who are permanently excluded. These places will be funded from the High Needs Block and we will also commission up to 80 places for secondary aged pupils on behalf of schools for dual registered pupils (fixed term exclusions). These will be short-term 'turn around places' intended to reintegrate students back into school. The Local Authority is currently working in partnership with the Central and District PRUs, Exceed Academy Trust and the BACs to develop the arrangements for admissions and the use of these places for the 2019/20 financial year.
- 4.4 In light of the pressures on the High Needs Block we are reviewing future funding arrangements for the dual-registered places commissioned on behalf of schools. In transition, up to the end of the 2019/20 academic year, the place element (£10,000) will be paid for from the HNB for student to access a place for up to one term only, with the referring school paying the top up element of funding. It is intended that, from September 2020, the cost of these 80 places will be fully met by schools without any contribution from the High Needs Block.
- 4.5 As the commissioner of these AP places, the Local Authority will regularly review the quality of provision and assess the outcomes to ensure children and young people's needs are met.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Not applicable – this report is for information only

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

No legal issues arising.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Not applicable – this report is for information only

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Not applicable

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Not applicable

7.6 TRADE UNION

Not applicable

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

For information for those ward members where District PRU is located - in Bowling and Barkerend

**7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS
(for reports to Area Committees only)**

Not applicable

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

The Local Authority would always challenge any school which permanently excludes a Looked After Child.

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

Not applicable

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

This report is for information only

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That a further update on the progress of the academisation of District PRU be presented to the Committee in September 2019.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – pupil data District PRU.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None