

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: Special Schools & Unit Provision 2014/15

DATE: 12th March 2014

RECIPIENT: Schools Forum

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

1. This paper outlines the proposals for the funding for Special schools, units in maintained schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) from April 2014.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

2. Special Schools, Special Free Schools and Special Units

The local authority has identified, based on current profile, the number of places required at the five Special schools, four Special units, one Free school and the Compass School in the 2014/15 financial year.

School	Places April 2014	Places Sept 2014
Springwell School	96	96
Great Oaks School	145	162
The Cedar School	70	70
The Polygon School	50	50
Vermont School	28	28
Rosewood School	26	26
Tanners Brook Primary School	14	14
Redbridge Community School	7	7
Bitterne Park School	5	5
Compass School	160	160
Total	601	618

3. It is planned to expand Great Oaks special school by 17 places in September 2014 at a cost of £182,000 for the part year.
4. Special schools, Special Free Schools and maintained schools with a special unit are funded on the basis of a flat £10,000 per place plus a per pupil top-up. Schools only receive top-up funding for the actual numbers of pupils in their school.
5. Because Special schools and units are partially funded on the basis of pupil numbers, it is proposed to operate a vacancy factor which would increase a school's top-up funding to compensate for low numbers in the autumn term. This allows some provision for empty places available for placing pupils during the financial year. A vacancy factor for both Vermont School and Cedar School has been set and is reflected in the rates detailed in Appendix 1.
6. While there is not a Minimum Funding Guarantee for Special school and units, there is a requirement that the top-up element of the funding is set at such a level that, if all the places were filled and the pupils came from the maintaining authority, the school's budget would reduce by no more than 1.5%.

BRIEFING PAPER

7. Pupil Referral Unit – Compass School

The PRU will be funded for 160 places. Each place will attract a base level of funding of £8,000 from the High Needs Block. Top-up funding per pupil will be paid by the commissioner of the place (either the local authority or a school) on the basis of three place types – Band 1, 2 and 3. It should be noted that for Higher Needs Pupils, that would otherwise require placement within a special school setting, top up funding will be paid on the basis of the Polygon top up rates.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

Appendix 1 2014/15 Special School and Unit Provision – Top Up Rates

Further Information Available From:

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