

Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Interim Director of Education

Report to:	Lincolnshire Schools' Forum
Date:	10 October 2019
Subject:	Alternative Provision Arrangements

Summary:

The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of Lincolnshire's current alternative provision arrangements.

Recommendation(s):

The Schools' Forum is to note the content of the report.

Background

In the years leading up to September 2017, the Local Authority's commissioned alternative provision was reserved for 6th day provision following a permanent exclusion. However, the extremely high rate of permanent exclusion from Lincolnshire schools, alongside the destabilizing impact of that on the AP settings themselves (The former *Teaching and Learning Centre* centres), necessitated a strategic change of direction. Subsequently, the Lincolnshire Ladder of Intervention was introduced. This aimed to stem the rising tide of permanent exclusion through a focus on early intervention and prevention. Schools' Forum agreed to fund additional resource – the Behavioural Outreach Support Service (BOSS) – with commissioned AP places also made available to schools as a resource for them to access *prior* to permanent exclusion, should BOSS intervention prove insufficient.

The steps of the Ladder alluded to above are now well established across the county with their impact reviewed as part of this paper. Key questions include whether the LA has been able to manage its commissioned AP capacity in a sustainable way, given there are now two routes into AP (permanent exclusion and Ladder referral) and the extent to which AP is delivering positive outcomes for children and young people. These questions are considered in 'Conclusions', below.

It is also important to note by way of background that the AP landscape in Lincolnshire continues to evolve and enrich. Whilst the LA has no contract with the *Acorn Free School*, mainstream schools in the Lincoln area continue to refer pupils for intervention. Both the *Specialist Education Support Network* (SESN) and *Castles Education*, again Lincoln based, have also recently registered as

independent AP schools as has *Good Apple* in Gainsborough. Mainstream headteachers therefore have access to an increased range of legally compliant options, should they wish to make direct (as opposed to Ladder) referrals into AP for pupils at risk of exclusion.

The LA's commissioning arrangements reflect this growth and diversification within the sector. The 252 places that formed the Wellspring Academy Trust / Springwell Lincolnshire commission are now equally divided across four purpose-built free schools, three of which opened during the summer: Springwell Alternative Academy Grantham is located on New Beacon Road, and Springwell Alternative Academy Lincoln, on Macaulay Drive. The third centre is a refurbishment of the old Monk's Dyke Tennyson building in Mablethorpe with the delayed Spalding centre also a refurbishment. Formerly the South Holland Post 16 Centre, Spalding Alternative Academy is due to open in December 2019.

These state-of-the-art schools have been designed according to nurture principles. Each provides a therapy room, a sensory room, a hygiene room, fitness suite, kitchen, parents' room, hall and multi-use games area, alongside classrooms. Large outside spaces also significantly enhance both the therapeutic nature of the provisions and the range of activities available to pupils.

With regard to capacity, current pupil numbers do highlight a geographical challenge, however. This will impact on the distances pupils have to travel and of course on transport costs if not mitigated in the near future. It is already the case that LN6 (Hykham address) pupils travel to Grantham with the numbers below highlighting a clear need for additional capacity within Lincoln.

Springwell Alternative Academy FS Lincoln

KS Capacity		Number on roll	Places
1-2	24	17	7
3	16	12	4
4	23	22	1
Total	63	51	12

Springwell Alternative Academy FS Mablethorpe

KS Capacity		Number on roll	Places
1-2	16	9	7
3	24	6	18
4	23	15	8
Total	63	30	33

Springwell Alternative Academy FS Grantham

KS Capacity		Number on roll	Places
1-2	16	15	1
3	23	11	12
4	24	21	3
Total	63	47	16

Springwell Alternative Academy FS Spalding (Boston)

KS Capacity		Number on roll	Places
1-2	24	12	12
3	15	11	4
4	24	15	9
Total	63	38	25

There is, however, potential to resolve this issue through the LA's second AP partner, *Build a Future*. This service commenced in October 2018, Schools' Forum having agreed to invest in a specifically (extended) KS4 and vocational pathway for disaffected adolescents. The commission guarantees provision for 75 'baseline' pupil places with scope for 50 additional pupil places, at a reduced rate. Clearly, with little by way of capacity for KS4 pupils in any of the Springwell centres, even at the start of the year, BaF will be the destination for the vast majority of KS4 pupils. More than this, though, it does provide potential for increased capacity where that is most needed, in the Lincoln area. Currently, BaF operates out of West Ashby (Horncastle) and Boston, Hubbert's Bridge. However, the provider is actively seeking a third site in the Lincoln area which, if secured, will alleviate the geographical/transport challenges just flagged. Property are supporting in this endeavour.

Between them, Springwell Lincolnshire and BaF enable the LA to deliver its statutory duty to provide full-time education on the sixth day following a permanent exclusion. In addition, they deliver the third step of the Ladder, admitting pupils through the process outlined in the extract from the Ladder, below. Neither provider accepts direct referrals from schools.

Extract from the Ladder: step 3

Statutory Guidance	School Actions
<p>"Schools should consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required."</p>	<p>Refer for intervention placement in alternative provision (AP), noting that referrals must be received by PRT@lincolnshire.go.uk on the Thursday of the week before the fortnightly panel meetings and accompanied by a BOSS report.</p> <p>Upon successful referral of a pupil KS1-3, attend admission meeting at the AP so that the intervention can be planned with roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders confirmed.</p> <p>Attend review meetings and work with the provider, BOSS and the PRT to ensure successful reintegration into school following intervention. A re-referral to BOSS may be made at this point.</p> <p>KS4 pupils will not usually return to mainstream but will instead follow an alternative pathway within the AP for some or all of the week. (Options and costs outlined in Section 5).</p> <p>Referrals for pupils with EHCPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School refers to panel for pupil with EHCP in just the same way as non-EHCP pupil - PRT informs SEND caseworker of this and invites to the panel - If referral is successful (Ladder has been followed) school is advised to convene an Annual Review during the second half of the intervention placement - Caseworker attends that AR to agree whether the plan needs to be amended

The Ladder itself evolves every year, as the policy context shifts and as evidence from the field suggests improvements to it. For example, a significant and at the time somewhat controversial amendment was introduced for the year 2018-19, when the option of single-registered placement into AP, via the Ladder, was removed. This was necessary to ensure that LA processes are compliant with Ofsted's definition of off-rolling, as published in September 2018:

Ofsted's definition of 'off-rolling'

The practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil. Off-rolling in these circumstances is a form of 'gaming'.

There are many reasons why a school might remove a pupil from the school roll, such as when a pupil moves house or a parent decides (without coercion from the school) to home educate their child. This is not off-rolling.

If a school removes a pupil from the roll due to a formal permanent exclusion and follows the proper processes, this is not off-rolling.

Though it does continue in some parts of the country, the LA's legal advice was that single registration within AP would not pass Ofsted's off-rolling test because it is clearly in the best interests of the pupil for the home school to remain invested in outcomes, to undertake quality assurance, simply to stay in touch. Dual registration achieves this and all pupils referred via the Ladder now remain dual registered with their mainstream schools.

Conclusion

Whilst there is always scope for further progress, exclusion data over recent years confirms that the LA's AP arrangements have played a critical role in reducing permanent exclusion and with that the risk to the high needs block and the sustainability of the Ladder.

PX Data				
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Primary	47	26	26	18
Secondary	105	111	93	102
Special	8	3	0	2
Total	160	140	119	122

Most notable is the fact that the primary sector has delivered a 62% decrease in permanent exclusion since 2015/16, against a national context which has seen the primary rate increase for the first time ever, and the rate for five year olds double since 2016/17.

Whilst the data does not suggest any such step-change within the secondary sector, the permanent exclusion rate, now 0.18%, is below the national average of 0.20% and Lincolnshire is out-performing all of its statistical neighbours bar one (Nottinghamshire) on this measure. The fact that the rising national tide of permanent exclusion has not been replicated here has been of critical importance in enabling the intervention/alternative pathway offer to continue. (Clearly, the LA's priority must be to fulfil its statutory duty to deliver 6th day provision and there is no budget to increase AP capacity if the settings were to reach capacity through permanent exclusion.)

The figures below confirm that Headteachers are making good use of the intervention offer, with less than half of the total AP cohort permanently excluded in 17/18 and 18/19.

	16/17	17/18	18/19
Intervention Placement	99	88	100
Alternate Pathway	N/A	54	46
PX	140	119	122
% of total PX	59	46	45

Lincolnshire's AP arrangements do then actively promote a revolving door service through which pupils are reintegrated back into their mainstream schools, where educational outcomes are optimised, post intervention.

The reintegration rate of permanently excluded pupils back into mainstream schools, on the other hand, remains a significant challenge, despite the fact that through CHIPS (Collaborative Headteacher Inclusion Panels) there is now a more streamlined mechanism to facilitate this process.

16/17 – 18 (72% success)

Successful – 13
 Unsuccessful – 4
 Move OOC - 1

17/18 – 19 (57% success)

Successful – 11
 Unsuccessful – 7
 Moved OOC - 1

18/19 – 13 (33% success)

Successful – 3
 Unsuccessful – 6
 On-going - 4

The more common route out of AP for KS1-3 pupils is into SEMH special school, which is indicative of what would seem to be the increasing complexity of this cohort.

In relation to the quality of Lincolnshire's commissioned AP provision, we have evidence that the offer for our disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils is stronger now than it has been in many years, and that it is improving. *Build a Future* was judged Good by Ofsted in the March 2019, following a three day inspection, with key strengths identified as follows:

- **Pupils are safe** – Pupils learn about risks to which they may be exposed, including sexual or criminal exploitation, extremism and online abuse.
- **Leadership** - Senior leaders have excellent knowledge and understanding of pupils' emotional and social needs. They have established an ethos of cooperation and mutual respect with pupils.
- **Teaching is good** - Pupils with previously negative attitudes to education, respond positively to good teaching and begin to close gaps in their learning
- **Tracking progression** - Staff assess pupils' starting points accurately and check regularly on pupils' progress with their learning. Pupils make good progress towards suitable external examinations.
- **Curriculum** - The curriculum provides an effective balance between academic subjects, vocational learning and pupils' personal development.

Attainment headlines from the summer, BaF's first as an LA partner, include:

- Whole School Pass Rate 2018/19 = 56%
- Pupil Premium average pass rate = 61%
- 66.66% achieved more than 40% pass rate
- 57.14% achieved more than 50% pass rate
- 38.09% achieved more than 60% pass rate
- Maths - 84% pass rate
- English Reading - 63% pass rate
- Carpentry 80% pass rate
- Vocational - 65% pass rate
- Catering - 69% pass rate
- On average pupils were entered for 6 subjects
- Horticulture has been developed 2018/19 will be expanded in 2019/20 - the impact on pupil behaviour was instant with more challenging learners engaging into the subject and becoming more focused across the whole curriculum.
- Curriculum offer is being expanded in 2019/20 with developments directly informed by pupils - this will include media, music and health and social care.

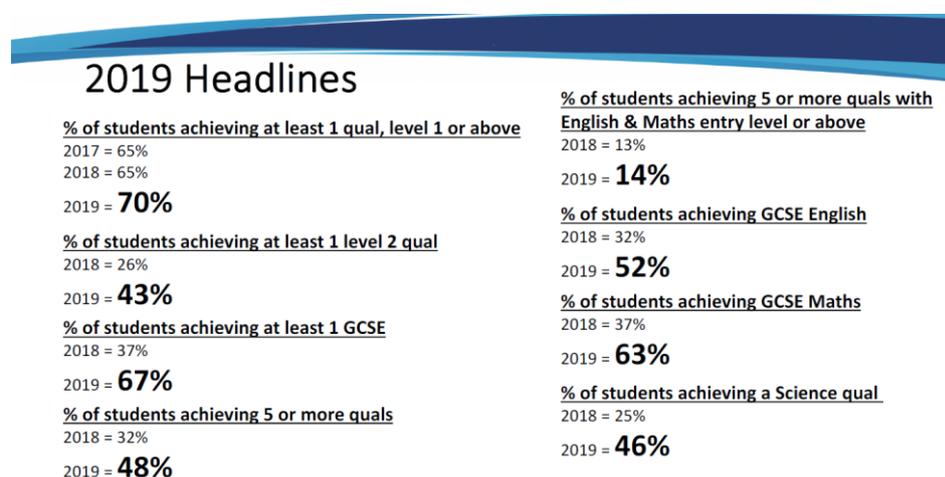
Post 16 destinations for the 2018/19 Yr 11 cohort were as follows:

- 94.6% progressed onto FE/ College

- 62.2% progressed onto Level 1 courses
- 24.3% progressed onto Level 2 courses
- Destinations range from health and social care, motor vehicle, carpentry, plumbing, and bricklaying to engineering, catering, media and sport.

The Springwell Free Schools are due for Ofsted inspection during the course of this academic year. There will be four separate inspections, each school having its own URN. However, quality assurance is undertaken both by LA officers and by referring schools and through representatives from CHIPS. Moreover, the oversight of the DfE free school team is robust with a programme of monthly visits already underway.

Headline data from the past two years points to significant progress on all of the key measures.



- July 2019 – 90% had offers for a post 16 destination
- Sept 2019 – 68% confirmed by the post 16 providers that the learners had started and engaging
- 24% - still awaiting response from post 16 providers.

It is possible to conclude, then, that Lincolnshire's AP arrangements are increasingly effective. We must look to further improve pupil outcomes, and resolve the Lincoln capacity issue, but the system introduced three years ago is fit for purpose.

Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out??

Yes

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

This was undertaken in 2017, when the current arrangements were introduced. Quality assurance of the AP provisions is regular and ongoing. It is undertaken by both AP officers and Headteacher representatives (reports available from LA Head of Inclusion)

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