

29th January 2024

Report for Scrutiny Committee

Redundancies and staffing

- Thirteen staff redundancies took place on 31st December.
- Two staff members left and were not replaced.
- One staff member was offered a post in the structure but resigned.
- One staff member's redundancy has been delayed as they have taken up a maternity cover post at The Grove Nursery School.
- We have reduced the staff team by sixteen posts.
- We have initially reduced our pupil numbers and closed two classrooms.
- We have reduced the 3-5's places from 60 children per session per room to 39 children per session per room. This is a manageable number of children to have in the space.

Our capacity to support children with SEN/D has been greatly reduced. At the moment we are transitioning into the new structure, and have needed to be very cautious regarding January admissions. This is because we have identified that starting new children in January whilst getting used to a new staffing structure has risks around safety. There are a number of families who really want to attend Kintore Way who are dissatisfied that a place has not yet been offered.

SEN/D- intentions and actions to date

There has been acknowledgement from officers that Southwark need to develop an Early Years Strategy for children with SEND. A SEND Early Years and Inclusion Planning Group has been created and two meetings have been held. At the initial meeting there was a discussion about the need to plan ahead for children who have been identified by health as having additional needs.

Anna Chiva, Assistant Director for SEN/D visited Kintore Way in December and a further meeting was held online. We looked at the children with high levels of need currently at Kintore Way and also the waiting list for places. Anna saw evidence of professionals recommending Kintore Way to parents/carers as well as an example of a primary school advising a parent that Kintore Way would be a better learning environment for their child.

A proposal for additional funding was made after the identification of a number of children with complex needs who would require an Education Health and Care plan in the future. This

funding is to enable us to put provision in place for children with complex needs, as part of high quality early intervention. We were unable to take further action until we received written confirmation of this funding offer. This is due to previous experience where the school lost out due to inconsistent communication around funding conditions and amounts. A written agreement was received on 23rd January and a discussion to finalise the agreement took place on 29th January. We are now in a position to make arrangements to provide additional support for identified children.

We have a waiting list for children with SEN/D and the key question is- 'If children cannot attend Kintore Way then where do the children go to access their entitlement?' There does not appear to be any alternative. The school are receiving supportive letters from Health Visitors acting on behalf of parents who put forward the case that Kintore Way is the best place for a particular child to attend. As a result, it is personally and professionally, very difficult to tell families that the school cannot offer their child a place.

The Early Years Inclusion Planning Group is covering a number of issues raised and one of those is to look at sufficiency planning and I hope that this will help ensure that there are nursery places for children identified by health professionals as requiring additional support. The group is also looking at funding.

Budget Update

We have received a cash advance to help cover redundancy costs and be able to pay staff salaries.

We are currently trying to create a deficit recovery plan to show that we can come out of deficit and pay back the money we owe over a 5 year period. The DFE have provided Southwark with additional funding to support schools in deficit. If we can demonstrate that this is achievable then we can access additional funding that has been provided by the LA. We have to submit a deficit recovery plan by 31st Jan, and if successful we will receive a payment of £175,774 on 21st February 2024.

I do feel that there has been a real recognition of the work that needs to be done and that there is a positive view that better systems can be in place in the future that will benefit nursery aged children with additional needs