

13.06.2017

Dear Parent/Carer

Thanks to all who attended our 16+ meeting at Woodhouse Learning. I thought the meeting was extremely positive and I know you were encouraged by our response to the current 16+ Leeds funding situation. As promised, this is a summary of the main points discussed.

I briefly outlined how we are working collaboratively with Leeds to come up with the right solution for all our 16+ learners.

Leeds LA have recently provided us with additional funds to support our 16+ provision, which are very welcome. As I explained at the meeting, the Governing body met on 11.5.17 and decided to defer any decision on making any changes to our 16+ provision without extensive consultation.

We will continue to work with you and the LA to ensure through the consultation, that all our young people with SEND at 16+ have access to high-quality learning and packages of alternative support.

I am encouraged by the conversations I have had with Senior Officers of the LA recently and note their commitment and ambition to ensure:

- All young people with SEND to achieve their potential and be as independent as possible.
- The starting point for each young person is based on an individual assessment of their needs, including preparation for adulthood.
- The Leeds approach will be grounded in strong collaboration between SILC principals, the governing body, Local Authority and key partners across health, care and the voluntary sector.
- There will be a new and defined offer for September 2018.

Crucially, Leeds LA have now committed to undertaking a full review of the High Needs Block which funds provision for children with SEND. This will start in June and be complete by September 2017. This is a significant action point and will, I hope, provide child friendly Leeds the funding source to support a tiered approach to post 16 provision for the most vulnerable in the city.

At the meeting Chris Walton, our vocational consultant, outlined aspects of our 16+ offer, with a particular emphasis on the WeCanDoCo enterprise initiative.

We also welcomed the opportunity to speak to you regarding your thoughts on appropriate programmes and preparation for adulthood for your son/daughter. The four initial questions shared at the meeting will form the basis of ongoing workshops and consultations with you regarding any potential 16+ changes. We are asking parents to describe:

1. What should preparation for adulthood look like?
2. What input would they wish to see from Education/Health/Adult Social Care?
3. How should the education offer (600 guided learning hours) be made? Over three days, over five mornings or five afternoons? What would be the advantages/disadvantages of each of these?
4. The three day education offer (600 guided learning hours) will be teacher led. The two-day enrichment/vocational offer, if offered by West Oaks, would be led by associate staff. Would this raise any issues for you? What would you expect the health/social care input to look like?

The responses to these questions will help us frame our 16+ offer. It will provide the opportunity for parents to share their thoughts and concerns and support our conversations with other agencies. Thanks to those who have already returned the questionnaire and I look forward to receiving the others in due course. Please email your comments to me at andrew.hodkinson@westoaksschool.co.uk.

We have created a separate 16+ Developments area on our website and we will place updates on here. Copies of letters and the questionnaire can be found on the website. Please let us know if you would like paper copies of any of these documents.

During the meeting, parents asked about our aspirations to deliver provision for learners aged 19-25. At this stage, we are focusing on delivering high quality provision for learners 2-19 and in particular developing a new offer with partners in other agencies for 16+ learners from 2018. The contribution of other partners, e.g. Health and Social Care will be key as we take this forward over the coming year. Parents asked about the timing of the school day in relation to the 16+ offer. There are no plans to make any changes to the timing of the school day however, this would need to be considered as part of the new and defined offer.

Parents expressed their support for the existing provision and the range of opportunities it provides for their children to develop and flourish. Provision will continue to be personalised to meet the needs of individual learners. This will include specific tailored programmes for the more able learners as well as those with complex learning needs. For some students, internships, supported employment may be appropriate.

A follow up meeting with parents/carers is planned for Tuesday July 18th at 4.p.m. at Woodhouse Learning to update you on your collective feedback and from any conversations/meetings with the LA.

Please be re-assured that West Oaks is committed to shaping the appropriate offer based on individual need and will work with all agencies to find the right solution. Should you require any further information or wish to offer any opinions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the School.

Best wishes



Andrew Hodkinson

