



Report to School Organisation Committee 21st July 2004

AGENDA ITEM 4

Title: Highcrest Community School Sixth Form

Date: 21st July 2004

Author: Head of Policy, Performance and Planning

Contact Officer: Stephen Box 01296 382440

Summary Highcrest Community School is designated as an 11-18 school but currently only teaches 11-16 year old pupils. The school wishes to begin to teach sixth form students from September 2005.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee confirm the status of Highcrest Community School as an 11-18 school.

Supporting information:

1. Introduction

1.1 Highcrest Community School was set up as a Fresh Start School following the closure of Hatters Lane School in 2001. The school was designated as an 11-18 school but initially there were no sixth form students. The school is now well established, is operating very successfully and wishes to admit sixth form pupils in September 2005.

1.2 Buckinghamshire County Council policy is for all secondary schools to be 11-18 schools. This arrangement provides for the possibility of continuity throughout the 14-19 phase. Historically few upper schools had sixth forms. The introduction of sixth forms into upper schools has improved retention rates significantly. It also gives pupils at upper schools the same prospect of continuity as those at grammar schools.

1.3 Parents are attracted to schools that can offer continuity of provision through to 18. Teachers are attracted to work in such an environment.

1.4 Highcrest Community School serves an area where the level of educational aspiration is not high. A large number of pupils who leave do not continue in full time learning. Many of the pupils live in areas which are the focus of the work of Aimhigher, an initiative funded via the Higher Education Funding Council and Excellence in Cities. The purpose of this project is to raise the educational aspirations of pupils from areas where participation in higher education has traditionally been low. Highcrest are active partners in this consortium and have been involved in a number of initiatives to encourage the educational ambitions of their pupils.

1.5 Currently the rate of retention among Asian Muslim girls in the area is low. The school is confident that their pastoral care and support systems will be able to retain these girls in learning if they are able to stay in a familiar environment.

2. Quality

2.1 The school was inspected by Ofsted in October 2003. The report described the schools as "good and effective." Leadership and management were rated as very good with the headteacher's leadership receiving an excellent grading. The teaching quality was very good in Key Stage 4 with a higher than average number of lessons rated as good or better. The school's Link Adviser is confident that this high quality of teaching will be evident in a sixth form.

2.2 There are already teachers on the staff who are able to teach sixth formers successfully. As the school balances its staffing for September 2005 it will make the necessary adjustments in staffing levels.

3. Affordability

3.1 Highcrest was described by Ofsted as being good value for money. The school has a Youth Club building on site which is no longer used as a youth centre. This building will provide a social area, office and three teaching areas. Other teaching will infill existing accommodation. There will be some renovation works required but no capital project will be required.

3.2 The numbers of pupils in the school is growing rapidly. The current Year 10 (who will feed into the sixth form in 2005) has 100 pupils. Lower down the school in Year 7 the cohort size is 170.

3.3 The school has surveyed its current Year 10 pupils and has made initial plans for a Year 12 of forty pupils. These plans are for a mixture of Level 2 and Level 3 provision as listed below.

Level 2 Offer

BTEC 1st Business
BTEC 1st Health & Soc Care
GNVQ Performing Arts (with
Cressex School)
GCSE English
GCSE Maths
GCSE Applied Science

Level 3 Offer

BTEC National Business
BTEC National ICT
Advanced Level Art & Design
Advanced Level Product Design
Advanced Level Human Biology
Advanced Level Psychology

The Enrichment programme will contain Football, NVA/YMCA Gym Certificate/Duke of Edinburgh Award, Clait/E-Quals, Mini Enterprise, Key Skills, Citizenship/RE.

3.4 Expected funding levels are £750 for an A level, £550 for a GCSE, £1100 for an applied GCSE, £2200 for BTEC National plus about £700 per student for key skills, tutorial support and enrichment.

3.5 Thus if twenty pupils take two AS levels and one GCSE, ten take a programme of GCSEs and ten take three A levels.

Income will be	40 x £700 = £28 000 (entitlement)
	20 x £2050 = £41 000
	10 x £2200 = £22 000
	10 x £2100 = £21 000

Total income will be approx £112 000

Teaching costs will be approx £3000 for a GCSE and £7000 for an A level, £15000 for a BTEC national.

Thus total teaching cost will be £28 000 for the A levels, £30 000 for BTEC Nationals, £12 000 for GCSEs and £24 000 for BTEC first and £15000 for enrichment.

Total teaching cost will be approx £110 000.

3.6 These figures are inevitably estimates. The numbers of students and the range of courses offered cannot be firmly established at this stage. However these estimates indicate that the proposed provision will not need to be subsidised by other areas of the school's work. However it looks as though the sixth form funding will make very little contribution to the fixed costs of the rest of the school. There will be some developing economies of scale in future years and costs will be reduced by a greater degree of collaborative work.

4. Relationships with other providers

4.1 The school has been working closely with the South Buckinghamshire 14-19 Consortium. This consortium has linked together the provision of 15 schools with the local College of Further Education, the Youth Service and a motor vehicle maintenance trainer. Their role in the consortium has been active- the deputy headteacher sits on the General Purposes Committee.

4.2 The new sixth form would make a distinctive contribution to the post –16 provision in the area. Other providers are willing to support this development and are raising no objections.

5. Resource implications

The school is planning a curriculum that will be funded within the formula funding allocation from the Learning and Skills Council. The teaching will take place in existing accommodation, using staff currently employed at the school. The building formerly use by the Youth Club will be refurbished to provide social accommodation and some teaching space.

6. Legal implications

There are no legal implications

7. Feedback from consultation and Local Member views (if relevant)

The Chair of Governors of the school is a local member. She is highly supportive of this proposal.
