

COMPLETE WOODLANDS MEED

Submission

To

WSCC Children and Young Persons' Select Committee

4th December 2019

Introduction

We are the voice for very special children who are vulnerable and are being seriously failed by WSCC and have been since 2012.

Through this evidence we will highlight to you all how WSCC are NOT honouring their Statutory duties, The Equality Act, The Education Act, WSCC's Best Start in Life and WSCC's own values.

Parents, carers and families feel very let down, anxious and stressed. They do not know how to plan for their children's futures. The Woodlands Meed College building is not suitable for their needs. How can the Council justify such a blatant disregard for these vulnerable children. It is disgraceful.

Every child has a right to an education and needs to have a place to learn that lets them reach their individual potential. WSCC are failing to support that.

WSCC : Best Start in Life

“The children born and being raised in West Sussex are our future – we look to them for a sustainable one. Therefore it is only right that children are at the centre of everything we do. **It is our job to make sure every child in West Sussex reaches their potential.**”

In your own document *ES18(18.19)_Woodlands Meed Design Fees document* in Feb 2019 you state:

“The current Woodlands Meed College buildings have significant suitability issues meaning the College is unable to offer the full curriculum and unable to accommodate the full range of SEND”

In the same document you state:

- o **Unable to meet statutory duty** to deliver secondary **curriculum** in specialist subjects
- o Unable to meet statutory duty to provide **appropriate accommodation (breach of Equality Act 2010)**
- o Failure to discharge a statutory duty in relation to **completion of the new school**
- o Claim against WSCC for **discrimination due to accessibility issues**
- o Unable to extend current planning permissions for **modular units** (due to expire 2019 and 2021)....
- o Unable to treat pupils with level of **dignity** required due to lack of **hygiene/hoist facilities**
- o **Health and safety risks**, increased incidents due to lack of group/timeout spaces....
- o Unable to deliver **essential therapies** on site due to lack of space"

So, how can the pupils at Woodlands Meed reach their potential?

WSCC - have five core values they state are central to successfully achieving their vision and corporate plan priorities:

1. **Proud to be customer-centred** - we put the customer central to everything we do
 - *We do not believe you are doing this for the pupils, parents & carers, Head, Staff & Govs*
2. **Listen and act upon** - we listen to each other and act on what we say.
 - *On 12 Nov, CLC Councillors said they were embarrassed so clearly you are not listening to them and you are most definitely not listening to the pupils, parents & carers, families and community*
3. **Honest and realistic** - we are honest and realistic about what we can achieve.
 - *You approved and allocated £20m after feasibility study and reviews, so why a u turn now*
4. **Trust and support** - we trust and support each other to achieve our goals.
 - *We no longer trust you*
5. **Genuinely valued** - we feel our contribution is valued and our achievements are recognised.
 - *We will only agree with this once you deliver the new college build you have promised us all.*

Meet some of the pupils

1. This is Amy in a Woodlands Meed uniform, unconscious and in a hospital bed.
 - The existing college accommodation increases the likelihood of her having more epileptic seizures. Lack of temperature control at the college means epileptic children are at risk of heat induced seizures.
 - As temporary buildings they have insufficient heating and air conditioning, so are frequently too hot or too cold. For children who do not suffer epilepsy but have sensory processing problems, the conditions which are unpleasant for us are intolerable for them.

2. Amy's learning difficulties, like so many of the other pupils, mean she cannot attend mainstream school.
 - She will not attain GCSE English or Maths. She needs PE, sciences, food tech, DT, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, hydrotherapy and other interventions if she is to continue achieving at all.
 - All these facilities she needs are also typical items of her peers, appearing on their Educational & Health Care Plan.
 - These are the facilities so lacking today at the college site and result in children having to be bussed to the school building, approx. 1 miles way for a number of classes several times a week, resulting in loss of valuable education time.

3. This is Izzy and Tilly
 - I cannot access the college buildings, as my specialist wheel chair will not fit through the doors and the classrooms are not big enough. There are not any hoists to move me about so I cannot leave my chair at all other than when I go to the toilet.
 - The current college does not support me and I do not want to leave Woodlands Meed, my friends and teachers – they know me and I have learnt to trust them. Please help me to stay and avoid being sent out of County at huge cost to the tax payers.
 - I need hydrotherapy but there are no facilities at the college site. I also rely on rebound therapy - this is an exercise therapy which uses a full sized trampoline to provide opportunities for movement, therapeutic exercise and recreation for people across virtually the whole spectrum of special needs. This is not possible at the college site as the required facilities are not present.
 - There is only one wheelchair accessible WC on the whole college site plus another temporary Portakabin hygiene room in the playground. If pupils need to access the one in the playground, they have to go down an outdoor zig zag ramp and get soaked in the rain. The handles either side of the hygiene room toilet are so far apart that they cannot use them to lower themselves onto the toilet, nor push up again (imagine tricep dips with your arms too far apart and the frustration of not being able to have any dignity) and yes you've guessed it the handles can't be moved to fix the problem. That same hygiene room has

no hot water when the pipes freeze in winter, so they cannot even wash their hands!

- Corridors are cramped in places so it is very difficult for pupils in wheelchairs and those with mobility issues to move from class to class.
- Children who need to be in a walking frame cannot fit through doors - they need to be placed upright into a frame for their breathing (sitting in a wheelchair too long doesn't do your breathing any good). They cannot go outside and those needing physio are confined to a small physio room.

4. Message from Mia's dad

"I originally joined the Campaign thinking it was to help the other children in specialist wheelchairs who were not able to attend Woodlands Meed College due to the lack of facilities for their needs. On visiting the College, I soon realised how the conditions would affect Mia and so many of the other children in the future. The teaching staff at the college do an excellent job but under very difficult circumstances. The School site is a perfect flag ship special needs' school, and the children and teaching staff at the College site deserve comparable facilities. As is the case for all parents of children with special needs, finding time to do more than raising their child and working, is difficult, and being part of this campaign has been stressful and very time consuming".

5. Message from Thomas's mum

"Thomas has had a statement since he first started in reception, and we fought to keep him in mainstream education all the while it was practical. He moved to Woodlands Meed in Sept 19 at secondary level, he loves the school and is proud as punch to attend. He is not academic and with Autism and severe speech and language delay would find everyday secondary classes impossible.

Secondary level Speech & language (1 core subject – science) approx. 3000 words required to access this subject on the curriculum. Thomas does not have this many words total. We have always told Thomas that it is about the effort he puts in, not the levels reached. If only WSCC could put the effort in to give our children the education and facilities they deserve.

We want Thomas to be able to reach his full potential, and this could be taken away from him by not having access to a full curriculum. Design Technology, PE, food technology, spacious rooms for continued Speech and Language therapy as Thomas can often find this more stressful and if he was in a small area this would prevent learning.

If the facilities can not be provided to support non academic and life skills that will be vital for his future, I am not sure where he would go. We need to know that his future won't be marred by the lack of facilities to access the curriculum. Tom will not like having to commute back and forth to the school site, for lessons which will disrupt his day and likely prevent his learning; if he can't cope, he will cry and shutdown.

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The social groups in his classes are working well for him at Woodlands Meed and this is very important to him, as it takes him a while to formulate friendships.

Hidden disabilities; to look at him you wouldn't know the struggles he has overcome. Severe hearing loss when he was younger before starting school, and always worked to be the best that he can be!

We will not allow the system to fail him!"

6. These children need basic provisions that are lacking in order to support their Education Health And Care Plans plus afford them the equality and dignity they deserve. They have many different and often complex needs. To reach their potential they need the correct facilities and these temporary buildings you gave them back in 2012 are inadequate.

Conclusion

In Feb 2019 WSCC approved and allocated £20m to finally complete the half built school so please no more reviews, do not back track, do not leave our children in accommodation that was designed to be temporary and is not fit for purpose, which breaches both the equality act and your statutory duty to provide a full education.

We ask and plead that without delay you proceed with the project; just do it!

We implore WSCC to deliver on the promise they made 10 years ago and without delay to get on with the job you started and still have not finished.

These children were born with a lifetime of challenge ahead, yet WSCC are adding to these - currently there appears to be no end in sight and clearly this is not acceptable.

The Complete Woodlands Meed Campaign Team

4th December 2019

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Complete Woodlands Meed School

Izzy will have to leave all her friends and staff due to lack of facilities



Mia is non verbal so I joined the Campaign to be her voice




Parents want provision that allows ALL children to reach their full potential



WSCC go back on plans and show blatant disregard for children who deserve to reach their individual potential



Meet some of the pupils



**This is Amy in a
Woodlands Meed
uniform, unconscious
and in a hospital bed
due to epilepsy**



She will not attain GCSE English or Maths. She needs PE, sciences, food tech, DT, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, hydrotherapy and other interventions if she is to continue achieving at all.



I cannot access the college buildings, as my specialist wheel chair will not fit through the doors and the classrooms are not big enough. I need hoists to move me about the college





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When Mia was born with Microcephaly doctors said she might never walk. This determined little lady thankfully proved the doctors wrong.

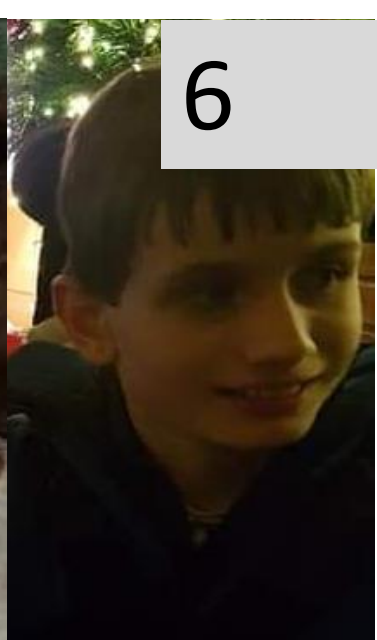




Tom is not academic and with Autism and severe speech & language delay.

He would find mainstream school impossible including SSCs





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