**Children’s Services**

**Early Help and Schools**

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Date: 22nd March 2022

Dear Candidate,

**Rochdale Inclusion Strategy**

In 2019 the Local Authority commissioned an independent review of Inclusion for the borough. The need for review was driven by the following:

* The need to further reduce pupil exclusion rates
* Increasing numbers of pupils at SEN Support and with an EHCP
* Greater access needed to specialist services and expertise
* Reported increase in the level of children’s needs on entry to Reception
* Increase in children and young people moving into the borough

The main concern of the borough, schools and partners that the provision across the borough was failing to meet the needs of some of Rochdale’s most vulnerable children and young people.

With an increase in pupil numbers across the borough in addition to significant pressure on places within the pupil referral service and special schools, the Local Authority identified a need to ensure sufficiency and appropriateness of provision for the borough’s children and young people to meet current and future pupil need.

The independent review advised six recommendations for the borough in March 2020;

1. Agree a shared view of inclusion and how to secure improved outcomes, drawing on a stronger evidence base for successful inclusive practice
2. Define and agree the level of complexity mainstream schools should manage and enable additional needs to be identified and supported early
3. Adopt a nurture approach across all schools to improve outcomes for pupils with a range of social, emotional and communication needs
4. Redefine the role of Brownhill Learning Community to work flexibly with schools to reduce the incidence of exclusions and ensure pupils at risk of exclusion are supported early through preventative interventions
5. Develop a continuum of staged specialist provision informed by a specialist place planning process that draws on regularly updated information on demand trends

Whilst the onset of the pandemic initially stalled the progress made towards the six recommendations, the local system is demonstrating an ambition and energy to effect change in this area. There is a shared, moral and urgent imperative to address the significant concerns relating to outcomes for ‘vulnerable’ learners. The local system has identified that support for ‘vulnerable;’ students is the highest priority and we are seeking to give this group the best possible life chances.

The appointment of an interim head teacher provides the governors, the LA, the school system and key stakeholders with the opportunity to determine the future provision of education and offer from Brownhill Learning Community to ensure sufficiency and provision matched to current and future pupil need across the borough. The interim Head teacher will have a key role in helping to inform and shape future provision delivered through the Brownhill Learning Community, in addition to supporting the further development of borough wide effective inclusion for all students.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Barratt

Head of Schools