

Full statutory proposal information for the closure of Homewood College community special school

In accordance with section 15 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 Brighton and Hove City Council proposes to close Homewood College with effect from 31st December 2024.

The name and contact address of the local authority publishing the proposals:

Brighton & Hove City Council

Hove Town Hall

Norton Road

Hove

BN3 3BG

schoolorganisation@brighton-hove.gov.uk

School details:

Homewood College

27 Queensdown School Road

Brighton

BN1 7LA

Homewood College is a community special school which is registered for young people aged 11-16 with complex needs. There are currently no registered pupils at the school.

Implementation plan:

It is proposed to close Homewood College on 31 December 2024. As of 31 August 2024, there are no pupils registered at the school and no staff employed at the school.

Reasons for Closure

Homewood College is a community special school for secondary aged pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. All pupils who attended the school had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The school received an inadequate judgement following an Ofsted inspection in December 2021 and has been subject to 'special measures' over the 3 years since.

It has received four monitoring visits since the inspection in December 2021 and remains inadequate.

The school is subject to an Academy Order dated 3 February 2022, but no Academy Trust has been identified by the Department for Education to sponsor the school.

The school's end of year budget position in the 2022/23 financial year was a cumulative overspend of £343,000. The final outturn position for the 2023/24

financial year is a cumulative overspend of £709,000, meaning the deficit increased by £366,000 in 2023/24. As the deficit is cumulative and will be impacted by the number of pupils attending the school, it will have continued to escalate unless action was taken. The school's funding comes from the High Needs Block allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant. This block is currently under pressure with increasing costs in a number of areas.

Despite the efforts that have been made over the last two years to improve the provision by school leaders and staff working with Council services, the problems facing the school were complex and long-standing and the quality of education at the school, as well as attendance by pupils, was declining.

With the support of the Department for Education's Regional Director for South-East, the Beckmead Academy Trust offered support to the leadership of the school. However, the Trust's support was only short-term and it was not in a position to offer permanent sponsorship to the school.

There have been longstanding concerns about pupil attendance at the school and for those that were attending, the quality of education was unsatisfactory and outcomes for pupils have not been good enough.

Following a staff consultation, discussions with the Department for Education and communications with parents involved the Council decided to cease commissioning any places at the school from the end of the 2023/24 academic year.

All staff were subject to a formal consultation and all employment was ceased at the school by 31 August 2024.

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

Brighton & Hove City Council were the only commissioner of places at Homewood College.

The table below shows the numbers of commissioned places for the last 5 academic years, plus how many children were allocated to Homewood at the September of each of those years.

Academic Year	HWC Commissioned Places	How many places allocated at the start of the academic year
19/20	45	43
20/21	46	47
21/22	50	45
22/23	40	34
23/24	50	36

Displaced Pupils

The Council has moved Homewood College pupils to higher quality provision from the beginning of the autumn term 2024. The Council has carried out annual reviews of the provision for all pupils at the school and has discussed alternative placements with families.

For the large majority of pupils now in Key Stage 4 from September 2024, they are placed at a new provision opened at St George's House in Dyke Road. This site is a building formerly used by the Pupil Referral Unit which has been unoccupied since July 2023. It has been refurbished to allow a cohort of pupils to join in September 2024. This is a facility for Key Stage 4 pupils with SEMH, focused on preparation for adulthood, transition to the next phase of education, employment or training. The facility provides a programme of on-site education and alternative provision with third party providers, individually tailored to the interests and aptitudes of pupils. There will also be a strong focus on building relationships with parents and carers and working together with families to ensure improved attendance and positive outcomes

The majority of Key Stage 3 pupils are now attending the Pupil Referral Unit at Connaught Road. This includes children joining year 7 in September 2024, who were previously likely to be allocated a place at Homewood College.

All displaced children have Education, Health and Care Plans and therefore their provision has been discussed with their parents/carers in detail.

Impact on the community

The Council does not underestimate the impact of this change on the pupils previously at the school, whose circumstances may already make them vulnerable.

The Council recognises the school serves disadvantaged families and therefore professional support, from the support services such as Educational Psychology has been in place to facilitate the movement of those pupils to different settings and minimise the impact of change upon them.

The Council also recognises the impact on those adults previously employed at the school. Support has been offered and where possible staff have been redeployed into other roles in the city.

Rural Primary School

These proposals do not relate to a rural primary school.

Balance of denominational provision

These proposed do not relate to a school with denominational provision.

Maintained nursery schools

These proposals do not relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school.

Sixth form provision

These proposals do not relate to the discontinuance of sixth form education.

Special educational needs provision

Supporting those with identified SEMH needs is a vital and growing area of support to children and young people in the city.

Homewood College has been a part of the city's response for these children, alongside, where appropriate, provision at the Pupil Referral Unit, support in mainstream schools, support in other special schools and via the use of Alternative Provision.

A report on "Social, Emotional and Mental Health Educational Provision" was accepted at Cabinet on 27 June 2024 which detailed current and forecast SEMH need in the city. It also detailed actions being taken to respond to this need, aligned to the Government's SEND and AP Change Programme, which the city is part of.

Children who were attending Homewood and remain in statutory education, and those that would have typically been allocated a place at Homewood for September 2024 have been provided with suitable placements.

These placements and the longer term planning for SEMH was covered in the cabinet paper, but summarised here:

- **Key Stage 3 (24 places):** The PRU has expanded to provide 12 places for Year 7 SEMH pupils for September 2024 and a further 12 in September 2025. The intention is to develop a two-year middle school model for Year 7's and 8's based upon a primary school model. This will provide 24 places in total over two years and will help support those children with SEMH needs who find the transition from primary to secondary particularly challenging.
- **Key Stage 4 (20 places):** 20 SEMH places are being commissioned through a satellite provision provided by the Beckmead Academy Trust. The provision is located at St. George's House in Brighton and provides a blended mix of tuition plus alternative provision, with strong links to the city's colleges to improve transition to Further Education.
- **Future developments (50 places):** There is a need to open another 50 place SEMH special school Satellite site to meet the increased need in SEMH places. The plan is to do this in partnership with a neighbouring local authority to offer a regional solution. To meet need Brighton and Hove would commission 50 places (20 KS2; 30 KS3 places). The partnership local authority would also have the opportunity to have a further 20 places at the satellite site, thereby providing economies of scale and sustainability.

Travel

The nature of Homewood as a special secondary phase school for children with SEMH means that their intake was drawn from all across the city. Therefore, changing the location of where the children are educated will mean shorter journeys for some and longer journeys for others. The location of the children's new provision will have been carefully considered with the child's family when agreeing to the new EHCP.

Revocation of the academy order and future use of the site/building

As the school remains subject to an Academy Order the Council has been liaising with the Regional Office for Education (DfE) regarding revocation of the Academy order in order that the Council can make a decision on closure. An agreement in principle to revocation was given at the start of the closure process. The outcome of the consultation has now been provided to the Regional Office and they have advised that they will look to submit a revocation request to the Secretary of State in October for a decision in early November. The Council will be unable to make a final decision on closure until a revocation order has been issued by the Minister.

If the Academy Order is revoked by the Secretary of State, and Cabinet subsequently makes the decision to close the school, a separate application to the Secretary of State would then be required should the Council wish to dispose of any school land should it be deemed surplus to requirements.

Where and when the Statutory Notice and Full Proposal information will be available

Brighton & Hove City Council will publish the statutory notice for this proposal on 7 October 2024. The notice will remain in force for a period of 4 weeks i.e. until 4 November 2024. Copies of the notice will be placed:

-at the entrance to the school

-in other places in the community; namely Moulsecoomb Library, Moulsecoomb Housing Centre and Moulsecoomb Station will be asked to display in a suitable place, if available.

It will also be published in **The Brighton and Hove Independent newspaper** on Friday 4 October 2024.

A copy of the statutory notice is attached to this document.

On 4 October 2024 the full proposal information (this document plus appendices) will be sent to the following recipients:

- the Secretary of State for Education
- the Diocese of Chichester
- the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton
- the governing body of the school

Members of the Brighton & Hove City Council Cabinet

Local Ward Councillors

The Members of Parliament for Brighton and Hove

The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)

Regulations 2013 also require that the parents of every registered pupil at the school

should be notified of the proposal. However as stated above there are currently no registered pupils at the school.

It will also be published on the council's website at the following address:

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/school-statutory-notice

Any person may request a copy of the full proposal information either by writing to

Head of School Organisation

1st Floor

Hove Town Hall

Norton Road

Hove

BN3 3BQ

Or via schoolorganisation@brighton-hove.gov.uk

How to make representation or comment on the proposal

Any person may object or make a representation or comment on the proposal. This can be done by writing to the address above or to the email address provided.

Following the closing date for representations, a report will be prepared for the Cabinet meeting to decide the proposal within 2 months.

At the present time it is anticipated that the report will be considered at their meeting scheduled for 14 November 2024. However this is subject to the Academy Order currently in force in respect of the school being revoked by the Secretary of State for Education.