



Mowbray Primary School
Stakeford Lane
Guide Post
Choppington
Northumberland
NE62 5HQ

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Miller

AM/LH

26 September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Primary Support Base (The Hub)

In 2022 Mowbray opened a Hub supporting the County Council with outreach and short term placements for pupils from other schools. While the work in The Hub was successful for many children, the needs of the children being placed with us became more extreme which required far higher levels of support.

I know many of you have shared your concerns over The Hub with me over the past few months and I understand and shared many of your views.

By the end of the last academic year The Hub was no longer a viable option as we were unable to support our staff, our pupils or the children placed in it effectively any longer. The Hub drew too many resources away from mainstream in order to support the increasingly extreme behaviours and needs of some children placed in it.

Despite working to minimise these risks, it became evident that this was not possible for us within the framework we had to work with. As a result I made the decision, along with the Governing Body, to close The Hub from 1 September 2024.

A Base continues at Mowbray but it will now operate as a Specialist Base. These Bases are a totally different format to The Hub. A way of thinking of the Specialist Base is as a small Special School site like Cleaswell Hill in a mainstream building working with young children with communication and language needs including autism.

Specialist Bases are for children with high levels of Additional Needs who have already been granted an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and have been granted a specialist provision placement. Special School places are in high demand and mainstream schools are beginning to attach Specialist Bases to support the need for places. Mowbray has more control over assessing whether we can meet the needs of the children being placed into this Base and the Base is financed well by the Council to help us meet the children's needs.

☎ 01670 823198

✉ Admin@mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk

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We worked initially with Cleaswell Hill Special School to set this up and our specialism is younger children with a Primary Need surrounding Communication and Language. Unlike The Hub, the children attending the Specialist Base do not exhibit extreme levels of behaviour but do require high levels of the support in relation to their development of speech, language and communication, as well as other needs related to communication and language such as autism.

The children in this Base are placed with us permanently. We have a high level of staffing in the Base and are developing a staff expertise bank so that children throughout our mainstream classes will benefit from the Base being here – such as staff developing our sensory support work, speech and language support and autism support.

While the concept of Hubs is a good one; it hasn't worked for Mowbray as a whole school. The Specialist Base fits our strengths and expertise and is well financed to allow us to support the children within it effectively.

Yours sincerely

A. Miller
Mr A Miller
Headteacher

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