

3rd July 2023

Consultation on the future of Specialist Post-16 Provision (SPP) at Impington Village College (IVC)

Introduction

It is after much consideration that the governing body is consulting on the future of SPP.

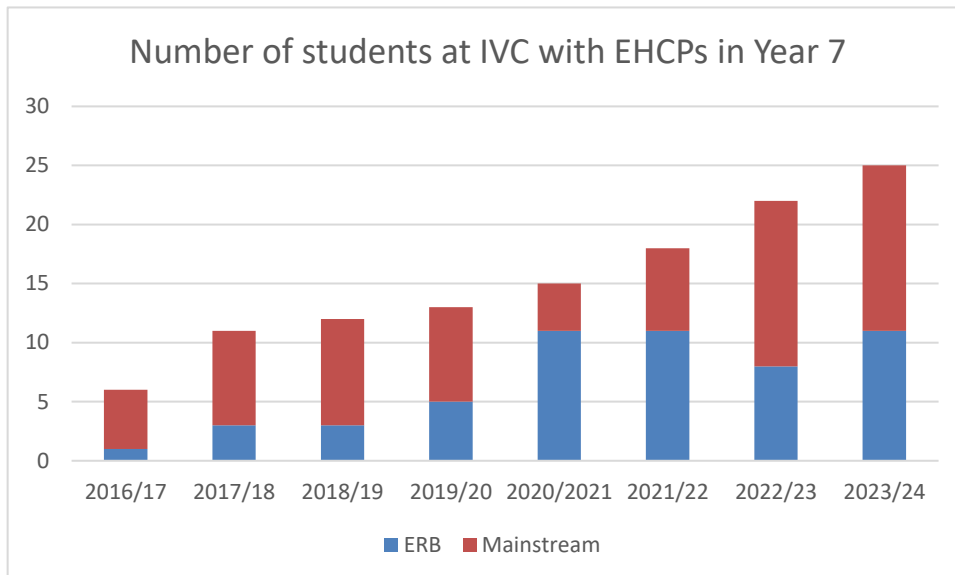
SPP is one of three Enhanced Resource Bases at IVC; The Pavilion (currently year 10 and 11, to be phased out as 'the pilot' rolls through), 'The Pilot' (currently year 7-9, to replace The Pavilion), and the Specialist Post-16 Provision (SPP, KS5).

SPP provides a 5-day-a-week sixth form program for students with SEND and EHCPs. SPP has previously had a maximum admission capacity of 24 students across years 12 and 13, however currently fewer places are commissioned (13). In recent years there has been a decline in numbers in SPP, due firstly to staffing issues (we reduced the commissioned places to 4 in a cohort in 2021-22) and then decline in uptake (7 of 8 places filled for Sept 23).

Context

Impington Village College supports a high number of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and who have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) (7.6% of students).

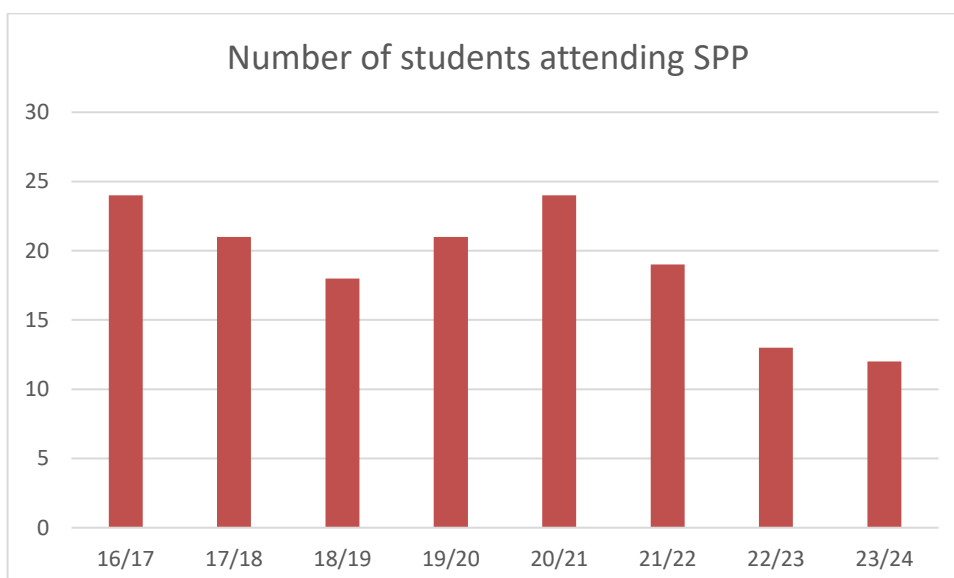
Over recent years, the number of students with EHCPs in year 7 coming to IVC has increased (both with ERB and non-ERB places, see below), with many students coming from outside of catchment. We believe this is both a reflection of the local and national picture (with more students being allocated EHCPs) and a reflection of the well regarded and inclusive SEN provision at IVC (we have a higher proportion of EHCPs than the national average). One of the consequences of having an ERB, is that parents of students with EHCPs are also attracted to request mainstream places (i.e. if the ERB is full or not appropriate, or because of a perceived benefit such as proximity to resource), which they will likely get because of the weight given to parental preference when naming schools within the SEN Code of Practice. It therefore seems inevitable that the number of students with EHCPs in KS3 and KS4 will continue to grow.



We now have close to 100 students at IVC with EHCPs. The needs of the students are very complex, and range from physical/medical needs (Duchenne’s muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, epilepsy), to sensory needs (visual impairments, multisensory impairments), autism, ADHD, and so on, with students working across the entire ability range (pre-GCSE to grade 9). Meeting this growing level of need is becoming increasingly challenging, for example, finding sufficient skilled teaching assistants to meet demand. Because of these factors, we are struggling to meet the needs of the students at IVC with EHCPs (both within and without the ERBs) and placements are beginning to break down.

Current Situation

In contrast to our main school provision, in SPP, we have seen a reduction in the number of students applying for places.



This may be a consequence of our reduction in places offered last academic year or some other post-Covid-19 effect, however we have also seen a shift in the students who previously may have been candidates for SPP being accepted into mainstream settings. The niche that we previously catered for seems to be getting narrower.

The SPP ERB does not follow on from the Pavilion/pilot ERB. It is not a 7-year offer, because most students in the secondary school have made so much progress with us that they are ready for a mainstream college. This

is a sign of success, however it means SPP places are filled by students from out of catchment special schools (100% of our current students are from out of catchment, and 2 out of 13 students attended IVC (one who moved from another mainstream during KS4). Historically, almost every student attending IVC is entitled to local authority funded transport. Our time and resource may be better spent serving the children already within our community.

We are also finding that the very small cohort in SPP (maximum of 24 students across year 12 and 13) means that we can not develop the young people's social and life skills or provide as enriching a curriculum as we would like. Furthermore, the SPP curriculum does not relate or map to our mainstream sixth form offer (which has relatively high entry requirements), and so the ERB model (where students spend the majority of time with mainstream peers) does not work. A significant amount of time goes into planning and delivering curricula for a very small number of students, and this time might be better utilised elsewhere, for example offering a greater number of ERB spaces in KS3/4, and/or improved provision for other EHCP students at IVC with the goal of all students leaving IVC at 16 able to enter mainstream colleges (or training) (as opposed to more expensive specialist settings/ERBs).

The SEN department building at IVC (called 'The Pavilion', built and opened in the 1980s) is no longer large enough for the number of students who need to access it. SPP students however have their own building/area within the school, which could potentially be utilised for different purposes.

Admissions

Based on recent admissions, students are likely going to be from out of catchment, or even out of county, which makes planning for/predicting future demographics based on local data/new housing etc irrelevant/difficult. It is not possible to identify potential future candidates for SPP from our current IVC cohort without making them identifiable, due to the very small numbers involved. However, as noted above, pupils rarely remain in the ERB from years 7-11 into the sixth form, because of the significant progress they make.

We will work with the local authority as part of this consultation process to ensure that alternative appropriate provisions have been explored for anyone who might be affected by future changes, and to ensure that students who currently have places (year 12 Sept 23) are able to continue at SPP for two years as planned.

Staffing

Staff are encouraged to reply to this consultation, and trade unions are also being consulted.

All staff who are working in SPP have skill sets benefitting the KS3/4 curriculum/other ERB and would be redeployed within IVC, which would go some way to addressing our staff shortages in other areas.

Conclusion

We have previously attempted to address the issues above in a number of ways, which have so far been unsuccessful. This includes reducing the numbers of students admitted to SPP, however this intensifies the issues above relating to having such a small provision. In addition, as funding is based on numbers of young people, it becomes impracticable to plan, deliver and monitor a curriculum (plus personalised support) for such a small number. We have also redesigned the provision/curriculum at SPP (previously known as IDEAL), in an attempt to make it more appropriate for ex-IVC students, as well as driving TA recruitment and retention as much as is possible within the constraints of the school budget.

The governing body have taken all of the above into consideration and are now consulting on the future of SPP, which may result in a decision to close it, if it is the best interests of educational provision within the area.

A statutory process must be followed and is a legal requirement. All stakeholders will be consulted, and following the end of this 4 week consultation period a meeting will be held by the governing body to decide on

the future of SPP. If it is agreed for the provision to close, it would do so in August 2025, but would not admit new students in the AY 24/25.

The proposed timetable, which is subject to change, is set out below.

Consultation period: Wednesday 5th July- Wednesday 2nd August

Staff information session: Wednesday 5th July (internal only)

Information session: Wednesday 12th July 4.00-5.00pm

Governing body meeting: Wednesday 4th October 2023

All information will be available on the College website.

Sharing your views and getting more information

You are invited to attend an information session at the school on Wednesday 12th July with representatives from SPP and the Governing Body, as well as the Local Authority.

This session is an opportunity for individuals to raise any specific concerns or ask questions and as it will not run in the format of a public meeting, you are welcome to attend at any time between 4.00pm until 5.00pm.

We welcome comments on the future of the provision.

Please either:

Email the school via sppconsultation@ivc.tela.org.uk

Write to: SPP Consultation, Impington Village College, New Road, Impington, CB24 9LX

Please note that all responses will be shared with Cambridgeshire County Council.

All comments will be properly considered by the decision-makers but we will not send individual responses to any specific points raised.

A list of frequently asked questions will be made available to view online during the consultation.