

Sent: 24 August 2016 00:19
To: cal adminmid
Subject: Black Isle Education Centre

It is with some concern that I have been apprised of the closure of the Black Isle Education Centre.

This is a resource that is required within the area and serves to provide a style of education to a number of children which is not available elsewhere. The centre provides education based on outdoor pursuits, and traditional education, which has shown benefit to the pupils.

I understand that the proposal is to close down the facility and provide the service through the main stream schools.

I am particularly concerned about the effect on my grandson who attends the school. My grandson has particular needs as he has been diagnosed with autism/PDA. He has attended main stream school and has not been able to respond to the demands of the larger schools and the fact that the staff are not equipped to deal with the different approaches and relationships required in these special cases. My grandson had spent a number of years being excluded from mainstream school due in my view to the inadequacies in staff training in dealing with his particular needs. The BIEC provides a safe and consistent environment in which my grandson and his peers have benefitted from. This is the first time in a number of years that my grandson has responded to his education in a positive way. The staff there have amassed experience in dealing with the type of issues my grandson has and It seems nonsensical to break up this team whose approach seems to work for him and his classmates.

One of the problems that my grandson does not seem able to cope with is change. Throughout his school life all that seems to have happened is that he has been moved from pillar to post throughout mainstream education with little or no success. The proposed integration of this service into mainstream schools, is a backward step as this has not worked for my grandson in the past.

Quoting Council guidelines,

"Getting it right for every child" CORE MESSAGE:
"Everyone has a responsibility to do the right thing for each child and we must all work towards a unified approach, with less bureaucracy and more freedom to get on and respond to children. This will mean earlier help and the child getting the right help at the right time packaged for their particular needs."

I see in the main report there are references to savings on transport, property costs etc., however the above statement makes no reference to cost of provision of this service.

The fact that there is only a limited roll at the school is not an excuse for its closure, as I know that the existence of the school has never been well publicised and judging from what I have heard there are other children out there who would benefit from this resource.

I am therefore of the view that the closure of the facility, by Highland Council, is inappropriate.