

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Knowl View was purpose built as a full-age range residential school for boys with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It was originally built to serve Rochdale, Oldham, Bolton, and Lancashire, with these other councils guaranteeing a minimum number of pupils each year. As part of this agreement the other three councils were given a 5% discount on the charge for each place. This agreement lapsed in 1986 and none of these 3 authorities now have children placed at Knowl View, in fact the last child placed there was from Lancashire in 1989/90.
- 1.2 From 1980 to 1985 pupil numbers were consistently over 40, reaching a peak of 47 pupils in 1982. From 1986 onwards there was a dramatic fall in pupil numbers, reaching a low of 19 in January 1989. However, since this date pupil numbers have risen steadily again to a point where there are now 36 pupils attending the school. The current maximum occupancy is 40 pupils, however, this could increase to 50 with an increase in staffing levels.
- 1.3 There has, however, been a dramatic change in the make-up of the pupil numbers. Until 1989/90 a substantial number of the pupils attending Knowl View were from outside L.E.A.'s, but in the following years the number of outside pupils decreased to the present level of 3, whilst the number of Rochdale pupils has increased in the same period from 14 to the present number of 33. This has led to a significant reduction in income from other L.E.A.'s, however, this is offset by the reduction in expenditure on the Independent Boarding Schools' budget.
- 1.4 Presently the school's budget is controlled centrally by the Special Education Needs department, but from April 1993 with the introduction of LMSS (Local Management of Special Schools), the budget will be controlled by the school. LMSS requires that at least 85% of the Special school's revenue budget will be delegated through formula funding.
- 1.5 In the past the charge to other L.E.A.'s was based on a cost per pupil basis at the end of each year. However, in recent years with the school population falling, this cost became too high and, therefore, L.E.A.'s were not prepared to pay such high charges. As from the beginning of the current financial year it was decided to charge a set fee (£6,000 per term) which (as part of a future marketing policy) is just below current market charges. This is higher than the cost per pupil and, therefore, profitable. It is hoped that this policy will attract more "out of borough" pupils, thus increasing income.