

TRANSCRIPT: Planning for the whole school – budgetary issues

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Our school is a special school catering for students from aged two to nineteen with a wide range of complex needs - autism, sensory impairment, physical impairment, and the main criteria for attending this school is a learning difficulty. A learning difficulty means that pupils would not be able to function in a mainstream school and need quite significant differentiation of the national curriculum to access their learning. The range of ability goes from a student last year achieving GCSE in maths, a particularly gifted autistic young person, right down to students working at P-levels which are the levels below national curriculum Level 1.

Planning for the whole school is a huge, very complicated job. I have to take on a massive amount of budgetary implications. We have to take on premises issues, accommodation issues and we're constantly fighting a battle for adequate funding to deliver the additional differentiation of the national curriculum to deliver the subjects relevant to individual need and the additional therapies that the children's Statements require them to have during the week.

Our numbers here at school have increased over the last few years and, as a result of that, the amount of funding coming in has increased as well. However, we have to be very mindful that any additional therapy or staffing that we put into school, for example, the aromatherapist or additional extra speech and language therapy, or additional work by our enterprise coordinator, we have to make sure that that's sustainable and we've got the funding to maintain that. It's no good starting a fantastic initiative one year to have it pulled from under you the following year, so a sustainability of funding is vital for me when I'm planning the years ahead.