

Children's and Young People's Services Select Committee

24th November 2010

Special Educational Needs and Out-of School Learning Rapid Improvement Programme

Report by Director of Children's Services and Director of Learning

Executive Summary

Special Educational Needs/Out of School Learning encompasses a wide range of projects. The Rapid Improvement Programme is a programme board established to oversee the delivery of the projects. The programme addresses weaknesses in the way the Local Authority and schools carry out their statutory function in relation to vulnerable children, maximises maintained provision, devolves resources and decision making and importantly increases parental engagement in SEN/OSL provision. This was formerly a project under the CLIW FSR Programme, but is now being managed by the Learning Service. Good progress is being made across the wide range of projects that make up the SEN/OSL Rapid Improvement Programme as outlined in the report.

Recommendation:

The Select Committee is asked to comment on the progress in the delivery of the SEN/OSL programme.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the FSR project Rapid Improvement Programme for SEN/OSL. A Programme Board has been established to oversee the deliver of a range of projects that are designed to:
- Address weaknesses in the way the Local Authority and schools carry out their statutory function in relation to vulnerable children and young people and children with special educational needs (SEN and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties SEBD)
 - Maximise the capacity of maintained provision to meet the needs of all local children
 - Devolve resources and decision making for these learners to partnerships of schools and settings within a framework of multi-agency collaboration and Children's Trust accountability
 - Increase parental engagement and confidence in the processes and activities that underpin SEN/OSL provision.

1.2 This report provides an update on the one submitted to the Committee on 11th November 2009.

2. Context

2.2 There are a number of strategic drivers for this Programme, as follows:

- to reduce the gap between the aspiration and reality of learning provision and attainment for children and young people with SEN, SEBD, medical needs and children in care, or who are otherwise vulnerable/have additional needs
- to improve compliance with statutory requirements with regard to SEN/SEBD
- to reduce the number of looked after children and children with SEN who are excluded
- to improve the match between the range of provision and children's needs
- to improve reintegration rates
- to reduce the proportion of children who are in independent and non-maintained settings
- to improve communications and engagement with parents/carers, in order to build their confidence in the local authority to deliver all of the above

3. What is the Programme?

The SEN/OSL Programme encompasses a wide range of projects, led by strategic and operational leads. Main areas of activity relate to:

- early intervention and the development of the Early Years Planning and Review Meetings (EYPARMs)
- review and development of Primary & Secondary PARMS; development of Special Support Centre (SSC) provision
- integration of Out of School Learning (OSL) with special provision for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD);
- increase in in-county places for SEBD
- development of a commissioning process to enable special schools and OSL and to provide more outreach work
- development of quality standards for transfer and transition;
- develop greater consistency of understanding of school action and school action plus
- provide stable in-year placements for vulnerable children in KS4
- development of Area/Locality datasets to inform commissioning and development of a learning pathway and parent/school charter to clarify expectations and improve parental confidence.

3.2 The Programme Board meets on a monthly basis and receives regular progress updates from strategic project leads. Strong progress is being made across a number of key project areas. A summary of all projects with projected completion dates will be available prior to the meeting.

4. Progress

4.1 The **EYPARM** project will establish area based, multi-professional planning and review meetings as part of the West Sussex 'Early Support Approach'. In

Horsham, a pilot is underway to facilitate improvement in the quality of information available, and provide a coordinated assessment and planning process to support young children with SEN. This is due to be rolled out in the Chichester and Crawley areas in Spring 2011, and the Worthing and Mid Sussex areas next Summer. The pilot aims to establish clear links with existing forums to support children and families (eg the Children & Young People's Planning Forums) to embed integrated tools and processes, particularly the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), to support early intervention. Access routes to EYPARM are being widened, and accompanying processes agreed with partner agencies. Feedback will be sought from parents on the new information that is being made available to them, including the consent form and information leaflets. New guidance materials relating to statutory assessment for children in EY Foundation Stage will be tested with input from multi-agency professionals. This project is now being progressed under the Aiming High for Disabled Children arrangements.

- 4.2 Good progress is also being made in relation to the review and improvement of the **Primary and Secondary PARMs** processes. Research has been undertaken with schools to identify good practice and establish a clear rationale for the 'new' PARMs. The aim is to establish a consistent experience for children and families with identified additional needs across West Sussex; to achieve efficiencies from reduced out-of-County placements and to improve outcomes for young people and their families through early identification and intervention plus timely and appropriate support. Schools will need to assess pupils against the continuum of need (for integrated working), and link to multi-agency planning forums to access the necessary targeted support to help keep pupils in learning settings. Next steps include briefing Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) on developments to date, and linking this work to the school career pathway that is being developed to improve parental understanding and their involvement in PARMs throughout the school system.
- 4.3 **Transfer and transition quality standards** are being drawn up, linked to the transition learning journey from the perspective of the child, parents/carers, schools and other partners. These will be accompanied by a 'transition toolkit' with supporting materials. The quality standards will be trialled, reviewed and approved by the Programme Board, prior to publication and dissemination via the West Sussex Grid For Learning (WSGfL). This work will link with and support EYPARMs, Primary and Secondary PARMs. The aim is to improve pupils' experience of transition at key points of transitional change, leading to a positive impact on exclusions, persistent absence and emotional/social/behavioural difficulties, and consequently children's learning. Implementation of the quality standards, resources/tools and 'transition pledge' will be monitored and evaluated for impact in due course.
- 4.4 A further project has consulted schools on the need for a **contextual dataset** to support schools, Localities and Areas to determine need and inform planning and commissioning decisions. This will include number and type of SEN (eg School Action, School Action Plus, Statement). A wider contextual dataset is needed, that can be collated at locality or Area level, to support schools to commission additional support services for targeted groups. Assuming the necessary resources are available to support this work,

this will be trialled and tested before going live via the Grid for Learning. Training will be available on how to use the data.

- 4.5 Underpinning the whole SEN/OSL programme is the recognised need to improve **parental engagement and confidence** in a range of activities and processes, throughout a child or young person's learning journey. Parents' views are being sought on all projects via representatives from the Parents' Forum, via a range of partnership meetings that include parent representatives as well as from individual sources. A 0-19/25 School Career Pathway is being developed to map out the learning journey, supported by a Parent/School Charter that will provide guidance on what to expect at each stage and particularly at times of transition. A conference is being planned for March 2011 to bring together parents, SENCOs and other services with the aim of improving 2-way communications and updating partners on the progress being made.
- 4.6 The above projects are being prioritised in line with the Education and Schools Policy, and are expected to achieve significant benefits more quickly than some others. The remaining projects continue to be progressed.
- 4.7 The SEN/OSL Transformation Board is considering how to best measure progress in delivering this Programme. A methodology for measuring progress has been developed, which includes an impact model template to evaluate short, medium and long term impact on key stakeholder groups (inc children & young people, parents/carers and other partners). This work will be taken forward, ensuring that agreed success measures align with relevant targets contained in the Learning Service Business Plan.

5. **Resource Implications and Value for Money**

- 5.1 Delivery of this programme is being managed within existing Learning Service resources, at no additional cost to the Local Authority. It has been designed to deliver the Education and Schools Policy relating to Special Educational Needs and Inclusion. Whilst it is difficult to quantify cost savings in the short term, the expected overall impact of this programme will be to:
 - Retain higher numbers of pupils in maintained settings, thereby reducing the cost of out-of County placements
 - Reduce the number of children with SEN who are permanently excluded from school, thereby reducing dependence on higher cost specialist support services and
 - Support intervention at the earliest possible stage, thereby preventing the development of more complex (and expensive) problems later.

6. **Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 Risks were identified at the outset of the Programme and are being monitored and managed on an ongoing basis. Current risks include:
 - Learning Service restructure and consequent demands being placed on staff time. The new structure will come into effect from 1st April 2011, by which time the majority of this work will be complete.
 - Much of this work relates to the development of good practice and quality improvements; none of which have a statutory basis. Schools will need to be persuaded of the positive impact of adopting proposed changes.

- Cultural change is needed within the Learning Service and schools to work in a more integrated way with Children's Trust partners, to effect joint solutions including the commissioning of support services.

7. **Crime and Disorder Act Implications**

Not applicable

8. **Human Rights Act Implications**

- 8.1 The successful implementation of this Programme will help ensure that the Local Authority meets its statutory requirements for assessing and reviewing the progress of children with special educational needs.

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Background Papers

None.