

**REPORT FOR SCRUTINY PANEL**

**IMPROVING THE ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) AND NARROWING THE SEN/NON-SEN GAP**

**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 In Slough work has been undertaken linked to the SEN Regional Hub and National Strategies to support schools to improve the progress made by children with SEN. This work has been led by the Service for Children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) but delivered in partnership with staff from the Inclusion team and School Improvement in particular. This has comprised:
- roll out and training on the Inclusion Development Programme with strands of activity related to speech, language and communication, dyslexia, autism and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties;
  - training and support to implement aspects of Achievement for All including the structured conversation;
  - piloting with a small group of schools and training offered to all schools to implement the Value for Money Resource pack;
  - dissemination of the Progression Guidance materials to support aspirational target setting for children with SEN and allowing schools and others to identify what constitutes good progress;
  - bespoke training for individual schools as requested;
  - establishment of a sharing good practice group related to including children with Down's Syndrome in mainstream schools;
  - good quality assessments of children who are not considered to be making adequate progress and recommendation of appropriate strategies for schools to implement;
  - moderation of children's work assessed to be at the P levels;
  - participation in the accredited training for new SENCOs working with Reading University;
  - running the SENCO cluster meetings to disseminate information and share good practice in relation to including children with SEN and supporting improved outcomes;
  - involvement in the training provided for NQTs;
  - training for SENCOs and Teaching Assistants;
  - providing specific support to new Headteachers, new SENCOs or schools that are in some difficulties.
- 1.2 These interventions have led to Key Stage 4 attainments for children with SEN being above the national average but as the attainment of all children in Slough at Key Stage 4 is above the national average, the SEN/non-SEN gap is wider than the national average.
- 1.3 At Key Stage 2, attainments for children with SEN are slightly below the national average as are the attainments of all children at Key Stage 2 in

Slough. The SEN/no-SEN gap is marginally wider than the national average but is reducing. The breakdown of this data is attached.

- 1.4 The Children's Services Assessment in December found that there was a need to focus on supporting improved attainments of children with SEN and to narrow the SEN/non-SEN gap.

## **2.0 Current Plans**

- 2.1 The work identified above is ongoing but is subject to review as this is dependent on funding provided by schools from within the Dedicated Schools Grant. There are elements of the work provided on a traded basis and this relates to specialist teaching inputs to schools and commissioned educational psychology time. These traded elements of the service will be reviewed with schools and there is an aim that this work will form part of the wider outreach provision to schools that is provided by/hosted by a school, developing the special schools as centres of excellence approach.
- 2.2 The draft School Improvement Strategy sets out the key principles underpinning school improvement in Slough and this includes reference to narrowing the attainment gap for all pupils and particularly for our most vulnerable pupils. It also refers to providing support to all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, to overcome any barriers to their learning and well-being.
- 2.3 The new School Improvement Team will work in partnership with the Service for Children with LDD to implement the core provision necessary for all schools to meet these principles and to deliver the additional strands of activity identified within the Strategy for schools at the "satisfactory" levels or "causing concern". The structure of the Service for Children with LDD will be reviewed to identify the most appropriate way to deliver this strategic and operational support most effectively but this will require ongoing DSG funding or funding identified from another source.
- 2.4 The data set for schools will continue to be provided and there will be a requirement to support some schools to make use of this data to target the children who are failing to make at least adequate progress even when they have SEN. The school breakdown of SEN/non-SEN gaps should be shared with all schools and those schools demonstrating good practice should be encouraged to provide advice and guidance to schools where the gap is above expected levels. The use of the Value for Money Resource pack should continue to be promoted and support provided in order to assist schools with identifying their income and expenditure related to children with SEN/AEN, map the provision that is made in the school, capture information about the children who access the interventions, the expected targets to be met and actual outcomes. This then supports schools to make judgements about the value for money of the interventions they provide/commission but the Slough pilot also found that it encouraged the schools to evaluate provision more effectively and in some cases change the programmes used or method of delivery to bring about improved outcomes. Schools should be encouraged to share information about their interventions that have led to

good outcomes and provided good value for money. The Local Authority will also seek to have access to the summary information generated by this tool to fulfil audit requirements related to delegated budgets.

- 2.5 The Additional Needs Strategy is now being implemented to ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate provision for children with the most complex needs in Slough schools. There is a focus on children with autism and those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties initially. It is anticipated that new resource bases will be established within mainstream schools but this will be subject to planning with schools and subject to the usual consultation processes. In order to successfully include more children in mainstream schools, there is a need for robust outreach provision and schools will be encouraged to ensure they continue to have access to these services even if no longer provided by the Local Authority.
- 2.6 There is a review of the SEN finance models applied to mainstream, resource bases and special schools to ensure that the level of funding is sufficient to enable children to make good progress and narrow the attainment gaps. There is an aim to delegate more funding direct to schools to provide them with the flexibility to intervene earlier and reduce the reliance on lengthy statutory assessment processes which involve a range of different professionals. Schools require further assurances about increased delegation and this work is ongoing. The emphasis on intervening early to avoid high level intervention is reflected in an Early Intervention Strategy which focuses on the use of integrated working practices which improves outcomes for children.
- 2.7 The non-financial aspects of work related to statutory assessments of children with SEN are also being reviewed and this includes the criteria for statutory assessment, the descriptions of the bands of provision, the process for applying for a statutory assessment, the annual review process and maintaining the drive to increase the person centred approaches used in schools and continue the emphasis on developing independence to reduce reliance on adult social care provision in the longer term. Whilst these elements may not be directly measured in terms of maths, English and science, in Slough we believe they continue to be important and there is a need to demonstrate progress as a whole not simply in academic terms.
- 2.8 A response to the Green Paper on SEN is being prepared by a small group of Officers. This is likely to lead to significant changes to the area of SEN and Inclusion over the next 2 years. Any implications for schools will be disseminated at the appropriate time and support will need to be put in place related to developments such as the new Education, Health and Care Plan from age 0 to 25 which will replace the current Statements of SEN from age 2 to 19 and the s139 Assessments for post 16 to age 25 and possibly incorporating the Early Support Plans from birth to school age.
- 2.9 The Early Years work within the Service for Children with LDD will be reviewed along with the EYFS work within Sure Start to promote improved

outcomes for children pre-school and supporting successful transition to school.

- 2.10 Children with specific learning difficulties generally have their needs met through relevant and purposeful measures in schools. This can include access to good quality assessments by Specialist Teachers in the Service for Children with LDD and support to implement appropriate strategies or access relevant resources. Schools can also currently purchase Specialist Teaching from the Service if they wish to and this can provide teaching to small groups or individuals and training for school staff. Where appropriate schools may also choose to access support from their Educational Psychologist for advice or assessment if a child fails to make adequate progress despite these relevant and purposeful measures. Since September children have received increased input as schools have commissioned a large part of the service. Some psychologists spend up to two days a week in schools and not only provide advice to the teacher and child but also to the whole school system which can lead to earlier identification of specific needs and impact on whole groups of children. The Inclusion Development Programme has a specific strand related to identifying and supporting children with dyslexia and this has been rolled out to all schools in Slough.
- 2.11 Whilst work continues to address SEN attainments there will continue to be a risk that the SEN/non-SEN gap does not narrow as all children are being supported to make progress and despite good attainments the gap can remain at above national average levels as demonstrated by the current Key Stage 4 data.

### 3.0 **Specific Interventions at Targeted Schools where the SEN/non-SEN Gap in 2010 was above the National Average**

It must be borne in mind that any provision made in schools is by agreement with the schools and for schools in Ofsted categories; this must be part of the overall School Improvement Strategy. Currently all this provision is funded by schools budgets and much of it is purchased provision. Without ongoing dedicated schools budget there will be no capacity to provide the strategic input from the Service for Children with LDD even if the outreach provision is maintained as purchased provision through a school. During 2010 all but 6 Slough schools accessed specialist provision from the Service. Information is included below in relation to those schools with SEN/non-SEN gaps wider than the national average in 2010. All provision is evaluated to ensure good progress is made and that any training input has a lasting impact.

Additionally there are a number of programmes in place across Slough schools which address the behavioural, emotional and social aspects of learning as well as how parents can help support their child with their learning. These programmes provided by the Psychology Service, Autism Service and Services Supporting Behaviour all help to raise the attainments of vulnerable children and narrow the gap and include nurturing, resilience and developmental programmes for children at risk of poor outcomes.

### **3.1 Foxborough Primary**

A Specialist Teacher has been allocated to provide specific teaching input for children plus follow up work and support provided for the Teaching Assistants. The Assistant Manager in the Service for Children with LDD is providing targeted support to train and support the SENCO and the Teaching Assistants. Provision needs to continue as part of the general school improvement work.

### **3.2 Holy Family Catholic Primary**

The school purchased a package of support from the Service and this has been used to undertake baseline assessments of individual children, set targets, provide weekly small group specialist teaching input, liaison with classteachers and provision of follow up work. The school has also accessed support from the Service to include children with Down's Syndrome. The increase in the gap relates to the specific cohort of pupils as small numbers can make a significant difference to the percentage figures.

### **3.3 Khalsa Primary**

The Assistant Manager in the Service is providing targeted support to train and support the SENCO and the Teaching Assistants. Provision needs to continue as part of the general school improvement work. Specific inputs have also been provided by a number of the Specialist Teachers for one off assessments of children who are not making adequate progress to assist target setting and determining appropriate interventions and for inset training.

### **3.4 Marish Primary**

The school purchased a package of support from the Service and this has been used to undertake baseline assessments of individual children, set targets, provide weekly small group specialist teaching input, liaison with class teachers and provision of follow up work.

### **3.5 Pippins Primary**

The Service provided a whole staff training day on identification and intervention for children with specific learning difficulties as a particular need was identified by the school. The school has also had access to assessments undertaken by Specialist Teachers to support their work with individual children.

### **3.6 Priory Primary**

Support will continue to be offered as part of the School Improvement Strategy to address the SEN/non-SEN gap which is above the national and Local Authority average.

### **3.7 Ryvers Primary**

The SEN/non-SEN gap is above the national and Local Authority average. Support will continue to be offered as part of the School Improvement Strategy.

### **3.8 St Mary's Primary**

The school purchased packages of support from the Service and this has been used to undertake baseline assessments of individual children, set targets, provide weekly small group specialist teaching input, liaison with class teachers, provision of follow up work and meetings with parents/carers. The school has also accessed support from the Service to include children with Down's Syndrome.

### **3.9 Wexham Court Primary**

The school purchased packages of support from the Service and this has been used to undertake baseline assessments of individual children, set targets, provide weekly small group specialist teaching input, liaison with class teachers, provision of follow up work and meetings with parents/carers.

### **3.10 Slough and Eton Business and Enterprise College**

The school purchased a package of support from the Service and this has been used to undertake baseline assessments of individual children, set targets, provide weekly small group specialist teaching input, liaison with class teachers, provision of follow up work, assessments for exam access arrangements and training sessions for Teaching Assistants.

### **3.11 Wexham School**

The school purchased a package of support from the Service and this has been used to undertake baseline assessments of individual children, set targets, provide weekly small group specialist teaching input, liaison with class teachers, provision of follow up work, assessments for exam access arrangements and training sessions for Teaching Assistants.

### **3.12 Grammar Schools**

All the Grammar schools access support from the Service and this generally involves assessments of individual children, exam access arrangements and some specialist teaching input for children with specific learning difficulties. Where a Grammar school shows a wider than average SEN/non-SEN gap, this generally relates to the small number of children involved as by their nature, they will have fewer children with special educational needs in attendance. It is also possible to show a negative gap.

Jackie Wright  
Head of Service for Children with LDD

Sally Grimstone  
Head of Psychology and Inclusion

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