

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 19th April 2017

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

1. **Purpose of Report**

To inform members as to the roles and responsibilities of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) service, and the work undertaken in Slough by the service.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Panel is requested to note the report.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The SEND service supports the following priorities:

- Protecting vulnerable children
- Improving mental health and wellbeing

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The SEND service supports the following priorities:

- Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications to the proposals in this report.

5. **Supporting Information**

Introduction

- 5.1 The definition of children young people and young adults with special educational needs and disabilities includes those with a range of underlying factors such as cognitive, physical or sensory difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties or difficulties with speech and language or social interaction. It also includes those who have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the local authority area.
- 5.2 Special educational needs could mean that a child has difficulties with:
- All of the work in school
 - Reading, writing, number work or understanding information
 - Expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying
 - Making friends or relating to adults
 - Behaving properly in schools
 - Organising themselves
 - Some kind of sensory or physical needs which may affect them in school.
- 5.3 Parents and carers who are concerned that their child may have difficulties with learning should contact a professional, such as the child's doctor, health visitor, the SENCO (Special Education Needs Co-ordinator) in the early years setting, school or college that the child is attending.
- 5.4 National statistics show that up to 20% of all children have some level of SEND. Most children and young people with SEND needs attend a mainstream school and are supported by resources which form part of the school's core budget. The old terminology of children at 'School Action' or 'School Action Plus' applied to these children – but since 2014 this has been replaced with a single designation of 'SEND Support'. This means that in Slough there will be at least 7,000 children, young people and young adults (under 25) with SEND needs. We will be able to calculate the exact figure for school-age children based on the 2017 school census, but have not yet done so.
- 5.5 Nationally, between 2.5% and 3% of all children will have a level of SEND that requires a statutory assessment of their needs and a legally-binding document to ensure provision to meet those needs. The figure for Slough is 2.9%. Most of these children also attend a mainstream school, but the school receives additional funding linked to meeting the needs of the individual child as set out in a legally-binding document. These documents were known as Statements of Special Education Needs and from 2014 the Government introduced Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) to replace Statements. Statements will cease to exist after April 2018 and Slough has been working to transfer Statements to EHCPs, with approximately 40% of these 'conversions' being complete by the end of March 2017. There are currently 1137 Statements of SEN or EHCPs in Slough.

Information, advice and support offered

- 5.6 All local areas are required to publish an online SEND 'Local Offer' setting out all the services, information, advice and facilities available to children and young people with SEND and to run or commission a service to provide information, support and advice to families – known in Slough as SENDASS (Special Educational Needs & Disability Advice and Support Service) – previously known as Parent Partnership. In Slough the Local Offer is integrated within the Slough Services Guide.
- 5.7 The Children & Families Act 2014 went live on 1st September 2014 and the revised SEND Code of Practice was published in 2015. The fundamental principles of this are that:
- All children with SEND should have their needs accurately assessed and appropriately met
 - Parents and carers (as well as the child or young person) are central to the assessment of needs and their involvement should be supported and respected
- 5.8 The Code stresses that all levels of SEND needs have to be met, not just those at the high level requiring an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). It also sets out the legal obligations on early year's settings, schools and colleges to do so. In all cases:
- The views of the child or young person should be taken into account
 - Parents and carers have a vital role
 - Children and young people should have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum
 - The response must be needs-led not driven by resources

Working in partnership with parents of children with SEND

- 5.9 The Code recognises that parents/carers/foster carers hold key information and have a critical role to play – they are partners, able and empowered to:
- Play an active and valued role
 - Have any difficulties identified early with appropriate intervention to tackle them
 - Make their views known about how the child is educated
 - Have access to information, advice and support during assessment and any related decision-making process including transition planning
- 5.10 It is recognised that the assessment process for SEND can be challenging and that families and young people may need support. Professionals involved in the process of assessment should express positive attitudes and focus on the child's strengths as well as their needs. They should be aware of child or young person's feelings (as well as those of parents), and ensure that they understand the procedures and be flexible in the timing and structure of meetings. User-friendly information should be employed and be available in a variety of languages. Slough adopted a new template for its EHCPs which received support and endorsement from the DfE in April 2016.

- 5.11 The Code of Practice stresses that the views of the child or young person are important. Children and young people have a right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion, and have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. The views of the child should be given due weight according to the age, maturity and capability of the child and these views must be reflected in a completed EHCP.

SEND support

- 5.12 This is instigated by the teacher(s) concern, underpinned by evidence that despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities the young person is not progressing. Interventions will be those that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the usual differentiated curriculum. They may include:

- Deployment of staff to work with the child/young person
- Different learning materials
- Group or individual support
- Extra adult time; staff development/training
- One off/occasional support.

- 5.13 The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in the setting/school/college usually takes the lead in advising on and establishing additional support programmes. The SENCO and other teachers will consider a range of different teaching approaches, materials, and ICT programs to meet specific special needs. A number of external services may be involved such as:

- The Education Psychology Service
- CAMHS (Child and Adult Mental Health Service)
- BEST (Behaviour Support Service)
- EWS (Education Welfare Service)
- The virtual school

- 5.14 These external services will advise on new IEPs with revised targets, may undertake specialist assessments, give advice on specialist strategies or materials and in some cases give direct support to the child or young person. Again, interventions will be additional to or different from those provided as part of the usual differentiated curriculum.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 'provision maps'

- 5.15 Each child should have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) outlining their programme with specific targets. These are reviewed, with families, at specific times. **Pupils on the SEND register should have an individual education plan (IEP), or a 'provision map' or both.** Parents should be informed that their child is on the SEND register of the school and be given a copy of the IEP/provision map. Some schools invite parents to the IEP review meeting and certainly should sound out their views. Parents can ask to attend the IEP/provision mapping meeting and for some schools such attendance will be normal practice.

- 5.16 IEPs/provision maps are a teaching and planning tool and record only what is additional to or different from the curriculum plan which is in place for all pupils. The IEP/provision map should specify the short-term targets, the teaching strategies to be used, the provision to be put in place and the outcome of the action taken. They should be reviewed twice a year or termly if possible.

There are usually 3 - 4 individual targets in the areas of:

- Communication
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Behaviour and social skills.

- 5.17 Where a parent considers that their child's needs have not been identified or are not being appropriately met, or they are unhappy with anything the school does for their child, they should first consult with the SENCO or class teacher at the school. They could also talk to the Head.
- 5.18 There is an active SENCO network in Slough supported by the SBC Educational Psychology service, providing information, training and professional development opportunities. There is currently no role for the local Teaching School Alliance. Schools should not put looked after children on the SEND register just because they are looked after.

Statutory assessment - EHCPs

- 5.19 A statutory assessment is a comprehensive, detailed investigation to find out exactly what a child's or young person's special educational needs and/or disability are and what additional support the child or young person needs. They can apply from birth up to the age of 25 (if the young adult concerned is still in education). They are assessments of needs and do not rely exclusively on medical diagnosis.
- 5.20 A statutory assessment will only be necessary if the early years setting or school or college cannot provide all the support needed, or if the support they have provided has not been able to support educational progress. The school, in consultation with parents and other agencies, can initiate an application for statutory assessment. Parents can also request a statutory assessment, without going via school. Over the last 12 months approximately 80% of requests for statutory assessments in Slough have been agreed (which is broadly in line with the national average).
- 5.21 Statutory assessment involves building up a body of evidence which includes:
- The views of the parents
 - The views of the child or young person
 - Copies of IEPs/provision maps
 - Evidence of progress or lack of progress over time
 - Copies of advice from medical and other health services
 - Input from others e.g. Educational Psychologists and Speech & Language Therapists
 - Evidence from social care professionals

- The Code sets out clearly the tests that should apply when judging whether or not the evidence above supports the need for a statutory assessment.
- 5.22 The assessment process should be completed within a maximum of 20 weeks (less if possible) and input from the child or young person and their foster carer is critical to the evidence-gathering and the drafting of the report, which will be shared with parents before being finalised. Over the last 12 months In the 12 months to January 2017, Slough has finalised approximately 60% of all new EHCPs within the 20 week deadline. This is broadly in line with performance across local areas in the South East. In that period, the SEND Service completed 202 new EHC Plans.
- 5.23 During the process, young people over 16 will have access to a local 'Independent Supporter' service to work with them during the assessment process. For young people in Slough this is run by an organisation called Adviza.
- 5.24 Following the statutory assessment the Trust will make a decision as to whether to issue an EHCP. Parents are given a proposed EHCP that outlines the child's assessed needs and the provision the local authority is legally bound to ensure is available to meet these needs, from any public sector provider named in the EHCP. The Trust also ensures the admission to a suitable local school for the pupils with EHCPs. For September 2017, 93% of pupils with EHCPs/Statements had their Year 7 school place confirmed on Year 7 deadline day (compared to 0% in February 2016). The same 90+% is likely to apply for Year R offers.
- 5.25 The Plan will also set out the timing and arrangements for reviews of progress, which should normally be annually (unless the child is under 5 when the review should be every six months).
- 5.26 The Annual Review is an opportunity to recommend changes to the EHCP, including identified additional needs, extra provision, increased funding or a change of school place. Only the Trust can decide whether or not to agree to amend any aspects of the EHCP, not the school.

Specialist education

- 5.27 There are currently three Special Schools in Slough – Arbour Vale, Millside (managed as part of Haybrook College) and Littledown. They offer places to approximately 400 pupils at present. There are also 12 Resource Bases at mainstream schools – 4 at secondary schools and 8 at primary, providing specialist support for pupils with high-level SEND needs. These 'units' currently support 220 pupils.
- 5.28 There are a very small number of Slough children who are placed at independent, fee-paying schools outside Slough – largely as part of their social care placement. There are currently 16 such placements.
- 5.29 Finally, an additional secondary phase Resource Base is opening in September 2017 as part of the new site for Ditton Park Academy. Initially it will admit 4 pupils. SBC Cabinet in March 2017 agreed an investment of £18.75m in increasing and improving specialist provision for children with SEND and for places at the Pupil Referral Units. (The Cabinet Report is attached as Appendix A)

- 5.30 Attached as Appendices B and C are a set of summary table showing the most recent statistics (January 2016 DfE Statistical release) for attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, showing Slough SEND pupil performance compared to the England and the South East regional averages. This shows a very positive picture of pupils attending Slough schools doing better than either average.

External inspection

- 5.31 In May 2016, the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted launched a new framework for the inspection of SEND. This is not a service inspection but an inspection of the effectiveness of all organisations in an area in implementing the SEND Reforms since September 2014. This includes services managed by SBC; those managed by the Trust; the role of the Clinical Commissioning Group in commissioning to meet SEND health needs and will also involve visits (NOT inspections) to individual schools, or early years' settings or colleges or all three. There is no 'scored' judgement from this inspection, simply a detailed letter highlighting what works well and what needs further development. There is single-word summary judgement either – e.g. Good/Inadequate/Requires Improvement. Locally, Hillingdon and Surrey have had an Area Inspection in the last 12 months.
- 5.32 Work is ongoing in Slough to build on the excellent working relationship between Trust-led SEND services and those led by SBC; on further developing the positive links with and involvement of the Parent Carer Forum (Special Voices) in all areas of SEND work; new links and formal agreements are now in place between SBC, the Trust and the East Berkshire Group of CCGs on their role and involvement in SEND; links, communications and funding issues between the Trust and all schools in Slough with high-level SEND pupils have improved significantly since January 2016; new EHCP template has been successfully launched and endorsed by the DfE; conversion to EHCPs for 2016's Year 11 pupils and all those over 16 in further education was completed and work to 'convert' all remaining Statements of SEN into EHC Plans remains a high priority for the SEND Service as Statements cease to exist on March 31st 2018.
- 5.33 Key areas to work on in 2017 include the 'Employment is Everyone's Business' Action Plan to improve supported employment, apprenticeship and internship opportunities for young people with SEND (having made a positive start in 2016 with the pilot supported apprenticeships programme at Heathrow Academy – thank to Elevate Slough). Work is also need to match the positive relationship in Slough between services and parent carers and the involvement and engagement of young people in their own right in service planning, delivery and feedback for SEND.

6. Comments of Other Committees

The information in this report has not been discussed by another committee.

7. Conclusion

It is suggested that if Members would like a fuller briefer on SEND Area Inspection, this should be the subject a separate detailed report to a future meeting

8. **Appendices Attached**

- 'A' - Cabinet Report, 20th March 2017
Special Education Needs and Pupil Referral Unit Expansion
- 'B' - SEND attainment, Key Stage 2
- 'C' - SEND attainment, Key Stage 4
- 'D' - SEND specialist provision in Slough

9. **Background Papers**

Cabinet papers and minutes, 20th March 2017