

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE		
Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services and Safeguarding)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Diane Roscoe	Education	October 2023

OFSTED Local Area Inspection preparation

A series of webinars were held for all partners to gain an understanding of the process, where we were at and what they might expect as partners. Nearly 200 people attended and indications from pre and post questionnaires indicated 98% felt they had an understanding of the revised SEND inspection approach. 94.83% felt they were prepared for the inspection process.

The new governance structure has now been implemented with much closer partnership working across health, social care and education spearheaded by the leadership group which will meet on a monthly basis.

DBV

The DBV grant has been agreed and we are waiting the grant funds. Recruitment has begun on the identified posts across early years and inclusion. We continue to have regular meetings with the DBV team to ensure we are on track with their expectations.

SEND

Compliance with the 20 week timeframe for education, health care (EHC) Assessments currently sits at 39.2% for the year. September monthly figure was 50% and this has been a progressive increase since June 2023. The current backlog of cases is 110, this is an increase since the last update due to the team focusing on the 518 statutory amends we need to make for those children and young people in transition year groups. Four new SEN Casework Officers have started and there are a further five to start by January 2024. The Interim Head of Service for SEND and Inclusion is now in place and the Interim Team Manager SEND. One permanent Senior Casework Officer and an Interim Senior Casework Officer are also in post.

Inclusion

Inclusion strategy session has been delivered and the priorities, vision and principles completed. Follow up sessions will be held. Key stakeholders gave positive feedback of a clear vision and a strong commitment for all to drive change forward. Further days booked in for Autumn Term and table allocated at the Local Offer Live event to gain parent and carers views on Inclusion.

A briefing was delivered to headteachers on adaptive teaching and our offer. All 8 headteachers who signed up, have contacted the Inclusion Consultants for additional training and support.

New to SENCO training has started and feedback has been extremely positive as new SENCOs feel supported and know where to access further support.

The autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) team SEND surgeries have great take up with schools so far with high levels of engagement and positive feedback.

Restorative practice with Leeds training has commenced with face-to-face sessions and head teachers have date planned in for emersion day (8 schools).

Inclusion Consultants (SEND/ASD) and early years (EY) team are part of the core offer for Team Around the School and have begun with their initial meetings including coffee mornings.

Funding for exceptional circumstances and group funding panels have been reorganised and are working effectively offering supportive challenge.

Schools causing concern (SCC) OFSTED reports are positive on inclusion and reference to LA and school partnership documented during feedback.

School Improvement

New Headteachers attended a welcome briefing in October where they were introduced to LA staff and discussed their priorities for the coming year.

Keep in touch (KIT) priority meetings between schools and their professional partner have begun; mentor training has been provided for professional partners and headteacher mentors, as well as a termly update.

Sefton Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) facilitated the Jewish Living Exhibition at the Formby PDC. Following the launch attended by local councillors and community representatives, schools attended a range of workshops up to the end of term.

The 2023 September Guarantee school leavers has been met with year 11 offers of learning at 98.8% and year 12 at 95%. The process for the confirmation of actual starts has now started. An application for "Gaps in Provision" funding is currently being made to the D for E in response to the removal of the Traineeship programme and the change in age profile for the Talent Match programme. Schools are still making steady progress in achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks. Starts on Supported Internships are now near to pre pandemic levels.

Early Years

The Early Years Graduated Approach and Tool kit have been successfully launched. The launch days have been held for all practitioners in the private, voluntary and maintained sector and there have been launch events for professionals. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

We continue to support both PVI and Schools in terms of quality improvement. Schools in the OFSTED window receive a Health Check from the Early Years Team leader and private, voluntary, independent (PVI) are supported to review the quality of provision using the quality improvement tool on an annual basis – this then identifies the level of support required from quality improvement officers (QIOs) and Early Years Quality Improvement. 100% of our private and voluntary sector are graded Good or Outstanding.

In order to prepare for the changes to the Early Years entitlements we have been liaising with other LAs across the Liverpool City Region (LCR), DFE and our own Early Years sector to create an action plan in preparation for the roll out of the increase in hours and expansion to children aged 9 months plus. We have been attending baby and toddler groups to speak to parents and gather information on their views of the increased hours. A report has been written to identify the possible impact of the changes within the EY service – once the funding rates and LA support package has been announced the report will be released and shared with strategic LA members and cabinet.

The Early Years team work closely with the inclusion service on delivering better values. The action plan has been created collaboratively with the inclusion team to ensure that it has the most impact on the service. We have agreement for the DBV plans to be embedded, therefore we will be recruiting to the posts of Inclusion consultants and Early intervention officers in the new year.

Our sufficiency report from June 2023 has been reviewed by cabinet and Director of Children's Services. This will be available to providers and parents on the Sefton website. We are carrying out termly sufficiency monitoring to gain a picture of sufficiency of childcare on a more regular basis. This will support our understanding of the impact and steps needed to be taken to ensure the smooth roll out of the increase in entitlements from April 2024.

Virtual School

The summer school for unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC) at Hugh Baird was a success, and we have agreed a new English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) course will start in September, enabling young asylum seekers in Year 11 to go to college.

Pleasing Year 13 results, with 2 young people going on to do degrees, one doing a high-level apprenticeship and one doing a degree access course. Still analysing Year 11 results.

Further Education (FE) Partnership launch was a success with a range of stakeholders in attendance. Care experienced representatives from each college spoke at the event and senior leaders from all 7 colleges signed the agreement.

Regular surgeries are held in Magdalen House by Tabby Walker Simmonds for Social Workers to offer advice, guidance and support with education. The take up is slow. However, Tabby is receiving email and phone enquires and is in contact with schools. Tool Kits and Educational advice and Guidance documents are being generated incorporating most recent DfE guidance and research, in collaboration with other teams (SEN/EP/Attendance) to support SWs in educational meetings.

A project between Sefton Virtual School, Edge Hill University and Zing Performance is underway in its pilot wave (4 schools), with a full launch to all schools planned for 8th November 2023. The aim is to ensure that all Sefton children with social care support have access to 2 terms of cerebellar exercises, which current research demonstrates enhances learning potential: reduces anxiety, enhances concentration and supports the brain activity required to develop reading skills. The overall objective

is to provide a graduated response to needs which result from trauma, improving children's attainment and subsequent life chances, to reduce pressure on services and reduce the number of children with SEN in the Youth Justice system.

Electronic personal education plan (PEPs) have improved. This year, all young people from 16-18 (or Year 13 if in education) will have a PEP. There is an adapted PEP for those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Training sessions for both schools and social care have been calendared for the academic year for both school age and Post 16 PEPs.

Early Years PEPs will roll out from January. We are currently in the implementation phase of this development.

A greater emphasis has been placed on multi-agency working with audits taking place for key vulnerable cohorts of children across the virtual school, social care and health. These audits enable key professionals to discuss common threads and aim to improve practice.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

This half term we have seen an improvement in attendance across the primary and secondary sector. The schools are putting into place attendance support plans. They are continuing to use the first day response initiative for children with a social worker.

Sefton has invested in early support to undertake "whole family working"

We continue to have termly meetings with schools identifying and discussing children who are severely persistently absent from school.

The reduced education provision guidance has been updated to support the reintegration of children returning to school with medical and other associated issues.

We are currently setting up an Education Planning Group for Children who are supported by the Youth Offending Team

EXCLUSIONS

In the first half term there have been 15 permanent exclusions from Sefton Schools. This is exceptionally high. We are seeing permanent exclusions from schools who do not normally exclude.

There is also a significant increase in younger children including those in reception. We will be putting a plan into place to address this on 3rd November 2023

The transfer protocol panel meeting where all schools are represented from the secondary sector has oversight of the managed moves across. There is representation on the primary panel by headteachers across 3 localities. Inclusion consultants work closely with schools trying to prevent exclusions.