

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 November 2006

Special Educational Needs – Strategy Monitoring Board

Purpose of Report

1. This report relates to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy Monitoring Board meeting that took place on 17 October 2006.

Background

2. The SEN Strategy Monitoring Board meets three times a year. It confirms, annually, SEN development priorities and monitors the impact and implementation of SEN development activity.
3. A wide range of SEN information, including the SEN Strategy document, is available on the County Council website. To access the information on the left hand side of the home page click on any of Community and Living, Education and Learning, Health and Social Care, or, Leisure and Culture, and then select Special Educational Needs from the lists displayed. Hard copies of documents are also available on request from Liz Hummerston ex.3854.

Strategy Overview

4. The Board received a presentation on the SEN Strategy. This linked the SEN Strategy to other plans, described links between the fourteen current strategy areas, and proposed adjustments to the structure of the Strategy in 07-08. The Board thanked Julie le Masurier for the presentation and agreed the adjustments to the structure of the Strategy in 07-08.

Monitoring the Strategy

5. The Board considered progress in the implementation of the current SEN Strategy plan from April up to the end of July 06. A summary report is attached which includes: the percentage completion of the actions within each area of development activity; an indication of whether actions were on target to meet the planned timescales; and brief comments.
6. Three areas within the Strategy were identified by the Board for focus at the next meeting: Training, SEN provision in the Secondary Phase (standing item), and Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development (standing item).

7. The sixteen outcomes of the SEN Strategy are the means by which long term progress towards Wiltshire's six key objectives for SEN are measured. They are monitored at each Board meeting. Information about different outcomes becomes available at different points in the year. At this point in the year new information becomes available for three outcomes:

Updated Outcomes	04-05	05-06	Comment
Access to primary Specialist Learning Centres (complex needs)	93%	100%	All primary schools now have a nominated Specialist Learning Centres (complex needs). The Board has requested that this outcome should be replaced by a new measure about the usage of the centres.
Percentage of SEN funds delegated to schools	38%	41%	This shows an increase and it is at its highest level since this measure was introduced. 41% is just over £15m of the nearly £37m of SEN funds.

A new outcome

Ofsted evaluations of the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in Wiltshire schools Sep 05 – July 06.

Grade	Primary schools	Secondary schools
1 Outstanding	2	
2 Good	21	4
3 Satisfactory	21	
4 Inadequate	5	
Total	49	4

No figures are currently available to compare Wiltshire schools with those in other authorities. The five schools where progress of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities was inadequate were also judged inadequate in all other aspects considered in the inspections and the LA is working with these schools i.e. no school was judged to be inadequate for children with learning difficulties and disabilities that was satisfactory, or better, in other respects.

8. Three development areas had been identified for specific consideration at this meeting: Communication, the Secondary Phase, and Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development. Background reports for these areas were circulated in advance and key officers were present to describe progress and answer questions.
9. **Communication:** The Board heard how effective communication about SEN supports: access to services; clarity and increased trust; and appropriate service developments. The Board received a live demonstration of SEN elements of the County Council website. The information provided on our website has been commended by ACE (the Advisory Centre for Education) and Wiltshire is quoted as an example of good practice in a guide for local authorities. Further development of the website is to be undertaken. A wide range of leaflets has been planned in conjunction with SENSS, the Parent Partnership Service. The first seven leaflets have been published and are in use. Typing 'SEN leaflets' into the search engine Google takes people directly to the leaflets on the Wiltshire County Council website. A newsletter is produced three times a year, eight have been published so far. It is circulated across the Department, to all schools and to a wide range of other stakeholders. The content describes SEN developments and provides contact details so that fuller information can be accessed, questions raised and views given. The SEN Parents' Forum is another joint venture with SENSS. It will take place twice a year, the first time being in November 2006. Before each SEN Parents' Forum there are area meetings when questions are prioritized to be answered at the Forum by senior staff who are responsible for children's services. The questions and answers will be widely circulated following the Forum to improve shared understanding and inform future developments. The Board also heard that although there are a number of positive ongoing actions in the area of communication this is still an aspect of SEN development activity that requires further substantial attention and actions to be taken throughout 07-08 are already being planned e.g. position statements for different forms of special educational need.
10. **Secondary Phase:** Following the Board's recommendation, at the May 06 meeting, that developments relating to the current specific learning difficulties (SpLD) centres should focus on pupils vulnerable to underachievement and link with other secondary specific developments such as provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder/social and communication disorder (ASD/SCD) proposals for taking this forward were drafted and shared with the Wiltshire Association for Secondary and Special Schools (WASSH) in September. The headteachers endorsed the potential re-designation of existing SpLD centres and the establishment of specialist centres/provision in all non-selective mainstream secondary schools for pupils with SpLD, moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and ASD/SCD. A group of officers and secondary school staff are to work in partnership, from October 19, to draw up a detailed proposal for this further development of secondary SEN provision. The detailed proposal will include: training plans, capital requirements, funding, admission arrangements, capacity, and outreach. The detailed proposal will then be

shared with secondary headteachers for their further consideration, via WASSH and Schools Forum. The Board viewed this update very positively.

11. Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development (BESD): A range of activity was described in this update for the Board. The Behaviour and Attendance Strategy document is now available for consultation, it includes exclusion, attendance, transition, behaviour for learning and emotional literacy. The first phase of the consultation will be within the Department, followed by a consultation process with Primary Heads Forum and WASSH. Linked to the Behaviour & Attendance Strategy, work continues with secondary head representatives and Special Schools on secondary developments and proposals to progress the BESD strategy. This is nearing a final version, which will be taken to WASSH. It is anticipated that this consultative document will be available for the next Board meeting. The feasibility study regarding the move of the Lynx Primary Behaviour Support provision is complete. It is anticipated that Lynx will move to the Downland School site for January 2007. This will have various benefits including support networks on site. The longitudinal evaluation of previous Calne SPEL cohorts is now underway and will be available to inform future thinking in respect of SPEL provision. On completion of this evaluation, it will be crucial to work with primary heads in respect of future SPEL provision, linked to financial delegation. The Young People's Support Service continues to work closely with the West Wilts Federation, the North Wilts secondary heads group and secondary headteachers in the South in respect of inclusion, drawing on prevention and early intervention to avoid exclusion. The Board were pleased to hear that the rate of effective permanent exclusions across all Wiltshire schools has reduced by 17% (academic years 04/05 89, 05/06 74 – target by 08 is 69) and that attendance rates have improved with Wiltshire outperforming authorities across the South West.

12. The next meeting will take place on 30 January 2007. It will consider progress on the SEN Strategy up to the end of December 06 and the priorities for SEN developments for 07-10, with particular emphasis upon actions to be taken in 07-08.

Proposal

13. The Committee is asked to note the report.

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