Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
Thursday 13th November 2008

PRIMARY BEHAVIOUR SERVICE – STRATEGY

Purpose of the Report

1   To inform Scrutiny members of the:

- Strategic direction of the Primary Behaviour Service
- Progress on the implementation of the revised service model
- Budgetary implications with reference to 'savings' as a consequence of early intervention.

Background

2   An independent review of the Primary Behaviour Support Service was commissioned by the SEN Strategic Monitoring Board in 2007. The final report of the review was made available to all primary head teachers and other stakeholders in October 2007.

3   In response to the review and to progress recommendations, a Primary Behaviour Strategy Working Group was established. The group has Head Teacher representation from primary schools across Wiltshire, is chaired by a Head Teacher and supported by Local Authority officers.

4   Progress on the work of this group has been regularly reported to the SEN and Social Deprivation Group with papers then going to Schools' Forum; the most recent report was presented to Schools' Forum on 25 September 2008.

Progress

5   Working with Head Teachers, the following progress has been made:

(i)   Completion of a Service Specification (Appendix 1)

(ii)   A service menu has been agreed (Appendix 1)

(iii)   Following consideration of data available in respect of deprivation factors, alongside the geographical distribution of schools, and, Wiltshire's twenty Community Areas, the preferred model for service delivery is thirteen local hubs (Appendix 2).

(iv)   The pupil referral route is being clarified to ensure different aspects of provision inter-relate within the service model.

(v)   The Strategic Manager for the service, Mary Smith, a former Wiltshire Head Teacher, took up post from 1 September 2008. This is not an additional post as it replaces the previous Head of Service Post.

6   The new service is committed to early intervention working with schools and other professionals to identify and meet needs at the earliest opportunity. This includes, where appropriate, engaging with parents and using the well proven intervention model of child, home, school – formerly used by SpEL, available in only two parts of the county – in order to effect change and improve outcomes.

7   The aim is to have the new service fully operational across the whole of Wiltshire from September 2009 ensuring all primary school children across the County have access to equitable support. The report to Schools' Forum on 25 September identified the additional staff required to provide an effective service in each of the 13 hubs and working closely with schools to enable the effective delivery of early intervention as per the service menu of services and service qualification.

        The necessary additional resources are:

5 FTE Qualified teachers	£225,000
2 Teaching Assistants	£ 40,500
Support costs inc travel	£ 37,500
	£303.000

8   The above increase in staffing would enable each hub to have the equivalent   of   0.6 FTE teacher and a teaching assistant. Three areas of Wiltshire have a higher level of need – Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury – these areas will receive a higher level of staffing.

9   Schools' Forum deferred reaching a decision until the 09-10 budget is more clearly known but did agree to an additional £50,000 be allocated to the base budget used to increase staffing. The £303k is in addition to this sum.

Future Savings

10   The strategy and model of delivery has been informed by research from Southampton University and a more recent internal longitudinal study on the impact of the SpEL model on the medium term positive outcomes for children, parents and schools. Other research further supports the early intervention model (see Appendix 5) (Ref: *"Evaluation of Behaviour and Education Support Teams" Halsey K., Gulliver C., Johnson A., Martin K., and Kinder K. [National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)], "What are effective strategies to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) in mainstream primary schools? Finding from a systematic review of research" Evans J., Harden A., Thomas J., [Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs – Volume 4 – Number 1 – 2004] and "Managing Exclusions in Worcestershire – report of the Scrutiny Task Group" Worcestershire County Council, April 2007).*

11   There is evidence from the SpEL evaluation and other research that timely intervention at KS1 and 2 will enable children and their parents to remain engaged in learning. This will have consequences in improved attainment and reducing both fixed and permanent exclusions, substantially reduce attendance issues and involvement in criminal activity.

12   Additional risks of unmet need at an early stage include the necessity of undertaking Statutory Special Educational Need Assessments, placements in special school provision and more children and young people needing to be accommodated because of the breakdown of school placements contributing to family difficulties.

13   Costs associated with the above can only be indicative but tracking through case scenarios begins to identify costs over the years of compulsory education. See Appendix 3.

Impact

14 At the present time there is insufficient capacity in the Behaviour Support Service (BSS). The Review of the Primary Behaviour Service in 2007 identified the limited capacity of the service to make significant impact. Although Schools' Forum agreed (in September 2008) an additional £50k into the base budget for the service, capacity to support 13 hubs is dependent on receiving the additional £303k. Given the investment to implement the 13 hub model, and working in partnership with schools and other professionals, the Behaviour Support Service will be able to evidence improved outcomes for children.

15 If the Behaviour Support Service is provided with the funding to enable it to make a significant impact in local areas, it will be possible to quickly identify the children in need in that local area and provide the appropriate support. BSS will be able to signpost families on to other providers at an early stage of intervention. BSS will know the school and their communities well and be able to identify when a child is in need of early interventions and what those interventions should be.

It is well documented that early intervention will mean not only an improvement in the primary stages but also secondary and the long term life chances. It is proven that problems identified and addressed early can prevent further costly interventions. Primary Head Teachers report that for the most vulnerable children, their needs are becoming more complex and therefore more challenging to meet in mainstream school.

In making an impact for the child, there will be consequent 'savings' for other service providers who might otherwise be required to provide intervention/services eg Youth Offending, Social Care, etc.

16 The following targets have been set for the 13 hub service:

Head teachers will be undertaking an audit of current unmet needs in order to benchmark and evidence reduced need annually assuming the 13 hub model proceeds.

	09/10	10/11
Fixed term exclusions reduction	200	180
Permanent exclusions	15	10

See Appendix 4.

17 Head teachers will be undertaking an audit of current unmet needs in order to benchmark and evidence reduced need on an annual basis assuming the 13 hub model proceeds.

Conclusion

To note the strategic direction of the development of the Primary Behaviour Service and the progress made toward implementing the new service model.

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PROPOSED

Primary Behaviour Support Service Specification

1. *What is this service?*

This service specification describes the work of the Primary Behaviour Support Service, funded through Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG), to support primary schools in meeting the needs of pupils, 'who demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties, who are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration; those with immature social skills; and those presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex special needs', SEN Code of Practice 7:60. The service provides knowledge and skills generally unavailable in mainstream primary schools, maintaining a high level of credibility it provides advice rooted in practical experience.

The service is the first point of contact for primary schools in relation to behavioural difficulties at whole school and individual level. The service promotes early intervention but works with the full primary age range across all levels of need. Some aspects of provision relate to whole school level work whilst other activities focus more on groups and individual pupils.

The type and level of provision is equitable across Wiltshire. Primary Behaviour Support staff (teachers and teaching assistants) are allocated to groups of schools, called clusters. The cluster arrangements include all primary schools and reflect the county's twenty community areas. Primary Behaviour Support staff develop strong relationships with the schools in their cluster area with the aim of building on existing strengths and skills within school to support effective inclusion and high levels of attainment.

2. *How is this service organised?*

Leading the ongoing development and performance management of the Primary Behaviour Support Service is carried out across the county by the Behaviour Support Service Strategic Manager. The day-to-day management is undertaken by senior members of the service and head teachers.

The service is located in hubs that serve clusters of schools that are based on one or more of Wiltshire's community areas. It works to common service standards, providing a county wide equitable service. Resources for each cluster are identified according to measured levels of need. These are subject to review and adjustment if appropriate. Whenever possible the service is based within a school in the cluster.

Within each cluster the service liaises about activity, impact and priorities with the cluster group lead head teacher, representatives of cluster schools, community partners and other LA services. Formal written reports include information on level and type of activity.

The cluster based provision has links to a short term intensive service for a small number of pupils.

There is a steering group for the service as a whole made up of representatives of each hub, special school representatives, the Strategic Manager, members of the Primary Behaviour Support Service and senior Local Authority staff.

This meets twice a year to consider the service's activity, impact (including benchmarking), staffing, future priorities and the resources required, in total and between the areas served by

each hub. The steering group confirms and adjusts, as appropriate, the performance measures for the service.

The steering group reports to Primary Heads Forum, Schools Forum and management groups within the LA e.g. the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy Group. The strategic manager also provides summary reports about the service for all primary schools.

3. *What does this service provide?*

To meet the needs of different schools and individuals the Primary Behaviour Support Service works in a variety of ways. Schools select from the menu:

COMMUNITY BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT SERVICE MENU

1. Coaching and mentoring through demonstration and advice on effective strategies to build staff expertise
    o Observation of individual school staff members with feedback
    o BST and class teacher - paired teaching
    o BST or SBA and Class teacher or TA working together with groups or whole class
    o SBA and/or BST running groups in hub school to demonstrate good practice
    o SBA and/or BST running groups in individual schools

2. Access for school staff to informal consultation via to a weekly surgery in the hub school to reflect, share concerns and receive appropriate assistance including advice on processes and the range of services available to schools.
    o Appointment system

3. A tailored range of guidance about assessment, appropriate strategies, including whole school policy and approaches, which enables schools to develop their practice.
    o Information from DCSF guidance and examples of good practice re whole school policy
    o Development of BSS Toolkit in line with Wiltshire's Indicators and Provision Document
    o INSET for schools

4. Whole School Behaviour Audit to inform and support SEF activity.

5. Specialist knowledge to schools
    o Current key developments in SEBD
    o Information of best practice and examples within Wiltshire
    o Advice on the range of provision and training opportunities
    o Advice on Wiltshire procedures and protocols with relation to Statements for SEN (Behaviour), Exclusions, NPAs, PSPs and PEARs

6. Direct support to individual pupils.
    o Assessment of pupil need which could include observation and feedback
    o 1 to 1 work on managing feelings – anger, loss, change; transition;
    o 1 to 1 work on learning to learn - organisational skills, listening skills, independent learning skills, managing transition
    o 1 to 1 mentoring
    o 1 to 1 work leading to small group work
    o In-class support
    o Playground support – break and lunchtimes

7. Pupil group work to enhance social skills including SEAL approaches.
    - Assessment of pupil need
    - Group work on managing feelings
    - Group work on learning to learn
    - Group work on social skills – co-operation, listening skills, turn taking, rules, expectations and boundaries
    - Group work on transition
    - SEAL small group work

8. Monitoring pupils after direct support has finished enabling proactive transitional support between classes, schools or Key Stage phases.
    - Discussions with school staff
    - Advice, signposting or direct work (see points 6 & 7)

9. Support with transitions planning from early years and into secondary provision.
    - Liaison with appropriate professionals – School Start, Early Years SENCOs, YPSS, Year 7 Co-ordinator

10. Attendance at Primary Emergency Annual Reviews (PEARS).

11. Co-ordinated and/or collaborative working with other specialists
    - Pupil has learning and physical needs involving co-ordinated work with, Behaviour Support, Educational Psychology, Learning Support and Physical Impairment Services
    - Parent Support group collaboratively run by SBA and Family Support Worker

12. Brokerage of provision between schools in the hub.
    - Surgery hub meetings

13. Working with the hub, special school and other services to identify pupils who would benefit from short term intensive provision.
    - Multi agency panel hub meeting

14. Working with the hub, special school and other services to facilitate the re-integration of pupils who have received short term intensive provision.
    - Support arrangements and shared plan co-ordinated by Behaviour Support

15. Support for parents
    - Direct delivery of parent groups through Wiltshire's Extended Schools agenda
    - Surgeries and, if appropriate, home visits – advice on strategies; signposting to groups or other agencies
    - Promoting communication with schools e.g. via Family Link Workers

4. *What is the impact of this service?*

Impact is monitored and evaluated at cluster level and county wide. The Behaviour Support Service Strategic Manager systematically gathers information on outcomes for pupils – progress, attainment, achievement, attendance.
An annual audit is undertaken.

As a result of the work of the Primary Behaviour Support Service the following will be evidenced:

- Reduced levels of identified unacceptable behaviours, increased levels of positive behaviours and increased teacher confidence in meeting pupil needs.
- Reduced number of permanently excluded pupils.
- Reduction number of days lost due to temporary exclusions.
- Use of out-county independent special schools for primary age pupils kept very low.
- Improved attendance and attainment outcomes at the end of KS2 and KS3 for all pupils who have received a service.
- Positive pupil views/feedback.
- Positive parent/carers' views/feedback.
- Positive schools' views/feedback.

5. *How do pupils, parents/carers and schools know about this service and what it provides?*

Pupils are told x in X way when x, y and z happening
Parents/carers general information e.g. website, parents' service and specific information xyz when the service working with their child.
Key to the effectiveness of the service is maintaining strong relationships with all the hub schools in each cluster e.g. attending head group meetings and SENCO meetings, shared training for cluster schools. Behaviour Support Service Staff will visit every school at least once a year. The strategic manager provides reports about the service for all primary schools throughout the year and summary reports at least twice a year. The service also takes part in other communication systems such as the SENCO networks and Primary Heads' Forum Meetings.

Hub Model

1   At Primary Strategy Working Group meetings it has been agreed that:

  • the amount of service available should be proportionate to the level of need in the schools in each area of the county
  • the level of need should be calculated by the amount of social need below the national average level
  • in the move to one council for Wiltshire, in line with all other services, the arrangements made should not divide any of Wiltshire's twenty community areas.

2   The need for each of the twenty community areas is set out below. (Eagle eyed head teacher representatives who left with a coloured map from the May meeting will note that these numbers are different from those on the maps. The maps were described as draft and were useful for establishing some key ideas around the hub model. However the label 'draft' was accurate as they included secondary and special school pupils and removal of these pupils has a different effect across community areas).

   Primary Phase Need Summary:

Community area	No. of Schools	Total need below national average
Trowbridge	18	1215.2325
Salisbury	14	1096.9992
Chippenham	18	796.4788
Calne	9	483.8457
Tidworth	5	433.3990
Melksham	8	397.5041
Devizes	16	392.7807
Amesbury	16	366.5309
Warminster	12	361.9892
Westbury	7	360.3343
Corsham	8	291.8012
Wootton Bassett	11	248.9290
Marlborough	15	213.7996
Malmesbury	10	133.9898
Downton	12	114.2878
Pewsey	8	102.2582
Bradford	5	85.6066
Wilton	3	81.5608
Mere	3	80.0601
Tisbury	5	44.6547
		7302.0422

3   Taking into account the variable level of need and the geography of the county it is possible to group the new service in different ways. Single community areas, or groups of them, would be hubs.

   Each hub needs to have an appropriate level of provision for the need in the area. At the last meeting there was discussion of twelve hubs for the service, twelve was the 'working number' that helped to establish principles and the group hoped that it would

be possible to have hubs that were of varying geographical size but had equal amounts of resources. As agreed further work has been undertaken on possible hub arrangements, see below. In these two example alternatives the aim is to provide coverage of large geographical areas with lower level needs whilst at the same time providing proportionate service coverage across the county. To achieve this all hubs in these models do not have the same level of resourcing.

- Ten hub model:

This model requires the division of the total service into fifteen parts – each part   being equal to 6.7% of the total service. Some hubs would have double or triple the amount of resources according to the level of need in the area.   Hubs covering a large geographical area could potentially run a satellite model for some functions eg weekly surgeries in more than one location for the Salisbury, Wilton, Downton and Amesbury hub.

Possible hub grouping	Proportion of service	
Bradford on Avon and Melksham	$^1/_{15}$	6.7%
Calne	$^1/_{15}$	6.7%
Chippenham and Corsham	$^2/_{15}$	13.4%
Devizes	$^1/_{15}$	6.7%
Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett	$^1/_{15}$	6.7%
Marlborough and Pewsey	$^1/_{15}$	6.7%
Salisbury, Wilton, Downton and Amesbury	$^3/_{15} = ^1/_5$	20%
Tidworth	$^1/_{15}$	6.7%
Trowbridge and Westbury	$^3/_{15} = ^1/_5$	20%
Warminster, Mere and Tisbury	$^1/_{15}$	6.7%

- Thirteen hub model:

This model requires the division of the total service into twenty parts – each part   being equal to 5% of the total service. The larger number of hubs means that more of them relate to individual community areas. To match provision to need some of the hubs would require a slightly higher level of service and this is indicated by the word 'plus'.

Possible hub grouping	Proportion of service	
Amesbury	$^1/_{20}$	5%
Calne	$^1/_{20}$	5% plus
Chippenham	$^2/_{20} = ^1/_{10}$	10%
Corsham and Bradford on Avon	$^1/_{20}$	5%
Devizes	$^1/_{20}$	5%
Malmesbury and Wootton Bassett	$^1/_{20}$	5%
Marlborough and Pewsey	$^1/_{20}$	5%
Melksham	$^1/_{20}$	5%
Salisbury, Wilton and Downton	$^3/_{20}$	15% plus
Tidworth	$^1/_{20}$	5% plus
Trowbridge	$^3/_{20}$	15% plus
Warminster, Mere and Tisbury	$^1/_{20}$	5% plus
Westbury	$^1/_{20}$	5%

4   There are potentially many other ways in which the service could be grouped. This will be discussed at the meeting on 4 July.

Child 'A', aged 7 years, was very close to permanent exclusion and her parents were feeling fairly desperate in terms of their ability to meet her needs and support her in education. 'A' presented as reluctant to follow an adult's instruction, either parent or teacher, when it was something that she had decided that she did not want to do. She appeared to be motivated by her own agenda and resenting adult authority figures. At home she was reported to be jealous of her sibling. The school referred child 'A' to the Behaviour Support Service as they were concerned that they were moving toward an exclusion situation with her.

Effective interventions by the Behaviour Support Service led to a reduced risk of exclusion. Whilst child 'A' continues to have some ongoing concerns, at the conclusion of Primary Behaviour Support intervention she remained in school and a follow-up 12 months later confirmed that she had not been subject to exclusions and that her family life had much improved. Through the involvement of the Primary Behaviour Support Service, Mental Health Services were contacted and engaged with the child and family.

Should it not have been possible for Behaviour Support Service to become involved with this child before the behaviours had escalated, then it is likely that the family would have undergone further difficulties. Child 'A' would have been excluded from school and there would have been further needs requiring the involvement of additional services throughout child 'A's years within statutory education. 'Savings' could therefore be identified as avoiding permanent exclusion, avoiding family break-down, avoiding offending behaviour.

Child 'B' was referred to the Behaviour Support Service at the time of the Statutory Assessment process. At this time child 'B' presented as a child with complex needs. There were concerns in respect of her attachment; she appeared to display different personalities or roles of behaviour at different times eg behaving as a dog, she appeared to have a lack of empathy with her peers and family members and appeared to have some gender confusion - all this indicating the need for a multi-agency approach.

The Behaviour Support Service supported the family through the Statutory Assessment process and within this, other agencies also became involved, specifically specialist CAMHS. Although the child was permanently excluded, she received support from the Primary Tuition Service and was supported and enabled to have a Fresh Start at a new school, which to date is continuing to be successful.

In this instance the school delayed making a referral to the Behaviour Support Service due to capacity issues within the service. Had this not been the case and Behaviour Support had been involved with the child earlier, appropriate interventions might have been in place to avoid a Statutory Assessment and the exclusion.

'Savings' therefore include Statutory Assessment costs, costs of permanent exclusion and Fresh Start. Without the intervention of Behaviour Support Service and other services, this child might well have moved into offending behaviour, the need for special school provision, family break-down and long-term specialist mental health support. On an individual level for this child, this undoubtedly would have led to her social exclusion and problems taking her into her adult life.

Exclusions – number of actual primary aged pupils over the last three years

Year	Permanent exclusions by HTs	Effective exclusions	Fixed term
05/06	8	6	200
06/07	15	12	224
07/08	19	14	218

Every child who is excluded from school suffers severe damage to their self-esteem. The families feel they have failed, the child feels a failure. With sufficient service available, a child who begins to be unable to cope can become supported, thus preventing a downward spiral.

Exclusions – estimated numbers of primary aged pupils over the next three years **assuming no increase in service provision**

Year	Permanent exclusions	Fixed term
09/10	23	224
10/11	27	230
11/12	31	236

Exclusions – estimated numbers of primary aged pupils over the next three years (with 13 hub model) based **on increase** in service provision

With sufficient intervention it is anticipated that over the next few years the number of pupils being excluded would decrease

Year	Permanent exclusions	Fixed term
9/10	15	200
10/11	10	180
11/12	7	160

Youth Offending Service – Involvement with Primary Aged Pupils

Over the last 3 years in Wiltshire County Council there have been 23 Youth Offending Service interventions. These include: burglary, arson, common assault and rape.

There have been 103 Police Reprimands which did not lead to Youth Offending Service interventions. These include: motoring offences, theft, arson, having an article with a blade/point in public and assault occasioning actual bodily harm. All the aforementioned offences are actual cases - children whose needs have not been met, for whatever reason, by their families, their schools, their communities and the Local Authority.

References from Research Reports into the impact of early intervention / prevention strategies

"Evaluation of Behaviour and Education Support Teams" Halsey K., Gulliver C., Johnson A., Martin K., and Kinder K. [National Foundation for Educational Research(NFER)]

In 2005, the DFES commissioned the NFER to undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) and their different types of intervention strategies. 20 different BESTs were engaged in this evaluation. Below are some relevant extracts from the NFER's report on this evaluation:

(a) Interviewees were asked to describe the impact of Behaviour and Education Support Team (BEST) intervention on children and young people, in the specific areas of attainment, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.

(b) Of the four areas, direct impact on children's attainment was referenced least by BEST practitioners…….it was felt that impact at the level of social and emotional wellbeing laid the foundations for positive impact on attendance and behaviour, which in turn would lead to improved educational outcomes.

(c) However, examples of positive impact on learning potential were given, including continuity of educational support, supplementary learning support, identification of specific learning, developmental or behavioural difficulties and assessment of special educational needs.

(d) Where group and whole-school work had been carried out by BESTs, this was seen to have impacted positively in terms of an overall improvement in attitudes of pupils (and parents) towards school attendance, and in some cases led to actual improvement.

(e) Regarding individual-level work, perceived impacts of BEST intervention included stabilising challenging behaviour, thus reducing the number of incidents in school, and giving pupils strategies to manage their behaviour and improve their social interactions. In turn this was seen to have led to the prevention of permanent exclusion or reduction in the length and/or frequency of fixed-term exclusions. Several example of positive impact on behaviour were cited. However, it should be acknowledged that, as with attendance, success was seen to be variable with regard to the age of pupils:

> 'With the young age group we are able to say yes, there has been an improvement in behaviour, they are much more settled. What we find in the older group is that some of the issues are deeply embedded and it is really hard to break that down. (Coordinator)'

(f) BEST support was seen to impact on pupil's ability to cope with the transition to secondary school, increasing their overall confidence about the move and thus reducing the risk of emotional and behavioural issues in Year 7.

(g) Finally, regarding the impact on children, a general comment made by a number of practitioners was that, given the often complex needs of the young people they were working with, BEST and school staff had to recognise that the impact might be small in overall terms. However, it was also stressed that the seemingly small steps could make a big difference to the lives of such individuals. Furthermore, while the BEST could not always solve problems, diagnosis of an underlying learning difficulty or facilitating a referral to another agency could be viewed as a successful outcome, in that appropriate support could now be put in place in the long term.

"What are effective strategies to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) in mainstream primary schools? Finding from a systematic review of research" Evans J., Harden A., Thomas J., [Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs – Volume 4 – Number 1 – 2004]

This article describes the processes and findings of a systematic review of research of strategies to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream primary schools. Findings from this review found that 28 studies carried out between 1975 and 1999 had concluded that a number of strategies, based on a range of theoretical frameworks, showed some positive impacts on pupil behaviour. However, this review also highlighted a dearth of good quality research on strategy effectiveness.

"Managing Exclusions in Worcestershire – report of the Scrutiny Task Group" Worcestershire County Council, April 2007

The Education Scrutiny Panel in Worcestershire County Council has been exploring the issue of behaviour support and pupil exclusions for a number of years, making recommendations that the alternatives to exclusion should be explored to make them a last resort and for reintegrating pupils back into mainstream schools as quickly as possible when this is appropriate.

Below are some of the relevant extracts from a report produced from a task group of that Scrutiny Panel in April 2007:

(a) A message that we heard time and again from schools at all levels and in all areas of the county was the importance of early intervention in preventing even greater problems later in a child's life.

(b) Middle and high schools reported to us that they felt that a child's behavioural problems could have been identified in their first years at schools, but that Key Stage 1 teachers may have put these problems down to a child's age or immaturity. It was suggested to us that if behavioural and emotional problems were correctly identified and tackled at an early age many more complex and difficult to resolve problems could be avoided.

(c) This was something that staff in Pupil Referral Units brought to our attention. They suggested to us that very often class teachers in Reception and Year 1 are aware of early indications of a problem, but there is a tendency to 'see how things go', very often waiting until KS2. They felt that an early acknowledgement of potential problems could only be to the long-term benefit of both school and pupil. We also heard from officers at Kirklees Metropolitan Council that they had made a major investment in early intervention in order to reduce the level of exclusions, and permanent exclusions were on course to be reduced to zero.

(d) The key message that we heard most consistently throughout the scrutiny exercise from across the range of people that we spoke to – from schools, PRUs, Local Authority officers and parents/carers – was that early intervention was key to successfully managing poor behaviour and, therefore, reducing the level of exclusions. We strongly believe that the local authority's focus should be in supporting preventative work.

(e) We recommend that the local authority considers ways in which support could be focused on identifying and tackling behavioural problems at an early stage focussing on more formalised outreach work at Foundation Stage KS1 and KS2 with the aim of avoiding more serious problems at a later date.