

12 February 2019		ITEM: 10
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Update		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Malcolm W Taylor, Strategic Lead of Inclusion / Principal Educational Psychologist		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Interim Assistant Director of Learning, Inclusion and Skills		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the services for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. It provides a summary of the Self Evaluation that has been carried out by the Local Authority in conjunction with the CCG to ensure that the key SEND reforms and duties brought in under the Children and Families Act 2014 are being appropriately met.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the self – evaluation of the support for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Thurrock Local Authority has in place an ongoing self-evaluation of the work across Health, Social Care and Education in relation to the SEND responsibilities covered in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014. This statutory guidance covers the key areas of SEN reforms introduced in the Children and Families Act 2014.

2.2 The Local Authority (Children's social care, SEN services, Adults services) has worked closely in co-production with parents and carers, schools, colleges, CCG, Health Providers (NELFT) , and third sector providers to develop a Strategic Vision for SEND across the Local Area and to ensure work is being carried out across all agencies to realise this.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 A highly successful conference SEND Inclusion conference was held in Thurrock in November 2018 to reflect on both National priorities and issues, with contributions from the National Association of Special Educational Needs and from the DfE, and included presentations of outstanding inclusive practice in place across Thurrock. This conference was co –produced with Thurrock’s Parent Carer Forum and worked on the next stage of work under the 6 key Strategic Priorities.
- 3.2 The Local Authority has close and positive working partnerships with the Thurrock Carer Forum (CAPA) and co-chairs the strategic partnership board which brings together the work on SEND across all agencies and settings.
- 3.3 The Local Authority commissioned a Peer Review in 2017 which was previously reported to Children’s Overview and Scrutiny in September 2017 and March 2018 alongside the resulting action plan and update.
- 3.4 The self-evaluation of SEND brings together information from a wide range of partners and agencies and has been developed through a range of consultation co-ordinated through the SEND Strategic Board.

3.5 Key Areas within the Self Evaluation

3.5.1 SEND Population

- 3.5.2 Based on the 2018 Benchmarking report Thurrock has a school population of 28,410, and 4,207 (14.8% children are identified as having special educational needs with 1004 (3.5 %) having a statutory Education Health and Care Plan.
- 3.5.3 The total percentage of pupils with SEN (14.8 %) is in line with National and Regional averages but the split between those with EHC plans and those with SEN (but are at SEN Support), show that Thurrock has comparatively more pupils with EHC plans.
- 3.5.4 There is a particularly high identification of pupils under the category of moderate learning difficulties at Primary school at SEN support and this is being worked on with schools to ensure appropriate categorisation is being used. The most common category for pupils with EHC plans is Autistic Spectrum Disorder in line with the National picture.

3.6 Placement

- 3.6.1 In Thurrock there are proportionally more pupils with EHC plans placed in mainstream Primary and Secondary schools rather than Special Schools in comparison with statistical, regional and national figures. This evidences the high identification of needs of children in school and the commitment to an inclusive education system in Thurrock.

3.6.2 We have high demand for places in both of our special schools and for places in our mainstream resource bases due to their outstanding reputations.

3.7 Participation in Decision Making

3.7.1 There is a strong positive relationship between the Local Parent Carer Forum and the Local Authority with clear examples of co-production in all areas of SEND strategic development.

3.7.2 There are good examples of work carried out in the early years such as the Early Years Panel and the Portage work on children's views as part of an Open University Research project. Feedback from parents on services and collaborative work has led to the development of new services such as the post 19 Autism support and extension of Primary Bases from HI and the new Treetops Special Free School. There are good examples from work across all ages of Children and Young people, being actively involved in their person centred planning meeting leading to their EHC Plan.

3.7.3 Advice is provided to parents/carers clearly through a wide range of activities including the Local Offer web site, the SEND information advice and guidance service, with further advice such as the Social care services directly from the Children and Disabilities members and through the Sunshine centre for Disabled children. Other support is provided from a range of staff including the Early Support Co-ordinator, Preparing for Adulthood Team and additional specialist Personal Advisors as part of Thurrock careers.

3.8 Identifying Children and Young People's Needs

3.8.1 The system for identifying pre-school children who may have SEND is good as evidenced in our Peer Review. There is strong multi-agency working through the early years panel.

3.8.2 The delivery of Education Health and Care Plans within the statutory timescales has improved from a rate of 13% in 2017 to 50.1% in 2018, with the current monthly performance rate now running at 71%. To achieve this, a major review and restructuring of the SEND service has taken place with new performance management and quality assurance processes introduced.

3.8.3 Education Health and Care plan formats have been carefully revised and developed through consultation with all agencies including carers and parents to ensure best practice. There are regular quality assurance workshops to ensure the content of the EHC plans is effective in identifying needs and support arrangements for all children. This process is also supported through the termly SENCo Forums.

3.8.4 Additional work is in place to ensure effective support arrangements are in

place for Children at SEN Support including the application of the Assess/Plan Do/Review process. The Peer Review in 2017 was focussed on SEN Support resulting in an effective Action Plan being completed.

3.9 Making High Quality Provision

3.9.1 Children and Young People (CYP) with Education Health and Care Plans make good progress above National averages at all key stages and have a higher rate than National of being in Education Employment or Training at the end of their schooling. There is clear identification and monitoring of vulnerable groups such as Looked after Children.

3.9.2 Thurrock has outstanding Special Schools (Beacon Hill and Treetops), and Mainstream Resources delivering high quality support to CYP with SEND. The performance of Early Years settings and schools with regard to SEND provision is carefully monitored through analysis of Key Stage data for Children at SEN Support and with EHC plans.

3.10 Transition to Adulthood

3.10.1 There are clear processes to support children to adulthood through the multi-agency Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) process. The work in Colleges supporting students with SEND supported by the Educational Psychology service was identified as a strength in the Peer Review. There is new innovative work taking place to ensure CYP not only make progress as adults but have all opportunities to ensure that they have access to good health support, community engagement and meaningful employment. This has included close work with 3rd sector agencies developing new resources such as the My Life programme, and supported housing schemes to promote independence and community engagement. The use of a multi-agency transitions panel with representation from all children and adults agencies has ensured effective transition work.

3.11 Information advice and Guidance

3.11.1 The Local Authority commissioned Information Advice and Guidance service known as Parent Advisory Team Thurrock, which provides a comprehensive offer of advice and guidance including working closely with other agencies and as a key strategic partner in planning SEND developments.

3.12 The Local Offer

3.12.1 There is a comprehensive local offer in place providing a range of information which is undergoing a process of development with the engagement of all key partners and specific parent and CYP groups to ensure it is easily accessible and that further areas for support are identified.

3.13 Joint Commissioning

3.13.1 There are close working arrangements between Social Care, the CCG and SEN services to ensure an effective child/family centred approach to all areas of SEND are in place. The SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has been produced with the participation of all partners to ensure all areas of need and future development are identified. There are close arrangements through joint panels and processes such as Continuing Care and Transforming Care to ensure the joint commissioning of individual packages of support for children. There is an Integrated Commissioning Strategy in place identifying key areas of joint commissioning.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To provide the Committee with an update.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

N/A

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The areas of activity covered in the SEND self-evaluation contributes directly to the delivery of the Council's statutory duties in relation children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Management Accountant – DSG and Schools

This report covering issues in relation to the support for Children and Young People with SEND includes services which are funded by the Direct School Grant. The effectiveness of this support has a direct impact on the demand for Statutory Assessments of Special Educational Needs, High Needs Support and the consequent financial implications of this.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

The statutory duties in relation to SEND are imposed by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer**

This report covers children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and therefore the arrangements across the local area are in the context of SEND legislation and the Equality Act 2010. The details of the arrangements set out in this report, evidences the way in which the Local Authority in conjunction with other agencies ensures equitable access to resources and protects children and young people with SEND from discrimination

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

N/A

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 - Thurrock Local Area SEND Strategy 2018 – 2020

Report Author:

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Children's Services