
Report of the Chief Executive of Education Leeds

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services)

Date: 5 July 2007

Subject: Development of the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs)

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To brief members of the Scrutiny Board on the progress made in relation to the SILC Strategy with particular reference to the recommendations made following the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) inquiry in 2005/06.
- 1.2. To involve members of the Scrutiny Board in the consultation process in relation to the refreshed Inclusion Strategy which aims to achieve a greater synergy between all key projects, programmes and strategies that have an impact on children with special educational needs, learning, behaviour and disabilities and other vulnerable groups at risk of underachieving.

2. Background

- 2.1. Following Members enquiry into the SILCs, Members of the Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) agreed their final report and made a number of recommendations for action.
- 2.2. Education Leeds responded to the recommendations of that inquiry with an action plan. The plan was approved by Scrutiny Board members on 13th July 2006 and subsequently reviewed for progress against the action plan on 8th March 2007.
- 2.3. Scrutiny Board members agreed that they would ask that the re-constituted board continue to monitor progress and review further information on developments since March 2007.

- 2.4. Part of the agreed future action was that officers would present a progress report in relation to the refreshed Inclusion Strategy of which the SILC Strategy is a key component.

3. The Report

- 3.1. The report summarises action taken since March 2007 against each of the recommendations and highlights, how through the refreshed Inclusion Strategy we aim to bring about the transformational change required for the SILCs to meet their aspirations in partnership with mainstream colleagues; Children's Services and officers across Education Leeds.

- 3.2. **Recommendation 1: That Education Leeds reviews the funding model for the SILCs, to reflect changing patterns of service delivery and the levels of funding required to support them**

An initial audit of the funding model for the SILCs completed in January 2007 indicated the need for a more fundamental review of funding to SILCs; partnership schools and resourced provision. A project initiation document has been agreed as part of the refreshed Inclusion Strategy. An officer has been allocated to lead the project and report back, on action required to secure sustainable future models based on best practice principles, by October 2007. Any recommendations for change will be taken through School's Forum ready for full implementation by April 2008.

- 3.3. **Recommendation 2: That Education Leeds carries out further analysis of the projected future numbers of pupils and their distribution between partnerships and SILC sites, in order to inform further work on funding, accommodation and partnership development.**

A significant part of our focused work over the spring and summer term 2007 has been to gather information on specific numbers educated in SILCs, resourced provision and partnership schools across the city and in areas/localities over the last three years. Available data is being matched to where children and young people live so as to enable us analyse patterns and predict future need. We are presently advertising for an officer to support us with this work and link it to the fundamental review of funding. A dedicated officer has been allocated from access to ensure accurate numbers are reflected in present and future building plans.

- 3.4. **Recommendation 3: That Education Leeds considers the place of partnership models such as Hollybush where specialised SILC units are sited on mainstream campuses within the overall accommodation strategy for the SILCs.**

A key part of our planned work is to collect, analyse, track and monitor progress of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities educated across the system. This will enable us to gain a valuable baseline of progress for all young people that can be further analysed and used to track progress across different settings, including partnership schools. Accurate pupil level data is now available and will be used to analyse trends and demonstrate where pupils are making the best progress. Again this is a key strand within our refreshed Inclusion Strategy.

3.5. Recommendation 4: That the Director of Children's Services and Education Leeds produce clear, co-ordinated and updated information, in a readily accessible manner, to guide parents and professionals through the maze of services for children with special educational needs.

- (a) Amendments have been made to the Children and Families directory and equality, access and disability training has been delivered to the children's information staff. A range of information has been developed through the Early Support Programme and a local information section has been drafted. A proposal to develop a parent partnership website is under consultation.
- (b) Working in partnership with Children's Leeds we have just finalised a parenting strategy that is now out for consultation with all key stakeholders. Further work has been completed to audit and review our existing documentation for parents and will be finalised once consultations for revised models of delivery are agreed for the SILCs and central services. Options for future models of delivery are being consulted upon over the summer and autumn term as part of consultation period for the refreshed Inclusion Strategy. Once these are agreed new documentation will be consulted upon with parents, carers and key stakeholders. Embedding the parenting strategy across Education Leeds is a key project brief within the revised Inclusion Strategy.

3.6. Recommendation 5: That the Director of Children's Services and Education Leeds devise a programme of training/ visits to enable professionals to gain first hand experience of current inclusion practice.

Working in partnership with the SILCs; Leeds University; the National College of School Leadership and the National Strategies team we are devising a comprehensive training programme for staff and professionals across the system that will build capacity and understanding of issues in relation to Inclusion and the skills required to work across Children's Services. Training is seen as a key driver in the revised Inclusion Strategy that underpins the success of much of our future work. A comprehensive training programme is being devised, in partnership with social services and health that will increase opportunities for professional development. Colleagues from the Child Development Centres and other services and agencies are increasingly taking opportunities to visit inclusive settings.

3.7. Recommendation 6: That Education Leeds leads in developing a communications strategy for the SILCs Strategy, to ensure that parents are engaged in the ongoing development of the SILCs and also kept informed of progress and choices in relation to their own child's educational provision.

- (a) Individual SILCs have developed newsletters that are models to build upon in the future. Collectively the SILC Principals are working with the Communications Team to develop this model. A significant project within our revised inclusion strategy is to review our systems and procedures in relation to statutory assessment and placement of pupils with Special Educational Needs. A key element within this is increasing parental choice and involvement. Proposals for a revised service will be finalised by the end of June that will focus on increased parental participation, choice and preference. A Choice Adviser and Parent Support Advisers have been appointed to support parents that are experiencing difficulties choosing the most appropriate school for their children. Practice developed across Leeds by the Choice Adviser has been identified as best practice nationally and used to inform developments.

- (b) Children with Special Educational Needs are prioritised within our revised Admissions policy and procedures and will be key partners as we consult upon further revisions to our policy over the next Academic year. Work in this area is being developed in partnership with the Admissions Forum.

3.8. Recommendation 7: That Education Leeds considers how the outreach role of the SILCs can be further supported and developed.

Significant progress has been made in this area over the last six months upon which we can model future practice as designated in the revised Inclusion Strategy. Service Level Agreements are now agreed for the Hospital and Home Teaching Service that will support and enable future partnership working and the development of a high quality service for children and young people with medical needs. Services for children with Physical needs and disabilities are well established, secured through a Service Level Agreement and arrangements are presently being developed for similar models with the North West SILC to manage the outreach service for children and young people across the autistic spectrum and the BESD SILC in relation to alternative programmes at 14 -19.

Officers from Education Leeds are working in partnership with SILC Principals and mainstream colleagues to agree future models for service delivery linked to the revised Inclusion Strategy and the extended schools agenda.

3.9. Recommendation 8: That Education Leeds facilitates a strategic review of the partnership provision associated with the SILCs and in particular the number of partnerships operated by the North West SILC, informed by future funding, accommodation plans and pupil number projections.

An initial review was completed of the partnership provision associated with the SILCs with a particular focus on the number of partnerships operated by the North West SILC. Further work is scheduled over the summer term 2007, linked in with the fundamental review of funding and accommodation described earlier in with the action in 3.2.

3.10. Recommendation 9: That Education Leeds ensures that appropriate and robust professional support in relation to change management is available to all schools subject to reorganisation, in the best interest of the pupils whose educational experience will be affected by the changes taking place. Also that Education Leeds ensures that the resources for this support are explicitly identified when proposals for reorganisation are put forward.

Over the last twelve months all the SILCs have been supported by the organisational change team and key officers from Education Leeds with a clear brief of ensuring the SILCs have access to a comprehensive training and development programme that will build capacity across the system. This focused support will continue as the SILCs enter the next stages of transformation.

3.11. Recommendation 10: That Education Leeds continues to provide the support and resources that are required for the leadership and management of the NW SILC in order to continue to build the trust and confidence of all in the future provision of excellent education and care for its pupils.

All SILCs including the North West SILC have targeted support to build capacity across the system but with a particular focus on leadership and management. A task group

was established for the North West SILC in September 2005 and focused support given to the governing body. The SILC has subsequently received a very positive Ofsted Inspection and is well placed to maintain and develop existing good practice. The Principal of the SILC chairs the SILC Principals group and is an active partner in the North West Area Management Board.

3.12. Recommendation 11: That the Director of Children's Services and Education Leeds work with partners to ensure the following issues which emerged during our inquiry are given further attention, and that they report back to us on the action being taken on each issue:

Clear transition plans for pupils at all stages, developed in conjunction with parents

An integral part of our revised Inclusion Strategy is a fundamental review of our monitoring and assessment processes. As part of this review we are strengthening our annual review process and monitoring individual progress. Working with parents and transition plans will be a key part of this development work.

3.12.1 The inclusion of information about the SILCs in admissions information and on the admissions preference forms.

Future admissions arrangements to SILCs, partnership schools and resourced provision will be the subject of further consultation as part of the review of the Admissions arrangements for September 2008. An integral part of the SILC developments will be to agree Specifications for all the SILCs that will clearly define admission arrangements. A multi-disciplinary admissions panel is in operation at the BESD SILC that will become part of the revised formal arrangements from September 2007. We have established secure working arrangements with the Admissions Forum who will continue to monitor this part of the action plan.

3.12.2 Ensuring that parents are kept informed from time to time of changes in policy or legislation which may affect the choices open to them for their children's education.

3.12.3 Ensuring that information on services available to parents incorporates non-statutory services.

3.12.4 Development of the Parent Partnership Service's profile with SILC parents.

Further information regarding items 3.12.2 through 3.12.4 in relation to the development of the parent partnership service can be seen in Appendix 1.

3.12.5 Tackling contractual barriers to the SILCs working with existing PFI schools.

A dedicated group is well established to keep under review SILC developments and issues related to building developments both PFI and Building School's for the future. At this time no apparent barriers have been identified however the group maintain a monitoring and development brief.

3.12.6 Clarifying the meaning of '1:1' support to avoid misunderstanding of entitlement

Significant work has been undertaken over the last six months to review our processes and procedures in relation to the Statutory Process. 1:1 support is no longer written into Statements. Specific wording about resource and how Statements are written is being addressed as part of the project plan supporting developments in this area.

3.12.7 Providing opportunities for staff development in both mainstream and SILC settings in relation to inclusion and appropriate curriculum delivery, particularly at secondary level.

A comprehensive staff development programme has been developed in partnership with National Strategies that is available to all SILCs and mainstream colleagues. The programme has a clear focus on supporting curriculum development, personalisation and building capacity of mainstream staff to fully meet the needs of pupils with learning and behavioural needs and disabilities.

3.12.8. Developing an outreach role for staff in experienced partnership schools

Further developments of the role of partnership schools are a key element within the revised inclusion strategy and will be developed in partnership with all key partners.

3.12.9. Partnership school representation on the SILC Board

A SILC Forum is now well established to oversee future developments in relation to the SILCs, partnership schools and resourced provision. The forum is multi-disciplinary with good representation of key partners. It is chaired by the link Officer from the change organisation team.

3.12.10. Further development of health support to enable the most effective use of specialist resources

A Health Inclusion Group is well established, Chaired by Jean Baker, the Children's Services Manager East Leeds Primary Care Trust. The group are working with key partners to review the most effective way of using resources.

4. Future Planned Action

4.1 Since the last Scrutiny Board met we have started consultation on our refreshed Inclusion Strategy.

4.2 A copy of the power point presentation, values and project grid are available in Appendix 2. Officers welcome the opportunity to discuss these proposals further with members of the Scrutiny Board.

5. Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1** The refreshed Inclusion Strategy aims to bring coherence between key initiatives under the banner of Inclusion including the SILC Strategy, the 'No Child Left Behind' project; future developments in relation to Special Educational Needs and disability and our vulnerable children's strategy.
- 5.2** We are aiming to launch our revised Strategy over the autumn term and welcome the opportunity to discuss our proposals further with Scrutiny Board Members and involve them in the official launch.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1** Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) is asked to endorse the proposed direction of travel and comment upon the proposals in relation to the refreshed Inclusion Strategy.