

The Development of Specialist Provision and Support for Special Educational Needs in Learning Environments - a discussion document

Children Leeds

Education Leeds 

1.0 Purpose of the paper

This paper sets out for discussion the development opportunities for the future role and function of specialist provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs within Leeds schools.

The paper considers the:

- historical context and local context
- national developments and in particular the implications of 21st Century Schools
- current issues
- principles and characteristics which underpin the development of specialist provision

The paper then provides recommendations which, if agreed, will be progressively implemented by Children's Services over the next three years. The implementation of the recommendations will be monitored by the LILS Programme Board and be further developed as appropriate. This paper is intended as an enabling paper setting out broad recommendations. Further papers will be produced once the direction of travel has been agreed, together with a multi-agency action plan.

This paper contributes to raising the achievement of all children and young people with SEN by 'narrowing the gap' and delivering excellence in SEN.

2.0 Historical Context

2.1 In 2004 special school provision was reshaped. Special schools were renamed SILCs (Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres) to emphasise their change of role; creating a new vision for the future role of Special Schools in Leeds. Five centres were created, one in each wedge, to meet the needs of pupils with complex learning, physical and care needs. A sixth centre was established to meet the needs of pupils with complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, serving pupils from throughout the city. This development predates national best practice defined in Removing Barriers to Achievement (2004), which was the Government Strategy for SEN. It set out the agenda for enabling all children, wherever they are educated, to be able to learn, play and develop alongside each other within their local community of schools.

2.2 This model has been replicated by a number of other Local Authorities as it has been recognised nationally as an example of best practice. The feature of this model was that the SILC was seen as a centre of excellence in the provision of SEN services provided to the local community of schools through:

- Specialist teaching when required
- Advice and guidance to the community of mainstream schools
- Allocation of resources
- CPD opportunities (staff training)
- Mainstream outreach support for children and young people

- 2.3** A key feature of the development of the SILCs has been the partnership working with mainstream schools, to increase and improve access to mainstream education for those children and young people with the most complex needs. In addition, Resourced Provision has been developed in a number of mainstream schools. Appendix 1 is a glossary of terms which clarifies the range of provision which has been developed in Leeds.
- 2.4** Education Leeds and Children's Services have developed some important initiatives to improve provision and service delivery to children and young people with SEN. There has been considerable investment in the delivery of specialist provision within Children's Centres and continuing investment in specialist provision in mainstream schools as well as SILC Partnerships and Resourced Provision.
- 2.5** Education Leeds Integrated Children's Services have reviewed their delivery arrangements during 2008/09 to provide more integrated working at locality level in liaison with other children's services. They are now deployed to wedges and work in close alignment with Area Inclusion Partnerships (AIPs) to meet needs outlined in the area development plans, providing high quality flexible resources – from additional needs to highly specialist needs. Early feedback indicates that this local integrated approach to the delivery of services has been well received.
- 2.6** The Children and Young People's Plan clearly identifies that Leeds is developing multi-agency locality working including the use of the Common Assessment Framework. Leeds has been in the forefront of developing local working through the No Child Left Behind Project which introduced the concept of Area Management Boards (AMBs) and delivered significant reductions in permanent exclusions. These were transformed during 2008/9 into the Area Inclusion Partnerships (AIPs). The AIPs encompass the work of the statutory Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships and are a sub group of the Area Children Leeds Leadership Team, which operate locally to implement the requirements of Children Leeds (Children's Trust) and the forthcoming locality working arrangements.
- 2.7** There is a wide range of support for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties in Leeds. This includes:
- (i)** In the universal setting, supporting the development of schools' approaches to improve the emotional health and well being of children and young people. For example, the attendance and behaviour strand of National Strategies and the SEAL project (Social, Emotional, Aspects of Learning).
 - (ii)** Providing targeted individual support from Education Leeds Integrated Children's Services (behaviour support), dual registration with pupil referral units, projects developed by AIPs, BEST (Behaviour Education Support Team) deployed at a wedge level; outreach from SILCs and Pupil Referral Units, brokering of personalised package of support from alternative providers such as FE colleges. Education Leeds and the AIPs are developing a range of local initiatives which enable early intervention and are shaping a continuum of local provision which maintains a young person within the

locality and utilises a range of locality teams around the child support services.

- (iii) Specialist long term support through PRU placement for excluded pupils, placement at SILCs and SILC Partnership bases in mainstream schools. In addition, there is a range of multi-agency support available from Health Services and Social Care. This support is available via single agency referral e.g. a referral to CAMHS for mental health support or via the CAF for multi-agency support.

3.0 National Developments

- 3.1** “Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century school system” (DCSF 2009), sets out the vision for the school system for the future. It means that every school works in the future in strong partnership with parents, other children’s services, other schools and providers.

- 3.2** It is essential that any model for delivering improvements in specialist provision for special educational needs in Leeds continues to build upon and move forward in line with the concept of 21st Century Schools. Key components for 21st Century Schools which impact on the delivery of the LILS programme include:

- Personalised education for all pupils to make progress and achieve high standards
- Schools having access to resources – which enable them to identify and address additional needs
- Schools working within their communities to provide a range of activities and opportunities to enrich the lives of children, families and the wider community
- Schools working effectively and extensively with parent/carer(s), other providers and the wider children’s services
- An accountability framework and school improvement strategies for the delivery of a wider range of outcomes
- The development of a highly skilled and motivated children’s workforce in schools which is well led and effectively deployed
- Resources in the system are most effectively deployed to the best effect to improve outcomes for children and young people.

- 3.3** There is a strong emphasis upon schools being the main universal service for children and young people and their central role in identifying the additional needs of children. It is noted that whilst 21st Century Schools must be at the heart of any local approach to early intervention, they cannot do it alone. As universal services, schools will have a vital role to play in identifying where children and families need extra support and responding appropriately. Often school staff will be able to provide any extra support that is needed, particularly where workforce remodelling means that the staff of the school include a wider range of different professionals than before who may work beyond traditional school hours.

3.4 Where there is a more serious or long term problem, schools will need access to locality based support from a single agency or multi-agency team for the young person and where appropriate, their families. Examples of this targeted support may include a short term placement in a Pupil Referral Unit (Short Stay School) or support from the BEST (Behaviour Education Support Team).

3.5 Beyond targeted support there will be access to specialist support or provision from a single or multi-agency team. Examples of this support may include a placement at a SILC or support from the Youth Offending Team.

4.0 Current Issues in Leeds

4.1 The AIPs are a vehicle for the delivery of the expectations set out for 21st Century Schools (DCSF June 2009) which outlined the vision for schools working more extensively and effectively with parents, other providers and children's services. In Leeds the AIPs are developing a number of exciting and innovative approaches to the management of pupils with behavioural difficulties. Further evaluation is necessary to identify specific benefits in improved outcomes for young people, but nevertheless high quality provision is being made in response to local need. There is, however, inconsistency in the models being developed across each AIP and it is important to ensure that best practice is identified, evaluated and disseminated and that the outcomes for children and young people are rigorously monitored.

4.2 Recent analysis of the data shows that the overall number of children and young people with Statements of SEN issued in Leeds has fallen significantly over the last few years (see Appendix 2 – fig 1). This fall in the number of statements is a consequence of the strategy for early identification where Funding for Inclusion (FFI) has enabled more children's needs to be met earlier in their school careers and before the point of failure. This system allows schools to access resources for supporting children and young people without recourse to the bureaucracy associated with the statutory process. However, this in itself does not indicate that need for additional support is reducing. For example the number with statements for SEN when combined with those who have FFI funding has risen by 11% over the last two years (see Appendix 2 – fig 3 and 4) and this has had a significant impact upon the budget allocation for SEN (see Appendix 2 – fig 21).

4.3 Despite this funding strategy, the published National Performance data (NI 104 and NI 105) shows the achievement of pupils with special educational needs compared to those without, has not risen in proportion to the increase in resources allocated (taking attainment as the measure). Leeds has clearly set out its ambition to narrow this gap and any future developments which take place will be focused on prioritising the closing of that gap.

4.4 The data also indicates that there are proportionally a higher than national number of pupils with statements for Moderate Learning Difficulties and Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and for Severe Learning Difficulties (Appendix 2 – fig 5). Any future developments in Leeds should focus on developing improved inclusion pathways and access to support for these groups of young people if the strategy is to respond sensitively to local need.

The development and implementation of an MLD Strategy is key to ensuring that such pupils are able to succeed in the mainstream setting.

- 4.5** The high quality of the five generic SILCs has been noted nationally and reflected in OfSTED reports which note exceptional and outstanding achievements. The staff and governors of the city wide BESD SILC have worked very hard in difficult circumstances for it to be recently removed from Special Measures. A number of the SILCs have developed key specialisms in addition to their generic role. The excellence of this work has also been recognised nationally. The SILCs have been developing this role progressively since 2004 and features of excellent practice can be seen in all areas of the city. However, SILC Principals recognise that greater consistency in the provision of the range of services and support provided to local schools needs to be developed. A key issue, identified through discussion, is that SILCs have insufficient resources to provide a wider range of localised support. It will be necessary to review the current balance between centrally managed and locally managed resources.
- 4.6** The Sensory Support Team has developed a model where the majority of pupils with Statements for sensory difficulties (primary need) are on the role of a mainstream school. The staff work through the resource bases on mainstream sites and there is a very strong accountability framework which has been developed between the team and the host schools. Quality assurance mechanisms, planning and staff development are in place to ensure improved outcomes for young people.
- 4.7** Under the current arrangements, with the exception of the Resource Bases linked to the Sensory Support Team, there are limited arrangements for an accountability framework or quality assurance mechanism which links the respective roles of the central support services or local SILC with the mainstream school hosting the base. Furthermore a review of the data also shows that there are a high number of vacant places in Resource Bases.
- 4.8** Projections on future need based on demographic trends have been made for the next ten years based upon needs in each wedge and by disability. A summary of these projections are held in Appendix 2 – figs 15-18. These projections suggest that, if the current strategies continue, approximately 700 more pupils will have statements or be funded through FFI Level 2 funding. It should be noted, however, that approximately 300 of these pupils will have cognitive difficulties (moderate learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties). This is an additional factor to consider in ensuring future strategies are put in place to support mainstream schools to meet these identified needs locally; in keeping with parental preference and the voice of the young person.
- 4.9** The current specialist provision for children with statements of BESD (Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulties) needs to be reshaped. This provision is currently managed by the Central BESD SILC and the North East SILC. The current provision is over 4 sites and there are significant concerns over the long term suitability of some of the buildings.

- 4.10** The city wide BESD SILC currently supports a large number of young people with very diverse emotional, behavioural and cognitive needs and this presents many challenges. There is evidence that a number of these young people have complex emotional difficulties which require a more focused integrated approach, involving both the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and Social Care.
- 4.11** Planning is underway with the AIPs to determine future funding arrangements for those educated in the centrally managed Education Other than at School Service; this includes the Pupil Referral Units. A pilot project starts in the South wedge from April 2010. The AIP and schools in the South have significantly reduced the number of young people permanently excluded and the pilot project will build upon this success for those out of school. This model follows the best practice identified in 'Back on Track' (DCSF December 2008) which identified that most appropriate provision is often made when local behaviour partnerships make provision for pupils with behaviour difficulties very locally.
- 4.12** A common theme has emerged about the importance of building capacity in mainstream schools to support children with behaviour difficulties through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and locally available support.
- 4.13** There is also the need to develop swift and easy access to a highly skilled and motivated workforce in and around schools that is well led and effectively deployed and which is characterised by multi-agency integrated working and facilitated by the use of the Common Assessment Framework.
- 4.14** As noted, Attendance and Behaviour Partnerships are now statutory. In Leeds, this is a key aspect of the Area Inclusion Partnership. It is essential that a clear accountability framework is developed to set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the AIPs, Education Leeds and other partners.
- 4.15** Despite a number of creative initiatives and the wide range of provision being developed for children and young people with behavioural difficulties, it is apparent that there are inconsistencies in how this is provided across the City. In order to provide a clear strategic direction across the city, an overarching Behaviour Strategy needs to be developed. This strategy should encompass the offer available from the universal setting, through targeted support to specialist provision. The strategy will need to reflect appropriate multi-agency working where appropriate.

5.0 Principles and Characteristics

Set out below are the principles and characteristics which underpin the development of specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs:

The 'Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy, 2007 – 2008' defined a clear set of principles and values. **"The guiding principles for our refreshed strategy are consistent with the Children and Young People's Plan, the 14-19 Strategy, the Extended Services Plan and all other key policies across Education Leeds, Children Leeds and Leeds City Council. Our key principles are:**

- **personalisation;**
- **devolved governance;**
- **collaborative and effective partnership working;**
- **local service delivery locally managed;**
- **equality of opportunity, provision and access;**
- **robust accountability and quality assurance frameworks;**
- **choice and diversity for children, young people and families; and**
- **continuum of responsive, high quality services whose staff champion the needs of children and families."**

Building directly upon these, the SILC Principals, representative head teachers from mainstream schools, representatives from the Area Inclusion Partnerships and Education Leeds have written a set of characteristics which should underpin the development of specialist provision. These characteristics derive from current best practice and the vision for the future; in particular the model for 21st Century Schools:

- I. SILCs will be centres of excellence for complex needs, working within the Area Inclusion Partnership to directly support their local community of schools to ensure excellent outcomes for children and young people
- II. The Children Leeds approach to integrated working will be adopted to ensure improved outcomes. Resources will be targeted to enable early intervention at a local level through integrated processes such as the CAF and the lead professional role
- III. The active participation of children and young people will be prioritised
- IV. SILCs will model best practice of collaborative and partnership working with parent/carer(s)
- V. Education Leeds, SILCs and the Area Inclusion Partnerships will ensure excellence through the development of accountability frameworks, effective monitoring and quality assurance

- VI. Education Leeds, the Area Inclusion Partnerships, mainstream schools, the SILCs and other partners including Further Education providers and employers will promote personalisation through the development of a range of high quality local and connected pathways and support up to the age of 25 as appropriate
- VII. SILCs and the Area Inclusion Partnerships will share and deploy resources at wedge level to the best effect to improve outcomes for children and young people
- VIII. SILCs and the Area Inclusion Partnerships will make available, where possible, local provision for children and young people modelled on evidence based practice for each area
- IX. The development of a high quality workforce and toolkit will further be promoted through training, mentoring and coaching
- X. The SILCs and Area Inclusion Partnerships will deploy resources to the most efficient and effective point of delivery in order to best meet the priority needs of children and young people

6.0 Recommendations on the developing role of SILCs, Support Services and the Area Inclusion Partnerships

From an analysis of the data, identification of best practice, national and local developments and based on the Principles and Characteristics, a working group of SILC Principals, representative Headteachers from mainstream schools, representatives from the Area Inclusion Partnerships and Education Leeds make the following recommendations for further discussion with all key stakeholders:

Recommendation 1.

An accountability framework will be developed between all partners to set out the respective roles, responsibilities and accountabilities in each setting. This framework must also include all processes for quality assurance and monitoring of improved outcomes for children and young people.

Recommendation 2.

SILCs will be core members of the Area Inclusion Partnerships, providing support for personalisation as a 21st Century School supporting the local community of schools through:

- Training and mentoring
- Sharing of resources
- Information, advice and guidance

as well as direct teaching.

Further work will be required to consider the appropriate governance arrangements and future developments, but it will be preferable to have a SILC presence as a centre of excellence in each wedge.

Recommendation 3.

To further support locality integrated working it will be necessary to review the current arrangements for the organisation of support services to enable the Area Inclusion Partnerships (through the SILCs where appropriate) to build capacity in the universal setting of local mainstream schools. This will mean the migration of some support services from central provision to develop enhanced capacity at wedge level to facilitate swift and easy access to services.

Recommendation 4.

Each generic SILC, in addition to providing the full range of services to pupils and schools in their wedge, will develop an area of expertise in SEN. This will enable them to act as the focus for the development of this expertise across the city and seek specialist status in this area.

They will provide advice, information, guidance and best practice to colleagues in other SILCs, mainstream settings and Education Leeds. They may also develop clear arrangements with other facilities in the city providing that specialism including, systems for Quality Assurance, the CPD of staff and the ongoing planning of provision.

Areas of expertise could follow those set out by the DCSF as areas for specialist status for Special Schools.

Recommendation 5.

A Behaviour Strategy will be written which:

- is based on a clear and coherent set of principles;
- encompasses the universal, targeted and specialist offer to young people;
- has appropriate multi-agency linkages;
- will be regularly reviewed and updated.

The strategy will include recommendations on the development and deployment of resources; the respective roles and responsibilities of all partners; the development of an appropriately skilled workforce.

Recommendation 6.

Subject to the required formal consultation the current resources held within the BESD SILC and other provision such as PRUs will be transformed into:

- A small central provision for Leeds which delivers multi-disciplinary support for young people with the most complex emotional difficulties. This hub to be commissioned through the Vulnerable Children's Commissioning Group and in partnership with the CAMHS Strategy
- Locality continuum of provision with local bases for pupils with behaviour difficulties under partnership arrangements between the local SILC and the AIP, such as short stay schools (PRUs).
- Building the capacity of all SILCs in partnership with the AIPs to work with pupils presenting with challenging behaviour associated with their learning disabilities

Recommendation 7.

A strategy for inclusion for young people with MLD will be developed to ensure there is a clear and consistent approach across the city.

The strategy will include recommendations on the deployment of resources; the respective roles of all partners; the development of an appropriately skilled workforce.

Recommendation 8.

A new model for “resourced” and/or “partnership” provision will be developed in the Autumn Term with the expertise of Headteachers, SENCOs and Integrated Children’s Services (Education Leeds), Social Care, Health and the Voluntary Sector.

Background Papers

Removing Barriers to Achievement (Government Strategy for SEN 2004)

21st Century Schools (DCSF June 2009)

Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century school system (DCSF 2009)

Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy 2007-2008 (Education Leeds 2007)

Draft Template for Area Map of Provision

