

		AGENDA ITEM 5
		CYP/19/12
Date:	6 December 2012	
Special Educational Needs and Disability		
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The current situation

According data about pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), there are 37,260 children and young people in Essex identified by schools as having SEND. This is 17.9% of the schools population. This compares to 19.8% nationally.

Within Essex schools there are currently 6,610 pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is 3.2% of our school population. This is higher than the national average of 2.8% of the school population.

Between 2011 and 2012, the number of pupils in Essex schools with a statement of SEN increased from 5695 to 6640 – an increase of 16.6%. Nationally the change was a 0.2% reduction.

985 new statements were issued in Essex in 2011 – this is the highest number issued by any local authority nationally (the next highest being Kent with 755).

At Key Stage 2 pupils in Essex with a Statement under perform by 3% compared to the national average, this gap closes at key Stage 4 where pupils with a statement perform as well as the national average.

The highest numbers of pupils with School Action are placed in year groups 2, 3 and 4.

The highest number of pupils on School Action Plus or with a Statement are placed in Year groups 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Essex has considerably more pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) than seen nationally. In primary schools 35.4% of SEN pupils (School Action Plus & statement) have MLD as their primary need type compared to 21.8% nationally. In secondary schools Essex is 35.1% and nationally 22.7%. In special schools Essex is 30.4% and nationally 18.6%.

There has been a noticeable steady increase in Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) numbers nationally since 2008. Essex numbers have fluctuated over the same period.

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) is the only category of need where the number of pupils increases consistently from reception through to year 11. The rate of increase is steady and the same irrespective of whether pupils are in the primary or secondary phase.

The number of pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) has risen considerably in Essex primary schools from 1381 in 2008 (17.8% of SEN pupils) to 1719 (27.7%) in 2012. Over the same period the national rate has only moved from 23.8% to 24.5%.

Essex has a low rate of BESD pupils in special schools – 8.5% of SEN pupils in 2012 compared to 14.1% nationally.

The SEND data obtained between 2008 – 2012 highlights the following areas that the local authority expect to make priorities for improvement:

- ensuring earlier identification of needs and relevant support
- supporting schools to provide the correct level of support for SEN reducing the need and desire of parents for Statements of Special Education Needs (which should only be required if a school cannot address a child's needs in school)
- addressing the causes of high levels of SEN tribunals
- considering and reducing as appropriate the number of children placed in the independent sector – this is both costly in terms of placements and transport, but also takes these children away from their local communities, and in some cases their families if the distance requires them to be residential
- improving the range of SEN provision, especially for Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) provision and behavioural, emotional and social development (BESD) and including reviewing the current specially resourced provision (SRP) within the county to ensure it reflects projected need and improving the accommodation for some special schools
- the need to provide more equitable distribution of special provision across the county (the west is particularly poorly served)
- clarity on the range of need catered for within existing special schools
- the need to improve the distribution and quality of Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) facilities across the county
- the need to reduce the number of long stay placements in PRUs (these are meant to be short stay schools), especially by those with statements for BESD
- the need for a comprehensive range of alternative education provision for those who find the normal school curriculum is inappropriate and / or irrelevant
- the need to join up support services provided by the local authority and ensure that specialist support is available for individual pupils, their families and the range of educational settings

The ambition of the strategy is to improve confidence in the system by setting out a plan to achieve continuous improvement and enable Essex to frame its Local Offer. A range of proposals will be drafted under the following priority areas.

1. Improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
2. Strengthen and coordinate our approach to preventative work and early intervention programmes.
3. Improve partnership working and joint commissioning.
4. Preparing for adulthood
5. Improve the organisation and delivery of SEN assessments, placements and services, including joint assessment and funding arrangements for children and young people.
6. Develop a continuum of provision to meet a continuum of need.

The Strategic Context

The new SEND Policy will need to respond to legal requirements of the SEN Code of Practice (2001) with regard to assessment and provision. Local Authorities' duties in relation to the SEN and Disability Act (2001) and Disability Discrimination Act (2005) are now within the remit of the Equality Act (2010).

It must also be responsive to forthcoming changes in national policy and therefore in drafting proposals must consider the Green Paper 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability' and the 'Next Steps' document which signal the Government's intention to require local authorities to set out a Local Offer.

The purpose of the Local Offer is to enable parents and young people to see more clearly what services are available in their area and how to access them. The offer will include provision from birth to 25, across education, health and social care. It will be developed in conjunction with children and young people, parents and carers, and local services, including schools, colleges, health and social care agencies.

The strategy will reflect the main themes of the Green Paper, namely, early identification and assessment providing clarity and confidence for parents, focussing on learning and achieving, preparing for adulthood, ensuring services work together for families.

Work to date:

During 2012 two workshops were held with SEND working groups in order to help inform our research and analysis in preparation for drafting a proposed strategy. In summary a number of shared principles were from these meetings:

- * Parents / carers are the experts on their children's needs and are essential partners in decision making processes, including service delivery and design.
- * All children and young people with SEND have a right to be involved in decision making that affects their lives.
- * Families should be able to easily access information in a range of formats that is accurate, up to date and relevant.
- * Preventative approaches, early identification of educational needs and swift deployment of support should underpin provision of SEND services.

- * Parents and carers views are listened to and taken account of. There is good communication and information and they are recognised as partners in a process where there is a cultural shift away from an adversarial approach.
- * There is equality of access to services and opportunities for children and young people with SEND, including extended services.
- * Partnership working and joint commissioning is a feature of SEND provision in Essex.
- * Schools, colleges and services use funding efficiently and flexibly to achieve agreed outcomes.
- * Inclusion is everyone's business, therefore mainstream schools regard SEND as an integral part of provision which is central to curriculum planning and delivery.
- * Special schools play an important role in providing education for some children and young people and also in supporting the development of inclusion provision in mainstream schools.
- * Out of County, independent placements are only used for a small number of children and young people with severe and complex needs.
- * Resources follow children and young people with SEND through the personalisation of provision.
- * The needs of most children with SEND can and should be met in a mainstream setting.
- * There should be a range of mainstream and specialist provision to meet the continuum of need.
- * Raising achievement and narrowing the gap in attainment for children with SEND must be the aim of all education providers in Essex.

Next Steps:

January and March – We are planning to consult with the public and invite the scrutiny committee to consider our proposals during this time.

April – Officers will consider consultation responses and draft any recommendations for amendments to the policy.

May – Amended draft strategy will be presented to Cabinet Member for consideration.

Scrutiny is invited to:

- consider this report
- comment on work to date and next steps
- highlight any areas in which they would like further detail
- consider whether they would like to review the draft strategy early in the New Year and make recommendations to be submitted through the consultation process/to the Cabinet Member as appropriate.

Definitions/Acronyms:

ASD Autistic Spectrum Disorder

BESD Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties

MLD Moderate Learning Difficulties

PRU Pupil Referral Unit

School Action: When a school believes a child has SEN, collects information about the child and discusses with the parents/careers what extra or difference help is required.

School Action +: When School Action appears to not be adequate, the school will seek parent/career approval to seek external advice and support. Usually a new Individual Education Plan will be developed on this advice

SEN Special Educational Needs

SEND Special Educational Needs and Disability

SLCN Speech, Language and Communication Needs

SRP Specially Resourced Provision

Statement of Special Educational Needs: A statement of special educational needs describes a child's needs and how they should be met, including what school they should go to.