

Agenda item 5

SEND Update on High Need Strategic Review and SEND Funding Audit Summary

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the progress of the High Needs Strategic Review and to share the summary of the SEND Funding Audit.

Recommendations

2. The Schools Forum is asked to:
 - i. note the contents of the High Needs Strategic Review briefing update, in particular the timescales of any actions arising from the review recommendation; and
 - ii. consider the SEND Funding Audit Summary and any further actions Schools Forum may take to support the implementation of good practice.

Background

3. In February 2018 the High Needs Strategic review began undertaken by Finn Wilding Ltd. This audit is ongoing and a briefing update is attached (Appendix A).
4. In October 2017 Forum resolved to support the SEN Funding Audit to be undertaken by Internal Audit and Associate School Improvement Advisors. The audits have now taken place and the summary report (Appendix B) is attached. This was sent to all schools in May 2018.

Proposals

5. Schools Forum continue to support the High Needs Review.
6. Schools Forum consider how the SEND Funding Audit can further support best value for money and progression for learners with SEND.

Next steps

7. A further update on the High Needs Review will be shared with Forum in the Autumn term.
8. Any actions agreed by Forum following consideration of the SEND Funding Audit are put in place.

Appendix A

Cheshire West and Chester

High Needs Review – Information update – June 2018

Background Information

1. All LAs received a grant fund to undertake a strategic review of high needs provision for learners with SEND. In CWAC this follows on from a review of specialist provision undertaken in 2012-2013.
2. Following the Council's procurement process and a meeting with Jonathan Wilding, Finn Wilding Ltd were chosen to undertake the review. Jonathan Wilding is an experienced project manager who has led SEND transformation projects in Warwickshire and Oldham who were impressed with his knowledge and understanding of SEND and the transformation process.
3. The review is being undertaken by F. Wilding Associates and started in March with a final report due in September 2018. We have asked the review to focus on these key areas:
 - Post-16 provision;
 - Barriers to inclusion;
 - Profile of specialist providers and pupils attending these.
4. F. Wilding Associates are currently analysing data and meeting with representatives of all stakeholders. This will continue during the summer term.

Key dates for next steps

Date	
September 2018	Report due from F Wilding
November 2018	Cabinet report to consider next steps and approve actions e.g. coproduction and/or consultation
February/March 2019	Agreed funding changes to the high needs block spending arrangements that do not require consultation to be presented to school forum for implementation in September 2019

Consultation/Co-production

5. Following agreement of our co-production strategy and the recommendations from the recent parent survey, we need to co-produce any changes to our high needs provision. After a co-production process, formal consultation of 12 weeks would follow before any recommendations can go to cabinet for approval. The next step would then be a report to school forum on the funding changes. This means that any proposed changes to numbers in provision or type of provision would be for implementation in September 2020.

6. There could be some recommendations in the survey that we could implement more quickly, e.g. funding to schools for outreach for inclusion would only need to go to school forum.
7. A more detailed action plan and time fame will be developed once the report from F. Wilding is received for cabinet consideration in November.

Appendix B



SEND Funding Audit 2018

Purpose of report

This report details the outcomes of the SEND funding audits undertaken in December 2017 and January 2018. The audits were undertaken separately by the Internal Audit team and Associate School Improvement Advisors (ASIA) to review schools processes to fund the support for learners with special educational needs at SEN support and with Education, Health and Care plans. The audits undertaken by the Internal Audit team were part of their programme of work. It was agreed by School Forum that additional audits led by the ASIAs would take place at the same time using the same questions as the Internal Audit review. This would give clearer pattern of good practice and areas for development in the effective use of funding to improve outcomes for learners with SEND.

All schools visited by both teams have received an individual report following the visits.

The selection of schools, format of the audit and process was discussed and supported by the High Needs Sub Group of School Forum in the autumn term 2017.

Undertaking the audits

The audit form was developed in collaboration with officers from the Internal Audit and SEN teams. The Internal Audit team visited 5 schools and the ASIAs were due to visit 10 schools across the borough. By Easter 2018 all Internal audit visits and 9 ASIA visits took place.

Audit Tool

The audit tool was broadly divided into the following areas:

- Knowledge of funding and information sharing
- Early identification of SEND
- Element 2 funding
- Element 3 funding
- Support including teaching assistants and interventions
- Attendance and alternative provision

Summary

A summary of key findings compiled from Internal Audit and ASIA visits is shown below.

SEN Information Report

Generally up to date SEN Information Reports were in place and available on school websites. However, there was not always evidence that the SEN Information Reports had been formally approved by the Governing Body.

A range of good practice was evident in schools work to support early identification of SEN with a strong emphasis on in house information sharing and systems.

SEND Profiles

Some schools share information with parents on spending. Not all schools do this or formally review the documents and obtain parents' signature.

Some schools were able to evidence costs for individual pupils at SEN support using E2 funding but not all school recorded this detail. Documentation from schools varied for E2 funding for example intervention plans and provision maps. It is not clear how schools who did not detail individual funding support evaluated value for money for support or had robust evidence for any requests for additional funding support at E3

SEND Profiles are completed at the start of each academic year. At this point the parent / carer is requested to confirm, via a signature, that they agree to the provisions and targets for their child. However, this document is updated throughout the year to reflect achievements and targets may be revised accordingly. This revised SEND Profile is not formally reviewed and signed by parents at the end of the academic year.

Review / Challenge by Governors

There is some evidence of details of SEN funding and spending shared with governors in a minority of schools, however this is not evident in all schools. If Governors do not receive full information on SEND they are unable to effectively review and challenge provisions provided and expenditure incurred to ensure that there is value for money.

Teaching Assistant Skills Matrix / Appraisals

In some instances there was no evidence identified of a skills matrix in place for Teaching Assistants and / or no appraisals had been undertaken.

Minutes of Discussions / Actions Agreed

There was evidence that meetings are undertaken to discuss and review SEN, for example, with parents, Head Teacher, Link Governor, these are not always recorded as meeting minutes and retained or shared with attendees.

Disagreement resolution

Very few schools were clear about disagreement resolution processes if parents were unhappy or not in agreement with the school about support for their child.

Attendance

Not all schools monitored attendance of learners with SEND as a discrete group.

Recommendations

All schools are advised to review SEND practice and consider the following recommendations which provide good practice. Schools may already have some or all of these in place. These recommendations will help to further enhance the controls in place and ensure that full and transparent records are retained to support SEND.

There is a useful School self review of SEN which schools can use to review their SEND practice at www.thesendreview.com

SEN Information report

Review and update SEND information regularly on website and approve annually by the governing body. Further guidance can be found in the SENCoP (6.70-6.83)

SEND Profiles / Parental Agreement

Where SEND profiles were completed these are sent to parents annually for review. Parental signatures should be obtained to evidence that all parents have reviewed / signed up to the SEND Profile and provision for their child. The parents should also be provided with the opportunity to provide feedback. Action should be taken to chase up outstanding signatures.

It is recommended that there is evidence that provision maps / action plans / SEND Profiles are formally reviewed / authorised by an officer within the school, for example, the Head Teacher or SENCO / Inclusion Manager.

Fully costed SEND profiles should be completed for all SEN pupils supported with element 3 funding. This should detail the financial cost of each element to support and be signed by parents. This is good practice at element 2.

A copy of the fully complete SEND Profile should be retained within the school.

Parents should sign the SEND Profile at the start of the year to agree provisions and targets for their child. However, it is recommended that parents / carers also sign the SEND Profile at the end of the academic year. This ensures that they are happy within the

provisions undertaken during the year and that the targets / outcomes have been achieved i.e. this is a backward looking reflection on the support provided during the year.

Review / Challenge by Governors

Regular meetings should be timetabled and held between SENCo and SEND governor.

It is good practice to produce a SEND Termly Report which should then be presented and reviewed by Governors. This should contain information on funding and expenditure. Where possible this should be linked to provisions and outcomes.

Teaching Assistant Skills Matrix / Appraisals

Skills matrices should be completed to identify if there are any gaps in the skills / knowledge of each Teaching Assistant. Where gaps are identified action should be taken to address this.

The completion of appraisals for all staff is good practice as it formally assesses the performance of an individual and provides the opportunity to address any weaknesses / areas for improvement. However, it is for the Governing Body to determine whether they feel that appraisals are appropriate for Teaching Assistants within this school. If it is decided that appraisals are not to be completed, it is recommended that this is formally considered, adopted within a Policy and approval documented within the Governing Body Minutes.

School may wish to give consideration type/grade of staff needed for each intervention and train appropriately.

It is good practice to maintain a record of staff training in SEND. Linking this to appraisal ensures that any areas for staff development are identified and addressed.

Minutes of actions and discussions agreed

Ensure that records are kept of all meetings with agreed actions and outcomes that are dated and shared with all attendees.

Schools should establish ways to share evidence based effective value for money interventions across schools. This may be by informal links, SENCo cluster and networks or by Teaching Schools.

Disagreement resolution

Review school information on how to resolve disagreements when a parent is unhappy with the provision or progress for a child or young person with SEND and make sure it is clear to parents and stakeholders the process the school follow to address any concerns raised.

Ensure all staff are aware of this and follow the process. Information for young people and parents on named contacts in the school for situations where parents have concerns should be included in the School Information Report. SENCoP (6.81)

Attendance

Ensure effective tracking of attendance and punctuality of learners with SEND is recorded together with actions taken to address attendance and outcomes of the intervention.

Other recommendations

Review the role of the SENCO in line with the SENCop (sections 6.84-6.94) and ensure there is sufficient time and resources for the role.

Include the SEND action plan and access planning to meet equality duties is included in the school development plan.

Put in place a range of quality assurance actions to monitor the quality of interventions and impact of these for learners with SEND. Use a range of monitoring including voice of pupils and transference of skills to evaluate impact and ensure whole staff understand and use different approaches.

Consider ways of sharing good practice and effective interventions for learners with SEND with other schools.

Work with feeder education providers to improve support for transition for learners who may have special educational needs or disability.