

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

17th October 2018

SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disability

In March 2017, OFSTED and CQC (Care Quality Commission) visited Middlesbrough to check how well the Local Area (Education, Health and Care) were doing in implementing the SEND Reforms. Inspectors felt that SEND Reforms had not been put in place effectively across Education, Health and Care. After the Inspection, the Council and the South Tees Health Clinical Commissioning Group worked together to develop an improvement plan which was approved by OFSTED and has been closely monitored by the Department for Education and NHS England.

In September 2018, the Council received a letter from the Childrens Minister to say how pleased they are with progress made since the Inspection. They commented on how well we work with parents, we make better use of information and that they can see that there has been improvement in how quickly we get through education, health and care assessments and send out Education Health & Care Plans for children and young people with complex needs.

The Department for Education and NHS England will still be working with us to make sure that our progress continues. We will need to send further evidence of our progress over the next 12 months to the Childrens Minister in September 2019.

Supporting Schools to Improve

Since January, the Achievement Advisors have been working closely with schools in order to ensure that they are receiving the right level of support and challenge, as well as exploring and sharing best practice across schools, subjects and key stages. Schools are categorised using outcomes data and where attainment and progress are below national expectations they are classed as 'Developing' and have been offered additional support. In 2017-18, fifteen schools fell into this category. Achievement Advisors carried out several visits to each of these schools in order to work with Senior Leaders to create an action plan for support and development. Partners in the school improvement project were then approached to carry out

a range of development activities alongside the advisors such as training, shadowing, peer support and collaboration on teaching and learning projects.

Recent feedback from a survey of the Head teachers of Developing Schools highlights the quality of the work of Advisors throughout this process, with 95% of respondents judging it to be 'good' or 'excellent'. Head teachers found the support to be, 'very swift, succinct and supportive', 'hands on' and 'strong'. One Head teacher commented that, 'the process was very positive and supportive during the process, both in the initial stages and through the mid-term evaluation'. Using summer 2018 outcomes data, five of the fifteen schools originally identified have improved to the extent that they are no longer in the Developing Schools category. 80% of Developing Schools improved in over five out of the ten key performance measures from Early Years, KS1 to KS2.

Advisors aim to build on the work begun in the last academic year and have refined processes and reviewed policies in order to ensure that such a high quality of support is systematically given to schools in all categories. As well as Developing Schools, visits have already begun this year to schools with the highest outcomes so that successful strategies and interventions can be identified and shared.

Stronger Families School Readiness

Bookstart Intervention

During April – June 2018, 37 children were referred to the school readiness team by a health professional for a nursery readiness intervention following their 2 year development review. Of the 25 (68%) who completed the intervention, 96% of their parents reported an increase in confidence around supporting their child's learning, 100% of parents reported an increase in their child's early years skills and 96% reported positive changes through the literacy questionnaire.

Learning Middlesbrough

As part of the Early Years Strategy and Action plan, the School Readiness team have worked with the Council Communication team to create an Early Years section on the Learning Middlesbrough website. The Early Years section is open to all Private, Voluntary and Independent day care providers and childminders and it will be used to keep them updated with events and training opportunities.

The page can be accessed at: <http://www.learningmiddlesbrough.co.uk/>

Middlesbrough Children's Centre and Ethnic Minority Achievement Team (EMAT)

Middlesbrough Children's Centre is currently working with the EMAT team to raise awareness and take up of the Achieving 2 Year Old offer (A2YO) for Romanian families in Middlesbrough. Based on experience of outreach work promoting the offer there is a lack of understanding within this community due to both the language barrier and the lack of knowledge around this country's early education system.

A partnership approach is also being taken with the new literacy programme, EWT@2 (Early Words Together at 2) which is offered to Romanian families and with support from the Children's Centre will provide a stepping stone to accessing more formal education.

30 hours free childcare for children in foster care

From September 2018, children in foster care will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare giving foster families the same support as other families. Children in foster care who are aged 3 and 4 years old will be able to receive 30 hours free childcare, if the following criteria are met:

- Accessing the extended hours is consistent with the child's care plan; and
- Where there is a single foster parent family, the foster parent is engaging in paid work outside their role as a foster parent; or
- Where there are two foster parents in the same fostering household, both are engaging in paid work outside their role as a foster parent.

More information can be found on the Family Service Directory:

<http://fis.middlesbrough.gov.uk/kb5/middlesbrough/fsd/service.page?id=VIP6ljhJLTo&familychannelnew=1-1>

Stronger Families Work Readiness

The Work Readiness Team are currently following up 2,957 young people to ensure they have a suitable offer of learning by the end of September which is the September Guarantee, and that they have started in education, employment or training.

The dedicated Work Readiness Practitioner for care leavers recently worked with the Pathways Team to put on a NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) event for care leavers and other vulnerable young people. The event took place in Teesside University as a way of raising aspirations for some of the most vulnerable young people in Middlesbrough.

Eighteen providers attended with stands and interactive displays of their provision. 48 young people attended of which 22 were care leavers. Members of the team transported young people to the event and supported them to engage with providers. Staff are currently following up how many of these young people have now started with providers as a result of the event. There will be another NEET event in October held at Middlesbrough College, as part of the teams continued efforts to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

Stronger Families Family Casework Team

Team Visit by Middlesbrough Chief Executive Tony Parkinson

During September the Chief Executive visited the team twice to shadow members of staff on home visits. The visits provided the opportunity to meet the children, young people and families of Middlesbrough that are receiving Early Help support whilst also seeing first-hand how staff utilise their tools to work with the family and effect change.

Access to Education

Michael Bettencourt has accepted the post of Virtual School Head. Michael comes to us from South Tyneside LA and brings many years' experience and a successful track record in improving the educational outcomes for looked after children.

Paul Mitchell, Head of Access to Education completed his final week at work in September before retiring; he has been replaced by Trevor Dunn.

A consultant has worked with us to review safeguarding within the Education area of Children's Services. He reviewed the Virtual School, the EMAT team, Alternative Education provision, exclusions and elective home education. This was a 'no grade' learning experience, and the staff in all of the teams benefitted tremendously from the forensic examination of their work. The consultant was much impressed by the commitment, passion and dedication of all of the staff he met. He will revisit in 2019 to carry out a 'deep dive' into some casework.

The Virtual School is working with Social Care to help all of our looked after children complete the Bright Spots LAC survey. This survey, developed by national leaders in the

voice of the child will help us to acquire some first-hand high quality data on the experiences our children have in care, at school and growing up. We hope it will provide a very clear base line for future improvement planning.

Councillor Janice Brunton Dobson
Executive Member for Education & Skills