

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY REPORT

Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel

7 DECEMBER 2020

Inclusion, Assessment and Review Service: The Team around the School model

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Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the new 'Team Around the School' approach developed by the Inclusion and Specialist Support Service and how this new model supports behaviour management and greater inclusion in schools.

Introduction

In July 2020, the SEND Assessment Team and Alternative Provision Team were restructured to create one single Inclusion, Assessment and Review service which is located in the wider Inclusion and Specialist Support Service. Feedback from schools was used to inform the development of the new model. School leaders highlighted the need for early intervention and support at the earliest of stages.

The purpose of the service restructure was to increase the capacity and resources available to support early intervention work in schools, further develop the quality and range of alternative provision options and identify special educational needs and support at the earliest point. There has been additional investment within the service to support the new model. This has been through increasing the number of Inclusion Officers from 2 to 5, and to provide additional educational psychology resource.

Schools have been enthusiastic about the changes to the service. It is anticipated that the new model will help reduce the level of exclusions in schools, ensure optimal utilisation of the 'high needs funding' available to schools for children with special educational needs and or disabilities and improve the quality of referrals for education, health and care assessments.

Evidence / Discussion

To support the implementation of the new service structure, the Inclusion, Assessment and Review service has introduced a 'Team Around the School' approach which has been in place since September 2020.

The team around the school model is based on the following approach:



The aim of the model is to develop a shared understanding of the context in each school, identify school priorities for inclusion at whole school, smaller group and individual pupil level and devise a multi-agency plan to take forward key actions.

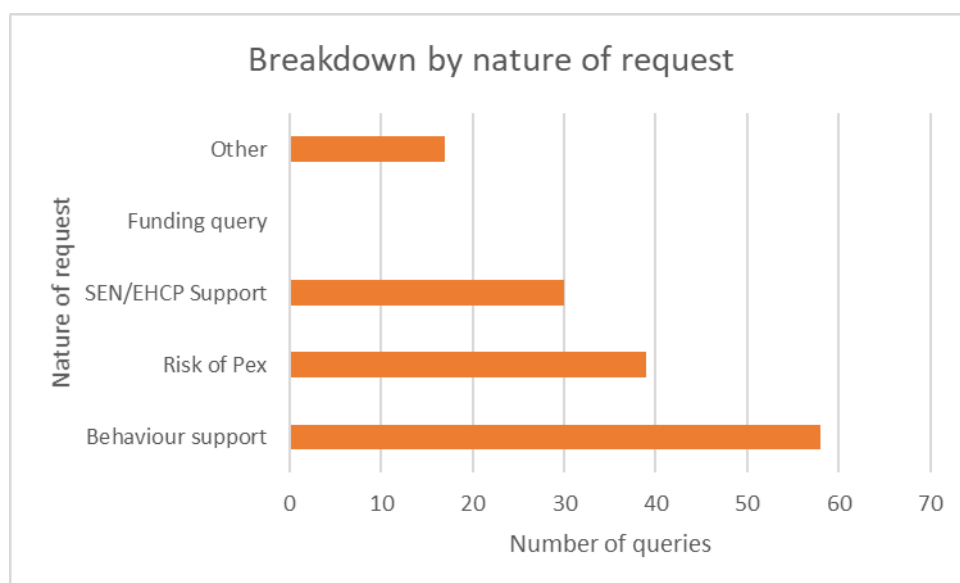
All schools are allocated a Local Authority Inclusion Officer who provides support and guidance to overcome any barriers in meeting agreed actions. There are opportunities for regular review within the model, which allows for greater learning and reflective practice.

Alongside the introduction of the Team Around the School model, there has also been a review of associated processes and panels to streamline the experience for schools. This led to the introduction of a new Primary Inclusion Panel in early November 2020 which mirrors the Secondary Inclusion Panel. This was well received by primary Head Teachers.

Since the launch of the Team Around the School approach in September 2020, the Inclusion Officers have had **144** requests from schools for support and guidance.

Breakdown of requests by type of school	
Primary	64
Secondary	80

Analysis of the data shows the breakdown of requests by the nature of the request:



Although the Inclusion, Assessment and Review Service and the Team Around the School approach is still relatively new, initial feedback from schools has been positive.

There are a number case study examples available to demonstrate early impact.

Case study 1

An Inclusion Officer provided support to a primary school regarding a child who was at risk of permanent exclusion as a result of extremely challenging behaviour.

The Inclusion Officer worked with staff in school to review the provision and the support in place for the child, advising and guiding on the resources available and providing guidance to access them.

The child is now settled in an alternative placement which will allow for further assessment of identified special educational needs and ensure a robust longer term plan is in place for the child. Had the new model not been in place, it is likely this case would have resulted in a permanent exclusion

Case study 2

A secondary school contacted the service to request additional support managing a child who was displaying challenging behaviours, including refusal to follow Covid-19 safety procedures.

Taking the Team around the School Approach, the Inclusion Officer worked with school and the family to secure a short-term alternative placement to help prevent further escalation within school and to support with effective behaviour management.

The child engaged with the alternative placement well and has since been successfully re-integrated back to the mainstream secondary setting. Without the support, it is likely that the child's behaviour would have escalated resulting in fixed term and possibly permanent exclusion.

Case study 3

A primary school contacted the service about a child who they believed was presenting with traits of autism spectrum disorder.

The Inclusion Officer worked with the setting to agree a short term transition support package to settle the child at school using play based learning, whilst the school completed further work with parents to explore an assessment for autism.

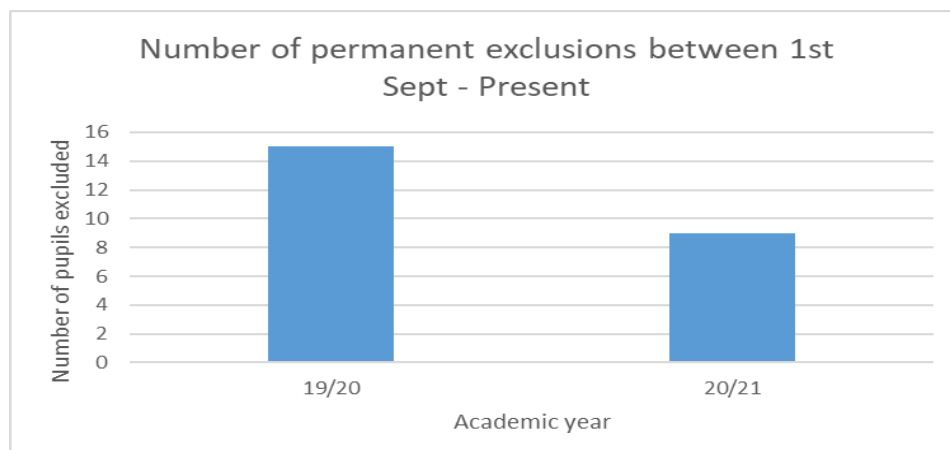
A multi-agency early intervention plan is now in place for the child, outlining the graduated response required to meet the child's needs within school. Without the support to co-ordinate this plan, the child's needs would not have been met which, over time, could have had a negative impact on the child's progress and behaviour.

An indicative measure of success may also be visible by analysing the data for permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions.

It is however important to note the impact of Covid-19 on school attendance since September, higher numbers of pupils self-isolating, changes to the structure of the school day and the introduction of 'bubbles' to manage groups of children which may also be reducing the opportunity and/or triggers for disruptive behaviour which would usually result in fixed term and permanent exclusions.

Alongside this, the Outwood Academy Trust has invested in developing its own Alternative Provision. This provision was launched in September 2020 and is available to Outwood pupils across Teesside. The opening of this provision may also contribute positively to a reduction in the rate and number of exclusions.

Comparison between the numbers of permanent exclusions for the period September to November 2019 against the same period for this year shows a decrease.



Data analysis of fixed term exclusions for the same period also shows the same pattern. In 2019, between September and November there were 1023 days of fixed term exclusions. In the same period this year, the number is 583 days. It is important to note that not all schools return fixed term exclusion data to the local authority and therefore, these figures are only a representative sample.

Conclusions

Although it is too early to evaluate the full impact of the model, early indications are that the Team Around the School model is having a positive impact. Further analysis, evaluation and review will be completed throughout the course of the academic year. Any evaluation of the model will also need to take into account the impact of COVID-19 and the risk management controls currently in place within schools.

An interim review of the model will take place by February 2021, with a full further review to be completed in July 2021.