

Learning Support Service Annual Report 2005/2006 Executive Summary

Rationale and Scope of Report

The Report is a position statement about the Service, its purpose, activities, and developments as we move forward in embracing the Change for Children agenda. During 2005-06 the Service underwent an extensive review, both internally and, in the case of support for children with sensory impairments, by an external consultant. The Service has refocused its work during the academic year; the emphasis is on improving outcomes for children and young people with additional needs within the Every Child Matters framework. This is achieved through work with individual children and groups, and increasingly through providing training to empower schools and settings. Closer working with other providers within the Solihull Child and Family Support Model has been adopted to enhance the support for families of children with additional needs. The Service has repositioned itself to be able to respond to initiatives which align the raising of achievement of children with additional needs more closely with that of all children. The Report outlines the rationale for the Service restructure, the re-alignment of resources and changes to the delivery model. The Service Performance Plan for 2006/2007 is included in the Report.

Developments

The Learning Support Service (LSS) will change its name from September 2006 to the **Specialist Inclusion Support Service** to reflect the support given to schools, settings and families in including children with additional needs in the mainstream of education and society. The Service has been restructured to provide support for children of all ages and will operate in three teams: Communication and Learning Difficulties (including Early Years, Autistic Spectrum Disorders, General and Specific Learning Difficulties, and Speech and Language Difficulties), Sensory Impairments (including Hearing, Visual and Multi-Sensory Impairments), and Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties. Staffing has been re-aligned to address priorities within the Borough to provide more systematic support for children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and those with difficulties on the Autistic Spectrum; some additional specialist Learning Support Assistant (LSA) time will be also be available to support schools and families with younger children with significant speech, language and communication difficulties. Following a review of service delivery, a new model has been introduced, designed to make best use of the resource and maximise staff time in schools and settings.

Integrated working

All teams have extended their links with partner agencies in a systematic and productive way. The Service is committed to the Common Assessment Framework and two staff have been nominated as trainers within the Borough. Many staff are involved in teams around the child and the family. The allocation of 'named' staff in each school who will become familiar with the school, their

staff, pupils and parents is designed to facilitate the building of teams around the school.

Interim Plan

A Service Interim Plan was developed for 2005-06 and set within an outcomes for children framework. The Plan is attached and details achievements against the identified objectives.

Statistical Information

A total of 2,536 children were supported by the Service in 2005-06, of whom 1,768 were boys and 768 were girls. 2,046 of the children were supported at school or early years action plus, 490 have statements of SEN. Breakdown by key stage has indicated a rise in requests for support from the ESBD team within the younger age groups. The amount of training delivered to schools has risen, particularly in the area of ESBD. All responses received in the annual Schools' Evaluation of Service rated the service as effective or very effective. The impact of Inclusion and the increasingly extreme nature of some children's needs is felt keenly by schools and settings. As ever most schools and settings would like more support than is available. Against this backdrop, and with a finite resource, it is essential to ensure that support is appropriately targeted, that service staff are able to share their expertise and empower colleagues in schools, and that the Service continues to build on its expertise. Behaviour support in particular is complex, but where schools and service staff have worked closely together there has been considerable success in dealing with difficult groups and individuals. Continuous professional development within the service is a high priority, the statistics show that the majority of In-service training time during 2005-06 has been spent on Inclusion, curriculum access and safeguarding issues. Details of achievements, training delivered and training received are given in individual team reports in Section 3 of the Report.

Performance Plan 2006-07

The ongoing development of the Service is reflected in the attached plan. Contribution to the Council's Objectives and Priorities and to the Education and Children's Services Directorate Key Deliverables are identified.

The emphasis over the next twelve months is on ensuring high quality value for money service which is responsive to need. Embedding systematic evaluation processes is a priority for the whole team and the emphasis is on outcomes and making a difference to children's lives. Challenges are addressed around data collection to inform planning, involving children and young people and their families at all stages, making integrated working a reality and building in the flexibility to respond to changing needs within the Change for Children agenda.

A list of staff and an outline of the Service structure are included as appendices.