



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3RD NOVEMBER 2015

SUBJECT: ALN REVIEW UPDATE

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Review and to inform them of proposals to seek approval from Cabinet to go out to formal consultation to close the Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Hendre Junior School and realign the Social Inclusion Base at Cefn Fforest Primary School.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The aim of the ALN review is to identify strengths and areas for development of the current services and to provide options for the delivery of services for children and young people with additional learning needs. The report provides an update on the status of the ALN review makes recommendations for a way forward with regard to two Specialist Resource Base (SRB) provisions.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 SEN Policy and Inclusion Strategy.
- 3.2 SEN Code of Practice for Wales (2002).
- 3.3 ALN White Paper (2014).

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Learning Education and Inclusion (LEI) Service consists of a wide range of support and intervention services, which includes Educational Psychology, Behaviour Support Service, Education Welfare Service and Additional Learning Needs Service. The purpose of the ALN review was to review the functions of the individual services and identify good practice and areas for development. Head teachers have been fully involved in the review process through a series of stakeholder group meetings.

In order to progress the ALN review four task and finish groups have been tasked to lead development on the following areas.

- Specialist Resource Base (SRB) funding models and provision development (lead officer Keri Cole)
- Additional Support (lead officer Jacquelyn Elias)

- Behaviour Provision (lead officer Andrea Davies)
- Looked After Children (lead officer Jackie Garland)

Membership of the Task and Finish groups includes officers from LEI, Human Resources, Finance and Head Teacher representatives. Recommendations from these groups will be reported to the Stakeholder meeting in November and to Scrutiny in the New Year.

4.2 **Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs)**

There are currently twenty-seven specialist classes in seventeen primary settings. At secondary level four secondary schools host SRB provision (Appendix A). An analysis of provision and future demand has revealed the need for further reorganisation and development of SRB provision to take into account:

- provision required to meet current and future identified need;
- geographical distribution of SRBs;
- cross-phase continuity for children and young people.

A report to the Scrutiny Committee in September 2014 indicated that addressing these issues could include re-designation and rationalisation of SRBs. A recommendation was made in June 2015 to the Head Teacher Stakeholder group that the SRB in Hendre Junior School should close and that Social Inclusion Class in Cefn Fforest Primary School should be re-designated as a Complex Needs class.

4.3 **Hendre Junior SRB**

Hendre Junior School is located on St Cenydd Road, Trecenydd, Caerphilly; it is an English medium school. The Specialist Resource Base (SRB) is designated to support a total of 8 Key Stage 2 aged pupils with severe hearing impairment.

For the academic year 2013-14, three pupils attended the SRB but this was reduced to one pupil when two siblings attending the base moved to another area. In April 2015 the one remaining pupil in the base transferred to Trinity Fields School. There are currently no pupils in the SRB.

It is proposed that the SRB at Hendre Junior School is closed. The setting does not have any children attending and there have been surplus places for a number of years. The advancement of new-born hearing screening, medical intervention and technology has allowed the Local Authority (LA) to meet the needs of children and young people with significant hearing loss in mainstream settings more effectively. In addition parents of children and young people with Hearing Impairment (HI) and the children and young people themselves, are requesting mainstream rather than specialist settings. This has impacted on the demand for placements for pupils with HI across the LA and many pupils are now very successfully placed in their local community schools with packages of support. This is in accordance with the LA's Inclusion and SEN Policy. The fact that the SRB in Hendre Junior School has no pupils on roll at present does not make it viable to continue with this provision.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body have been consulted regarding this proposal and have indicated that would support the closure of the SRB.

4.4 **Cefn Fforest Primary School SRB**

Cefn Fforest Primary School serves the village of Cefn Fforest, although approximately a third of the pupils come from the Blackwood area of Caerphilly, it is an English medium school. The school currently hosts two specialist classes. One social inclusion class takes pupils in year 3 and 4 from other schools in the local authority and pupils are dual registered. The other class caters for Key Stage 2 pupils with complex needs from all over the local authority.

It is proposed that the Social Inclusion Class at Cefn Fforest is re-designated to be a Key Stage 1 Complex Needs Specialist Resource Base. The setting currently has a Key Stage 2 Complex Needs SRB. The ALN Review has recognised that children in SRB settings benefit from cross-phase continuity so that transition for children between key phases can be managed more effectively. A recommendation from the review has been to review current complex needs provision and where possible ensure that both key stages of the provision are in the same setting.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body have been consulted regarding this proposal and have indicated that they would support the realignment of the Social Inclusion Class.

The ALN Review has also considered the effectiveness of social inclusion and nurture provision in the context of a more strategic approach to behaviour management across the authority. The ALN Review has identified that due to the way nurture and social inclusion provision is organised, vulnerable children attending these classes have a fractured educational experience, which does not lead to sustained progress over time in relation to the difficulties they are experiencing. A behaviour review will consider arrangements for specialist provision to meet the needs of children with behavioural, emotional and social needs (BESD). This will be subject to a separate consultation process.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Council's full Equalities Impact Assessment process will be applied to the formal Consultation Document and report to Cabinet.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial consequences from this report but it is recognised that this will need to be reviewed following consultation. An update will be provided to Scrutiny Committee following that.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Rationalisation of base provisions could impact on personnel currently employed in SRBs. Any staff affected will be fully consulted along with trade union representatives and supported through HR processes. Alternative arrangements have been made with regard to all staff at Hendre Junior SRB.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Heads of Services and a Head teacher focus group have been kept fully informed of the progress of the review. The Head Teacher and Governing Body of Hendre Junior School and the Head Teacher of Cefn Fforest Primary School have acknowledged the need for the changes in relation to the SRBs in their schools and accept them. Further, wider consultation will take place following Cabinet's approval to move to the next stage.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to progress these proposals the Local Authority must follow procedures set out in the School Organisation Code 2013. It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and that it is progressed to be discussed for approval at Cabinet.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Current provision is no longer fit for purpose and needs to be revised in order that children and young people's needs are fully met.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The School Organisation Code (section 1.13).

Author: Jacquelyn Elias, Service Manager, Additional Learning Needs
Consultees: Cllr Rhiannon Passmore, Cabinet Member for Education
Mr C Burns, Chief Executive
Cllr W. David, Chair of Scrutiny
Mrs K Cole, Chief Education Officer
LEI Senior Management Team
Head Teacher Stakeholder group
Head Teacher and Governing Body of Hendre Junior School
Head Teacher and Governing Body of Cefn Fforest Primary School
HR
Finance

Appendices:
Appendix A SRB provision in Caerphilly