

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) PEER REVIEW

To: Cambridgeshire Schools Forum
Date: 14 December 2016
From: Meredith Teasdale, Service Director, Strategy and Commissioning

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To update Schools Forum on the outcomes of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Pilot Peer Review. This report summarises the findings of the review, our intentions in responding to these, and the next steps for reporting and sharing the findings more widely.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The SEND Peer Review Framework has been developed as part of the Eastern Region's work on improving outcomes for all pupils. Cambridgeshire was the first local authority to be reviewed. Colleagues from Norfolk, Central Bedfordshire and Essex attended interviews, focus groups and reviewed documentation on 15 and 16 November. A presentation of findings was given at the end of 16 November. Following this, the Peer Review team provided a report, which has been finalised and will be publicised shortly.

3.0 Main Findings of the Review

3.1 The review team highlighted 6 themes from the documentary analysis which informed their lines of enquiry over the two days of fieldwork:

- Analysis of impact informing strategic planning
- Schools' understanding of their role and responsibility with special educational needs (SEN) support cohort
- Sharing effective practice
- Early identification issues
- Alignment of SEND services with school improvement challenge
- Parental engagement and support

3.2 The peer review team identified several areas of effective practice in Cambridgeshire which should be shared with other local authorities:

- The arrangements, policy and service level agreement in relation to Alternative Provision
- The 'School Offer' for SEND in best practice schools
- The Accelerating Achievement action plan
- The Virtual School Service
- The locality teams
- The Children with Disabilities Team
- The Joint Commissioning Unit

3.3 There were six key recommendations made by the peer review team:

- Clarify to all Cambridgeshire schools and all agencies that the prime responsibility for the SEN support cohort sits with schools.
- Clarify the roles and expectations of both the local authority, partners such as health partners and schools in meeting the needs of the SEN support cohort and revisit the Local Offer to schools to improve understanding of available support and approaches.
- Develop a culture of consistent challenge and support to schools through all directorates and partners to focus on improved learning outcomes for the SEN support cohort
- Develop an effective practice strategy, which draws on the most effective practice across Cambridgeshire schools, including Teaching Schools and Special Schools. Consider using the School Improvement Board as the driver for this strategy.
- The two phase transformation process provides an opportunity to involve parents in co-production of the lifelong SEND service and consider where the champion role sits for the SEN support cohort.
- Revise the local area Self-Evaluation drawing on analysis of key data and involving all partners.

3.4 There were offers of support from the participating local authorities:

Norfolk offered support for clarifying the expectations of roles of local authority and schools.

Central Bedfordshire offered support for building capacity, school-to-school support and the use of teaching schools.

Essex offered support for refining the local area Self-Evaluation.

4.0 **Next Steps**

- 4.1 The findings in the report are due to be shared with Children, Families and Adults Management Team, Cambridgeshire School Improvement Board and the Joint Commissioning Board over the next 6 weeks. A report of the findings will also be taken to CYP Spokes in January and CYP Committee in March. As the peer review was a pilot, the process of the peer review and the outcomes will be discussed at the SEND Regional Network. The finalised report will also be publicised on the Council's website and shared with those who participated in the review.
- 4.2 Any actions arising from the recommendations made by the Peer Review team will be included in the service planning for the new SEND Service.
- 4.3 The next SEND Peer Review is planned to take place in Norfolk early in 2017. The Peer Review Team for Norfolk's review will include a member of staff from Cambridgeshire. This will allow sharing of learning from the Peer Reviews across the region.

4.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The Forum is asked to comment on the findings of the review as summarised here.