

JOINT LOCAL AREA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) INSPECTION IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

To: **Children and Young People Committee**

Meeting Date: **11th July 2017**

From: **Wendi Ogle Welbourn, Executive Director for Children, Families & Adults**

Electoral Divisions: **All**

Forward Plan ref: **n/a**

Purpose: **To update the Committee on the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection**

Recommendation: **The Committee is invited to:**

- a) Note the outcomes of the Ofsted Inspection;**
- b) Agree to proceed with service planning to address areas for improvement across the Local Area and with parent carers.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Between 20 March 2017 and 24 March 2017, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Cambridgeshire to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.
- 1.2 Inspectors spoke with children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, parents and carers and local authority and National Health Service (NHS) officers. They visited a range of providers and spoke to leaders, staff and governors about how they were implementing the special educational needs (SEN) reforms. Inspectors looked at a range of information about the performance of the local area, including the local area's self-evaluation. Inspectors met with leaders from the local area for health, social care and education. They reviewed performance data and evidence about the local offer and joint commissioning.

2. MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

- 2.1 Senior leaders in the local area are working well together to improve services for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are clear plans in place to address their key priorities for improvement. Consequently, outcomes for the children and young people are improving.
- 2.2 Strong and effective leadership is evident in joint commissioning arrangements. Open, well-established relationships between services and the alignment of budgets have resulted in an improving offer for children, young people and families. An example of effective practice is leaders jointly commissioning face-to-face and online counselling services as part of their work to improve emotional health and well-being. Children and young people were involved in the design of the services provided.
- 2.3 Leaders' self-evaluation of the local area's strengths and priorities for development is accurate. Following the implementation of the reforms in 2014, improvement was not as swift as it could have been. There are now credible plans in place to make rapid improvement; the actions being taken are making a difference.
- 2.4 Improvements are evident, for example, in the support for children and young people who display challenging behaviour. As a result of local area leaders and school leaders working together, the number of permanent exclusions of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has reduced by three quarters in a 12-month period.
- 2.5 Children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities progress as well as others at secondary schools and colleges. In 2016, the proportion progressing in line with national averages in secondary schools was close to that for all pupils nationally.
- 2.6 The children receiving SEN support do less well at primary schools, making less progress than all pupils nationally during key stage 2.

- 2.7 Young people are well supported as they move into adult life, with very high proportions staying within education, employment or training.
- 2.8 Most specialist health services are meeting NHS waiting targets of 18 weeks, with significant improvement in access to child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) assessments. Professionals hold clinics jointly to support the early identification of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 2.9 Leaders ensure that the safeguarding of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is given a high profile, including those placed out of the local area. Visits are undertaken to independent providers to check that the children and young people placed there are safe, and that the quality of provision meets the local area's high expectations.
- 2.10 The designated clinical officer (DCO) was appointed shortly after the reforms were implemented in 2014 and has a good understanding of the strategic agenda, areas of strength and areas for further improvement. The DCO works proactively with partners to ensure that the contribution of health professionals is consistent across the local area and is improving over time. Leaders took appropriate action to recruit additional personnel when they recognised a lack of capacity in the clinical commissioning group to deliver the reforms effectively.
- 2.11 A high proportion of new education, health and care plans (EHCPs) are completed within the 20-week timeframe. The timeliness of transfers from statements of educational need to EHCPs is improving, and the local area is well on track to complete all transfers by April 2018, as required. However, targeted services provided by health and social care are not consistently included within the EHCPs.
- 2.12 The local area's website for the local offer provides a wealth of information and guidance, but some parents and carers do not know about this online information and others have struggled to find what they need on the website. The local area has consulted with parents and carers and responded to feedback by improving the website. In the recent survey undertaken by the parent carer forum, Pinpoint, fewer than half of the 547 respondents answered a question relating to the local offer website, and only half of these reported finding what they were looking for.
- 2.13 Specialist services provided by education, health and social care professionals are of high quality and are well regarded. However, some parents and carers report that it is very difficult to access these services in a timely way, if at all. Some providers do not fully understand the roles of each service or the referral criteria and processes. This results in a delay in identification of need and frustration for families. One parent summed up the experience of accessing the behaviour support team as, 'Once we found them, they were brilliant – but it took months.'
- 2.14 A significant proportion of parents and carers are dissatisfied with the arrangements and procedures for assessing children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities. This dissatisfaction relates to providers and to the statutory assessment and resource team (START). Parents and carers feel that they have to battle in order to arrange an assessment for their child and, in some cases, this has

resulted in a lack of confidence and trust in the local area's effectiveness.

- 2.15 Leaders consult with, and work alongside, parents and carers to co-produce a range of services, advice and guidance. Over a quarter of parents and carers who attended the webinar during the inspection reported being involved in co-production, including some who are dissatisfied with the response to their child's special educational needs and/or disabilities.

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

The following bullet point set out details of implications identified by officers:

- With improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Cambridgeshire, there should be less reliance on meeting needs of children and young people with SEND in out of county placements. This should enable some of these resources to be used to support more children and young people with SEND in mainstream provision.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The All Age pathway work undertaken with service users has identified 'flashpoints' that need to be addressed. This has led to the development of a 0 – 25 SEND Service with the Social Care Disability Team and Adults Services. The benefit of this is a seamless service with consistency of message and practice around inclusion and independent living for young people with Learning Difficulties.
- The Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) for the Local Area inspection has identified joint areas of work with Health.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- Children with any SEND living in Cambridgeshire do less well than their peers nationally in Early Years, in KS1 and in KS2.
- Children who are at SEN Support at KS2 and eligible for FSM do less well than KS2 at SEN Support.
- The SEND Peer Review which took place in November 2016 highlighted the need to clarify expectations, responsibility and accountability in relation to SEN Support. There is a SEN Support Action Plan and an Accelerating Achievement strategy. Joint work across services is taking place, which aims to target support for vulnerable groups.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Source Documents	Location
Cambridgeshire Local Area SEND Ofsted Inspection outcome letter	<i>Cambridgeshire's outcome letter is published on the Ofsted website:</i> https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/local-authority-school-improvement-arrangements-inspections-and-focused-school-inspections