

DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM

12th January 2017

ITEM NO 8

SCHOOL FORUM OFFICER WORK UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to update School Forum on the review of the high needs services and related activity.

Progress to Date

Resource Base Workshop

2. As reported to the last meeting, all schools delivering high needs services have worked closely with the SF Officer to ensure reporting is clear and consistent eg tracking and monitoring of children's achievement compared to local, regional and national data. This progressed in the form of a formal workshop for resource base (RB) managers, hosted by Heathfield Primary School. The workshop was very well received and it was agreed to meet again before the end of the Academic Year.
3. It was agreed that the greatest challenge was to analyse results/performance against national indicators and it is difficult to compare across RB's due to different cohorts and needs. It was agreed that we could measure on an individual school basis ie RB against SEN; and RB against non-SEN. The RB Managers agreed to provide this information in their SEND Governor reports if not already doing so. It was also agreed that inclusion data should be recorded, for the annual report ie attendance, fixed term exclusions, extra-curricular etc. The Annual progress reports need to report on achievement data at key stages.
4. It was agreed that the current recording of pupil plans was still appropriate, which give start and end points so progress can be measured.
5. The RB Managers will be undertaking a self-evaluation using an agreed format and this will need to be completed to report to the School Forum next year. The managers were asked to check with their SENCo (if not SENCo themselves), that their statutory duties regarding SEND Local Offer are reviewed and up to date.

Service Updates

6. Low Incidence Needs Service (LINS) - Specific support has been provided for the LINS this term. As previously reported the service has developed a draft radio aid policy which will require approval. A meeting has been held to identify issues to consider and this has led to a review of the LA specialist equipment policy. A group will be set up to steer these two pieces of work which are key to enable schools and the LA to undertake their duty more efficiently in order to make reasonable adjustments for children and young people with SEND.

7. The Beaumont Hill outreach service for cognition and learning financial and resource review has indicated that there is some capacity within staffing. Further work is required in order to identify the needs of schools and in liaison with other services to look at options for best use of resource. This is a priority in the Spring Term in order to evaluate services and to contribute to future planning.
8. The Travellers Education and Attainment Service have undertaken a review concentrating on three areas of service delivery in order to evidence impact. This will be further analysed with the Head Teacher.

Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing

9. The SF Officer has been supporting Public Health in the implementation of the Future in Mind projects: mental health first aid course, peer support grant funding and mindfulness training for staff and delivery of mindfulness courses to students (see paper presented in March 2016). The total value of the grant that has funded these courses is £151,000.
10. The mindfulness programme comprises of four key strands of activity:
 - a 'taster' course
 - an observation course delivered by Mindful Therapies in schools with pupils and observed by staff
 - a personal mindfulness course for staff in Spring Term 2017
 - a 'train the trainer' course in Summer Term 2017, in order to allow staff to deliver mindfulness practice in schools

Feedback on the completed courses to date is below.

Mindfulness Taster Course (completed)

90% of staff completed evaluations on the course; 94% of staff enjoyed the sessions 60% of staff 'strongly agreed' that they felt more informed about Mindfulness; 35% of staff 'moderately agreed'. 53% of these staff wanted to train in Mindfulness and 41% wanted to know more about Mindfulness. Therefore Mindful Therapies will be offering free attendance to all interested staff at weekly drop in classes.

Mindfulness Observation Course (completed)

469 children/young people were engaged in the course. 47 staff observed the course run by Mindful Therapies, and are all signed up for an 8 week personal mindfulness course with start dates throughout January and February 2017. Staff are encouraged to ensure they complete all sessions. Staff will then undertake personal mindfulness practice and then will be able to deliver courses in school.

Mental Health First Aid Course - 61 staff from 38 different schools participated in the 2 day course. The 61 attendees are now certified Mental Health First Aiders by MHFA England CIC. The course was well received, participants valued the '3 month pledge' and opportunity to follow-up with the trainer on their commitments. This shows that the training was not stand alone as participants had the confidence that they will be supported to implement the recommendations in school. The networking opportunity allowed schools to discuss best practice and identified some common issues, and themes that schools are struggling with. A full evaluation report will be prepared. An action plan to support schools (subject to budget) in facilitated networking with others and sharing of good practice on what they have done since the training, is being considered.

Peer Support Grant – 10 schools have benefitted from grant funding for implementation of peer support projects which include playground mentors; playground buddies; circle of friends; and peer mentoring transition programmes. The grant is now closed. Further support will be available for e-safety peer support training, linked to the Healthy Lifestyle survey ‘team around the school’ action plans. Further details will be made available to participating schools early next term.

Recommendation

11. The School Forum to note progress on review of services and monitoring activity and other related activity in particular the progress on projects in schools to support children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing.

Eleanor Marshall - School Forum Monitoring & Support Officer