

DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM

10th March 2015

ITEM NO 5

SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION - RESOURCE BASE REVIEW

Purpose of Report

1. To update Forum regarding the review of the Speech and Language Resource Base (hosted by Northwood Primary School).

Reason for the Review

2. The review has taken place within the context of the changing national and local context:
 - The SEN reforms – which have extended SEN provision from birth to 25 years of age. The new system extends rights and protections by introducing a new Education, Health and Care plan.
 - The Children's and Families Minister, Edward Timpson invited OFSTED, on 17 December 2014, to formally inspect local areas on their effectiveness in fulfilling the new SEN duties.
 - Funding – the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) high needs funds this provision. As reported at the School Forum meeting on 13 January 2015, it is clear that unless future years DSG grant allocations are increased then it will be difficult to balance the budget without the need for reduction in provision in some budget areas.
 - Monitoring – it is necessary to have a contract and detailed specification in place for all DSG funded services. This will allow the School Forum to monitor the service in future years.

Review Scope

3. This review has considered how children with primary speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) are provided for by the resource base, how the team is structured and managed and funded.
4. The review does not assess the provision that schools commission, or SALT provision in specialist schools.
5. The review has considered the wider context of Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) provided by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust, and has taken into account the feedback from schools from a recent speech and language survey.

Background Information – Provision and Access

6. The resource base provision is for up to 9 primary aged children provides inclusive educational provision for children with severe and complex SLC delay (not associated with any other developmental difficulty), from ages 4-11. All children have a One Plan. The base also offers an outreach service.

7. Children with severe and complex speech and language disorders have difficulty achieving their full educational potential unless their speech and language needs are addressed. The resource base and outreach service's role is to enable children to improve their communication skills and reduce any impact that this may have on their educational learning.
8. As part of the specialist support a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) provides on-site support directly to children in the resource base whilst also having a case load of other children not at Northwood school.
9. A provision map has been developed and shown at Appendix 1. This shows that the service supports at universal, targeted and specialist levels. This approach is set out by Bercow¹ in his review, 2008 which identified that more effective services had adopted the concept of a continuum of provision delivered by a workforce consisting of both specialists and the wider workforce.
10. The children at the resource base are provided with daily access to an environment modified to the needs of a child with significant needs but being cognitively able to cope in a mainstream class where they will be educated for the majority of the day.
11. Children are placed in the base by the LA provision panel, after recommendation from a school in liaison with the SALT and other specialists.
12. Children having severe or complex SLN disorder or delay require assessment and diagnosis, intervention planning and specialist intervention in liaison with parents/carers and other professionals, in the originating 'home' school prior to accessing the resource base.
13. As part of the child's support it should be expected that the outreach service are part of the continuum of support, prior to a recommendation for a place at the resource base.
14. Placement of children at the resource base is for up to a maximum of 2 years. Children can exit the base at any time within the period of placement and exit to either Northwood Primary school, their home school. Outreach will support transitioning children however does not provide support beyond transition to Year 7.
15. General advice or information can be accessed by schools through making direct contact with the base and requests for involvement with individual children at SA/SA+ must be made via a request form.
16. The service have particular responsibility to work with primary schools with regard to children with a statement of SEN who have primary SLCN. In this case, individual programmes and one-to-one support can be provided, with follow up visits.
17. Children who have left the resource base but stay at Northwood Primary School, access the outreach service as all other schools.

¹ The Bercow Report – A Review of Services for Children and Young People (0-19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Current Position

18. The review of current delivery has led to production of the provision mapping and a 2014/15 service specification (Appendix 2) agreed with the Head Teacher at Northwood Primary School.
19. Performance Indicators have been reviewed and it has been identified that new indicators will need to be developed. The current indicators measure against age related expectations, (currently under review), but it has been identified that the resource base should report the progress to specific speech and language goals, and progress of children to exit the base.
20. The Head Teacher will work with the base SLCN teacher and SALT and a baseline position will be reported for the December 2014 cohort. This will provide the basis for review and monitoring.

Review - Key Issues

21. The key findings are summarised below. The full detail from the data review, findings from discussions, interviews and research is outlined in the accompanying report (Appendix 3).

Outreach

22. The process by which a child is recommended should include outreach provision. This does not consistently occur and children can enter the base without the staff having a prior relationship with the child.
23. The number of outreach hours declined from 2012/13 to 2013/14, with new requests for outreach support also marginally lower. The 2013/14 annual report indicates that 47 children received continuous support from the outreach service, the majority of children being at SA+, 4 children with statements. With the addition of the 9 places, this equates to less than 25% of all children who have SLC recorded as their primary need.
24. The outreach service report that some schools appear to be more likely to contact the resource base than others, this is evidenced in the survey results. Most schools prefer to use the SALT service once an SLC need is identified, either via school's own commissioned service, or through referral routes.
25. There has been a significant contribution by the outreach service to training and supporting the wider workforce to identify SLC through the use of Language or Speech Link, and other methods such as Talk Boost/ICAN, to embed high quality inclusive class teaching that promotes all children's language development.
26. These recommended assessment tools and teaching methods are the preferred approach for teaching children in the resource base and in provision of outreach training.

Places

27. Some children are not able to access the resource base as this would mean forsaking their home school place, which is not acceptable to some parents. Where parents are hesitant to take up a place at the resource base because their child will lose their place at the 'home

school' there should be a process by which children could remain on the school roll, whilst being on dual roll at the resource base. In this case, the home school should be fully responsible for the child's transport, transition, and liaison.

SALT Programmes

28. Schools have indicated that more support is required to advise on the delivery of personalised SALT programmes for children.
29. Schools report they are not clear as to how children have benefitted therefore any future commissioned services needs to ensure the therapist works with schools to ensure a continuous cycle of assess/record/review as ultimately, no matter what support the child receives, or from whom, any child regardless of support provided can be referred for a place at the resource base.
30. There could be economies of scale if schools could strategically commission their speech and language support through North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust.

Data

31. The data shows a year on year growth of SLCN being reported as a primary SEN need. There is a significant growth particularly between 2012-2014 of SEN at nursery and reception reaching a peak at Year 1.
32. In Year 2 there is a drop with decreasing numbers through to Year 14 (12.5% of all children).
33. The majority of children currently on roll at the resource base are in Reception class.
34. The EY performance data shows a growth in the number of children not achieving standards in communication and language.
35. There has been a growth in the enquiries by parents of EYFS children and the school is being recommended by settings and other specialists. This is giving the wrong message to parents, as children should be, as explained above, be only recommended to the base after following the agreed pathway.
36. In terms of Early Years supported, it could be suggested that the emphasis needs to be on supporting more children in Year 2 in the base, with more outreach in Reception, as these children are less likely to make the quickest improvement.
37. In terms of secondary school support, there was not a large demand for outreach support, however, it may be appropriate to provide support beyond transition for an agreed time, and possibly to extend to young people with statements where SLCN is a primary need. This will ensure young people have the time to adapt and give young people the confidence towards leaving school.

Value for Money

38. The budget is £117,149 (9 places at £10,000 per place, plus £10,000 for outreach service plus top-up). 67% of the budget is allocated to staff costs, approximately 27.5% to premises and 5.5% for other resources including training costs. However 2014/15 top-ups

are overspent and this should be reviewed.

39. The staff costs reflect the qualifications and experience employed and value for money is on a level with other DSG services that are currently being reviewed.

Points for Discussion

40. The provision mapping shows how schools can align the outreach service with their own commissioned provision. In all cases, schools support language development in the first phase of a systematic approach to reduce the impact of lower language competence.
41. This can be supplemented by adopting teaching methods such as ICAN Talk Boost etc which are recommended by the outreach service and a continued programme of training will support this. Then schools will be in a better position to identify pupils with more pronounced language learning needs lowering the incidence of SEN.
42. However, from this review, it appears that schools could be missing out an important step in that children are more likely to be 'sucked up' into specialist services as soon as a need is identified. They could miss out on targeted interventions as recommended by the outreach service which could address a need quickly.
43. It is therefore encouraged that schools not only use a common approach to identify SLC needs, but that where a child is not making progress, that the outreach service be part of the continuum of provision, including school's own commissioned services. This will improve the consistency of the support provided to all children, particularly those who eventually access the Resource Base.
44. Schools' buy-in to adopting methods recommended by the resource base will ensure that the training and support provided by the outreach service is not just a nice to know. It is suggested that staff attending have the responsibility to cascade and impart knowledge and experience that schools adopt as a whole school approach. This ensures buy-in at the highest level, and a consistency of approach.
45. **This approach will ensure the resource base and outreach is working with the children most in need, and at the right level, therefore, it is recommended that schools@onedarlington adopt a strategic approach to SLCN. This is the best way to enhance and co-ordinate universal provision and provide support at an earlier stage of language development. A shared understanding of the role and services provided by the resource base can ensure there is no duplication of effort. By schools' adopting a common approach to the 'pathway' to access the resource base provision this will ensure children are prioritised and support directed in the right way.**

Recommendations

46. The School Forum should note the current position as at paras 18-20.
47. The School Forum to discuss paras 40-45 and agree:
 - A Speech, Language and Communication strategy should be developed to include schools own commissioned services. This will be presented to the June 2015 School Forum.
48. The Speech and Language base provision and outreach service will be reviewed, and with the implementation of the strategy it can be identified through monitoring whether this approach works in practice.
49. The School Forum to agree other actions following other key findings, for the officer to:
 - develop a 'dual-roll' process for proposal at the June 2015 meeting
 - discuss with schools the potential for joint commissioning of NHS SALT
50. The School Forum should review at the Autumn 2015 School Forum meeting. Any future service provision is subject to budget allocation and agreement by Spring 2016 for the Academic Year 2016/17.

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