

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7 March 2017

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: The Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) joint inspection of the local area of East Sussex 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.

Purpose: The report sets out the outcome of the local area Special Educational needs and Disability (SEND) inspection which took place in December 2016

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to note the outcomes of the inspection and that the findings of the inspection will be used to secure further improvements in the local area.

1 Background

1.1 On 27 February Ofsted published the inspection letter following the joint Ofsted and CQC inspection, in December, of the local areas effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Ofsted do not provide a grade for the inspection instead they provide a narrative and confirm whether or not a written statement of action is required. The local area will not be required to submit a written statement of action. The letter is attached at Appendix 1. The inspection letter notes '*...a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities that is shared by professionals across the county.*'

1.2 In advance of the inspection process we produced a comprehensive self-assessment which was viewed by inspectors as detailed, accurate and honest and this is reflected in their identification of the areas for development. The inspection letter recognises the action that has been taken to address areas of weakness and to improve services and noted that in some instances it is too early to see an impact.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The key focus of the inspection is the effectiveness and impact of services in the local area and the difference this is making to the outcomes for children and young people who have SEND. The inspection focused on the effectiveness of the local area in:

- identifying children and young people who have SEND
- assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have SEND
- improving outcomes for children and young people who have SEND

2.2 The findings of the inspection are based on discussions with children and young people with SEND, parents and carers, representatives of the local authority and Public Health, headteachers, SENCOs and governors and examining a wide range of documentation. In addition the inspectors visited 13 East Sussex schools, settings and colleges, a children's centre and the child development unit at Eastbourne General Hospital, to speak to them about how they were implementing the SEN reforms.

2.3 Key findings include:

- Most parents and carers of children and young people who have SEN and /or disability reported that they were very positive about the provision their children receive in schools. Many parents and carers also report that the central services they have experienced since the introduction of the reforms have made a positive difference to the children and young people in their care.
- Leaders have taken urgent action to address areas of weaknesses and improve services and they have set out an ambitious strategy that all managers, teams and partner agencies, such as the East Sussex Parent and Carers' Council, are working towards
- The local area has effective information management systems that leaders use well to evaluate the progress that staff are making towards delivery of the core aims of the East Sussex ISEND 2016 – 2018 plan. The local area uses both short term and longer term forecasting well so that leaders are planning effectively for the growing demands on their services.
- The three clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in East Sussex are well represented in the joint commissioning group. CCG investment in the community paediatric service and new service specification has increased access and reduced waiting times.
- Children and young people who have SEND in the care of the local authority receive good support and do well. A specialist children looked-after nurse team has been established and the SEND Designated Medical Officer (DMO) is working closely with the named doctor for children looked-after and the designated/named children looked-after nurse. This means that children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in care receive effective support to meet their medical needs.
- Leaders are taking urgent action to address the increasing absence and exclusion rates for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The impact of this work is evident in targeted schools. Early indications are that trend is being reversed steadily.
- In 2016, early years and key stage 1 school-age children with SEND achieved well compared with their peers in similar local areas.
- Provision at post-16 and post-19 is effective.
- The local authority has improved access to professionals to seek advice and guidance about children and young people's needs, by introducing the ISEND front door. As a result professionals report that they are able to identify the needs of children and young people more effectively than in the past.
- School leaders are particularly positive about the SEND Matrix, a detailed and informative guide for all professionals that leaders report is improving the consistency of their work.

2.4 The main findings identified areas for improvement:

- Improve communication with parents and carers. There is evidence of some contribution of parents and carers and children and young people to the evaluation of services. However, leaders recognise that there is more work to do to increase the participation of parents, carers, and children and young people in assessing the local area, especially the local offer.
- Currently, the designated nurse role for children looked-after sits within the East Sussex Healthcare Trust provider service and is the operational team manager. This creates a conflict between the leadership and governance aspects of the designated nurse role and undermines the effective operational management of the specialist children looked-after nurse team.
- Despite taking relevant action, the area has been unsuccessful in reducing the waiting times for referrals to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).
- In 2016, pupils in key stage 2 achieved less well and leaders across the sector are taking urgent action to recover the previously good standards.

2.5 The findings of the inspection will be used to secure further improvements in the local area and built into existing plans.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the report and the areas for improvement which will be incorporated into existing plans.

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