

**Report on Education Inclusion Service for HWBB**

The SEN Strategy is focusing on increasing provision within the local area for children and young people with SEND. This has a major impact on various areas within the LA and is proven to be of major benefit for the children, young people and their families.

Areas this impacts:

- Improve life and educational outcomes for children and young people with SEND by providing excellent quality provision within the local area
- Improving the social aspects for the children and young people by supporting them to be part of their local community
- Enabling young people to access employment and training opportunities offered within BANES for example Project Search, Learning for Work and Partnership 4 Learning all BANES driven opportunities to aid young people to transfer into employment.
- Reduce the costs of the placements in expensive out of county independent special schools therefore easing the pressure on the High Needs budget
- Reducing the costs and the carbon footprint in relation to transport.

Since the SEN reforms in 2014 the number of Education, Care and Health plans (EHCPs) within BANES has more than doubled with the figure now standing at 1842 and still increasing. The number of requests for Needs Assessments has also increased in 2021 there were 405 requests as compared to 293 in 2020. As of August 2022 there have been 335 requests this year.

This data shows the pressure in the system. There is pressure on the teams involved not only the SEN Team but all the other agencies that feed into the assessment process e.g. Educational Psychologists, Social Care, OT & Physio, Speech & Language and the newly formed SASS (Specialist Autism Support Service).

Linking into the above these figures also highlight the pressures on the educational settings within BANES. Both generic special schools are full for 2022 and 2023, Aspire Academy for Social Emotional and Mental Health young people has expanded numbers and is increasing to a total of 120 places within the academic year 2022/23 but for September 2022 is also full. The lack of spaces in the B&NES special schools puts pressure on the mainstream sector and leads to increased placements in the independent sector (See below for future plans in relation to sufficiency of places linked to the SEND Strategy). With the increase in mental health difficulties following the pandemic and with the increased pressure on schools there is also a chance that there will be more exclusions due to poor behaviour and schools struggling to manage. However BANES is committed to working with schools to reduce exclusions.

## **Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND**

We continue to support excellence in SEND teaching and practice and ensure key local and national priorities are communicated via our SENCO conferences. BANES is also working closely with schools to embed the Graduated Approach (GA) (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) this should be a whole school approach and if adopted can lead to a reduction in the requests for EHCPs. The work around this sits under the Head of Education Commissioning, Olwyn Donnelly. The start of this is to employ an ex special school Headteacher to carry out an audit of the use of the GA in B&NES Schools to underpin further work in supporting schools to adopt this approach and to ensure that going forward the offer at SEN Support is robust. The intention is to improve school and parental confidence at this stage to reduce the number of requests received for needs assessment and thereby the number of EHCPs.

In addition it is vital that the B&NES Early Years offer is robust and sustainable. The contract for the specialist nursery provision will be out for re-tender between September and December 2022. This will include the nursery provision together with training for staff and some outreach support. Also included is the need for new premises for this nursery which will then free-up 20 much needed places within Three Ways School.

## **Employment and Training Opportunities**

The offer from Youth Connect South West has expanded to accommodate the need in the local area. The Learning for Work programme continue to support young people who find accessing formal education a challenge, this is run in conjunction with Bath college. This is for young people who would like to gain skills and experience for work but find formal education a challenge. Partnership 4 Learning is also run in conjunction with Bath College and supports young people who require a more flexible personalised learning offer and are socially isolated with high levels of anxiety/mental health.

WECA supported initiatives in relation to careers advice and support are also run in the special schools, Alternative provision and with YCSW. This is now going to be widened to the mainstream arena focussing particularly on young people with SEN.

## **Sufficiency of Places/Reduction of out of count placements and transport**

Within the next couple of years BANES will need to consider investment in more special school type places and one way of doing this is to work with MATS to set up resource bases attached to mainstream schools. At present BANES has 5 bases and we are working on increasing this. It is imperative that these bases provide a full and excellent curriculum and education for those attending.

This piece of work now sits with the new Head of Education Inclusion (Capital & Strategy) post held from September by Rosemary Collard. To date there has been interest in opening a potential of 9 new bases across B&NES, 6 in Primary and 3 in Secondary. In addition B&NES is working with Premier Advisory Group to put in a bid to the DfE for a new free special school.

**Rosemary Collard - Head of Education Inclusion Service**  
**26<sup>th</sup> August 2022**