



Title of Paper:	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Progress Since the 2019 inspection and next steps.
Author (including organisation):	Richard Hanks, Interim Director, Education and Skills, Bristol City Council
Date of Board meeting:	12th January 2023
Purpose:	Oversight and assurance

1. Executive Summary

Summary of progress as judged by the recent Local Area Inspection and outline of the next phase in the Local Area's SEND improvement journey.

2. Purpose of the Paper

To provide the Board with assurance of the progress made in addressing the five areas of significant weakness identified by Ofsted and CQC inspectors in the Local Area SEND inspection September/October 2019 and report on the outcomes of the 2022 re-Inspection.

3. Background, evidence base, and what needs to happen

The Local Area Inspection 2019 identified the following 5 areas of significant weaknesses, requiring a Written Statement of Action (WSOA), approved by Ofsted in March 2020:

- The lack of accountability of leaders at all levels, including school leaders
- The inconsistencies in the timeliness and effectiveness of the local area's arrangements for the identification and assessment of children and young people with SEND
- The dysfunctional EHC plan process, and inadequate quality of EHC plans
- The underachievement and lack of inclusion of children and young people with SEND, including the high rates of persistent absenteeism and fixed-term exclusions
- The fractured relationships with parents and carers, lack of co-production and variable engagement and collaboration

Local Area SEND final inspection report

- Between 3rd and 7th of October, OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) jointly re inspected the effectiveness of Bristol's approach to implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The specific focus was on the progress made by the local area since 2019.
- The report recognises that Bristol and the local area have improved special education needs and disabilities (SEND) services.
- The report's main findings show that four of the five areas highlighted in the 2019 inspection are showing 'sufficient progress' in addressing 4 of the key areas.
- Inspectors judged that 1 area, the difficult the relationships with parents and carers found at the last inspection had continued. However, the report goes on to note that; 'the majority of parents and carers accessing services and support more recently, are positive about their experience'.

We have received written confirmation that we will require an Accelerated Action Plan (APP) for Area 5 which is the relationships with parents and carers. We are already in conversation with the DFE, stakeholders and parent/ carers about how to progress this work. The SEND Improvement Board is the main governance structure for the APP.

Accelerated Action Plan Further Information

Outcomes we are aiming to achieve through the Accelerated Action Plan:

- Improved relationships at all levels with established systems and processes for co-production, engagement, collaboration, and joint working.
- To facilitate a consistent view of the quality of support and improved trust in systems. This will be established through continuing to develop informal systems and through the development of a formal structure.
- To work together to ensure that the shared commitment to getting the best outcomes for children and young people is used as a firm foundation on which to build future developments.

To enable the above outcomes to be achieved we will need to ensure:

- a. Governance arrangements across the local area are transparent and include parents and carers.
- b. Clear shared approaches to co-production, engagement and collaboration will be developed across Education, Health, and Care.
- c. Systems for ensuring good communication with all our parents and carers will be continued and developed. This includes our Community of Groups work, our Local Offer, and our Social media posts.
- d. Continuous quality improvement will be an embedded culture of working practice with a particular focus on relationships through effective communication and on improving the experiences and outcomes for children and young people and their families.
- e. A formal structure for Bristol will be developed to enable the voice of children, young people and their parents and carers, to plan future services and approaches to working with children and young people with SEND.
- f. Informal and formal structures will be inclusive and ensure that diverse communities across Bristol are represented.
- g. Proactive steps will be made for resolution and repair when difficulties in relationships or conflicts of interest arise.

A new SEND Partnership Plan will also continue to tackle the areas of weakness identified in the inspection, the re-inspection report and feedback from partners. The local area benefitted from the structure and format of the WSOA and the new partnership plan will take a similar approach. The SEND Partnership Plan will also reflect the new local area SEND updated inspection framework which focusses on experiences and outcomes as opposed to the implementation of the 2014 reforms.

4. Community/stakeholder engagement

Partners have engaged with parents and carers and children and young people throughout the SEND improvement journey, including co-production of the redesign of Bristol's statutory processes (Time for Change project) and development of the Children and Young People's Outcomes Framework which were fundamental to the improvements identified in the re-inspection report.

The Community of Groups is a representative forum made up of many parent/carers groups that has broadened the Local Area's reach and access to a more diverse range of SEND voices. This group continues to support the co-production of Local Area plans and provides ongoing feedback regarding SEND families' experiences in the Local Area.

Clearly, further work is needed to formalise the co-production arrangements within the Local Area as set out in the report above.

5. Recommendations

All Board members to note the identified improvements in SEND services across the Local Area and continue to actively ensure services contribute to partnership working and the SEND Partnership Plan to further improve the experience for children, young people and their families. The SEND Partnership Plan and APP will have milestones and KPI's, the board may wish to have regular updates on progress.

6. City Benefits

Ongoing improvements to the SEND system will benefit the 12000+ children and young people with SEND and their families, by improving inclusion, and reducing inequality.

7. Financial and Legal Implications

Continuing to improve SEND services and support for children and young people with SEND and their families, ensures that the Local Area meets its duties as set out in the SEND Code of Practice statutory guidance and the Children and Families Act 2014.

8. Appendices

[Local Area SEND inspection 2019](#)

[Written Statement of Action \(WSOA\)](#)

[Local Area SEND final inspection report 2022](#)