

Essex Parent Partnership Service Newsletter

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Achievement for All

improving outcomes for pupils with special educational needs

full story on page 2



Achievement for All: improving outcomes for pupils with special educational needs

Vision

One fifth of all pupils in schools have special educational needs and disabilities, and too many do not fulfil or realise their potential. In 2008, less than 12 per cent of pupils with SEN achieved five GCSE's at A*-C, including English and Maths, compared to 57 per cent of their peers. This makes it clear that more needs to be done to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) fulfil their potential and achieve the outcomes they need for success in their adult lives. Achievement for All will demonstrate best practice in improving outcomes for pupils with SEND and help schools rethink their approach to, and expectations of, these pupils.

The aims of Achievement for All are to:

- Improve outcomes and progress for all pupils with SEND;
- Improve the involvement of parents and carers of pupils with SEND in their child's education; and
- Improve these pupil's Every Child Matters outcomes to ensure barriers to both learning and participating fully in school life are removed.

What this means is that:

Pupils with SEND will feel more secure as learners, feel positive in their school life and see more clearly the potential they hold:

Parents will have more confidence in SEND system and be more engaged in their child's education;

Schools will have an ethos of high achievement and stretching targets for all their pupils and know they have a range of proven teaching and learning approaches and expert support to draw on;

and

Local authorities should feel confident that they have identified and provided suitable education for pupils that are achieving, and more certain that resources are being used appropriately at school level, and are meeting their goals to ensure that they are providing improvements in their relationships with and services for pupils and parents.

Achievement for All will begin in September 2009 in 10 local authorities - one of which is Essex. There are 32 primary schools, 8 secondary schools and 2 special schools in the project. The focus will be on Year groups 1, 5, 7 and 10 and that the project will follow children's achievements over a two year period.

Integrated Working to Strengthen Families

'It made me feel stronger!'

Basildon was one of the pilot areas for the 'Strengthening Families' programme and successfully ran the programme in October 2009. This programme is designed for families with children aged between 10 – 14 years. The programme is delivered in 2 – hour weekly sessions for 7 weeks. Each session began with a meal prior to the one hour separately facilitated parents' and young peoples' sessions. The families then came together for a family session. The programme objectives are:

- Help parents/carers learn nurturing skills that support their children
- Teach parents/carers how to effectively discipline and guide their children

- Give children a healthy future orientation and an increased appreciation of their parents/carers/
- Teach young people skills for dealing with stress and peer pressure.

The team of local facilitators attended a 3 day Strengthening Families training programme in March. Essex County Council coordinated this training through the Parenting Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) a DCSF funded initiative to increase parenting capacity across the Childrens Workforce.

This was a real example of an integrated approach with facilitators from partner agencies working together to meet a local need. The Basildon Lower Academy provided the venue and food and The Basildon Excellence Cluster provided a crèche which enabled parent/carers with younger children to come along. Families were introduced to the programme by the Academy and the East Basildon TASC.

The programme was evaluated by the parent/carers and young people. Here are some of their comments:

- *It has been socially good for both of my children*
- *It made me think more positively towards my child*
- *I never felt judged*
- *My child told the other group members he loves me*
- *It's made me think more about my behaviour (Young Person)*
- *My mum received a phone call from school to say how much my attendance had improved (Young Person)*
- *I had a lot of fun (Young Person)*

Following this successful pilot we are planning to run the programme again in the Spring term. If you require any information please contact Lynn Mizen/ Debbie Bigaignon on 01268 498858.

For enquiries concerning PEIP please contact Sue King
Email: sue.king2@essex.gov.uk



Publication of the Childrens and Young People's

Making sure all the children and young people in Essex have a happy life, feel safe and are aware of their rights and responsibilities are the main ambitions of the Children's Trust in Essex.

The Children's Trust is a partnership between all of the services that work with children and young people and their families in Essex with a collective responsibility to deliver outstanding services to our county's 330,000 children and young people.

A refreshed Children and Young People's Plan 09-11, originally published in 2006, details how this will be achieved and how Children's Services in Essex aim to take forward the government's Every Child Matters agenda.

The new plan which sets out 10 priorities for the next two years was developed following extensive consultation with children and young people. Cllr Peter Martin, Essex County Council cabinet member with responsibility for Children's Services said: "Strong partnership working and increased investment in the key areas is vital and will provide the foundations to support, nurture and protect all our children and young people. We are striving towards providing an environment in which every child and young person is safe and reaches their potential."

The Children's Trust partners will work together to deliver the 10 priorities linked to the Every Child Matters outcomes making better use of resources to more efficiently and effectively deliver

the common aims set out in the plan.

Cllr Martin added: "We want the children and young people of Essex to have the best quality of life in Britain and we are confident that that the refreshed plan has identified the right priorities to deliver this ambition and make a real difference to their lives."

To obtain a copy of the **Children and Young People's Plan 2009-11**

visit

www.essex.gov.uk

or email

childrenstrust@essex.gov.uk

for further information.

Spectrum-on-Sea:

A Positive Parent Support Group

Do you worry that your child...?

- Finds it hard to make friends.
- Gets really upset over small changes.
- Gets very involved in certain toys, activities or routines.
- Finds it hard to respond to other people's feelings.
- Has unusual interests.
- Can seem over anxious.

A new parent networking group for families coping with these worries started up in Clacton in September 2009. It has been set up in collaboration with parents and professionals, including an educational psychologist, clinical psychologist, nursery and children's centre staff.

The group concentrates on mutual support and practical solutions and strategies for problems arising from social and communication difficulties.

Parents/Grandparents/Carers can come along whether or not your child has a diagnosis.

The meetings happen twice monthly at Willow Tree Nursery & Children's Centre, Chingford Avenue, Gt Clacton from 10.00am -12.00pm. The first meeting of each month will be informal tea/coffee and a social emphasis. The second meeting will have a specific focus. Refreshments are provided and a free crèche is available (this needs to be booked in advance).

For further details telephone: Sadie, Paula or Michelle on 0780 722 1052

SALT review



Measures to provide better support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabled children were announced by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls on 28 September 2009. The proposals aim to make life easier for parents and help their children maximise their potential. The measures will test easier ways of assessing children with special educational needs (SEN) and there will be new guidance for schools to tackle high exclusions of children with SEN.

As part of these measures, the Secretary of State has also commissioned Toby Salt to lead an

independent review into the supply of teachers trained to meet the needs of children with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

Toby Salt convened an Expert Group as a sounding board, bringing together the knowledge and expertise to analyse the questions in scope enabling him to make recommendations to the Secretary of State by the end of February 2010. Further information on the SALT Review can be found on the DCSF website at www.dcsf.gov.uk.

LAMB inquiry

In March 2008 Brian Lamb OBE was asked by Rt Hon Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools & Families to look at how parental confidence in the special educational needs system could be improved. Because of emerging issues during the period of the Inquiry, he was also asked to look at SEN and disability information; the quality and clarity of statements; inspection and accountability; and what impact the changes in the Tribunal system were having on parental confidence.


Three Interim Reports were submitted leading to a final report which can be found at www.dcsf.gov.uk. This final report incorporates Brian Lamb's previous recommendations and the updates that he made to these recommendations

Throughout the Inquiry Brian Lamb and his team had the privilege of hearing from thousands of parents, children and young people as he went around the country. They shared their experiences, their insights into how the system currently works and their aspirations for the future.

In the introduction to the report Lamb describes how he is most grateful for the time everyone gave and the enthusiasm with which they supported the enterprise.

Brian Lamb was supported in undertaking the Inquiry by an Expert Advisers Group and a Reference Group who all brought their vast experience of different parts of the system to the issues considered in the report.





Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Equality Duty places on all public authorities (including schools) a general duty to, amongst other things, promote positive attitudes towards, and equality of opportunity for, all people with a disability. The DDA defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, and long-term conditions such as cancer and HIV. These are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long term, as defined above.

In addition to the general duty, regulations made under the Part 5A of the Disability Discrimination Act set out a specific duty on certain public authorities, including all publicly-funded schools, requiring them to demonstrate how they are meeting the general duty. In effect the general duty sets out what schools have to do; the specific duty sets out how schools have to do it and what they need to record as evidence of what they have done.

The main requirements of the specific duty are to:

- prepare and publish a disability equality scheme (a scheme);
- involve disabled people in the development of a scheme;
- implement the scheme;
- report on it.

The purpose of the scheme is to demonstrate how the school plans to meet the Disability Equality Duty. Schools are required to undertake the development and review of their scheme in a particular way and to include particular elements, such as:

- involving disabled people (pupils, staff, parents) in the preparation of the scheme;
- setting out in their scheme how disabled people have been involved in its preparation, and their arrangements for gathering information on the effect of the school's policies on:
- the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees;
- the educational opportunities available to and the achievements of disabled pupils;
- the school's methods for assessing the impact of its current or proposed policies

and practices on disability equality;

- the steps the school is going to take to meet the general duty (the school's action plan);
- the arrangements for using information to support the review of the action plan and to inform subsequent schemes;
- implementing the actions in their scheme within three years;
- report on their scheme annually;
- review and revise their scheme every three years.

Publishing the school's Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Schools must publish their DES either as a separate document or as part of another document, such as the school improvement plan. It should be available on schools' websites or as a printed document in the school.

The school is not required to do anything under its scheme that is unreasonable or impracticable. However, where a child has special educational needs a school has statutory duties under the Education Act 1996, which include:

- ensuring teachers are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for pupils who have SEN

- ensuring a pupil with SEN joins in the activities of the school together with other pupils, so far as is reasonably practical and compatible with the child receiving the special educational provision their learning needs call for, the efficient education of the pupils with whom they are educated and the efficient use of resources
- report to parents on the implementation of the school's policy for pupils with SEN.

You can get further advice, guidance and information from a range of materials, including:

- DCSF guidance - visit www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/
- National Strategies - visit www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies - Disability equality schemes and schools: A duty under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005
- Disability Rights Commission (2006), Schools and the Disability Equality Duty in England and Wales - Guidance for Governors, Headteachers, teaching and support staff working in schools in England and Wales. This is available at: http://83.137.212.42/sitearchive/DRC/PDF/Schools_guidance_england_and_wales.pdf

Finally, your local authority can provide advice and guidance about all aspects of developing and implementing your scheme.

Essex Choice Advice Service Update – January 2010

Well I've been in post for three months now and so far it has been very exciting!

The Choice Advice Service is now on the ECC website and the intranet, www.essex.gov.uk/choiceadvice. a new Choice Advice leaflet has been available since the end of January.

So far I have carried out three home visits, one for support with a secondary school application and two for early years application. Two of the cases were families where parents have learning difficulties and one was a Polish family where mum spoke very little English (her teenage daughter did the translation). I also supported a Polish family at the child's primary school where mum needed clarification of some of the content of the Secondary Education in Essex booklet.

The support and advice given to these families was mainly around completion of the common application form. I also visited two primary schools to deliver a choice advice presentation and answer questions from parents.

Current methods of access

Contact with the Choice Advice Service has been through the Choice Advice Helpline, 01245 437622, and the Choice Advice email, choice.advice@essex.gov.uk

Referrals have come from Contact Essex, the Essex Planning and Admissions team, Mid Chelmsford TASC team, Parent Partnership, Traveller Education Service, Choice Advice leaflet mailings and primary schools.

Admission Appeals

In the amended School Admissions Code, Appendix 5, point 18, it states 'It is good practice for Choice Advisers to provide support during the appeals process...'

National Offer Day is 1 March 2010, when parents will learn which school their child has been offered. If any parents wish to appeal against their school place, they can contact me for advice and support. Where possible and if required, I can also attend an appeal and speak on the parent's behalf.

Hayley Jordan Choice Adviser

BUDS (Braintree & Uttlesford Districts) Special Needs Playscheme has just celebrated its 10th Birthday. We were awarded an 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in our recent inspection (August 2009). **BUDS** offers respite provision during the main school holidays for children aged 4–12 years who have additional needs. **BUDS** is held in Finchingfield Village Hall. Our Playschemes run from 9.15 until 2.30, cost £15 (*negotiable*) per day. All staff and volunteers are very dedicated, trained and have a wide experience of working with children who have additional needs. Our next playscheme will be held during the Easter Holidays. **For further details, our latest newsletter or to obtain a parent pack please contact Linda Turner coordinator on 01371 810542.**

Families Acting For Change (Essex).

Helping to Represent the views & experiences parents/carers of disabled children – enabling them to have a voice about services they receive in Essex. It is vital to our work that all families with a disabled child have their say on issues relevant to them.

To become involved at a level suitable to you please contact:

Tracey Dartnell

Email: info@face-essex.org.uk or

chair@face-essex.org.uk

Mob: 07910 883337

E-zine Announcement for Public Facing Publications – January 2010 – Children's Trust launch Online Magazine

The Children's Trust in Essex has launched an exciting new online E-magazine.

Focussing purely on news from across Children's Services in Essex, the E-zine is an easy to read online publication which will be packed full of community projects, case studies and above all the real life stories that are happening in our communities every day.

The Children's Trust is a multi-agency partnership underpinned by the Children's Act of 2004, bringing partners together for the good of children and young people who live in Essex. The formal partnership between both statutory and non statutory partners brings together all services for children and young people in Essex and is led by the vision and values of the Children and Young People's Plan. The E-zine will support and promote this and provide a source of information for parents, young people and professionals to highlight how Children's Services in Essex are making a real difference to children, young people and their families.

To make sure you receive your copy simply email: childrenstrust@essex.gov.uk and register your interest.

All information about the Children's Trust can also be found on the Essex Partnership Portal – www.essexpartnershipportal.org

EssexWorks.

For a better quality of life

Essex Parent Partnership contact details:

Parent Partnership Managers

Janet Hill and Clare Woodcock (County Hall)
Telephone: 01245 436236

Parent Partnership Helpline:

Telephone: 01245 436036

Write to: Essex Parent Partnership Service

SENCAN, Essex County Council,
E2 County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LD

Parent Partnership Officers:

Mid SENCAN, Ann Gregson,
Crossman House, Station Approach,
Braintree, Essex, CM7 3QA
Telephone: 01376 555615

North East SENCAN, Samantha Morgan,
Park Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3UP
Telephone: 01206 711134

South SENCAN, Maggie Caley,
The Knares, Basildon, Essex, SS16 5RX
Telephone: 01268 632321

West SENCAN, June Fleming
Goodman House, Station Approach, Harlow.
CM20 2ET. Telephone: 01279 404500

Parent Partnership Business Support Assistant

Vicky Torr (County Hall)
Telephone: 01245 436326

email: parentpartnership@essex.gov.uk
web: www.essex.gov.uk/parentpartnership

How are we doing?

We would welcome your feedback if you have any comments or ideas for future articles, please let us know. You can call Parent Partnership on the helpline: 01245 436036 or email us at parentpartnership@essex.gov.uk

Or write to us at:
Parent Partnership, SENCAN, E2 County Hall, Chelmsford. CM1 1LD

The information contained in this newsletter can be made available in alternative formats: large print, braille, audio tape or disk. We can also translate this information into other languages.