

TITLE OF REPORT: Special School Provision and Developments

REPORT OF: Strategic Director Learning and Children and
Director of Children's Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update relating to the changes and developments to special school provision. This is following the recommendations from last year's review that an annual conversation be held with special schools.

1. Background

Special school provision is constantly evolving because it is affected by changes in mainstream provision, nature of special educational needs and disabilities and local and national policy. Partnerships, such as Health and Social Care, are fundamental to the delivery and support to children's special educational needs and this report will outline some of the joint work currently in place.

2. Current Context

There are 6 special schools in Gateshead, Dryden and Hill Top schools are a hard federation and the Executive Headteacher is Jane Bryant. Furrowfield and Eslington are a soft federation and the Executive Headteacher is Michelle Richards. Gibside school's headteacher is Judith Donovan and The Cedars headteacher is Martin Flowers and is an Academy.

All of the schools have been rated by Ofsted as at least good with Dryden, Eslington and Gibside schools outstanding schools. This supports the view that Gateshead has high quality special school provision in place.

3. SEN Strategy Group vision for schools

The SEN Strategy group are currently working on a new vision to give a context to future developments for schools including special schools and the future SEN provision for the local authority. The vision set out below ensures that health and social care providers with other service users are in partnership to deliver high quality provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Vision

Working in partnership with education, health and care providers and service users:

- To develop and deliver cohesive education, health , care services and support systems which give children and young people the best opportunity to engage, achieve, succeed, and progress
- To agree arrangements and protocols that enable a partnership approach to:
 - Structured information gathering and sharing
 - Joint or collaborative service planning
 - Joint or collaborative commissioning
 - Efficient delivery
 - Effective monitoring
 - Evaluation and analysis
- To develop and maintain comprehensive, accurate data and information to understand need and inform service planning, development and delivery
- To ensure that children, young people and families have access to timely assessment that enables intervention at the earliest opportunity
- To establish and maintain co-ordinated information and advice services that are accessible and support decision making and choice
- To co-ordinate services so that transitions are smooth and support is continuous
- To provide opportunities for children, young people and families to contribute to the design, delivery and evaluation of services
- To adopt best value principles in directly provided and commissioned services

4. Data

January 2016 - DfE - A total of 530 pupils were being taught in special schools

Primary SEN need	Number
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	136
Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	122
Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)	104
Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)	93
Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)	32
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)	21
Physical Disability (PD)	7
Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)	7
Other (OTH)	4
Visual Impairment (VI)	2
Hearing Impairment (HI)	1
Multi Sensory Impairment (MSI)	1

The table below outlines the 2016 picture of each individual school and the range of needs they are supporting.

	MLD	ASD	SLCN	SLD	SEMH	PD	SpLD	VI	PMLD	MSI	HI	O	Tot.
The Cedars	67	24	15	13	7	6	2	2	0	1			137
Dryden		7		34					10			1	52
Eslington					49								49
Furrowfield					66								66
Gibside		70		37					11				118
Hilltop	37	35	16	9	1	6	5	0	0	0	1	3	108

*O is for other need

In **January 2015**, 1.6% of Gateshead's whole school population were being taught in special schools. (Jan 2015 school census data).

Below is an excerpt from the updated SEND Needs Assessment which shows the overall number of pupils in special schools broken down by category of need. The data is from the January 2015 School Census.

In January 2015 there were 492 pupils with either a statement of SEN/EHC Plan or at SEN Support being taught in special schools in Gateshead. The table below highlights the number of pupils being taught in special schools by primary special educational need in January 2015.

Primary Special Educational Need Category	Number of pupils <i>(Jan 2015 School Census data)</i>
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	120
Social, Emotional Mental Health (SEMH)*	112
Moderate Learning Needs (MLD)	98
Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)	98
Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)	24
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)	20
Physical Disability (PD)	10
Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)	4
Other	4
Hearing Impairment	2

Comparing the 2015 and 2016 data in relation to special schools shows that:

- The numbers of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) has significantly increased in 2016. This has particularly impacted on Gibside school and is about 60% of the school population. The Cedars also has greater numbers of ASD than previous years.
- Pupils with Social, Emotional, Mental Health needs (SEMH) is also increasing which is adding pressure to the numbers for both Eslington and Furrowfield schools.
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) is also increasing on the previous year. While Profound, Multiple, Learning Difficulty (PMLD) has stayed about the same.

Conclusion on data

The conclusion being that the SEN strategy group are needing to review the current capacity and what will be needed for future provision.

Gibside school, from early years information, is predicting the need to expand further. It currently has a base of two classrooms in Blaydon Children's centre to accommodate previously required additional numbers. However, new information in early years is highlighting increasing numbers and the school have identified will require more classroom space for September 2016. The local authority is checking recent data and the governing body of the school are in discussions with the local authority on how it could increase numbers and find more classroom space to be prepared for September 2016.

5. Eslington Developments

A report to cabinet 24 February 2015 outlined proposed new developments for Eslington Primary school for an extra 30 places to make 68 places in total (including 8 additionally resourced places) and to extend the intake age range from 5-11 to 2-11 year olds with effect from 1 September 2015. The report also requested that the council convert the Redheugh block at Tyne View Children's Centre to create a split site school.

This proposal was because it had been identified that the number of children with Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) needs requiring specialist educational support was rising and it is anticipated this will continue to increase in the future. A number of pupils were placed in mainstream schools due to a lack of places in specialist provision like Eslington which was deemed the best placed to meet their needs.

The new facility at Tyne View opened September 2015 and 4 classrooms (accommodating 7 pupils in each, allowing for 30 pupils in total) are in place. The cost of the Tyne block conversion fit out was met from the Council's capital

programme on the basis that the project will generate revenue savings for the Council.

Eslington Primary School currently admits children from 5 to 11 years of age. The early education and intervention for two year olds and reception aged children, in response to views received during the informal consultation exercise carried out. This will increase the number of specialist placements available for 2 year olds which will assist in meeting the objectives of the government's initiative to provide 2 year olds with free education if they meet certain criteria, including if they have a current statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. However, places at the moment have been taken by over 5 year old pupils.

6. Nurse attached to Special Schools in Gateshead

A nurse was appointed for the Gateshead Special Schools, in September 2015. Her post is described as a Registered Child's Nurse for special schools.

She is working with the Children's Disability Nursing Team and is line managed by them. The post is based at Low Fell Clinic though the schools had preferred it would be in one of the schools. The reason given for this not been possible was that the nurse needed a computer linked to the NHS system. However, though the nurse was given a computer by Gibside school the nurse does not yet have access to the NHS system unless she is at the clinic. This, therefore, means that much needed time in schools is lost because twice a day the nurse goes to the clinic to check emails and collect information.

Hopefully this is a temporary situation but the schools are concerned that the amount of time they had expected to have is not in place. However, the support given, for example, such as feeding clinics, has been helpful. The nurse is also writing or updating the health care plans in line with the single plan reviews, though, this happens away from the schools as they are written at the clinic and opportunities are missed for the staff to share information. The nurse then has to print out information and can only amend on return to the clinic.

The special schools have recognised that they need to track and clarify the work of the nurse with the Children's Disability team whether it is training, for example, around gastro feeds and toileting or Education Health Care Plans so that all managers' expectations are met particularly for this specific role of the nurse. They hope, therefore, to achieve more consistency and liaison to move this opportunity further to meet school needs.

7. Recommendation

It is requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to receive an annual report on Special schools and provision.

Ann Muxworthy, Inspector SEN and Inclusion