

CUMBRIAN SCHOOLS FORUM – SEN, SOCIAL DEPRIVATION, ACCESS AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

Notes of the meeting of the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Working Group held on Monday, 18 June 2007 in the Lowther Room, Newton Rigg, Penrith.

Present: Norma Bates (Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary), Jane Blacklock (Small Schools), Chris Brooksbank (South Lakeland Primary and Chair of Group), Bernard Gummatt (Special Schools, representing Steven Bowditch), Alan Rutter (Teachers' Associations and Chair of the Forum), Anton Hodge (LA), Ashleigh Burdess (LA), David Henderson (LA), Harry Slater (LA) and Nicola Shiels (LA).

Apologies: Mr S Bowditch, Mr K Little, Mrs J Mansfield, Mr E Tumelty

1. Notes of the Meeting held on 17 April 2007

The notes of the meeting of the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Working Group held on 17 April 2007 were agreed.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising. There were, however, some specific issues from the notes that would be covered later in the meeting ie. strategically resourced schools and provision mapping.

4. Review of Funding for Social Deprivation and Personalised Learning

There was a presentation that brought members of the group up to date on the ongoing work relating to the review of funding for social deprivation and personalised learning.

The group had accepted that the present method of allocating deprivation funding, FSM, had limitations. Alternatives had been investigated including IMD and IDACI, and information regarding commercial packages that were available such as Acorn and Mosaic had been requested.

The data used for IMD and IDACI was quite old (2001 census and 2001/02 data from the Department of Work and Pensions) and the group had expressed some concern about this. It was however reported that the University of Oxford were looking to updating some of the data, eg. change in income domain related to changes to social security arrangements.

IDACI had been created specifically to measure deprivation that affected children and was used by Ofsted in PANDA reports. It was also mentioned in the formal consultation relating to the restructuring of Children's Services.

Both the commercial packages, Acorn and Mosaic were available to post code level. The group were informed that Children's Services already subscribed to Acorn.

Also, a letter had been received from the head teacher of Askam Village School who felt that the LA were missing language, vocabulary and social interaction as a deprivation factor.

The group were asked to consider

What was the most suitable method?

Was it appropriate to use more than one method?

Should there be a threshold below which no payments were made?

There was some discussion regarding threshold and concerns that there would always be instances where there were small elements of deprivation that were not recognised.

After the School Forum meeting on 2 July 2007 it was hoped that there would be an indication about what could be included in the consultation with schools. It was possible to ask schools how the social deprivation funding should be allocated and if they thought that the right amount was delegated. Nationally there was a move away from FSM but this appeared to move resources away from those areas regarded as the most deprived, to more affluent areas.

The group then agreed the options that should be taken to the Schools Forum on 2 July 2007: -

- Continue using FSM
- Use an alternative method – IMD, IDACI
- Use Part FSM and part alternative method

AB/AH

The group also discussed the period of consultation. Ideally there would be two periods – an initial consultation on the principles that would take place on the principles followed by a second period that looked at the effects and how they could be managed.

5. **SEN**

At the last meeting of the group some concerns had been expressed about an inconsistency of funding for strategically resources schools (SRS). David Henderson had been invited to the meeting to update the group about work relating to SRS.

LA officers and the SRS had been working through a difficult process to try to establish an agreed intake into strategic provision. There were currently 21 SRS, soon to be 23. The schools were not necessarily in the right locations and there were not as many strategic places and would ideally be liked.

In previous years some SRS had had an 'open door' regarding admissions. This exercise had attempted to separate who was strategic and who was not. Whilst working through the process, those involved had tried to establish a core group of strategically placed pupils and the marry these to a funding model. Those pupils

placed in SRS should have needs that could not be accommodated in their local school.

This had been an encouraging process in that it had attempted to refine who was strategic and who was not.

A Local Authority aspiration was that all SRS would have an agreement in place by the beginning of the Autumn term 2007. Officers were working with the schools to reach agreements that would set out how the SRS provision would be maintained, what the school would do and what the LA would do. All agreements would be based on a similar set of criteria but each one would also have different elements dependent upon the individual circumstances of the school.

This was a developing process that would continue. The LA was working with schools to try to identify new areas of provision and were also looking at redesignation of current SRS where need had changed since the strategic provision had been established, eg. physical/medical pupils could now often attend their local school so physical/medical SRS may be redesignated – autism, or another category.

Also, there may be occasions when a designated SRS had, for a period of time, no pupils. A minimum level of funding had been established to allow the school to maintain the staffing/expertise for future children that came into the school.

A real issue related to the direction by statement, which effectively made the LA the admissions authority. Usually, named schools were agreed through negotiation but a situation could arise where the named school was not acceptable to the parent. This would then have to be resolved in tribunal.

There was also some concern about the different levels of support for activities identified in statements. It was important to establish some basic principles relating to the funding of statements. It was suggested that schools should be consulted on agreed principles that could include: -

- external moderating value based on a national average level of support for different types of learning, taken from Ofsted reports of other special schools.
- SRS – fund at the same level as special schools.
- thresholds.
- equal funding across age groups.

6. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting of the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Working Group would be held on Monday, 9 July 2007 at Newton Rigg, Penrith. The meeting would begin at 9.30am.

Further meetings of the group had been scheduled for:-

Wednesday, 12 September 2007, Newton Rigg, 1.00pm
Tuesday, 30 October 2007, Newton Rigg, 9.30am

6. Any Other Business

Provision Mapping – The Chair of the group, together with other members of the group (J Blacklock) that wished to contribute to the discussion would be arranged with David Henderson.

CB/JB/
DH

P&R/NJS
June 2007