

Committees:	Dated:
Community and Children's Services Committee	08/06/2018
Health and Wellbeing Board	15/06/2018
Audit and Risk Management Committee	17/07/2018
Health & Social Care Scrutiny Committee	06/11/2018
Subject: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) City of London Local Area Inspection outcome – May 2018	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Theresa Shortland, Head of Service – Education and Early Years	

Summary

This report provides an update to Members on the outcome of the City of London Local Area Inspection letter – May 2018.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills gave notification on 5 March 2018 to the City of London local area that we were going to be inspected, under section 20 of the Children Act 2004, from 12 to 16 March 2018.

The inspection provided an independent external evaluation of how well the City of London local area carries out its statutory duties in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND) to support their development.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published the inspection findings in letter form on 18 May 2018. The findings set out briefly the context of the inspection, the evidence gathered, any strengths and weaknesses, and areas recommended for improvement.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The duties on local areas regarding provision for children and young people with SEND are contained in the Children and Families Act 2014. The Minister of State for Children and Families has tasked Ofsted and the CQC with inspecting local areas on their effectiveness in fulfilling these duties. The Ofsted/CQC Inspection Framework sets out the legal basis and the principles of inspection.

Context

2. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills gave notification on 5 March 2018 to the City of London local area that they were going to be inspected under section 20 of the Children Act 2004 from 12 to 16 March 2018.

3. The inspection was led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors from Ofsted, with a team of five, including an Ofsted inspector and a children's services inspector from the CQC.

4. The inspectors undertook a range of sessions over the period they were in the City and spoke with children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, parents and carers, local authority and National Health Service staff. They visited a range of providers, including Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School, and spoke to parents, staff and governors about how they were implementing the SEND reforms.

5. Inspectors looked at a range of information about the performance of the local area, including the local area's self-evaluation. They reviewed performance data and evidence about the local offer and joint commissioning alongside a number of other relevant documents relating to the governance of the SEND work in the City.

6. The inspection provided an independent, external evaluation of how well the City of London local area carries out its statutory duties in relation to children and young people with SEND to support their development. The evaluation identified strengths and areas for development.

7. Ofsted published the inspection findings in letter form on their website on 18 May 2018. The letter sets out the context of the inspection, the evidence gathered, any strengths and weaknesses and areas recommended for improvement. The letter constitutes an inspection report under Regulation 3 of the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015 (see Appendix 1).

Summary of main findings

8. The letter identified that leaders in the local area have shown a strong and purposeful commitment to implementing the reforms. They have a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their work. As a result, their

self-evaluation is accurate. Leadership roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined. Governance arrangements in the local area are effective.

9. Due to its small geographical size, the City of London local area faces significant challenges as a large proportion of children and young people who have SEND are educated in schools outside the local area. However, leaders have effectively mobilised resources and staffing, and used joint commissioning to manage these challenges effectively. Inspectors reviewed several examples where leaders commissioned a personalised package to support children and their families.

10. Professionals involved in meeting the needs of children and young people work well together, sharing information and communicating effectively. Strong support is also provided to parents and carers where needed. Professionals and leaders have a clear understanding of the risks facing children and young people with SEND. The sharing of information and monitoring of individual pupils means that additional social care support and interventions are in place to help young people to manage any identified risks.

11. Providers are highly complimentary about the local area's work. They particularly point out the strong communication, quick response and commitment of leaders and professionals to working together with the provider to meet children and young people's needs.

12. The local offer has improved significantly over the last few years. It was reviewed in the autumn term 2017 to include more access to provision outside of the local area. In the words of one parent: "It is refreshing that the local area wants to improve the local offer." Parents appreciated this and recognised the improvements made. Leaders acknowledge that a priority is to widen the offer further, particularly broadening the short-breaks offer and including more activities that take place within the City. Leaders are aware of the need to further improve communication about the offer to parents and young people.

13. Leaders have correctly identified that they need to further develop their processes for ensuring that they receive timely information from schools that City children and young people attend outside the local area. This particularly affects the details that leaders have of the attendance and outcomes for those children and young people identified as receiving SEND support.

14. The Parent Carer Forum (PCF) is in the early stages of development and is moving towards autonomy and independence. One leader of the PCF is also co-chair of the SEND Programme Board. This is another example of the commitment of the local area to working with and hearing the voice of parents.

Strengths

15. The findings identify that there are clear systems and procedures in place for early identification of SEND in a timely way, particularly in the early years. Health visitors and early years staff work well together. Leaders also provide effective support for children, young people and families before a formal assessment is finalised. This means that any emerging needs are met quickly.

16. Leaders have a strong vision and high ambition for children and young people who have SEND. They have made sure that there is effective multi-agency working, and that the providers they commission can meet the needs of children and young people.

17. A wide range of professionals work well together, make effective contributions to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, and identify learning needs. Also, a culture has been created which means that professionals in the local area work well together to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people. Providers and parents particularly appreciate the availability and quick response of the Educational Psychology service. The range of information gathered from professionals is used well to ensure that detailed provision is included in EHC plans. It was evident that the right people attend meetings at the same time.

18. There is good provision for children looked after by the City. This is currently a unique group of looked-after children composed entirely of unaccompanied asylum seekers. Health professionals have worked to commission a local bespoke health package for all those in this group, including a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) assessment and an immunisation and vaccination check. This means that children and young people in this group have quick access to the right support where any signs of SEND are identified.

Areas for development

19. One of the main areas for development is for leaders to improve the City's data collection with providers that educate City children outside of the local area. This is particularly in relation to monitoring information that relates to the SEND support group. Leaders have recognised the need to make better arrangements to collect and share information that relates to attendance, exclusions and achievement more quickly. This work is important because a very high proportion of children and young people are educated outside the local area.

20. Leaders are aware that there is a need to build on their initial work to identify any children or young people who may have a social, psychological or emotional health need, particularly for those aged 13 to 19. Their recent research has suggested that this needs to be explored further.

21. Leaders acknowledge that their work to engage children and young people in co-production is at an early stage of development – for example, collating and analysing their feedback as part of the transition process so that any improvements made reflect their views and opinions.

22. The designated medical officer (DMO) works across both Hackney and the City of London. A lack of time for the DMO role has meant that their work for children from the City focuses on operational priorities. For example, the DMO is unable to attend the SEND programme board meetings. The children's programme board manager attends these meetings and feeds back to the DMO. This means that the expertise of the DMO is not being immediately heard when strategic issues are being discussed at the SEND Programme Board.

Conclusion

23. The priorities for the second year of the SEND Strategy 2017–2020 have been identified in the revised self-evaluation in February 2018. The areas for development identified in the Ofsted and CQC inspection findings are already included in the self-evaluation. The inspection identified that the local area has a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its work and, as a result, their self-evaluation is accurate.

24. The summary of findings and the development areas will be implemented and monitored by the SEND Programme Board. SEND report updates are a standing item on the Safeguarding Sub Committee of the Community and Children’s Services Committee. The development plans will be reported back to the Sub Committee and the Children’s Executive Board at regular intervals over the next year.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Letter to City of London – Inspection finds of the joint local area SEND inspection in City of London

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