

Schools Forum Meeting Agenda

Thursday, 30 November 2017 at 9.00 am
to be held in Mezzanine Room 3, Tor Hill House, Union Street, Torquay, TQ2 5QW

Membership

Roger Hughes (<i>Chair & Primary Maintained Head</i>)	Mike Lock (<i>Vice Chair & Special Academy Head</i>)
Stewart Biddles (<i>Primary Maintained head</i>)	Daneian Rees (<i>Secondary Maintained Head</i>)
Maurice Codd (<i>Primary Maintained Governor</i>)	Clive Star (<i>Secondary Academy Governor</i>)
Dan Hallam (<i>Post 16</i>)	Jan Chopping (<i>Secondary Academy Governor</i>)
Adam Morris (<i>Primary Maintained Head</i>)	Jim Piper (<i>Primary Academy Head</i>)
Lindsey Kings (<i>Secondary Academy Deputy Head</i>)	Steven Hulme (<i>PRU Head</i>)
	Lisa Finn (<i>Secondary Academy Rep</i>)

- 1. Apologies/Changes to Membership**
- 2. Minutes of the last meeting**
- 3. Matters arising**
- 4. Delegation of Services** (Pages 3 - 6)
Rob Parr to present
- 5. Financial Report** (Pages 7 - 9)
- 6. Higher Needs recovery plan** (Page 10)
- 7. Vulnerable Pupils Project**
Analysis of permanently excluded pupils
Verbal update on Head of Vulnerable Pupils
- 8. Funding and Resources meeting**
Verbal update on Disapplication consultation
- 9. Autism project report** (Pages 11 - 33)

For information relating to this meeting or to request a copy in another format or language please contact:

Mike Freeman,
01803 208261
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10. **TESS report** (Pages 34 - 36)
11. **IOSS report** (Pages 37 - 39)
12. **Report on Audit of Schools Forum** (Pages 40 - 54)
13. **Items for next meeting**
Feedback on Individual Child Placements
14. **Future meeting dates**
Thursday 18th January, 09:00 Mezz 3 Tor Hill House
Thursday 8th March, 09:00 Mezz 3 Tor Hill House

To – Schools Forum – 30th November 2017

De-Delegation and Centrally Retained Decisions for 2018/19

1. Why is this coming here – what decision is required?

Under the Government's current funding rules there is an assumption of delegation for a number of budget areas which are currently held centrally for maintained schools and are delegated for academies. Each year maintained schools' representative on the Schools Forum vote, by phase and on behalf of the schools they represent, to de-delegate these areas i.e. allow the LA to hold the budgets rather than delegate to schools; where it is proposed by the local authority. The outcome of the vote is binding for all maintained schools of that phase.

For 2018/19, Torbay Council Children's Services is proposing the option of de-delegation for all of the areas shown in the table below. It is for Torbay's Schools Forum to vote on each on behalf of schools. The vote is being carried out at this time to enable schools and services time plan for their budgets and responsibilities for 2018/19.

Under the national funding arrangements the government wants schools to have the opportunity to have as much funding and responsibility delegated to them as possible. The vote determines whether or not a range of costs currently met centrally will transfer to maintained schools for them to manage themselves.

Academies are not part of these arrangements since these responsibilities and the funding for them are automatically delegated to academies through the EFA use of the local funding formula.

Actual figures for 2018/19 will be finalised over the next couple of months as the settlement and the school census become available. See individual spreadsheets for detail and voting boxes

2. Centrally Retained budgets

These budget areas can be retained before allocating formula with the agreement of the Schools Forum. For Torbay this is Planned Pupil Growth, School Admissions Service and Servicing the Schools Forum.

Other than pupil growth, a centrally retained budget area can only be retained at the level of the previous year and cannot have any new commitments or budget increases. The School Forum is required to approve the amounts against each budget area. See Appendix 2 for details and voting boxes

All Members of the Schools Forum have an EQUAL vote on these items.

3. Recommendations

That the Schools Forum considers the proposals in this report and for:-

Maintained schools members vote on the de-delegation items on behalf of the phase of schools they represent

All schools and academies vote on centrally retained items

Rob Parr
Principal Accountant
01803 208273

DE-DELEGATION FOR 18/19 - DECISION FOR SCHOOL FORUM (MAINTAINED PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOL MEMBERS ONLY)

THESE FIGURES WILL BE UPDATED ONCE OCT 17 PUPIL NUMBERS ARE KNOWN

DfE No.	School Name	Pupil Numbers NOR Oct-16	Eligible FSM Nos.	EAL Pupils	FSM Eligibility £	Insurance £	EAL £	Travellers Education £	Rates Contingency £	Education Support Functions £	Total De-delegation £
2407	Furzeham Primary	258	39.00	1.21	(306)	(3,862)	(255)	(320)	(1,422)	(1,589)	(7,754)
2439	White Rock Primary	508	70.00	6.08	(550)	(7,605)	(1,280)	(630)	(2,799)	(3,129)	(15,993)
2455	Homelands Primary	207	46.00	7.02	(361)	(3,099)	(1,478)	(257)	(1,141)	(1,275)	(7,610)
2460	Watcombe Primary	198	50.00	3.54	(393)	(2,964)	(745)	(246)	(1,091)	(1,220)	(6,658)
2469	Sherwell Valley Primary	632	49.00	0.00	(385)	(9,461)	0	(784)	(3,482)	(3,893)	(18,005)
3103	Brixham Primary	210	42.00	2.33	(330)	(3,144)	(491)	(260)	(1,157)	(1,294)	(6,675)
	TOTAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS	2,013	296.00	20.18	(2,324)	(30,135)	(4,249)	(2,496)	(11,092)	(12,400)	(62,695)
4117	The Spires College	752	163.26	20.83	(1,282)	(11,257)	(4,386)	(932)	(4,144)	(4,632)	(26,633)
4601	St Cuthbert Mayne School	761	141.00	33.04	(1,107)	(11,392)	(6,957)	(944)	(4,193)	(4,688)	(29,280)
	TOTAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS	1,513	304.26	53.87	(2,388)	(22,650)	(11,343)	(1,876)	(8,337)	(9,320)	(55,914)
	TOTAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY	3,526	600.26	74.05	(4,712)	(52,784)	(15,592)	(4,372)	(19,428)	(21,720)	(118,609)

Is funding going to be de-delegated in 18/19 (Y / N)

PRIMARY

Is funding going to be de-delegated in 18/19 (Y / N)

SECONDARY

	Unit Value per pupil £	Unit Value per FSM pupil £	Unit Value per EAL pupil £
Rates (Contingency)	5.51		
Travellers Education - EAL	1.24		
Free School Meals eligibility		7.85	
Insurance	14.97		
Support to ethnic minority groups - EAL			210.56
Education Support Functions	6.16		
Totals	27.88	7.85	210.56

DECISIONS FOR CENTRALLY RETAINED SERVICES 2018/19 - ALL SCHOOLS

Number	Service Type	2017/18	Proposed 2018/19	Vote Y/N
1	Planned Pupil Growth	£147,300	£147,300	
2	Schools Admissions Services	£80,000	£80,000	
3	Servicing the Schools Forum	£28,000	£28,000	
4	Central Early Years Block provision (5% retained)	£327,700	£327,700	
5	Funding moving from Schools Block (0.5% transfer)	£0	£364,000	

All Members of Schools Forum have an equal vote

Notes:

- 1 This funding is Planned Pupil Growth in White Rock, Cockington, Warberry & Torre.

Schools Forum - 30th November 2017

Financial Report

The following report contains a detailed breakdown of the financial position of the local area for 2017/2018. The report enables members to note the outturn position and the significant factors contributing towards spend. The report covers the following items

- Outturn position 17/18
- Contextual information regarding Early Years Block
- Contextual information regarding Higher Needs Block
- Reserve funds
- Position and Recommendations

Outturn Position 2017/18

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded activities are currently forecast to **overspend by £1.122m.**

The following table details the areas of both over and under spend. Many of these budgets are demand led and will be monitored during 17/18 and revisions reported accordingly.

Budget Heading	Budget	Projected Spend	Over / (Under) Spend
Early Years 2, 3 & 4 yr olds	£6.m	£6.22m	£220k
Early Years - ALFEY	£220k	£250k	£30k
Joint Funded Placements	£500k	£481k	(£19k)
Recovery of funding from Excluded Pupils	£0	(£100k)	(£100k)
Independent Special School Fees	£2.1m	£2.35m	£250k
Other packages for statemented pupils / recoupment from other authorities	£148k	£296k	£148k
School contingencies (Rates, planned pupil growth etc)	£307k	£250k	(£57k)
Statementing / EHCP in-year adjustments (see separate paper for detail)	£200k	£312k	£112k
Special Schools / High Needs in-year adjustments	£244k	£844k	£600k
School Intervention / Commissioning	£324k	£262k	(£62k)

The two areas of significant volatility are within the Early Years Block and Higher Needs Block. The demand led pressures in these areas are detailed below

Early Years Overview

The local authority is required to ensure that eligible 2 year olds receive 15 hours per week and 3 and 4 year olds receive 30 hours per week of nursery provision. This is a national offer based on nationally determined eligibility criteria. Over the past two years the local authority has had to fund a greater number of children than the DfE have funded. In 17/18 the DfE initially funded 300 children for the 30 hours offer. Since the previous forum it has been noted in additional guidance that the 300 children is based on a full year allocation of 570 hours. However the scheme commencement in September 2017 results in this equating to 521 children receiving funding over the two terms within this financial year.

The recent forecasting information given by both schools and providers indicates that we are forecast to provide spaces for approximately 750 children in the spring term. The Local Authority currently has 820 eligible codes assigned for take up in the spring term.

These approximate figures indicates that there is potential for 230 children to receive that we are not funded for. However an adjustment will be made from the January 2018 census and forum will receive an estimate of the adjustment at this time.

The universal 3 and 4 year old grant is currently projected to provide spaces for an additional 90 children on average of the year.

The figures for 2 years old are in line with the allocated budget and the local authority has just received the next Department for Working Pensions eligibility list and an update will be provided against the January census return.

Based on the current information held the budget pressure remains at **£250k**.

Higher Needs Overview

Alongside the Early Years pressure, Torbay also has a greater number of children requiring additional support up to and including a special school place than the funds available in the higher needs block can meet. This demand pressure is in the great majority driven by schools requesting additional support and/or that children are assessed for an education health and care plan (EHCP). At present the projected budget pressure on the higher needs block is **£991k**. This position provided in October 2017 was **£950k**.

In addition to these placement factors there continues to be an increase in the request for additional funds above the £6,000 allocated to schools. The following table indicates the position to date.

Statementing / Education, Health & Care Plan Funding for 16/17 & 17/18			
	16/17	17/18	Increase / (Decrease)
Number of pupils with a statement	362	373	11.00
Number of FTE's with a statement	334	353	19.00
	£	£	£
Funding below £6k allocated through school formula elements	1,914,223	2,047,279	133,056
Funding above £6k allocated as a top-up per eligible pupil	926,146	1,234,164	308,018
Statementing / EHCP Contingency	238,400	200,000	(38,400)
In-Year adjustments			
April	110,476	25,735	(84,741)
May	23,628	45,249	21,621
June	19,756	13,913	(5,843)
July	8,445	0	(8,445)
August	114,700	127,405	12,705
September	63,804	40,866	(22,938)
October	34,132	32,141	(1,991)
November	(4,951)	(4,951)	0
December	19,419	19,419	0
January	(11,636)	(11,636)	0
February	22,423	22,423	0
March	1,663	1,663	0
Total - In-Year adjustments	401,859	312,227	
Projected (underspend) / overspend	163,459	112,227	
Notes			
Based on April 17 to Oct 17 in-yr adjustments and the same allocation for the remainder of the financial year as 16/17, it is anticipated the statementing / EHCP contingency will overspend by			£112,227

Reserve Funds

The reserve funds remains unchanged from the October 2017 forum. The following table demonstrates how the reserve fund has been used and the uncommitted reserves that remain available to forum for consideration.

DSG reserve				
				Balance
				Over / (Under)
				£
Balance remaining as at end of financial year 15/16				(1,289,211)
Expenditure during 16/17				
Schools Safeguarding Social Worker (Year 3) - Mayfield School				50,000
Business Support for TESS - Mayfield School				15,000
Additional TESS funding - agreed at Schools Forum				40,000
Inspiring Equality in Education (Homophobia) - agreed at 10/3/16 Schools Forum				6,173
Improving outcomes - D Pritchard				12,206
CAMHS School Support Service				167,939
16/17 DSG overspend				834,603
Total 16/17 Expenditure				1,125,921
Balance remaining as at end of financial year 16/17				(163,290)
Vacancy saving for Head of Vulnerable Pupils (Apr - Aug 17)				(28,300)
Social care contribution towards TESS 17/18				(50,000)
Social care contribution towards TESS 18/19				(50,000)
Contribution from Troubled Families Grant - agreed by DCS				(200,000)
Total funding available in DSG reserve				(491,590)
Funding still to be allocated against the balance				
Transitional funding to enable Early Years funding rate to remain at £4 per hr for 17/18				153,900
CAMHS funding still to allocate in 17/18 (Apr - Aug 17 only)				73,000
TESS in 17/18 Financial Year				41,753
TESS in 18/19 (Apr - Aug only)				72,483
Autism until 31/12/17				66,890
Challenging Behaviour in 17/18 Financial Year				0
Challenging Behaviour in 18/19 Financial Year				54,663
Challenging Behaviour in 19/20 Financial Year (Summer Term only)				31,738
Total Funding still to be allocated against current remaining balance				494,427
Total Over / (Under) spend				2,837
Note:				
Unspent balance for Challenging Behaviour held by Watcombe Primary at 31/8/17				(65,943)
Unspent balance for TESS held by Mayfield School at end of 16/17 Financial Year				(122,415)

Position

In October 2017, School Forum took the decision to vire the permitted cap of 0.5% from the 18/19 Schools Block budget allocation. Applying the virement of approximately £364k, this leaves a currently known DSG pressure of **£758k**.

Recommendations

It is requested that Schools Forum ;

1. Note the financial position and work with the Local Authority in the establishment of a Financial Recovery Plan.

Schools Forum 30th November 2017



Higher Needs Financial Recovery Plan and Disapplication

At the last meeting, Schools Forum agreed to vire 0.5% of the Dedicated Schools Grant from the Schools Block (2018/19) to address the pressure emerging within the Higher Needs Block. It had been the intention of the local authority to seek a disapplication of the cap on the virement to deal with the remainder of the financial pressure for 17/18 of circa £780k. It was also apparent that Schools Forum members and beyond that the wider family of schools were not in support of that position.

Having had the opportunity to reflect on the position of schools and the requirement to have a financial recovery plan in place in support of any application it is proposed to carry over the pressure into 2018/19 to allow for further discussion with schools. The local authority recognises the commitment and support of schools on this issue and would prefer to work collectively to develop a comprehensive plan to deal with the underlying causes of the pressure in order to mitigate the impact on Dedicated Schools Grant. The views of Forum members are sought on this as a way forward.

Andy Dempsey
Director of Children's Services

Schools Forum - 30th November 2017

AUTISM-Friendly



Autism Champions Report

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide School Forum with an overview of the impact of the funding provided through the Supporting Vulnerable Pupils Projects. Each champion has created a case study detailing the impact of the project/training.

Barton Hill Academy

D is a 5 year old boy who has found being in school tricky since nursery. He has had difficulties with sharing, joining in with adult led groups and keeping himself and others safe. Throughout nursery he wore a winter woolly hat each day and refused to remove it.

During reception he continued to struggle and found the free play and unstructured nature of the class set up difficult to manage. He repeatedly hurt children and interrupted all learning with continuous shouting out, screaming and throwing things. At this point D was still not in school full time. We tried several strategies: visual timetable with structured activities, sand timers to help him understand when his turn was starting and ending and support with a 1:1 to help with interacting with his peers safely. After the first term D was still struggling and we made the decision to place him into our pastoral provision with reduced access to his mainstream class. The room was now quieter and smaller.

Once in the provision we were able to set up a learning space that was D's. We set up a routine with the same adults and provided some free choice time for when he had completed his learning. He still presented with the same behaviours with regards to frustrations and outbursts. His ability to engage with learning and make progress was improved and he moved from level 6 to 13 with his reading. He was able to work at his own pace for his maths (which is above age expected).

In the pastoral provision we have a calm room that we encourage the children to use when becoming dysregulated. This is a safe space with a range of toys and calming ideas that help the children to regulate their emotions. We have some 5 point scales that we are now using as a point of reference to talk through the children's levels of anxiety or anger. D is now showing signs of using this room independently and will tell the adults that he is going to the calm room to calm down. He does not stay long and will bring himself out. We also use some restorative justice questions to talk through some situations. D sometimes prefers to talk through his Pikachu toy and we use this to talk about how he is feeling without directly saying it is D feeling 'nervous'. D is continuing to develop his emotional literacy with Thrive sessions and through the use of comic strip conversations.

D has a now, next and then with visual widget symbols. He uses this really well and we have also incorporated the ? symbol to allow for the unknown. Dylan is independent in taking these off as he completes them and transitioning on to the next activity with little fuss.

The main area of concern is the physical assaults and spitting. D does not respond well to the word 'no' and so we do not use this and direct him with 'we need to do this... then we can do this' or directing him to his timetable and showing him where we may be able to do what he is asking. He spits in response to not getting his way. We have written him a social story and are trying to use this daily to reduce this behaviour.

Eden Park

As part of my autism champion role, I have implemented one page profiles across the school. I gave the staff an example that I had done to guide them, then encouraged them to complete them with the children in their class so that pupil voice was evident. This extended beyond children with autism to children with other additional needs. These were shared with MDAs who said that they found it really useful and would be able to use the knowledge to help to support the children over lunchtimes. The senior leadership team were also given copies so that if children were sent to them for any reason, they had information that would help them. They are also displayed in the staff room so that everyone can access them.

Kings Ash Academy Cohort 2

Context- JS had a difficult time transitioning into reception. He displayed negative physical behaviours to both adults and children and would sometimes refuse to come into the classroom from the reception area. JS would run to any exit to try and leave. He could not tolerate change with adults and in a class with a teacher share this was very difficult for him.

Transitioning into Year 1- I wanted to start the transition process for JS early as it was a time he was going to find difficult. A social story was made and read to him daily. He also visited the classroom daily for the last term to familiarise himself. During the school holidays JS was invited to summer school where I (His previous teacher) and his new teacher worked with him to ensure language used was the same. The last day of summer school he helped to move his calm area from the reception classroom to the year 1 classroom.

Impact- JS is calm at present because he was aware and involved in every step of transition to the new classroom. Everything used with him (Makaton signs, visual timetable, social story, calm area) moved with him to his new classroom. Although this was a big change for him I feel having these have helped him to transition smoothly.

Oldway Primary

Stay and Play sessions are now held every week for our pupils with autism and their parents. This session has also been moved to an after school session to allow more flexibility and accessibility for pupils and their parents. Pupils have been invited to share their 'special interest' with the group which has developed communication skills and increased confidence, in a familiar, calm environment.

"In the Stay and Play sessions, the children can be themselves with all their little quirks in a relaxed atmosphere. They can socialise in their own way and us adults have an opportunity to talk 'autism' or not, with other parents who know what our lives are like at different stages of autism. Having an

autistic child is very isolating – having two is even more so! It's nice to be with others who understand" (Stay and Play Parent)

"My child loves attending the Stay and Play sessions mainly to have fun and be himself. He feels so relaxed with the group and looks forward to attending every week now" (Stay and Play Parent)

Following Lego Therapy training, sessions are now conducted throughout the school and are also held at our weekly Stay and Play sessions with pupils and their parents. Staff members have requested further training and now there are six members of staff who have received enhanced training through the Autism-friendly Schools Project. These staff members are now conducting Lego Therapy sessions with pupils with autism. Lego Therapy has succeeded in effectively developing social/communication skills with pupils in our school. One particular Year 3 child who attended sessions found it extremely difficult to take turns and was very controlling during paired or group work in class. He was able to develop the ability to take turns and allow others to take the lead during these sessions.

"I love Lego Therapy because I get to play Lego with T and we love Lego. We get to talk about what we are making and we help each other if we get stuck. We have to take turns to be the builder and the supplier but I like being the builder best!" (Year 3 Pupil)

During National Autism Awareness week, I led a whole school assembly for all pupils and teaching assistants. Autism was explained to pupils at an appropriate level. One of our pupils with autism stood up in front of the whole school and shared their experience of autism. He explained how his autism affected his learning, and his behaviour, and suggested ways that his friends could help him. This particular child had previously been unable to attend whole school assemblies due to heightened anxiety and sensory overload, so this was a huge achievement!

"I really liked finding out about autism in assembly today because it taught me that we might look the same but are different and we might look different and be the same. I liked listening to L talk about his autism and find out ways we can help people in our school that have autism." (Year 3 pupil)

At the end of Autism Awareness week, I organised a fundraising event to raise awareness and funds for the National Autistic Society, along with pupils and parents from our Stay and Play sessions. Information on autism was shared with parents and pupils and the event raised £242!

Autism training

As part of my role of Autism Champion, I have led autism training for all teaching staff during a school staff meeting, led training for all support staff during a non-pupil day and delivered training to Newly Qualified Teachers in Torbay. This valuable training has raised awareness of autism and will enhance their knowledge and understanding, as well as providing support and resources when supporting pupils with autism. The sessions also included Lego Therapy training.

"Very engaging session. Well presented with lots of ideas for strategies and resources to use back at school. Lots of interaction too which was enjoyable" (NQT)

"Really good training which could be applied to other pupils with other specific learning and behaviour needs. I really liked having a go at writing social stories and learning how to phrase new experiences in appropriate language" (Teacher at Oldway Primary)

‘Excellent content – very informative. Provided plenty of strategies for different children. Saw definite benefits of Lego Therapy’ (NQT)

“Great understanding of what autism is and strategies you can apply in the classroom. Good to have time to discuss case studies of children in our own class currently and how to resolve issues or check that what we are doing is correct or a good strategy” (NQT)

‘An excellent insight into Autism. The course provided lots of valuable information for both people with experience of Autism and for those with little knowledge. I have already put extra opportunities in place for the Autistic pupils I currently work with from the extra knowledge I gained from attending this course.’ (TA)

St Marychurch

IMPACT CASE STUDY

CONTEXT - *how she presented, her strengths and needs*

M, a year 5 pupil was struggling to cope at lunchtimes. Once she had finished eating, she was unsure of how to join others play. This often caused her or others to be in trouble outside. School had tried a small group lunchtime, lunchtime club and staying in the classroom but nothing had been successful.

ACTION - *how the school has responded to her needs*

I discussed the situation for M with the Inclusion Manager and the Class Teacher and we agreed the following actions:

- M would have regular check-ins with me over the course of the day to reduce anxiety.
- She would come to my classroom from 12:55-1:25 daily to help the Reception children.
- Adults working with M would make her a badge to wear that shows she is a classroom helper.

IMPACT - *how she presents now, her strengths and needs*

- M enjoys helping the younger children.
- M is calmer over the course of the day as she has less anxiety about lunchtime.
- M gets into much less trouble at lunchtimes.

Sherwell Valley

I have been running a coffee morning once a half term for our parents of children with Autism. The main aim of the morning was to create a calm, friendly atmosphere where our parents could chat to each other about their own experiences, ask questions of each other and to generally seek reassurance. Another aim was through inviting all of our parents, we would have a mix of ages and experiences. This was especially important as we have two children with new diagnoses in Nursery who were very concerned about how their child would move through school and what their future might be. Our SENDCO joined us on occasions and this was great as she was not only able to get to know our parents better, but they were also able to address any concerns they had with her. Initially

I was worried that an hour would be too long, but actually it wasn't enough! The parents responded so well to them and there was a lot of laughter as they shared stories and experiences. The feedback I have had has been so positive with comments like 'I don't feel so alone', 'someone else is going through similar' and 'my child is not the only one!' I have also had really encouraging feedback from the teachers of the children, as parents have talked about the coffee mornings in such a positive light. I am carrying on with them this year and have the first one in the beginning of October. I have really enjoyed doing them and feel they have made a good impact for our school.

Follow up transition meetings

In the previous case study I talked about one of our child PG in Year 5 and his parents' concerns about moving to secondary school. I initially met with them and our SENDCO and shared some resources with them. We have then had subsequent meetings, where the parents have followed advice and visited a range of schools at different times to get a feel for them. They have also had meetings with the schools' SENCOs and now feel more informed about the schools available.

I feel in general that our roles as Autism champions have had big impacts in our schools and I have loved being a part of it. From working closely with my SENDCO, to being a point of call for teachers and a source of reassurance for parents, it has been such a worthwhile career development and I am looking forward to continuing on into the future. It has even set me on the path of looking at the SENDCO training; hopefully with my head teacher's backing!

Torre Academy Cohort 2

SH is a child in key stage one who is currently going through the process of gaining an EHCP. He moved from another school into a year one class and is currently in year two. SH came to the school without an assessment and was observed by John Parkes and was subsequently given the diagnosis of ASD. The Occupational Health Therapist from John Parkes observed SH in his setting and met with myself and the class teacher on various occasions leading up to this. There were various strategies that the OT from John Parkes suggested and within my role as ASD Champion, I ensured that the class teacher and 1:1 learning support assistant were supported in implementing these strategies in the classroom. During the ECHP process; I was also involved in filling out the required form and met with the 1:1 support assistant to ensure this was filled out to meet the needs of SH appropriately.

SH's main barriers to his learning and school life are his social communication and his understanding of school structures and routines. SH also has difficulty in expressive communication and listening and understanding. In accordance with this, we have set up visual timetables, now and next boards and a social story for tasks in the classroom that are appropriate to him. With his 1:1 he also receives additional sensory (such as play foam, shaving foam, sand etc) activities during the lesson as a 10 minute on, 10 minute off strategy during the lesson. After becoming aware of the Lego-based therapy training session provided through the Autism-friendly Schools Project, I also arranged for SH's 1:1 to receive Lego therapy training in the summer term which Sue has begun to introduce, however we feel it may be more appropriate to use Duplo in this way as he finds it difficult to manipulate the Lego pieces. SH's expressive communication is an area which we will continue to assist SH in developing and ensuring he develops his understanding of social situations.

Watcombe Primary School

EP received a diagnosis of ASC in June 2016. He had struggled through KS1 and lower KS2 and often presented challenging behaviour. His confirmed diagnosis has enabled the staff supporting him to help him in the most appropriate way. After my training as Autism Champion I have been able to support them in this process.

I have made a profile sheet which all staff have seen and have access to; this was put together with discussions with EP, the staff that support him and his parents. It highlights his likes and dislikes and how to support him. This has enabled us all to have a better understanding of E and as a result the staff are better equipped to support him which has resulted in fewer problems at break times which has impacted on his ability to be ready to learn. The team that work with E are able to pick up on his anxiety before it escalates, and are aware of the quickest ways to help him settle again.

As part of my ASC role I have also, with the support of the SENDCO, completed a request for statutory assessment for EP. This was accepted and the final assessments are currently taking place. This has further developed a positive relationship with his parents who I met again to help complete some of the paperwork and it will also support him in this transition to KS3 in September 2018.

Year 5	Reading	Writing	Maths
Autumn 2016	Year 6 within	Y4 secure	Y4 secure
Spring 2017	Year 6 within	Y5 beginning	Y5 beginning
Summer 2017	Year 6 within	Y5 within +	Y5 within +

E's data from last year shows that he has made good progress across the curriculum and the support put in place has helped him to access learning. He is beginning Y6 in a fantastic position, ready to build on his strengths and develop the areas he needs to improve.

White Rock

This data will be based on only the children with a diagnosis.

- Pupil 1 (male) – EYFS
- Pupil 2 (male) – EYFS
- Pupil 3 (male) – KS2
- Pupil 4 (female) – KS2
- Pupil 5 (male) – KS2
- Pupil 6 (male) – KS2
- Pupil 7 (male) – KS2
- Pupil 8 (female) – KS2
- Pupil 9 (male) – KS2

Attendance analysis			
Name	Academic Year 15/16	Academic Year 16/17	Academic Year 17/18 <i>First week back</i>
Pupil 1			100%
Pupil 2			100%
Pupil 3	92%	95.3% (2.1% authorised absence)	83.3% (16.7% Authorised absence)

Pupil 4	98%	96.1% (3.9% authorised absence)	100%
Pupil 5	89%	95.5% (1.3% authorised absence)	100%
Pupil 6	97%	96.6% (3.4% authorised absence)	100%
Pupil 7	95%	93.9% (6.1% authorised absence)	100%
Pupil 8	97%	97.6% (2.4% authorised absence)	100%
Pupil 9	97%	98.7% (0.8% authorised absence)	50% (50% authorised absence)

Progress analysis – This will show whether the children have made: less than expected progress; the expected progress or more than the expected progress.

Name	Reading	Writing	Maths
Pupil 1			
Pupil 2			
Pupil 3	Expected	Expected	Less than expected
Pupil 4	Less than expected	More than expected	More than expected
Pupil 5	Expected	Expected	Less than expected
Pupil 6	Expected	Expected	Expected
Pupil 7	Expected	Expected	Less than expected
Pupil 8	Expected	Expected	Expected
Pupil 9	Expected	Less than expected	Expected

Impact and plans for 2017/2018

During my time (2 years) as an Autism Champion within White Rock Primary school I have worked alongside the school's SENDCo and Communication and Interaction Lead. I have helped other members of staff write EP Implementation plans for children that I have previously taught with ASC as well as supported Teachers in writing weekly IEPs for children with a diagnosis of ASC. The school staff are all aware of my role within the school as are the parents of ASC children.

I hope to continue to support the children in the school through working with their class teachers to focus on any gaps there may be in their academic progress and by writing plans and interventions for these children in order to ensure they make at least expected progress.

The school is very inclusive. The way the classrooms are set up is consistent across the school and there is a multisensory approach (visual time tables, labelled resources, organised learning spaces) which allows all children to learn effectively within the classroom environment. The environments will be looked at during Learning Walks during Team meetings. The expectation of visual time tables will differ throughout the year groups – whether that is a widget based time table or a written word style time table. If a child is in the upper years and they cannot access a written word time table a personalised visual time table or now and next board is provided.

In previous years I was part of a team that planned and delivered Lego Therapy Based training to Teachers, Learning Support Assistants and EPs that work within the Torbay area. We received excellent feedback from this training and we were able to enthuse and excite other professionals to start this same intervention in their schools.

For the past year I have lead an LSA meeting for adults that work with children that have ASC. These meetings allow time for the adults to discuss any issues that may have arisen during the week and any strategies that they may have tried and been successful in. This has been a really successful meeting that we will continue to run this year.

When I first started my role as an Autism Champion at White Rock Primary School I organised a trainer from the NAS to come and deliver training based on girls with Autism as this was a particular need of the school during this time. This was very beneficial as we were able to access this training as a whole staff so consistency could be guaranteed across the school.

Brixham College

This year has been about raising the profile of Autism within Brixham College. With our other Autism Champion; Simon Shrubbs, I ran a week of Assemblies for Autism Awareness week to bring Autism to the attention of the students in our cohort. This was followed up with some support material delivered by tutors to help get students thinking about being Autism Friendly.

I also delivered a small session of staff training on “Five top tips to become Autism Friendly” to remind teachers what Autism is and how some of the issues that cause Anxiety in School can be removed. This has since been shared with another Champion for her to share the session with her school. Simon and I also held a transition session with 6th form teachers to highlight the issues that are current and future 6th formers on the autistic spectrum face.

I have continues to work with LS from last year on supporting his lesson, we now have a TA working with him in one to one study sessions to support his Physics and a Maths Specialist TA mentoring him for his GCSE further Maths cause ready to reintroduce him into A-Level next year. I am also in contact with the local LA to try and change the way his transport to and from Churston for his Computer Science lesson is funded and organised. We occasionally have issues with taxis not showing up due to a change in the company serving the contract, or half term week interrupting the rotation of the time table, this causes great anxiety for L and could be an issue for LH who has just graduated from the Autistic Provision to Sixth form and is also commuting to and from Churston. We are trying to set up an “in house” transport system for students on the Autistic Spectrum who travel to and from other educational establishments which will allow us to reduce anxiety due to consistency in the way they travel.

For the transition to 6th form I have also been working on bespoke timetables for L and Lu due to the travel time and the difference in timings for both schools. Working with Bruce Nisbett (Autism Champion) from Churston I have also tried to make provisions for a smooth transition into computer science lessons at Churston for Lu and continue to iron out any issues for L. I am also in the process of trying to set up a Silent Study area for 6th form students on the Autistic Spectrum so they can reduce hypersensitivity whilst in private study session. This currently causes issues for L who will often stay home for these sessions as he cannot work if there is any noise. Our aim is to get him attending full timetable by the end of the year which he currently cannot do due to the noise in the sixth form study area.

The big project and vision this year is to try and make our sixth form Autism Friendly. This involves working with the Head of 6th Form and assistant principal involved in 6th form teaching and learning, as well as 6th form teachers to provide support and strategies for their lessons. The aim is to provide a 6th form suitable for students to attend after graduating the Provision in year 11 or for students with Autism and Autistic traits to attend from mainstream schools. I am working on transition and Autism

awareness as well as catering for individual anxieties by working with the students themselves and their families.

Brixham College Cohort 2

Impact of Champion Training

January 2017 On gaining increased awareness of the enhanced sensory experience of young people on the spectrum I decided to formalise a pattern of behaviour I had already endeavoured to improve outside the Enhanced provision at Brixham College. The ASC area is on a main corridor but there are alternative routes that students could use and areas to congregate during break times. The noise from the otherside of the provision entrance doors could be intrusive especially during wet breaks and lunch times. Additionally provision students would have to pass through a potentially intimidating group of students to gain access to the provision. Signs were placed in the corridors adjacent to the provision and through repeated reminders and encouragement main stream students were requested to leave clear the corridor pathway to the provision, so no congregating was permitted at all.

Though it took several weeks and battles as the year progressed the amount of time we spent clearing the corridors diminished and the atmosphere in the provision improved because we no longer had direct or indirect intrusions to deal with. Access also was available without having to pass through large boisterous crowds.

Impact: less stressful for students accessing ASC provision, more peace peaceful for students in ASC as no personal interruptions person or noise

18.2.17 After training and reference to Pupil Profiles I explored the schools SEN files and found that work had been undertaken the previous year to create individual profiles. This work was to all intents and purposes hidden from teaching assistants and teaching staff in the Autistic provision. I spent time making a precise of this information to give bulleted highlights. I informed staff where to find this information (not wanting it to be seen openly by students). In the example of JK Y8 who experiences high levels of anxiety, requiring support and reassurance in mainstream lessons I acted frequently as advocate with support staff (often variable personnel) who wanted to encourage him to attend class and wait for TA support. I advocated that he not leave the Provision until support arrived for him and this became the accepted norm or if challenged again by staff I reminded them it would not satisfy his particular needs. Impact: Staff have increased awareness of individual needs

Similarly with ST Y8 in conjunction with Personal profile information we became aware of absence on return to school days after holidays. Returning to mainstream classes was also an issue for several days of a new term / half term. In monitoring this pattern of behaviour we instigated a new term procedure in consultation with parents, pupil and staff.

ST would remain in the ASC enhanced provision on his return to school for the entire first day, then we would negotiate / agree with the pupil the lessons he would access on day 2, day 3 etc, slowly returning to full timetable.

Impact: Over the course of the year his attendance on first days back improved and his reintroduction to lessons was less anxious for him.

April 2017 Autism Awareness week

Tom Norman and I undertook mainstream school assemblies with each house (4) in turn during the first week in April. The assemblies included video material of young people with autism, we also illustrated how every individual might have autistic traits, we focused on the anxieties that may be found in young people on the spectrum and ways to positively support. The assemblies were supplemented by two tutorial sessions that I prepared using multi media resources.

Impact: Feedback from several tutor groups indicates that students understand more clearly why ASC students leave class early and arrive late, and why the corridors outside ASC are to be kept clear of mainstream students

May 2017

Building on information about sensory needs our teaching area undertook some decorating and physical changes. We took special care not to overload the teaching areas with too much information on walls, etc. keeping the classrooms information free. We organised information on a student noticeboard in the foyre between classrooms.

Impact: reduction in sensory overload and visual noise in classrooms, to facilitate improved learning environment.

June 2017

Some of the material above re Autism Awareness was used during a staff training carousel predominantly for teachers of potential 6th form students transitioning into the 6th form. I prepared personal profiles and a list of characteristics and concerns of LH, TB & TH who were applying to join the college 6th form.

Impact: To provide 6th form staff with details to improve transition into 6th form

July 2017

AET Progression Framework, I began investigating and experimenting with this to improve my skill level, I discussed its use with my line manager and began showing it to the HLTA in charge of the Provision. September 2017, we have identified 3 students WC Y8 and JD, NM Y10 who may benefit from being offered opportunities to develop themselves from the independent living section. I have spoken with a TA (PO) assigned to spend curriculum time with these students on Life Skills.

Impact: we have tentatively agreed to trial a topic based approach using the areas covered in this section of the AET progression Framework so that the above students will increase and improve their independent living skills

Churston Ferrers Grammar School

JH has a diagnosis of ASC which he received at the beginning of Y8. He joined us in Y7 with a loyal group of friends from primary school and seemed to cope exceptionally well with transition and exhibited few behaviours in class that would make him stand out apart from perhaps an over-literal interpretation of some instructions or phrases. This continued through Y8 until the summer term, when a couple of JH's friends moved school due to family relocations. This loss of peer support has hit JH badly, perhaps coinciding with hormonal and body changes moving into Y9. His lack of self-confidence has affected both motivation and class involvement. JH is in one of my Y9 classes this year and we have had a good start which bodes well for establishing a good working relationship.

JH struggles with boundaries and expected social behaviour, but responds well when given clear advice regarding expectations is given. Staff members have been made aware of this and also that

expectations need setting for each and every occurrence JH will not make the link between scenarios or locations.

Teacher education will be key to a successful Y9 and options process for JH. He will need environments where heightened anxiety can be calmed, constant and consistent boundary setting as well as work that allows him to be pushed from the rigid thinking that is often his first response.

I will be encouraging JH to attend some of the lunchtime sessions in my room where all manner of students come for a respite from the hustle and bustle of school lunchtime. It will also allow me to give mentoring support without that label. JH seems now more aware that he is different. I will be planning ways of allowing him to see the benefits of that difference and helping him devise strategies to cope with the situations that he currently finds difficult.

Paignton Community and Sports Academy Cohort 2

I am a Head of Year and have specialised in Pastoral care for 9 years. My current Year group are Year 8 and I have been mainly focussing on them, however we have done some whole school awareness training to help all students and their families. During Autism Awareness Week we ran sessions for all staff and students using the sensory overload lesson. We also had an Autism Awareness PowerPoint for every year group's assembly. We have introduced Lego Therapy club during two lunchtimes, this is being regularly attended by 6 students all who are either diagnosed or in the processes of ASC diagnosis.

LF. LF is a highly Autistic young man who finds it very difficult to cope with rules being broken. He often takes it upon himself to administer discipline to the rule breakers. This has resulted in many fights and arguments. LF has been issued with a timeout card and a leave 5 minute early card, these are different colours and laminated, a key ring has been used to hold them together, with a picture of LF in it. This has helped him to come to the office and talk about the rule being broken, who broke it and how he feels that it is unjust that they were not told off. This cooling off period has helped LF not become involved in altercations. The leave 5 minute early card means that LF is not caught up in crowded corridors with hundreds of other children pushing and shoving, it also means he can collect his bike early without the anxiety of interacting with others or witnessing others "mucking about", which tends to upset him. LF has also been attending Lego Therapy, this has worked well to open up new social groups but LF still finds it difficult to take on just one role in the build!

Parent view

Parent is happy that LF is now out of his nurture group and able to be in mainstream lessons in line with his academic ability. LF is enjoying school more as he is not so anxious about unstructured time and the journey home. There have been far fewer altercations with other students since the awareness week and the introduction of the cards. Parent wished that there was more one-to-one TA time available for LF so he could attend more of the extra-curricular clubs without the anxiety of new interactions.

St Cuthbert Mayne

Background

See previous case study on AW 250117 (below this case study). This case study is an update to reflect the development and impact over the last 7 months.

Observation and Intervention

Since January, I have continued to work with AW's teachers in offering advice and strategies to assist AW's learning in the classroom. The subjects that were still problematic were English, Science and PE (this emerged as behavioural logs were updated) with participation in group work, organisation of equipment, not doing homework and refusal to write in exercise book raised as common concerns

Prior to intervene in these areas, I met with the SENCO, the deputy head and AW's mother in February 2017. This resulted in very direct conversations and supportive strategies being agreed between all parties, including:

- Trialling a Chromebook for writing/typing in English initially
- Providing some alternative provision to PE lessons (where sensory issues and social anxieties were the barriers to participation)
- Establishing a time within school hours where Alfie could complete homework
- Involving AW in the Lego Therapy club (both Alfie and his mother thought that this would not work as Alfie didn't like Lego)
- Continuing to communicate with AW's teachers about strategies to use

Outcomes:

All of the above were put into place, with very strong outcomes indicating that AW is developing skills in several areas and this has also led to a perceived reduction in his anxiety:

- AW worked with me in identifying the best spots in school to use a Chromebook and Wifi. This was a collaborative effort. When the Chromebook, on occasions, did not work, AW thought more dynamically and less rigidly about potential solutions. AW started writing in his exercise book again as well as using a Chromebook. AW's progress grade has gone up significantly due to the legibility and presentation of his work (AW has more confidence in showing and sharing his work)
- AW is now working with the canteen staff during some PE lessons. This alternative provision allows him to work in a team with some physical activity. This arrangement has been formally acknowledged by the deputy head.
- AW can now work on homework in 'Chatterbox' club, with learning mentors present to help him. Behaviour logs reveal a reduction in homework-based negative behaviour points.
- AW actively engaged in the Lego Therapy sessions, working with a range of other students and getting adept at working in pairs. AW was always on time for his sessions, and was sometimes early. Attendance records indicate that AW's attendance had improved on days when Lego Club was running.
- I observed AW more in lessons and also worked with the SENCO in gaining his view and opinions (student voice). This led to a lot of clarity on what some of his perceived issues were. For example, his processing time often led to further sanctions in lessons. Teachers are now fully aware to give AW more time, and AW has a 5 minute time out / movement break card to use if he feels he needs to self-regulate his behaviour. This has proven effective from a behavioural perspective too

Overall, the thinking about AW's needs has changed significantly in the whole school. There is no longer discussion just about consequences and sanctions when perceived poor behaviour is presented, but rather an aim to find the underlying issues and work with AW to help resolve these. It

was good to see that other than myself and the SENCO, that others were also seeking more creative investigations. For example, the deputy head noticed that AW's behaviour log indicated negative incidents during period 2 lessons. Once he had established AW's food and drink intake and timescales, work was done with canteen staff and AW's mother to ensure that AW was eating and re-hydrating at certain intervals. This appeared to reduce the period 2 behavioural incidents.

Next steps

Now in year 9, AW has made a really positive start to the academic year. The following will be strategies that we anticipate using / developing:

- AW will continue to use the Chromebook in English- should this continue to work well, the Lead Practitioner (also me) will work with AW's other teachers with the view that AW can use the Chromebook in other lessons.
- AW will continue to work within Lego Club to develop social interaction skills and group work skills. This will also be informally observed in certain lessons to ensure skills are spotlighted to AW as being transferable in lesson situations too
- AW's mother will meet more regularly with the SENCO team and will have regular phone communication with the deputy head. Equally, we will do the same to continue to build this now positive relationship.
- Work will be done in Science this year to settle Alfie into routines quicker, and also ensure that his seating position is optimal for his learning. There should be a better and more consistent experience this year (last year was marred by several cover and supply teachers due to staff absence)
- The behaviour log for the last 6 months indicates that the main cause of negative behavioural points is the lack of equipment (eg, pen, PE kit). AW's executive functioning ability indicates that he simply forgets these items. Work will be done with staff to provide him with equipment to still allow him to work in lessons.

Compiled by:

Adam Shaikh

AW

250117

Background

AW is a year 8 boy who had perceived behavioural problems when he joined us at the start of year 7. Last summer, he received a formal diagnosis of autism. Over the first half term of this academic year, the SIMs behaviour log indicated key behavioural issues in the following:

- Not following instructions
- Fidgeting
- Disrupting others
- Refusing to work
- Arguing back
- Being rude to teachers in lessons
- English - refusal to write, resulting in several parkings

- D+T - being rude to the teacher, not following instructions and seeking distractions (particularly frustrating as in Art, with the same teacher, AW is quite pleasant).
- Science - not following instructions and writing very little in lessons.

Observation and intervention

Having reviewed the behaviour profile with the SENCO, I then observed lessons in late November where most of the incidents were taking place - Science, English and D+T. I looked at the teaching and learning atmosphere, routines and expectations and level/form of instruction. I then fed this back to the teachers and suggested strategies that could be used. Amongst others, here are the key ones:

- Slow pace down
- Keep to routine with the whole class
- Use visuals to support, especially printed sheets to reinforce whiteboard information
- Move to a seat with less visual stimuli
- Reduce verbal instructions and don't stack questions
- Wait for a response
- Praise processes and not outcomes (eg, making effort, social interactions, rather than the final grade)

Outcomes

AW has made positive progress since feedback to staff:

- Behavioural incidents have reduced (4 incidents in the last 4 weeks, rather than the 21 incidents in a 4 week period last November 2016)
- English: the teacher indicated that AW was more biddable and able to begin written tasks. Moving his seating position and using visual reinforcement to scaffold helped considerably.
- Science: more productive with knowing the sequence and order of work due to seating move and use of visuals.
- D+T: Teacher and student relationship improved when it was pointed out to AW that his Art teacher (whom he gets on with very well) was actually the same as his D+T teacher. In addition, the classroom environment was adapted to consider less stimulating 'office'-style spaces

Teachers have fed back through a survey to indicate positive impact of this approach by the Autism Champion at STCM.

Next steps:

- I will be observing AW in his literacy intervention session to see where we can develop opportunities for curriculum and learning around social interaction. To take place early February.
- Develop student voice to get more of AW's feedback on what is working for him
- Develop communication / forum with AW's parents to continue to work more holistically on routines, expectations and strategies

St Cuthbert Mayne Cohort 2

My application to be an autism champion arose as I supported a new student who had arrived at STCM in year 8. I had no experience dealing with autistic students and started reading how I could support parents and the student and sought advice from the current autism champion. AZ was mid-way through the process of diagnosis when he joined us and parents were anxious that the problems he had experienced in previous schools did not continue at STCM.

AZ suffers from anxiety and finds transition particularly difficult. He had been socially isolated in his previous school, had no friendships and low self-esteem.

I supported AZ in a phased start to school, which included daily contact with parents to deal with any problems and reduce anxiety quickly. AZ was issued a time-out card to be able to see me any time he felt anxious and we met every morning to go through the structure of the day and alleviate any worries. AZ also had a special interest and I arrange for him to spend some lunchtimes in my room and introduced him to a group of students with similar interests.

Through this initial period the chance to apply to be an autism champion came up and it has provided me with so much knowledge and the opportunity to seek advice from colleagues that I would not have had the opportunity to do so. From my own teaching point of view, in 20 years of teaching this role has really given me the chance to reflect on my own practise and the impact it has had on my and others has been more than any other role I have been involved in. AZ now has a diagnosis and I have worked closely with staff to provide them with strategies to help AZ reach his full potential. This role has allowed me to go into classes, observe AZ and feedback to individual staff. I have just supported AZ through the options process, transition to GCSES and his first round of exams using special arrangements. My input to staff has not only raised awareness of AZ's individual needs but reduced escalating behaviours through a greater depth of understanding on both my part and staffs.

Feedback from parents

“ Tracy, I just wanted to say a massive thank you for all you have done to support A in every way since he started at Cuthbert. He is really going to miss you and the fact that you have taken time to understand him and all the little things he does has meant so much to us all. As parents we have really valued the support you have given us and to see A happy and settled is something we always hoped for but were never really sure it was possible”

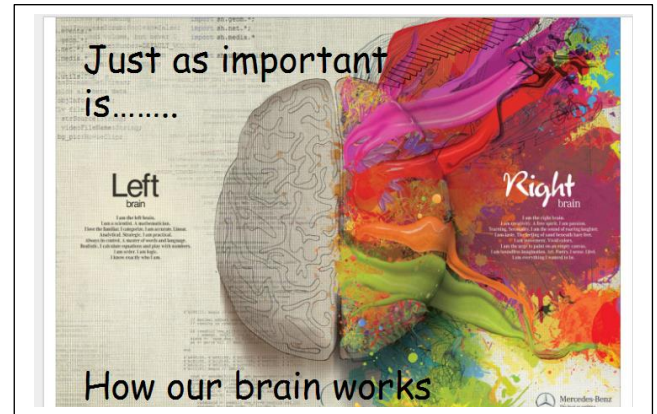
Developing a whole school Autism-friendly approach

After school we run a 2 hour teach meet which is an information sharing opportunity between staff. AS and I produced an 'Introduction to autism leaflet' and scenarios and simple strategies that staff could use immediately within their classroom. These sessions also gave staff the opportunity to ask us questions about individuals or the role in general, with further drop in sessions offered for staff to seek more in-depth advice/request in class support.

Drop in sessions are offered regularly to support staff who want to take contribute to making the school more autism friendly and develop a greater depth of understanding of individuals. My role

also included working with the SENCO to discuss introducing one-page student profiles which are accessible to all staff with key areas of information on each student.

During world autism awareness week AS and I delivered an assembly to each year group during Act of Worship on 'Neuro –diversity and difference'. We looked at differences between myself and Adam Shaikh and used the model brains and the soft brains to engage students and to get them thinking about how our brains work differently.



During this week we also did a 'daily drop' to staff giving them the latest research on autism, facts and figures and simple strategies. We placed a brain in the staffroom for staff to pin questions, thoughts and observations on.

The Spires College

In order to ensure that my role as Autism Champion was effective it was agreed with the SENDCO that I would focus my intervention on those students who have been diagnosed with Autism but who do not have an EHCP. The rationale behind this was that those students with an EHCP are already receiving a high level of support from the SEN department and it is those without an EHCP who do not have in lesson support and are often adept at 'hiding' the impact of their autism. Together we identified a group of year 7 and 8 boys. All of these boys were relatively newly diagnosed (within 1-3 years) and were not all comfortable talking freely about their autism. Once a fortnight the boys were taken out of a lesson and given a lesson focussed on social skills, group work and an honest discussion of the benefits and downsides to having autism. These sessions would run alongside the Calm and Quiet club (a library club for autistic and vulnerable students designed to be both a safe space and opportunity for interaction) and lunchtime sessions where the students could come and watch a programme and chat which also provided a safe space for them to relax and control the sensory input. These lunchtime sessions usually revolved around watching Doctor Who and provided an opportunity for the students to discuss any issues that were worrying them. One student (JB) who had recently developed friendships with some quite boisterous boys in his year seemed to particularly value the opportunity for a quiet space where he could be himself.

The fortnightly sessions were designed to develop the boys' interactions and to develop an understanding about how their autism affects them in school. We began by looking at their ideas for a perfect school.

this would make it too obvious and may make it uncomfortable. Students were generally happy to discuss acceptance openly and the school environment became more inclusive as students were far more aware of their choices and treatment of others.

As mentioned earlier, MF was also invited to Lego Therapy twice a week to build on her communication skills as, although seeming outwardly happier, she was still on the edge of her peers. Lego helped her to make some new friends and it was also rewarding to see her new identity being cemented and accepted amongst some of her peers. Although MF does not obviously present as a female, students were happy to follow by the teacher's example and refer to MF as 'her' and 'she' and use her new name.

I appreciate that this case study is very anecdotal and I certainly don't take credit for the shift in MF's attitude. However, I genuinely can't express enough how happier she now seems and I think that is down to a shift in school attitude and the fact that she is accepted and communicated with on a regular basis.

Torquay Girls Grammar

As a champion I have become the point of contact for parents, staff, students, prospective parents and the SEND department for information and queries relating to any ASD issues.

The leadership team have asked me to meet with prospective parents and pupils at opening evenings and events to discuss with them how we could meet their daughter's needs.

The SEND team have included me in their meetings and we have updated the policy for processes such as the referral for SEND assessment to include a meeting with me if there is a possibility of ASD tendencies.

With a particular girl in year 9 (now going into year 10) I met with her in the capacity of Head of Year to look at how we could support her due to very low attainment. Although I do not teach this student (IP), I had already had contact with her Mother who reported a 'meltdown' at home one evening when IP had accidentally broken her 'phone and an ensuing rage when she could not be reasoned with. I then wondered from our interaction at our meeting if she may have difficulties with communication, social interaction, anxiety etc. I canvassed opinion from her subject teachers, carried out lesson observations and looked at her history in the school. IP was not able to give me her own opinions of anything and became very withdrawn if asked to comment on her feelings towards anything.

I had a follow up meeting when IP's mother came in to discuss her academic attainment at a Head of Year mentoring session. At this meeting Mrs P told me that she has long since had concerns that this student may be on the Autism Spectrum. I suggested that she may like to speak with her GP, which they did, and the GP said that any referral would need to come from the school.

Within school IP presented as being uncommunicative, unresponsive when asked a direct question, refusing to do homework as she believes work should be done at school and also that she will only spend time on tasks which she enjoys. The Maths department in particular were becoming frustrated because IP was not making progress, would not complete homework and would not attend the lunchtime support clinic as she was asked to. She was being given several detentions.

I made a support plan which removed detentions. I discovered that IP was unwilling to attend the lunchtime support group because it was held in a classroom which was not her usual teaching room and had unfamiliar people including sixth formers in it. She would often hover in the corridor waiting to see if it was the right place, and not feeling able to go in. We have since put a clear sign in the window stating 'Maths Clinic is held here at 1pm on Mondays, please come in' so now she is clear about where and when to go, and she has been attending. There are many activities which she can do online so she is more motivated to complete those.

I have liaised with IP's teachers and explained that she may lose concentration if there are too many other stimuli in the room, and helped them to reconsider seating arrangements. This seems to have helped in many areas.

I updated IP's Student Support Plan and circulated it to staff, with a comment from her mother to explain how it will support Isabelle to follow the suggested techniques in class.

I set out a suggested timetable for IP to follow at home so that she has a clear homework time set aside, then the remainder of the evening is her own time. Her sister is at home at the same time and encourages her to stick to this.

I contacted Devon Integrated Children's Services (Virgincare) and obtained the forms necessary for making a referral to the Autism Assessment Team and over the summer I have communicated with her mother, the SEND department and coordinated all the notes we have to make a portfolio of evidence, complete the questionnaires and have now sent off the referral.

I continue to be in regular contact with her mother, and alongside the SEND team we are working with staff to support IP as best we can. I meet with her frequently and she is happy with the referral being pursued. IP told me that she watched *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* and that it rang true for her with her own experiences.

Our aim is to improve the experiences of this student in school, to support her the best way we can and to equip her with skills which will enable her to manage independently in the wider world.

Combe Pafford Cohort 2

Combe Pafford is an SEN school set up for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). I am a teacher within the Autism Unit and I currently teach 7 children aged 8-11 who have autism alongside learning difficulties.

JE is an 8 year old boy who has PDA and suffers from Pseudological Hallucinations. He has been in a PMLD school before being home schooled last year after refusing education. He has now spent a year at Combe Pafford and has come on leaps and bounds. This short case study highlights the transition and intervention that was put in place for JE so that he was able to come back into education.

JE began afternoon visits to our class in the Summer Term before his September start date. He attended these afternoons with his mum who would assist and observe. He was very anxious on these afternoons and would often hit out or run away from the classroom. He would speak explicitly about death and self-harm. JE was already registered with CAMHS for this need. He would not interact much with the other children as he found them 'odd'. JE was to return to us in September on a part time timetable of mornings only. JE could not read, write or count with any meaning at this point.

Through research, advice and help from an Occupational Therapist, JE was set up with his own workstation and personalised 1:1 timetable. His workstation consisted of his TEACCH station, a short visual timetable, a visual reward system (same as the rest of the class) and some sensory toys. JE's timetable consisted of short 1:1 lessons where he would get 'reward' time at the end. Weekly interventions that were put in place were: 2x whole class Talkabout (social communication), 2x 1:1 sensory integration, 1x 2:1 sensory integration, yoga, fine motor skills and Autism Movement Therapy.

JE immediately became immersed within his new setting and routine. We stuck very rigidly to his routine for the first term. In January JE began 5 mornings and 2 afternoons and by February half term he was eager to stay for 5 full days. This didn't come without difficulty and of course in any school staffing becomes an issue at this point. Routine, research and preparation allowed for JE to become part of the whole class and we were able to drop some of his 1:1 learning support time.

In the summer term I was able to introduce Lego Therapy into our whole school to support social communication. This targeted 50 high-need children and whole school within small class groups. JE struggled with this new intervention to begin but over time made great progress within his small group. His next steps for this academic year are to use his new found skills elsewhere in the school.

Preparation and communication between myself and the team around JE was key for the integration of this boy back into school life. From beginning in September he did not run away once and was able to find his safe workstation when a problem occurred. He can now read and write to a Year 1/2 standard and counting over 100 and back. The main thing is that he *wants* to learn and feels extremely comfortable within our autism friendly school setting. Without further help from our Autism Champion training and discussion with the other champions I may not have been able to cater for this boy as well as I have. I have definitely learned new knowledge and techniques to use within our Unit.

Mayfield

In my role as autism champion I was asked to work with pupils in Key Stage 2 who were assessed as being in the lower quartile for English or Maths. After identifying the 8 pupils, I spoke to the class teachers, who were all keen to have intervention for their children. I referred to the pupils' ILPs so that I could identify what the teacher was working on and link this to the area of learning they were struggling with.

The pupils assessed were either non-verbal or had limited communication. Lego therapy is not usually used for pupils who have not achieved 3 way communication, however, I wanted to trial it and set about simplifying the rules.

Working with Sheridan, an intervention T.A, we initially played with the pupils on a one to one to see whether they had joint attention, photo recognition, could match picture to object. Once this had been assessed, Sheridan spent a few weeks modelling how to build; using two hands, pressing down, picking up a piece at a time, for example. Once this had been established we set about making simple Duplo models (Lego was too fiddly) for the pupils to build. We took photographs of each stage, of each brick.

This worked well, however, we realised that the photographs were not always clear as they did not show each piece or model in 3D. We also realised that most pupils need a choice between two pieces as a tray containing all the pieces was too confusing.

Once Sheridan had established that each child could understand the expectation she worked on building 3 way communication between herself, the pupil and the Duplo.

Sheridan and myself get together weekly to discuss and review. We agreed that the Duplo buildings we had made for the pupils to build were not stimulating. I put in a bid for some Duplo sets and received 5 sets of colourful creations ranging from a dipper truck to a train and a house. We also decided that the props and names given for the pupils in normal Lego therapy would become a distraction for these pupils due to their levels of engagement so these were not included in our sessions.

Sheridan worked with 2 pupils at a time for 20 minute slots.

I videoed her working with two 10yr old boys together, R.M and C.B

The boys were really motivated by the new Duplo sets. The cards which came with them showed clearly what the model should look like. Sheridan sat between both pupils, verbally prompting each child. R.M built and C.B passed the block that was needed (with physical and verbal prompting)

This worked really well. Expectation was clear and we already saw deeper engagement from the pupils. Once the model had been built the pupils took turns to play with it.

Regardless of the curriculum area of need highlighted for each pupil, it was clear that communication was what we needed to work on. We have adapted and are still adapting how best to work with the pupils. We write up, video and photograph each session to assess progress and plan next steps.

The first term was about establishing relationships, engagement, expectation and communication. Due to the academic levels of the pupils involved, we expect small steps of progress; however, the project is a really exciting venture for ourselves and the pupils.

Leonie (SaLT) visited to discuss how we were planning each session, in the early stages. She will return in the autumn to watch an established session. We are also visiting Bidwell Brook in September to watch a session in progress there.

I am sharing the Lego Therapy workshop information with our staff on a training day in September as well as how we have implemented it at Mayfield.

Medical Tuition Service

1. I previously wrote about a student whom received a late diagnosis in year 9 (TF). This student continued to have escalating presentation throughout his year 9 studies which resulted in increased levels of anxiety. This with the onset of puberty has made home and school life very difficult. A new baby arrived in the family in the last year and although adored by the student, in his comments in school this was not so much seen by the family. TF experienced anxiety to a level that he missed much of school in the spring/summer term. This was greatly down to his anxiety making sleep a very limited thing for him.

Mum has shown increasing concern for TF and not only his studies but also his personal life experience. She was very worried over the time he was missing. TF continued to place copious amounts of pressure on himself to achieve everything the staff expected of him and

would often spend all his recreational time within school trying to complete the work he had been set in lessons.

Through talking with the parents and the experienced gained via the autism training I could make suggestions which could be implemented within the school day to help alleviate some of the anxiety experience by TF. We learned that one way in which his anxiety could be reduced was through vestibular stimulatory activities such as spinning and calling and running. We established that 15 minutes before the lunchtime break TF would be allowed to enter a seclude space within the garden and spin and run and make noise to reduce his anxiety. This worked for a while and TF had a greater attendance.

Unfortunately, TF has had a summer holiday in which his anxiety has again increased. His mum is currently working with us to find a solution in which he can maintain schooling. Due to the training, I have been able to offer a ten-minute switch off period in which TF is able to change over between lessons (something that has come out as an incredibly challenging task for him). I have also been able to train staff on using a chevron method in which they can make lesson tasks explicit and work towards making sure TF is able to complete all tasks within the lesson and therefor find is easier to make the switch.

I have spent time visiting the student and walking with them, talking to maintain the relationships and trust and we hope for reengagement through a very specific personalised programme, adhered to by all staff. TF's parents have found it very difficult getting the paediatrician to see TF and are going that with some medical intervention his sleeping patterns may improve and help with his education.

This case is ongoing, however due to the training I feel able to openly make suggestions on how we may be able to make things easier at school and speak with parents about how we can support at home.

2. Again, the case I speak about here is a continuation of the case I spoke about in my first review. This is regarding a student whom only received a diagnosis in year 9. This student has just completed his year 11 and GCSE's. I must admit this is a student whom will always be in my thoughts and have impacted on me and my teaching due to the specific presentations and bonds he made with us while he was there.

This student made all his needs known through humour and stories that he made up about obscure topics. His key in way the Chinese mafia/rare medical conditions or his own martial art antics (something that always made him laugh and relax). Whether he thought this was funny because we didn't understand he was joking or whether it was because he found it funny that we were trying to talk about something unreal didn't matter, it kept him engaged.

This student really struggled through the final year and again had much absence. I worked incredibly closely with his parents to ensure he had access to work from home and that he had the time he needed to gain access to lessons. We also made sure that throughout his exams he was supported. The student required a reader for all exams this was allowed in and extra time. We ensured for all his exams he had one of two teachers whom completely understood his specific requirements and who he felt comfortable with. Due to his

processing time delay many teachers found it difficult not to be silent and wait, something we picked up in doing mock exams with him. I was one of these teachers and after reading an English exam question too him, I too found it difficult to sit and wait the twenty minutes before he started writing, however having spent time with the student before preparing and knowing that if I interrupted and asked if he wanted me to read again, would cause his whole thinking process to have to start over, I found this much easier. This compounded the training for autism undertaken and gave me experience that was supported by knowledge gained.

The student's results were;

Subject	KS2 based prediction	Teacher assessed prediction	Actual
English Language	3	2	3
English Literature	3	2	2
Maths	3	2	2
Physics	D	E	E
Biology	D	E	F
History	D	E	G
Art	D	F	D

As seen ragged against the initial predictions from the teaching staff DD achieved higher in two subjects, on target in three and below in two. Although against KS2 data this is different we feel due to the difficulties faced by the student he did amazingly and this has given him the experience needed to move onto post 16 studies at SDC.

I have since results day spoken with the student's mum who was as happy as we were with his results (he did not fail anything), and the student is starting a course in the nurturing environment of a small group at SDC. She has requested that I compile a report for the tutors at the college, explaining how we found working with DD and what worked well. I have of course said that I will make sure this happens.

Without the information gained through the training I don't know whether I would have the confidence to relate the experiences with this child to his autism and provide evidence for future professionals on ways to structure work for him.



Schools Forum - 30th November 2017

Torbay Education Safeguarding Service (TESS) Progress Report

1. Purpose of report.

The purpose of the report is to provide an overview and summary of progress and developments to the Schools Forum since the last report produced in February 2017. Previous reports have tended to consist of my reporting of TESS activity with little or no contribution from those who TESS are delivering services to. This year I have tried to capture the views of Children's Services and Schools – this has led to a slightly longer report, however, it would seem important to understand the impact of TESS particularly as we enter the last academic year of guaranteed funding. The following paragraphs capture the views and impact of each service area.

2. Children's Services – MASH and Targeted/Early Help

2.1 MASH

"MASH continue to value the presence, input and perspectives TESS can bring to the multi-agency team, to ensure even better communication and information sharing between Children Services and Education. TESS has been valuable in seeking children's views and in obtaining an immediate snapshot of how that child presents emotionally, physically and behaviourally that day. TESS can explore concerns with schools prior to making contact with MASH, and in working towards a better understanding of both Children Services and school processes. In certain cases, joint working with TESS has ensured the right outcome for children and families to materialise more promptly. TESS are an integral part of the MASH's functioning and in determining a more accurate identification of thresholds. Without TESS, this would place significant additional pressure on schools. "
Claire Davies, Screening Manager Multi Agency Screening Hub.

2.2 Early /Targeted Help

"TESS play a significant role in the Torbay Early Help Targeted Help offer. Since Early Help was launched in 2015 TESS have contributed to the panel each week and supported countless TAFs' led by schools. Attendance at Panel became slightly less regular when there was only one member of staff (Sarah James), although there was still close co-ordination, case discussions and a very good professional relationship where support and challenge was always visible between myself as the former Early Help Co-ordinator and Sarah as the TESS Senior Practitioner. Since the increased capacity of TESS in spring 2017 there has been 100% attendance at Panel and supporting schools to complete assessments, co-ordinating TAF's and providing support to Lead Professionals where

required. Since the Easter Term TESS now scrutinise the panel list and identify schools, inviting representatives and gathering information when schools are unable to attend in person. TESS encourage schools to obtain the views of the child/young person if not already gathered for the purposes of completing the Targeted Help assessment and have delivered workshops to schools in the use of tools such as the Three Houses for this purpose. TESS staff played a significant part in the re launch of Early Help in Torbay in July 2017 by contributing to the design of the assessment form, the design of leaflets and the communication strategy. The partnership between targeted help as the level 3 offer from CS and TESS is a solid one, and assists in delivering both good quality Early Help support for families at level 2 from our partners and Targeted Help support for families at level 3 to Torbay families. TESS have also been a good advocate for both education and children services during the re-launch and have supported education meetings to ensure that education had their voice and could discuss their ideas and concerns freely. TESS have also supported with ensuring I am able to attend DSL meetings and advise of information that schools require to allow me to distribute or develop these to ensure our relationship with education is strengthened to replicate the relationship targeted help have with TESS. TESS are an integral part in supporting targeted help in ensuring it is successful and able to meet the needs of the families in Torbay.”

Kerrie Ford, Family Intervention Team Manager and Targeted Help Co-ordinator.

3. SCHOOLS

Previous reports have noted the quantity of contacts with schools which peaked at 326 in January 2017. These figures lacked any qualitative analysis, so I felt it might be useful to explore where TESS has had an impact. Appendix A represents a breakdown of the returns from the 26 schools completing the questionnaires. One additional school did not have time to complete the questionnaire but did respond stating that they valued the service.

It is pleasing to know that in terms of the timeliness of TESS responding to queries, and the usefulness of discussing queries with TESS that the majority of answers scored 9-10. It is also of interest to note that Ofsted take note of the exchanges with TESS when inspecting schools. In addition, it is encouraging to know that the DSL forums and newsletter are well received as a great deal of thought goes into these. However, in framing my questionnaire I was mindful of the fact that when coming into post my impression was that relationships between schools and Children’s Services could be “tense”. I fully understood the reasons for this and was hopeful that TESS could play a part in improving understanding of the perspectives of the agencies. Both in terms of the knowledge of Social Care thresholds and relationships and communications with Children’s Services schools are currently reporting scores in the majority of over 8. Given the importance of working together, this response is extremely positive.

Whilst I have kept the reporting anonymous I am aware that some schools have been slow to take up the services of TESS yet the questionnaires were returned by some of these that have only recently begun to trust us and have confidence in our knowledge and skills. We have been here for 3 years – sometimes that is how long it takes to build up that trust and I believe our persistence and commitment has paid off. I think this comment summed up this position: *“TESS has given practical, pragmatic advice which is relevant to the context of working in a school. They also do what they say they will do! Their knowledge and support*

has been of great value to the school's efforts to safeguard children. The fact that they have been available to support parents on safeguarding plans in the school holidays has also been a great help, and I know for a fact that outcomes for families have improved as a result of this support... I did not make enough use of TESS when the service was first introduced, because it took time to realise that they are actually doing what they say they will and not just talking about it..."

4. Future steps and comments from schools

Our funding is only guaranteed until August 2018 and there was a resounding message from the returned questionnaires that schools would like us to continue. Those that have taken up the opportunity of supervision or advice workshops have found these extremely useful and others would welcome the opportunity of training. It was not possible to include all of the comments from the questionnaires in the appendix, however, I thought it worth including a few of the feelings expressed by DSL's:

"Being DSL can be quite a lonely job and can put you in quite a vulnerable position at times. The expertise and advice of TESS has given me more confidence to persist in following up issues and dealing with the inevitable difficulties that result from being persistent."

"Before TESS I felt quite isolated within the bleak world of safeguarding. They have always supported us with many aspects of safeguarding in our school and have improved our knowledge, skills and confidence in making correct decisions and taking the most effective course of action. We very much hope that TESS will continue beyond the agreed funding even if it means paying in to the service."

"The knowledge that they are so easy to contact and respond quickly to any query I have is very reassuring and essential in my role".

"The supervision I have on a regular basis with Sarah is amazing and I feel supported and listened to."

"The clarity of vision from TESS is always reassuring. I turn to TESS for advice and guidance, particularly as we make so few referrals."

"This service is effective. TESS are our 'sounding board' for discussions and support which is needed as schools are so busy."

"We had to prove to HMI we called you for advice and our record of conversations was deemed good practice"

"They have always backed us with challenging decisions when necessary and have helped us to escalate when appropriate. Similarly if they have felt that threshold is not met they would be quick to tell us and give an alternative option"

Sarah James
Education Senior Practitioner.
September 21st 2017



Schools Forum 30th November 2017

Intensive Outreach Support Service (IOSS)

Context

The following report provides an overview of the work and outcomes achieved by the IOSS for primary aged pupils delivered by Chestnut School on behalf of the Local Area. The Service has been in place since September 2016.

The service had been previously funded as a Schools Forum project, however recently the cost of the service is being met by the Troubled Families Grant received by Torbay Local Authority. Although no longer funded by DSG, the impact of the service is of significant importance in reducing demands on higher needs funding and for this reason, forum will continue to monitor the service.

What is the service and what does it provide?

The small service has a core of two full time workers (reduced to 1x FTE from 31st August). The current vacancy is being recruited to.

The service works with those children at risk of permanent exclusion and with the most complex behavioural needs. Each package of support is bespoke and includes work with families.

The impact of the work is being monitored and measured in several ways.

- Does the child maintain their school placement or move to a more appropriate educational provision
- Does the child show progress on behaviour thresholds
- Does the child show progress on their Thrive assessment
- Does the feedback from the schools show positive changes
- Does the feedback from the families show positive changes
- Are the advised strategies being implemented
- Are the advised strategies still being implemented on the post service monitoring visit

Impact to date

The service has worked with nine schools and are part way through work with one more school. To date, the service has worked with 12 children and families in total.

Summary of Impact Chart

School	Worker	Time allocation	Child remained in school or moves school to a specialist provision	Actions implemented by the school	Reduction on behaviour threshold	Increase in Thrive assessment level	Action still in place on monitoring visit	School Feedback	Family feedback
A	1	44 days	Yes 2 children	Some	N/A	N/A	Some	Positive for all aspects	Positive for all aspects
B	2	23 days	Yes	Yes	High 4 to low 3	10%	Yes	Positive for all aspects	Positive for all aspects
C	1	13 days	Yes	Yes	High 4 to high 3	30%	No	Positive for all aspects	Positive for all aspects
D	2	18 days	No (Parent removed child)	Some	High 4 High 4	5%	N/A	Positive for all aspects	Work not able to continue
E	1	24 days	Yes 2 children	Some	High 4 High 3	35%	Yes	Positive, school felt service was not long enough	Positive for all aspects
F	2	59 days	Yes	Yes	Mid 3 to high 2	18%	N/A	Positive, school felt withdrawal should be dovetailed	Positive for all aspects
G	1	69 days	Moved to Chestnut	Yes	High 4 to Mid 4	7%	N/A	Positive, more monitoring needed	Breakdown of relationships due to SG concerns
H	2	33 days	Yes – managed move in progress	Yes	High 4 to low 3	13%	5/12/17	Positive, monitoring sessions useful, more capacity needed	Felt strategies supported child in home; breakdown of relationships due to SG
I	1	18 days	Yes – IOSS to continue following Summer	some	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing
J	2	38 days	yes	Some	To come	28%	To be arranged	Positive	Positive

The table demonstrates that the service is supporting the maintenance of Children in mainstream offer in the majority of cases. Early follow up meetings indicate that there continues to be a positive impact with strategies being continued or stepped down when appropriate.

Whilst working with individual pupils, there has also been a noted benefit for whole school approaches to working with children with SEMH (Social Emotional Mental Health). Reporting from schools have indicated the following benefits.

- Staff training impacting on understanding and whole school approach to SEMH and a transference of strategies for a range of children
- An improved management of unstructured times resulting in fewer individual incidents
- Improved positive behaviour for learning plans
- Improved communication across schools
- Improved parent engagement
- Improved transitions

To ensure this benefit is experienced by all schools, the service has updated the SLA which is agreed prior to commencement of work. This should enhance the development of a sustained approach.

To move the service forward it is proposed that the following next steps are implemented:

- Facilitate schools to become more attachment aware
- Update the IOSS policy
- Improve strength of child voice in evaluations
- Evidence time spent in each school by each worker
- Exit and entry from the end of a piece of work to the start of a new piece of work will be dovetailed
- Plan for the continuation of family support when the Outreach worker finishes

Amanda Cotton
IOSS Manager Mayfield/ Chestnut



Draft Internal Audit Report

Schools Forum and Use of DSG

Children's Services
Torbay Council

July 2017

OFFICIAL



Devon Audit Partnership

The Devon Audit Partnership has been formed under a joint committee arrangement comprising of Plymouth, Torbay and Devon councils. We aim to be recognised as a high quality internal audit service in the public sector. We work with our partners by providing a professional internal audit service that will assist them in meeting their challenges, managing their risks and achieving their goals. In carrying out our work we are required to comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards along with other best practice and professional standards.

The Partnership is committed to providing high quality, professional customer services to all; if you have any comments or suggestions on our service, processes or standards, the Head of Partnership would be pleased to receive them at robert.hutchins@devonaudit.gov.uk.

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This report is prepared for the organisation's use. We can take no responsibility to any third party for any reliance they might place upon it.

1 Introduction

The dedicated schools grant (DSG) provides funding to Local Authorities for the schools they manage. The DSG is split into three blocks: the schools block, the high needs block and the early years block. These blocks are notional, and local authorities and Schools' Forum are able, following consultation to move funds between them.

However, there is a potential change to 'hard funding' where local authorities Schools' Forum will no long be able to freely move funds between blocks, hence an evaluation of the processes in this area is important to ensure compliance with these potential future changes to grant requirements.

2 Audit Opinion

Improvements Required - In our opinion there are a number of instances where controls and procedures do not adequately mitigate the risks identified. Existing procedures need to be improved in order to ensure that they are fully reliable. Recommendations have been made to ensure that organisational objectives are not put at risk.

3 Executive Summary

There are a number of processes in operation which align to expected practice and associated guidelines. Forum meetings are reasonably well attended by the educational community and the Local Authority (LA), with a good level of information provided by the LA to forum members to allow preparatory review, scrutiny and challenge. However, we found little evidence of engagement from the education community via their representatives feeding into the meetings. Challenge and associated decision making is not appropriately recorded and is itself at risk of subsequent challenge and potential invalidation.

As required by associated guidance, forum documentation is available publicly on the Torbay website; however the information was very difficult to locate and therefore not easily accessible. In our opinion, it would benefit from a more structured dedicated communications provision that is well signposted so to be visible to the public.

Although budget information provided to the forum by the LA is comprehensive, it is in effect short term and does not currently provide a means for long term forecasting and planning. Whilst the forum challenges budget positions, the timeliness of remediating action in relation to a significant increase in overspend was, in our opinion, insufficient. It did not provide a mechanism by which the overspend could be effectively managed within an appropriate timescale.

The detailed findings and recommendations regarding these issues and less important matters are described in the Appendices. Recommendations have been categorised to aid prioritisation. Definitions of the priority categories and the assurance opinion ratings are also given in the Appendices to this report.

4 Assurance Opinion on Specific Sections

The following table summarises our assurance opinions on each of the areas covered during the audit. These combine to provide the overall assurance opinion at Section 2. Definitions of the assurance opinion ratings can be found in the Appendices.

Areas Covered		Level of Assurance
1	Allocation and monitoring of the DSG by the Schools Forum	Improvements Required
2	Financial monitoring of the DSG by the LA, leading to overspend.	Good Standard

The findings and recommendations in relation to each of these areas are discussed in the "Detailed Audit Observations and Action Plan" appendix. This appendix records the action plan agreed by management to enhance the internal control framework and mitigate identified risks where agreed.

5 Issues for the Annual Governance Statement

The evidence obtained in internal audit reviews can identify issues in respect of risk management, systems and controls that may be relevant to the Annual Governance Statement.

In terms of this review, we are able to report that there are no issues arising from the examination of systems and controls that warrant inclusion in the annual Governance Statement.

6 Scope and Objectives

The audit has been undertaken based on the areas discussed during the scoping meeting with the client department. The audit focussed upon and provided opinion based findings regarding the effectiveness of the following:

- Allocation and monitoring of the DSG by the Schools Forum;
- Financial monitoring of the DSG by the LA, leading to overspend.

We evaluated the in relation to compliance with the Education Funding Agency: Schools' Forum Operational and Good Practice Guide and the Schools' Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

We reviewed the operational practices of the schools forum to ensure that the requirements stated in the document 'Schools' Forum operational and good practice guide' were being adhered to. We attended a Schools' Forum meeting to evaluate and evidence the discussions and actions identified.

7 Inherent Limitations

The opinions and recommendations contained within this report are based on our examination of restricted samples of transactions / records and our discussions with officers responsible for the processes reviewed.

8 Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all those who provided support and assistance during the course of this audit.

Robert Hutchins
Head of Partnership

Appendix A

Detailed Audit Observations and Action Plan

1. Area Covered: Allocation and monitoring of the DSG by the Schools Forum	Level of Assurance
<p>Opinion Statement:</p> <p>The Forum utilises the 'Schools forums operational and good practice guide, Oct 2013' as guidance, this being the latest guidance available.</p> <p>Forum meetings are appropriately scheduled to align with DSG dates, the frequency of which aligns to the regulations. In our opinion the meetings are generally well attended by forum members, in particular, good Local Authority (LA) representation was evident, providing explanations and responses to member questions. Any gaps in representation of the educational community are identified and where necessary, sourced. We did however note that forum members were leaving prior to the end of the meeting with no apparent record of this being made, thus potentially impacting required quorum levels and the robustness and validity of decisions. Although discussion and challenge by forum members was evident, decisions and agreements are not formally voted upon nor adequately recorded within the meeting minutes, compounding the risk of decisions being invalid and open to further challenge. It was pleasing to note that information was distributed to forum members prior to meeting dates, in the form of an agenda pack. This contained financial information from the local authority regarding the DSG and a report from the Post 16 working group, allowing member's time for preparatory review and scrutiny, and therefore prepared challenge within the meeting framework. However, we found little evidence of engagement from the education community via their representatives feeding into the meeting.</p> <p>Terms of Reference for the Forum have been previously defined, however as we could not evidence any current terms detailing roles and responsibilities specific to members our opinion is that these are not currently sufficient and would benefit from review and update to reflect the current forum structure and membership.</p> <p>Of concern is the DSG overspend for 16/17 which is significantly higher than expected, with the 17/18 budget also predicted to overspend. In our opinion the forums actions to respond to the increased overspend were significantly delayed and potentially impacted the effectiveness of any remediating activity. We understand that this is now being addressed by the Forum and the LA through use of reserves, and formulation of a working group. In our opinion a more proactive budget planning and monitoring approach would provide a more robust financial framework for future years forecasting.</p> <p>Within the guidance there is a requirement for forum papers and information to be published in advance of meeting; although these are available to members via the agenda packs, our findings suggest that there is an insufficient level of communication with the public and the educational community as a whole. Information is available on the council's website however this is difficult to locate and therefore not easily accessible for the public. The dedicated webpage should provide the required framework within which information can be publicly shared and where engagement from relevant parties can be facilitated; and further provide a means to ensure compliance with the associated guidance.</p>	<p>Improvements Required</p>

No.	Observation and implications		
1.1	<p>Documents relating to a Schools' Forum meeting on the 6th December 2012 were located on the Torbay Internet by the Auditor, subsequently a dedicated schools forum webpage on the Torbay Internet was provided for review by the forum's Clerk. Although additional information was included on the webpages, a Terms of Reference was not located.</p> <p>In order for the forum to operate effectively and efficiently, an up to date Terms of Reference specific to the Torbay schools forum, setting out the operational practices and procedures, as required by The Schools' Forum operation and good practice guide Oct 2013, is required.</p>		
	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.1.1	<p>Terms of reference (TOR) should be completed in order to define the purpose and structure of the Torbay Schools Forum. They should contain clear and specific information on how the forum is organised and what they are trying to achieve, the following areas should be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose of the Forum; • meetings/timings; • roles and responsibilities; • membership/composition; • operation; • quorum; • voting; • declarations of Interest; • review frequency. 	High	
No.	Observation and implications		
1.2	<p>The Local Authority provide the forum members with documentation regarding the DSG budget, which is sent to forum members by the Clerk in the School Forum attendance pack together with the working group reports, prior to the meetings to enable the members to review them.</p> <p>The LA was also well represented at the meeting attended by the Auditor, to provide explanations to the documents provided and to answer any questions put forward by forum members. However, there was a lack of responding information and discussion emanating from forum members in relation to the groups they represent.</p>		

	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.2.1	Forum members should be proactive in raising the profile of issues from their represented group within the forum meetings. Discussions regarding any issues/questions, etc. from their represented group should be raised at the forum meetings and recorded in the minute for review. To ensure responsibilities and processes for communication with represented groups are clear they should be set out in a Terms of Reference.	High	
No.	Observation and implications		
1.3	Minutes are not adequately reflecting discussions and challenges at the forum meetings, nor record any votes by members to decisions or agreements. In addition, numerous members left the meeting prior to the end and this has not been recorded in the minutes.		
	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.4	The meeting minutes should clearly record the level of challenge and discussion of each of the agenda items. They should provide a sense of the discussions held and the options presented at the meeting to non-attendees and then clearly record the conclusions and action agreed in relation to each of the agenda items. It is important to accurately record in the minutes when forum members leave a meeting. This could potentially impact on whether the quorum was breached in relation to any decisions, approvals and agreements made at the meeting.	High	
No.	Observation and implications		
1.4	Formal agreement/approval to agenda items by the Forum members was not evidenced at the meeting attended by the Auditor, a more informal approach was observed. Due to the decisions and approvals that are required by the forum it is important that there is a formal approval or agreement to decisions to ensure clarity in the process as required in the Schools Forum operational and good practice guide. Members of the Forum can be asked to agree proposals from the Local Authority that will have an effect on all Educational establishments in the Torbay area therefore it is essential that the procedures for formal votes are established and adhered to.		

	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.4.1	<p>Clear votes should be taken in relation to recommendations and decisions.</p> <p>To ensure clarity in the voting process it is important to document the procedures for making decisions. There is the opportunity to include these as part of the Forums Terms of Reference.</p>	High	
No.	Observation and implications		
1.5	<p>The schools forum meets five times per year which is in accordance with the requirements in the practice guide. A significant increase in the overspend amount was identified by the LA however the School Forum members did not meet until the scheduled June meeting, this resulted in a delay to decisions and remediating actions, where in our opinion more immediate action was required.</p> <p>Meeting are usually approximately 1 hour, with the meeting attended by us being approximately 2 hours. A number of forum members had to leave part way through the meeting. It would have been prudent to inform members well in advance of the meeting that it would be a longer meeting, as there was the budget overspend that needed to be discussed which was a change to the overspend reported in the March meeting.</p>		
Page 48	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.1	<p>Due to the overspend reported in March significantly increasing from the £404,000 forecast to £834,597 an urgent/unscheduled meeting should have been called by the Schools Forum . Leaving the discussions until the June meeting has meant that there was insufficient time for decision by the Forum to be made and a working group had to be set up to manage and make decisions required on the overspend.</p> <p>In addition, due to the known overspend issue that needed to be discussed at the June meeting, and as an urgent meeting had not been scheduled, extra time should have been allocated to this meeting and advanced notice given to ensure that all members of the forum could attend the entire meeting.</p>	High	
No.	Observation and implications		
1.6	<p>Plans had been put in place to address budget overspend in 2016/17 by use of the reserve funds. However, the overspend had significantly increased to £834,597 from the figure of £404,000 reported in March 2017.</p> <p>In addition, a budget overspend is also predicted for 17/18 which has been addressed by the Local Authority. Although difficult to predict, due to DfE mechanisms, long term financial planning should be completed..</p>		

	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.6.1	It is recommended that more long term budget projections are developed and requested from the LA for monitoring by the Forum. This will enable the forum to scrutinise future budgets and identify savings in the long term, therefore avoiding having to make immediate budgets decision as is currently required.	High	
No.	Observation and implications		
1.7	The forum received an update on National Fair Funding (NFF) from the LA, however, actions required by the forum were not discussed and there was no feedback provided from the educational community via their representatives at the meeting. With the government planning to introduce 'hard funding' it is important that the forum monitor the situation and identify actions required before the hard funding is implemented.		
	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.7.1	<p>The forum members should be communicating the budget pressures with the educational groups they are representing and reporting any feedback at the forum meetings. By including the Local area, ideas, savings and opportunities can be identified and discussed at forum meetings, which could contribute to balanced budgets and prepare for the possibility of the hard funding blocks in the future.</p> <p>For example, forum members have identified that the area of pupil exclusions are well managed within some schools without the need for a pupil placement, which can be very costly. By identifying and sharing areas of good practice the local area educational community could potentially contribute to better management of budgets within the individual funding blocks.</p>	High	
No.	Observation and implications		
1.8	Communications by Forum members with their educational community, as required in the practice guide, could not be identified, or was not made available at the time of the audit and therefore is not currently deemed effective. The practice guidance states that 'communications to the wider educational community of the discussions and debates of and decisions made by schools forum is fundamental to their effective operation'. Although some documentation relating to the schools forum is evident on the Torbay website, such as agendas and meeting minutes, there is no dedicated schools forum webpage that includes up to date information about the forum, meeting dates, members, contact details, etc.		

	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.8.1	<p>Forum members should be reporting back to their represented areas to ensure good open channels of communication are being achieved. The members should report what needs to be achieved, decisions made and the outcomes of the forums meetings. By involving the educational community it means that they are aware of the budget pressures being faced and potentially how they could contribute to ideas to address any future overspend.</p> <p>Section 2.36 of the practice guide includes how the forum members could consider communicating with the community. It is a requirement that information relating to the schools forum is publicly available.</p>	High	
No.	Observation and implications		
1.9	<p>Information regarding the schools forum can be found on the Torbay website, however the documentation held is difficult to locate on the website..</p> <p>It is a requirement for the schools forum to be open to the public. Papers, agendas and minutes must be publicly available well in advance of the meeting. Best practice is that notification of and provision of papers regarding the meetings are published on the website at least a week in advance. The practice guide states 'The publishing of papers and agendas well in advance of the meeting and minutes published promptly is required under Regulation 8(13) of the Schools Forum Regulations 2012.</p>		
Page 50	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.9.1	<p>The Schools Forum area on the Torbay Council website should be made more accessible and clearly signposted for public review. All papers, documentation and information regarding the forum including its roles and responsibilities and contact details, as required by the practice guide, should be made available. Many local authorities dedicated Schools Forum websites post key information for members and any other interested parties and can be reviewed for ideas regarding the information included on the Torbay Forum web page.</p>	High	
No.	Observation and implications		
1.10	<p>It has been identified that not only is it an opportunity but also a requirement for the forum to communicate with the educational community and any other interested parties.</p> <p>In addition, the forum may want to consider the following to engage the local area in the DSG allocation process -</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly newsletters - these could be published on the website or presented to the Head teachers meetings; • Contact with other LA Schools Forum groups and/or consider establishing a 'South west forum group' to share good practice; • Sharing good practice within the educational community in the Local area; • Online bulletin boards, so suggestions, contacts and questions can be gained from the community; • Utilisation of technology such as face time, Skype, etc to maximise communication. 		
	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
1.10.1	The forum should take full advantage of all opportunities to raise the profile of the Schools forum and encourage the local area to engage with them.	Medium	

2. Area Covered: Financial monitoring of the DSG by the LA, leading to overspend.		Level of Assurance	
Opinion Statement: Budget plans are completed by the LA for the current financial year and are monitored on a consistent basis by the LA. The current budget and any associated changes are provided to Forum members prior to the meetings within the agenda attendance pack. The packs are issued and then discussed in detail by the LA representative at the Forum meetings thus providing opportunity for review and challenge. The DSG budget has overspent in the previous year (2016/17) for the first time in Torbay and a deficit has been identified in the current year's budget 2017/18. As noted in 1.5 and 1.6 above, the short term budget planning process did not provide a stringent enough framework by which the budget overspend could be effectively addressed. There were numerous issues which compounded this issue andn our opinion a longer term budget planning process which provide an improved framework to pro-actively address the areas of overspend. Although we appreciate that long term budgeting is made difficult due to the Department for Education (DfE) allocation mechamisms, consideration and implementation of this approach at this stage would also provide an opportunity for some preparatory work to consider the implications and actions of the loss of provision to move funds between funding blocks were 'hard funding' to be enforced by 2020.		Good Standard	
Page 52	Observation and implications		
	Accounting records are maintained for the current year only. For the years 2016/17 there was, for the first time, overspend in the DSG within the higher needs and early years funding blocks. We understand that this is not specific to Torbay and is a national issue. The main issues identified are the additional in year requests for EHC Plans and the uptake of the 30 hours free nursery places. The predicated overspend in the 2017/18 budget also needs to be addressed.		
	Recommendation	Priority	Management response and action plan including responsible officer
2.1.1	The LA could further enhance the budget planning processes by constructing a three year budget plan. The plan can then be presented to the Schools Forum at all meetings to examine each element of funding and to review and discuss long term funding models in order to identify actions required and any potential saving scenarios.	High	

Definitions of Audit Assurance Opinion Levels

Assurance	Definition
High Standard.	The system and controls in place adequately mitigate exposure to the risks identified. The system is being adhered to and substantial reliance can be placed upon the procedures in place. We have made only minor recommendations aimed at further enhancing already sound procedures.
Good Standard.	The systems and controls generally mitigate the risk identified but a few weaknesses have been identified and / or mitigating controls may not be fully applied. There are no significant matters arising from the audit and the recommendations made serve to strengthen what are mainly reliable procedures.
Improvements required.	In our opinion there are a number of instances where controls and procedures do not adequately mitigate the risks identified. Existing procedures need to be improved in order to ensure that they are fully reliable. Recommendations have been made to ensure that organisational objectives are not put at risk.
Fundamental Weaknesses Identified.	The risks identified are not being controlled and there is an increased likelihood that risks could occur. The matters arising from the audit are sufficiently significant to place doubt on the reliability of the procedures reviewed, to an extent that the objectives and / or resources of the Council may be at risk, and the ability to deliver the service may be adversely affected. Implementation of the recommendations made is a priority.

Definition of Recommendation Priority

Priority	Definitions
High	A significant finding. A key control is absent or is being compromised; if not acted upon this could result in high exposure to risk. Failure to address could result in internal or external responsibilities and obligations not being met.
Medium	Control arrangements not operating as required resulting in a moderate exposure to risk. This could result in minor disruption of service, undetected errors or inefficiencies in service provision. Important recommendations made to improve internal control arrangements and manage identified risks.
Low	Low risk issues, minor system compliance concerns or process inefficiencies where benefit would be gained from improving arrangements. Management should review, make changes if considered necessary or formally agree to accept the risks. These issues may be dealt with outside of the formal report during the course of the audit.
Opportunity	A recommendation to drive operational improvement which may enable efficiency savings to be realised, capacity to be created, support opportunity for commercialisation / income generation or improve customer experience. These recommendations do not feed into the assurance control environment.

Confidentiality under the National Protective Marking Scheme

Marking	Definitions
Official	The majority of information that is created or processed by the public sector. This includes routine business operations and services, some of which could have damaging consequences if lost, stolen or published in the media, but are not subject to a heightened threat profile.
Secret	Very sensitive information that justifies heightened protective measures to defend against determined and highly capable threat actors. For example, where compromise could seriously damage military capabilities, international relations or the investigation of serious organised crime.
Top Secret	The most sensitive information requiring the highest levels of protection from the most serious threats. For example, where compromise could cause widespread loss of life or else threaten the security or economic wellbeing of the country or friendly nations.