



**SUPPORTING ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE IN PERTH AND KINROSS
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS REVIEW**

¹Executive summary



**A strategy to ensure Perth and
Kinross Council meets the
needs of all children and young
people**

¹ Acknowledgement for the image to www.more4kids

Introduction

The Executive Director and Senior Managers of ECS demonstrate strong leadership and high levels of commitment to meeting the needs of all children and young people, including the most vulnerable. The alignment of ECS funding to the three key service priorities² is having positive impact and achieving good outcomes for many children and young people. The Senior Management Team is clear that the way in which the *total* needs of children and young people are met, is through close working partnerships with relevant agencies. Their continually improving integrated practice has already been recognised and praised in external inspection reports. The Executive Director and Senior Managers are keen to continue to drive forward this agenda. In line with the organisation's culture of self evaluation as well as ensuring best value, they have worked with an educational consultant to comprehensively review and evaluate the adequacy and quality of provision currently in place for children and young people who require additional support.

Discussion between the consultant and Senior Managers confirmed that they are clear about ECS's key priorities. Staff in schools, social work, community learning and external agencies are working hard to achieve this agenda, particularly in relation to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable young people. This clarity and focus has resulted in funding 4 FTE social workers and 5 FTE community link workers through appropriate targeting of resources with the aim of continuously improving services for the most vulnerable children and young people. In keeping with successful early intervention for vulnerable children the Executive Director has 'mainstreamed' funding for the four highly successful nurture groups. This report summarises the findings, highlights strengths in the service and provides advice to the Executive Director and his team about the way forward to ensure continuous improvement. Many of the recommendations are closely inter-linked. Further detailed reports provide specific guidance.

The Scope of the Review

The Additional Support Needs (ASN) review took account of the broad nature of ASN and involved consultation with representatives of all stakeholders. This included headteachers, deputies, support for learning teachers, support for learning assistants, specialist and peripatetic teachers, speech and language and occupational therapists and physiotherapists, guidance teachers, behaviour support teachers, staff in the re-integration project, pupil support co-ordinators, ECS senior managers, parents and pupils. Visits were made to all secondary schools, 20 primary schools and the re-integration centre. The review paid particular attention to the function of the learning support service in primary and secondary schools and support for behaviour in primary and secondary schools. Close account was taken of the numbers of pupils who receive part-time education and of the numbers of children and young people placed in residential special schools. The review also examined the documentation and processes involved in the audit and other key systems which have been developed to ensure that Perth and Kinross Council meets the legislative requirement of the Additional Support for Learning Act.

Background

The section of the Education and Children's service which support **Additional Support Needs (ASN)** plays a vital part in ensuring the needs of all children and young people, particularly vulnerable children and young people, are effectively met. It is a large, complex and expanding service. Recent national legislation described in this report, have had serious implications for senior managers and schools. Expenditure during 2007-2008 was in excess of £8 million in spite of tight budgetary control and continuous monitoring.

Legislative considerations

Since 2000, there has been important legislation to support Councils in making provision for children with 'special educational needs' and guide them in the way in which they provide 'additional support' for children and young people.

1. Section 15 of the ***Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000*** came into effect in August 2003, and introduced what is now referred to as the '**presumption of mainstreaming**' in relation to

² ECS's key priorities: Raising achievement for all; Supporting vulnerable children and families; Equality of access to culture, sport and active recreation.

pupils with special educational needs. This means that the onus is on education authorities to place children, including those with disabilities and with challenging behaviour, in a mainstream school. Exceptions to this presumption are shown in Appendix 1.

2. Following the introduction of **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004**, 'the new concept of additional support needs refers to any child or young person who, for whatever reason, requires additional support for learning. Additional support needs can arise from any factor which causes a barrier to learning, whether that factor relates to social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, disability, or family and care circumstances'. One of the changes enshrined in the new Act is the adoption of the term **additional support needs**, which is considerably wider in scope than its predecessor, special educational needs. The change in nomenclature to additional support needs signals a general recognition that **approximately 80% of children or young people may have additional support needs at some stage** in their school career. That is, it is not necessarily exceptional to have additional support needs, although in some cases the support needs will be exceptional and will require very special consideration and *additional* support.

Implications of the legislation

The fast changing backdrop of special education now referred to as Additional Support Needs (ASN) or Additional Support for Learning (ASL), which encompasses almost all children and young people, has had significant implications for all Scottish Authorities. In addition to the very considerable developments required as a result of The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, referred to as the ASL Act, authorities and schools have had to, and continue to, re-think how to plan for and deliver support for almost all children and young people and 'additional support' for many. ECS have supported schools in doing this through the development of a 3-level framework of Assessment and Intervention. The authority has also developed a very comprehensive system of auditing the needs of children and young people in order to try to provide equitable additional staffing. Schools have generally embraced the presumption of mainstreaming. In primary schools, the headteacher and in secondary schools the Depute (Support for Pupils), along with the Headteacher play a key role in ensuring additional support is in place to meet the needs of a wide range of pupils. Integrated team structures which promote a multi-agency approach play an important part in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable young people, particularly in secondary schools. In four primary schools, nurture groups play a very positive role in supporting the most vulnerable children and their families. Overall, primary and secondary schools effectively support children with significant needs in mainstream, including children with very challenging behaviour. This good practice has resulted in the numbers of children being educated at home, reducing. Along with colleagues from health and housing, schools have provided very effective support to children of travelling families. Some schools demonstrated outstanding practice. It is important to remember the high level of skill required to support children and young people with significant ASN in mainstream settings.

Summary of strengths

The review reported very positively on many aspects of provision. These included:

- Strong commitment at all levels of ECS to the presumption of mainstreaming which is line with the Council's Inclusion and Equality Policy 2007³ and national legislation;
- Excellent responses to the ASL Act in terms of procedures and documentation to ensure the authority operates in line with legislative requirements;
- Very good support for children of travelling families achieved through close working with community health and housing colleagues; and substantial reduction in numbers of children who are home educated;
- High quality support for children and families for whom English is an additional language

³ 'It is our responsibility to ensure that individuals, groups and communities are not excluded and marginalised from opportunities. We need to find ways of making participation possible for marginalised individuals, groups and communities. This would include young carers, gypsy travellers, people with a range of identified learning, cultural, social and mental health needs.'

- Very good support for children in most primary specialist provisions
- Many examples of schools having purposeful partnership with agencies and some excellent examples of close working with parents, often achieved through the very good practice of community link workers; and
- An increasing understanding that strong systems, procedures and practice which raise and recognise the attainment and broad achievement of the *most vulnerable* children and young people, also improve approaches to meeting the needs of all children and young people. This is a key message from the Scottish Government.

Given this positive picture, it is clear that ECS has the capacity to take forward further improvement. Many specific examples of very good practice are described in the individual detailed review reports.

Key messages to ensure continuous improvement and clarify future direction

The key messages from the review are presented within the context of the Single Outcome Agreement, National Outcomes, the Community Plan, Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan and the priorities of Education and Children's services. The means of delivering services to all children and young people and particularly vulnerable children is through well-planned integrated working⁴. Detailed evidence to substantiate the recommendations is available in the individual review reports.

Recommendation 1

Update and further develop a strategic overview and written guidance for all practitioners across ECS to ensure the (additional) support they provide for children and young people is in line with best practice and is well placed to promote and recognise attainment and broad achievement for all.

Schools' additional support includes Support for Learning teachers, sometimes referred to as Additional Support Needs teachers; Support for Learning assistants; Guidance teachers; Behaviour Support teachers; Specialist staff based in Fairview and the other five primary specialist provisions; and Peripatetic teachers of children with visual and hearing impairment children and young people for whom English is an additional language (EAL). It also includes teachers who work with and 'beyond' secondary schools with secondary aged pupils who have significant behavioural needs. ECS staff who support children and young people with additional support needs work most effectively when they work closely with a range of partners. These include therapists and other health professionals, educational psychologists and community link workers and others.

The broader concept of additional support needs and the high level of mainstreaming in Perth and Kinross has implications for practice, including partnership working, for **all** practitioners. Managers across the service have had to support all their staff in understanding this concept and in taking forward effective practice. Clear updated guidance is now needed for all staff across the service in relation to respective practice, particularly given this (positive) complex inclusive partnership model. The guidance should take account of existing good practice in meeting ASN needs, particularly in primary schools, which are effectively using the principles of the *Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)*. It should also recognise the growing willingness of secondary schools to provide an extended, more practically based curriculum as well as take account of the proposed curriculum pathways at S4-S6 in line with CfE. More explicit guidance can support staff to meet the needs of *all* learners, encourage broad achievement for all and support the aim of ensuring an appropriate minimum attainment level⁵, particularly for vulnerable learners. The guidance will apply equally to the Level 3 provision for children and young people with significant challenging behaviour, described more fully in recommendation 2. This will assist ECS 'with the aspiration to exceed our comparator authorities by 2011 and become one of the highest performing Councils nationally across all measures'. (BMIP Plan 2009-2012). It will also respond to the statement in the 2009 HMIE report, *Improving Scottish education* which states: 'Whilst there are real strengths in achievement for children and young people in Scotland, we still need to ensure that education is sufficiently inclusive'.

⁴ BMIP: 'As a collective, the Service Management Team has a clear focus on integrated working'.

⁵ Further details are contained in the draft Presentation Policy

Recommendation 2

Improve alternative provision for the most vulnerable children and young people who display challenging or phobic behaviour.

There are positive indicators to show that ECS works effectively to meet the needs of vulnerable young people. The Executive Director and Senior Managers demonstrate high commitment to their role of 'corporate parent, taking on responsibilities that generally fall to parents or carers, in improving outcomes for vulnerable children. Exclusion figures have reduced; attendance figures have improved; community based placements for looked after children are amongst the highest in Scotland and the levels of attainment for these children are improving; the considerable investment in Fairview school ensures that the arrangements for meeting needs for children with disability who are placed there are excellent. However, additional support needs (ASN) can arise from any factor which causes a barrier to learning. For instance, additional support may be required for a child or young person who is *being bullied*; has *behavioural difficulties*; has learning difficulties; is a parent; has a sensory or mobility impairment; *is at risk*; or *is bereaved*'. Whilst ECS has invested very heavily in provision for children with disability, the broader concept of ASN and positive regard for all children requires a more equitable response to children who display challenging or phobic behaviour.

In recognition of the need for extended support 'beyond primary school and S1', for children with significant challenging behaviour who have their needs described as at Level 3, ECS has established Almondbank House. This provision will provide a more flexible and personalised experience in line with the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence* using themed planning and therapeutic approaches within small group provision and strong multi-disciplinary partnership working. In addition, ECS has realigned the roles of three primary behaviour support teachers to ensure they provide support for Level 3 children in mainstream schools and also provide advice, guidance and practical support for (behaviour) SfL assistants.

At the secondary stages, the Senior Integrated Team and a Pupil Co-ordinator work hard with colleagues to provide individual young people who present with challenging behaviour and described as having needs at Level 3, with flexible additional support. This includes some excellent innovative support provided by one teacher in particular. However, this overall support is often time-limited and part time and its impact is extremely difficult to manage and evaluate. In addition, up to 10 secondary pupils with Level 3 social, emotional and behavioural needs are supported by the Re-Integration Project, based at George Inn Lane. The project, which was established in 2001 with the prime aim of supporting young people returning to the community from residential schools, was evaluated in 2004 as having achieved this goal, primarily by providing effective personal and family support. However, in recent years the number of young people in residential special schools has reduced considerably and the needs of those who are placed in residential schools are so complex and significant that it is less likely that they can return to local provision. The aims of the project now require to be revised. In addition, the project is currently unable to provide suitably broad learning experiences which lead to sufficiently high attainment.

Overall, from S2 onwards, there is a lack of equitable and progressive pathways for young people whose significant social, emotional and behavioural needs are judged to be unable to be wholly met in mainstream provision. It is recommended therefore that secondary provision at Level 3 be reconfigured to better meet the needs of young people from S2 with social and emotional needs, including the significant numbers of pupils on part-time timetables⁶. The new cohesive service which pupils might attend on a shared basis with their mainstream school or, in a few instances full-time, can ensure that the effective personal support which is currently provided by the re-integration project is matched equally by a strong emphasis on the provision of a range of learning pathways based on the guidance described in recommendation 1. The very positive existing part-time practice referred to earlier should also be incorporated into this overall provision. This re-constituted extended secondary provision will have clarity of purpose, a curriculum in line with CfE and national guidance, and will ensure young people who disengage from the mainstream secondary curriculum for whatever reason, can receive motivating personalised learning opportunities. The strong focus on *Skills for Work* and core skills, therapeutic support, including outdoor education experiences, combined with strong personal and social support can promote attainment and broad achievement within small group settings in S2 and S3. In S4, young people can extend these experiences and use their

⁶ During session 2008-2009, the numbers of pupils on part-time education reduced considerably.

achievements and skills to participate in work experience, social enterprise activities and link with college.⁷ In line with the principles of inclusion, schools will continue to be encouraged and supported to sustain mainstream placements, particularly at S4 and beyond, and retain their own pupils on the school roll to demonstrate their willingness to fully re-integrate pupils whenever appropriate.

Re-allocation of existing additional resources from secondary schools (referred to as 'additionality') will support this important investment.

ECS has developed several decision-making bodies which 'gate-keep' access to specialist provision and also maximise inclusion. This includes the Placing Panel. This body involves staff from both care and education in ensuring the (additional support) needs of children looked after outwith the Authority are met in a cost effective manner. In order to ensure that the young people who are placed in residential special schools also receive their full entitlement to maximise attainment and achievement, ECS should ensure that their procedures in relation to placement always clarify the quality of education as well as the quality of care in these establishments through examination of recent inspection reports and/or visits by education and care staff. Given the high cost of residential special schools, it is essential that ECS agrees which external organisations make the best value whilst also providing high quality integrated care and education.

ECS should examine its decision-making structures to ensure they always involve representatives of both care and education in agreeing high quality best value placements which maximise attainment for looked after children and young people.

Recommendation 3

Work closely with speech and language therapists to ensure early identification of children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and through more focused timely joint intervention, improve their attainment particularly in literacy.

(This recommendation should be read in conjunction with the report on the recent review undertaken by ECS and the Speech and Language service)

Since most learning involves reliance on communication skills, children with delayed or disordered language start pre-school/school at a significant disadvantage. The 2007 I CAN report 'The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication: Scotland edition', quotes frightening statistics showing links between early communication difficulties and low attainment which exacerbate as the child progresses through school. In turn lack of educational success and poor self esteem frequently lead to emotional and behavioural difficulties and reduced life chances. Lack of communication skills are a contributing factor in a young person not attending education or training, post 16. During the review of the primary SfL service it was clear that where SfL teachers worked closely with speech and language therapists (SALTs) and had a very good understanding of the nature of SLCN, pupils' needs were more effectively met.

Currently, there does not exist a service-wide joint approach to early SLCN screening which can identify children who have either delayed, impoverished and possibly transient difficulties or those who have specific impairment such as a phonological disorder. Whilst the specific report on communication provides details of broader proposed improvements, there is an identified gap in provision for children with SLCN which this report wishes to highlight. Children with phonological impairment or severe delay (possibly but not necessarily due to impoverished backgrounds) or language disorder find the acquisition of literacy well nigh impossible and certainly very frustrating. Without specific early intervention a child with significant communication difficulty will fall behind peers in listening, talking and reading and writing. They are also likely to lose confidence in all aspects of learning. There are several examples of very successful provisions in Scotland where SALTs and SfL teachers and assistants, trained in SLCN, work together at the P1-P3 stages and earlier to provide very specific approaches to remove these barriers to children's learning and ensure success in literacy attainment. ECS should consider how to reallocate one FTE SfL teacher and assistant and agree with the SALT service how they might work together to provide focused support, in one school in the first instance, for children with the most significant communication difficulties.

Recommendation 4

⁷ Details of this development are contained in Section 3 (Level 3 provision) of the ASN review report.

Continue to maximise the most inclusive settings/provision for each young person and ensure equity of provision.

ECS is a leader in Scotland to the extent to which it has responded to the 'presumption of mainstreaming', in line with research (by Riddell in 2001) which shows the pattern of 'high mainstreaming in outlying areas' (such as Perth and Kinross) and 'low mainstreaming in cities'. In addition, the Authority has worked with parent groups, including Parent to Parent, in empowering parents to make informed decisions about their children's future. Many parents in Perth and Kinross have chosen mainstream schools as their preferred option. ECS's considerable Investment in Learning (IIL) through its new build community campus schools made very careful consideration at the design stages of the nature of Support for Pupil provision so that it could be flexible and responsive and meet the needs of a broader population without stigma. Within the 6 integrated community campuses in which each school has its place, there will also be located social workers, adult care workers and a library with extended opening hours, thus broadening access to social care and learning facilities to a wider community.

The annual audit of needs ensures equitable provision of SfL assistants, particularly in primary schools. However, the audit does not similarly take account of the allocation of SfL teachers in either primary or secondary schools. In order that ECS ensures better equity of additional support for learning, senior managers should agree a formula for SfL *teachers* across primary and secondary schools which is based on deprivation factors, issues of rurality and needs of children. ECS is committed to support its staff to improve practice in relation to meeting the wide range of needs, including those which cannot be wholly met in mainstream schools. It is strongly advised that the extended provision planned for pupils at Level 3, described in a previous recommendation maintain the closest links with mainstream schools to ensure there always remain (equal) opportunities for pupils to return to mainstream provision on a full-time basis whenever possible. The return, if appropriate, to local provision for pupils who are cared for and educated in residential special schools, may be more possible through the reconfigured provision.

Recommendation 5

Continue to work in close partnership with all agencies and parents, in order to meet the needs of all children and particularly the most vulnerable through joint training and further development of integrated structures.

In order to increase efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, as stated in the Scottish Government Efficiency Agenda, Perth and Kinross Council is committed to delivering a more efficient government. ECS engages with this agenda through working as an integrated service as well as working in close partnership with shared services initiatives. In recent years there has been a growing awareness that children's needs encompass their social, emotional and health needs as well as their learning needs. Schools are well placed to meet some of these needs. However, in order to meet the holistic needs of each pupil, particularly the most vulnerable, the skills and expertise of a range of professionals are essential. As mentioned in the previous recommendation, the development of Integrated Community Campuses was a key element within the overall national strategy to raise young people's achievements and improve social inclusion in Scotland. It was based on a clear recognition of the important relationship between educational achievement, attainment, health and socio-economic factors, and the consequent need for the more integrated delivery of associated services. ECS has in place many structures which promote the integration of services. It now needs to disseminate existing good practice through joint training, continue to try to engage with Health services **particularly in relation to mental health needs**, and clarify roles and responsibilities of partners to maximise impact on pupils. ECS should continue to work closely with parents to consolidate the culture of trust and confidence.

Recommendation 6

Reconfigure the management structure for support for pupils at authority level so that it supports and monitors best practice in line with the implications arising from the ASL Act to ensure the needs of all pupils, including the most vulnerable, are very effectively met.

Supporting schools to take forward the broader concept of additional support needs has challenged senior managers at all levels across Scotland. The work undertaken by the ECS Service Manager (Support for Children and Young People) in relation to responding to the new legislative issues and potential Tribunal Hearings borne of the ASL Act, has been of a very high calibre. Significant training has been delivered to schools to ensure they are clear about expectations to do with ASL Act. However, there is increased research and national advice about the needs of specific groups of children such as those with dyslexia, early communication difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder,

motor learning difficulties, mental health needs, school phobia and challenging behaviour. In the context of the presumption of mainstreaming this stream of national guidance requires ECS to ensure potentially all practitioners have knowledge and skills to meet these needs. The management structure for ASN consists of one service manager and four pupil co-ordinators. Currently, as a result of the implications of the ASL Act and the need for the ECS to ensure schools adhered to efficient procedures, the remits of the co-ordinators are more focused on individual pupils and Levels of Assessment and Intervention rather than on whole service strategic improvement and support for continuously improving, up-to-date practice. The review strongly recommends that the management structure is re-configured to take account of the increased remit of this important section of education services. The focus must now move to supporting and monitoring the practice of all (school) staff and Level 3 staff who are involved in supporting pupils, including those who require significant additional support. Continued promotion of integrated practice within and beyond ECS must also be a priority.

Budgetary Considerations

Across Scotland, Councils are dealing with escalating costs which are the consequence of the presumption of mainstreaming. The report, *Moving to Mainstream* written in 2003 by Audit Scotland in partnership with HMIE, stated the following: 'The increase in the number of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools will lead to increased expenditure, due to:

- the capital cost of making schools more accessible
- the transitional costs of rationalisation of the school estate (sometimes offset by capital receipts)
- the revenue costs (largely staffing and training) of more pupils with SEN in mainstream schools
- providing NHS therapy services to a greater number of schools.'

The predicted cost of mainstreaming across Scotland was £121 million.

ECS have undertaken this ASN review to ensure that children and young people with additional support needs have their needs effectively met within a budgetary framework which is realistic and tightly managed. Throughout the review, close attention was paid to best value.

The review has shown the high degree of effective and efficient mainstreaming in Perth and Kinross's schools; this mainstreaming often due to parental choice. The complexity of needs of pupils with additional support needs in mainstream schools also continues to increase, thus challenging all staff. As predicted by the Audit Scotland report, this has involved considerable additional costs in terms of staffing and training. Nevertheless the ASN budget in Perth and Kinross has been managed very effectively and has not increased.

The review highlighted the range of provision, including the excellent new school, Fairview, for children with disability. However, a similar range of provision does not exist for children who present with challenging behaviour or school phobia. The needs of these children are such that they require considerable additional support.

The changed nature of the service from the narrower 'special educational needs' to the broader concept 'additional support needs' requires a different management structure to ensure school and Level 3 staff are supported and managed to meet needs effectively.

The review cannot readily identify specific areas for **savings**. However, **efficiency** savings and possible recycling of existing finance, can best be made by:

- ensuring current arrangements for making external care and education placements deliver best value in terms of quality of placement, improved outcomes for children and young people, and cost effectiveness
- reviewing the additional resources provided to secondary schools over and above the core staffing standard and re-investing these resources to provide appropriate Level 3 provision for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs
- reviewing the location, function and deployment of Support for Learning teams in primary and secondary schools

Appendix 1

Section 15 of the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000*: 'presumption of mainstreaming'

The exceptions to this are as follows:

- when education in a school other than a special school would not be suited to the ability or the aptitude of the child;
- placement in mainstream would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom the child is being educated; or
- would result in unreasonable public expenditure.

In addition, Education authorities have to take account of parents' views in reaching a decision about a placement, and **parents have the right of appeal** if they disagree with the placement proposed by the authority.