



## **How can we best meet the needs of our SEND learners Oct 19'**

### **Background**

Following the school's Ofsted report in March 2018 where the school was judged to be 'Requires Improvement' in all areas, the school's leadership, including Governors and the School Improvement Adviser, started the process of improving SEND provision.

On the face of it, this might not have been the first place people would have looked to make changes. The school's SEND provision had a good reputation in the local area and was well thought of by the local authority. The school was a case study for the Local Authority on best practice. The SENCo was experienced and had supported other schools in their provision for SEND. SEND children made above expected progress against similar children in nationally published assessments.

However, on closer inspection there were elements of the practice that meant that it needed to change.

- Our rationale for SEND Provision had become unclear and practice had become stuck in a cycle where what we did for SEND children was what we had done the previous year, even if the children required something new.
- The overall cost of the SEND provision for the school had outgrown the overall income acquired through SEND need. The SEND/inclusion team had grown to include Nurture Workers, 1:1 Teaching Assistants and in 2018-19 the deficit for SEND was £50,000 and through wage inflation this figure was set to grow to £90,000 and £140,000 in the following years.
- The model that the school employed in using Teaching Assistants was not in line with the idea of best practice. Children who were awarded funding for their needs would primarily be given a 1:1 Teaching Assistant, often leading to dependency and a lack of independence on the part of the child and a misguided understanding of the role from staff, including teachers.
- This misunderstanding included teachers who believed that they had a right to have a teaching assistant in their classroom fulltime in order for them to deal effectively with the SEND children.
- There was an over use of Interventions meaning that some children would not have access to the majority of WAVE 1 teaching throughout the week. Furthermore the Interventions staff were trained to run lead the provision; children were found to match the interventions rather than the other way around.



- There was an over identification of children on the SEND register. In many cases this was so that the school could monitor the child's progress to see whether early delays were connected to the term of birth, EAL understanding or settling in to school rather than a SEND need. In most year groups between 30% and 40% of the cohort was identified leading to a number of issues, such as;
  - SENCo workload – having this number of children on the SEND register means that there is an almost continuous cycle of assess, plan, do, review meetings that means that there is very little time to make a difference in the classroom
  - Teacher workload – having between 8 and 12 children in your class whom you are recording assessments on BSquared for becomes time consuming, especially when you might not see the child for the majority of the week.
  - Lowered expectations for the identified children. As demonstrated by the fact that our SEND children would either be in-line or above the local average and this was seen as a strength. However, if across the school 40 of these children were mis-identified then their attainment is not being compared with comparable children and therefore they are underperforming.
  - *It is important to note that SEND attainment is likely to fall in this improvement model as a result of non-SEND children being removed.*
  - Children identified as SEND being taught primarily in interventions or supported in class by the TAs. If these children were the ones who were initially put on the SEND register to monitor in EYFS or Yr1 but in fact were just taking their time to be school ready then a system that intervened them for several years would lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy of under-achievement.

In October 2018, following advice from the School Improvement Adviser and having discussed the proposals with the Governing Body, several changes were made to SEND provision.

The first change was to the Rationale behind the school's SEND provision.

***That all children, regardless of whether they have SEND or not, deserve to have access to the broadest and deepest possible curriculum for as long as they possibly can.***

This rationale is in line with the Code of Practice for SEND and the new Ofsted Inspection Framework.



To ensure that these changes were appropriate and effective an SEND review was arranged and took place in February 2019. Patrick Kelly visiting the school on February 28<sup>th</sup> and his report is included in appendix 1.

As part of that review, Patrick advised that the staffing structure in place should be reviewed to ensure that the school made the most of the Teaching Assistants it had so as to support the SEND children effectively.

What follows in this report is the result of a number of meetings between the SLT, Governors, School Improvement Adviser and Patrick Kelly. It proposes the way the school will organise and deploy its support staff in order to secure the best possible outcomes for children with SEND.



## Capacity

Over the last 12 months the number of children on the SEND register has fallen from 34% of the school's cohort to 25%.

This new figure is in line with similar sized schools in similar context to us in South Leeds and in the view of local SEND experts who helped stress-test these proposals, more reflective of the scale of need within the school.

*It is important to note that the children removed from the SEND register have not been forgotten. Their needs are being met with differentiated tasks in QFT and they are a separate group discussed at pupil progress meetings.*

While there is the potential for this figure to change over a long period of time, the information the school currently has with regards to its Reception and Nursery intakes is that this figure is likely to remain constant over the next few years.

The most significant needs the school must provide for are:

- **Communication and Interaction** – especially on entry to EYFS which can contribute to children's challenging behaviour
  - The school receives £XX,XXX to support this need
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health** – which presents itself through either:
  - challenging behaviour
  - low self-esteem and anxiety often seen in Upper School
    - The school receives £XX,XXX to support this need
- **Sensory and/or Physical Needs** – the school has several children with significant medical conditions that require support during the school day
  - The school receives £XX,XXX to support this need
- **Cognition and Learning** – there are a number of children with specific cognitive needs that have been identified and are addressed through specific programs
  - The school receives £XX,XXX to support this need

While the majority of these needs have always been there, the school has seen a significant rise in the number of children with SEMH needs over the last 2 years. This coincides with the rise in the number of fixed-term exclusions and repeat FT exclusions for a small group of children whose behaviour is very disruptive and challenging.

At the time of working with the different partners on this proposal, the number of children with an EHCP was 8 with the school working on 4 or 5 more referrals.



Although when comparing this information against the national perspective, caution should be applied as many of our children received funding through Leeds' unique FFI funding scheme. This has meant we have only applied for EHCPs where it is our belief that the child requires specialist provision that the school can't provide.

Based on the children that we have in school, there are several children who have wholly individualised curriculums. This includes 8 children who attend 'Restorative Learning'. This is specialised provision for children with SEMH needs that present through challenging behaviour which puts other children at risk of physical harm and/or severe disruption to their learning.

Taking into account the levels of need in the school, any revised model would require access to a high level of expertise in the following areas:

### **Communication and Interaction**

A Speech and Language practitioner

*School currently has an SLA with the NHS for a L7 SALT Therapist from the NHS 2 days a week*

An ASD practitioner

*School currently has a member of staff who has undertaken Level 4 Autism Training*

### **Social, Emotional and Mental Health**

A SEMH practitioner

A Behaviour practitioner

*School currently does not have someone who is an SEMH or Behaviour practitioner but does have two HLTAs who have significant experience in SILC provision*

Educational Psychologist

*School currently has an SLA with Leeds City Council to pay for 18 sessions of Educational Psychologist*

### **Cognition and Learning**

A SpLD practitioner

*School currently has a member of staff who is trained to diagnose and support children with Dyslexia*



## **Finance**

The school currently receives £???,?? towards meeting the needs of the children on roll with SEND. This figure is the highest of any primary school in Leeds and equivalent to the funding received by most secondary schools.

This figure has remained relatively stable and is further evidence that the school had become very successful in using the SENCo, SEND Assistant and outside agencies such as SALT and Ed Psych to gather evidence to make successful FFI referrals. However, this meant support was office based and stuck in this cycle of evidence gathering and review, rather than in class.

*It is important to note that this figure is likely to fall in this model as the number of children identified as SEND falls. However, it will remain relatively high in comparison to other primary schools as the school has a high level of need within the accurately identified 25% of the school cohort.*

## **Principles around Support Staff Deployment from January 2020**

From April 2020 the deployment of Support Staff will be taken with these guiding principles in mind:

- Support Staff deployment decisions are taken at an SLT level using the SENCo's end of year SEND report as a basis for all discussions.
- Teachers will need to provide SLT evidence of what they intend to use their Support Staff for. This will be monitored by the AHTs and the SENCo and discussed in Pupil Progress Meetings to ensure that children make good progress.
- Specific Interventions should be sought to meet the needs of children with SEND following Quality Assurance from SLT and SENCo.



## **Best Practice Alignment**

Given what we know about best practice the new structure needs to have:

### Leadership

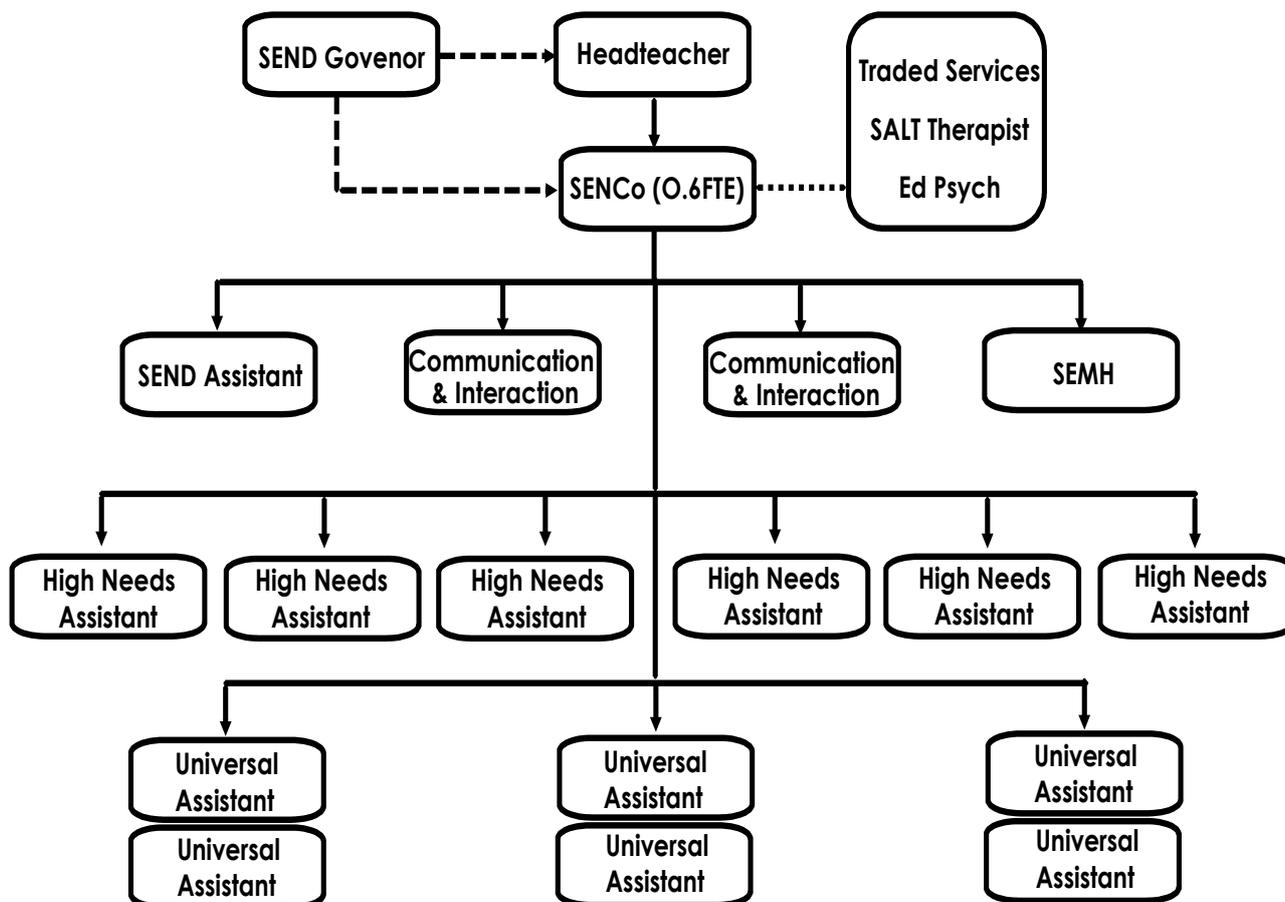
- Allow the SEND governor to fulfil their duties outlined in the SEND code of practice.
- Allow the SENCo, SEND Assistant and outside agencies such as SALT and Ed Psych to support teachers in classrooms. Identifying children and working together to find the best ways of meeting their needs in whole class teaching.
- Pass the responsibility for meeting the needs of all the children in each class to the teacher rather than either the SENCo or the TA.

### Staff Deployment

- Use Teaching Assistants sparingly to provide in-class support, especially 1:1 support.
- Ensure that Teaching Assistants see themselves as professional and have high expectations of their role through rigorous performance management and quality assurance. This includes:
  - having a higher criteria for qualifications when applying for the role and trying to recruit graduates who are interested in a career in education.
  - being able to see career pathways with rates of pay that will reflect their expertise.
  - some Teaching Assistants have whole school responsibilities for a given areas of SEND.
  - access to training so that they have the skills required to do their role with the minimum qualification for Teaching Assistants supporting children being TA level 3.
  - training to deliver a range of high quality interventions aimed at meeting the needs of specific children.
  - induction processes for TAs that mean they are well prepared for the demands of the role and understand the professional nature of the support we require.
- Emphasise the importance of QFT in meeting the needs of all the children in the class.



**Proposed SEND Staffing Structure for KS1 and KS2 – Post January 2020**



**Assumptions about the proposed model**

- The deployment of Universal Assistants (Paid at L2 TA) and High Needs Assistants (Paid at L3 TA) in EYFS will continue as now and be lead by the needs of the children in the class and minimum legal ratios.
- The line management structure will be such that in this new model the SENCo will be managed by the Headteacher with accountability to the Governors via the SEND Governor.
- The SENCo will line manage the SEND Assistant, Communication and Interaction Specialists (EYFS/KS1 and KS2) and SEMH Specialist who will be paid as HLTAs.
- The SENCo (supported by the SEND Assistant) will line manage the High Needs Assistants.
- The SENCo alongside the Assistant Headteachers will line manage the Universal Assistants (2 per phase) so that their day to day practice supporting teachers is improved by the AHT and SEND support by the SENCo.



## **Journey from current position to new structure**

In order to move from the school's current position to the new model we need to carefully manage the change. There needs to be:

### Staff and Governor Buy-In

- Governor meetings where Martin and Patrick Kelly present the new model and explain the benefits and necessity to modernise provision.
- Staff meetings where Gov's and Patrick Kelly attend in order to outline the changes that will be occurring over the next term and the reasons for these. During these meetings staff will have the chance to ask questions of the SLT, Gov's or Patrick Kelly so that they can be assured that the plan is linked to best practice and has been stress-tested.

### Training

- Training for the Teachers on how to meet the diverse needs of all the children in their class during QFT. This would include a process of teachers becoming used to fewer TAs in class or even no TAs at all.
- Training for the Teaching Assistants on how to support middle and higher attaining children during QFT so that teachers are able to support SEND and LA children while TAs support the rest of the class.
- Training for the Teaching Assistants on specific Interventions that will meet the needs of children identified on the school's provision map.

### Selection process managed by our HR Company:

- Following consultation with the HR Company and the Trade Unions, there will be a process where some staff will want to put themselves forward for the various roles in the school's staffing structure.
- As part of this process there will need to be less members of support staff. This reduction needs to be carefully managed.
- Training for the Teaching Assistants who have been given roles higher than they are currently on the school's staffing structure.

### Inductions, Job Descriptions and Performance Management

- Following the new structure being put in place, new job descriptions will need to be written to clearly articulate the new roles within this model. With regards to the HLTA specialist roles, these would be something new to the school so we might use existing model JDs from LCC or an exemplar school.
- Robust performance management targets and line management would also need to be established in order to ensure that all staff were in line with the new model and old procedures which were not effective are not reused.



## Communication with Parents of SEND children

- Parents of children who are directly impacted by the change in model should be contacted at the earliest possibility and offered the chance to attend a Coffee Morning.
- During the Coffee Morning SLT and Gov's explain the school's decisions and the positive or neutral impact it will have on their child's learning and experience in school.
- Furthermore, on successful transition from the old model to this model there will need to be updates made to the school's SEND Policy and the SEND Information Report and Local Offer to clearly articulate the new SEND ethos.

## Quality Assurance

- Once established, there needs to be robust quality assurance of standards of QFT, Teaching Assistant support and Intervention to ensure that the children's outcomes are improved by these changes.