

## The Highland Council

### Education, Children and Adult Services Committee 27 August 2015

Agenda Item	17.
Report No	ECAS 63/15

## Provision for Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs in Ross-shire

### Report by the Director of Care and Learning

#### Summary

The ASN Review completed in May 2014 made several recommendations that were specific to pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs (SEBN). This included recommendations that: all Areas should have an SEBN support base with an outreach service; there should be a greater level of coordination of the range of SEBN supports and specialist services; this should be linked to a structured training programme; and an offsite Intensive Support and Vocational Centre should be established for the Mid Area, where currently no such provision exists. (Recommendations 11-16)

[www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/id/10913/additional\\_support\\_needs\\_review\\_paper](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/id/10913/additional_support_needs_review_paper)

This Committee Report outlines the progress being made on these recommendations, with a specific focus on the Mid Area.

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Currently there are 1823 pupils recorded as having Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) in Highland schools. Research tells us that pupils with SEBN have poorer academic outcomes and reduced life chances as a result. They are less likely to move into positive destinations post-school and more likely to experience mental health issues and relationship breakdown.
- 1.2 Promoting positive relationships and maintaining peaceful and positive learning environments is the most effective preventative measure for both supporting individual pupils with SEBN and also reducing potential disruption to their learning. Early and staged intervention provides the framework for additional support where behaviour, for whatever reason, becomes more challenging and while largely this support will be provided within the context of a mainstream school, some pupils benefit from having time out of the classroom or school, having some of their education provided within a school based nurture group or specialist provision off the school campus.
- 1.3 Training opportunities for school staff, interventions from support staff or specialist services and strategies employed by off-site facilities, are all used to good effect to benefit pupils with SEBN. However, many interventions and supports were established some time ago and until recently have been managed and deployed at different levels and by different services.
- 1.4 The restructuring that has taken place over the past year with the creation of the Care and Learning Service has provided an Area ASN management structure that

can now ensure greater integration of the range of supports for pupils with SEBN, linking those used within the classroom, those used to develop a whole school approach and in relation to the use of specialist services and offsite provisions.

- 1.5 This is in line with national guidance to promote the development of a flexible support service, able to step up and step down the levels of support and intervention, appropriate to the needs of the individual child/young person, integrated within a holistic view of the child and family, (Scottish Government 2013).
- 1.6 Consultations carried out as part of the ASN Review mirrored this requirement for a local service that integrates all levels of support, promotes inclusion and re-integration and maximises opportunities for young people with SEBN who are at risk of academic failure, disengaging from education or offending in the community. This review also highlighted the variation in practice and in resource across Highland and recommended the creation of an off-site vocational provision in the Mid Area, similar to those already in existence in the South (The Bridge), the North (Airport House) and the West (An Cala).

## **2 Current Level of Need**

- 2.1 Of the 1823 pupils recorded as having Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) in Highland schools, 460 attend schools in the Mid Area. 65 pupils within this group have been assessed to have significant levels of need (level 3 needs) and 28 require substantial levels of support from specialist services and provisions for most of their time in school (level 4 needs). In addition, currently 6 young people from the Mid Area attend residential schools out-with the Highland Council area. There is therefore a need for a range of provision in the Mid to support pupils at different ages to develop greater levels of emotional literacy, self-regulation and positive relationships.
- 2.2 The prime aim of redesigning services for pupils with SEBN is, as far as possible, to retain our young people within the support structures of the Highland Council and to develop a range of supports and provisions which form part of an integrated service that can meet the range of needs presented by pupils with SEBN. It is hoped therefore that by redesigning the range of services in the Mid Area, better outcomes can be achieved for pupils with SEBN.

## **3. Current Specialist Provision**

- 3.1 Support for pupils with SEBN starts with the general support provided by teachers, Pupil Support Assistants and Children Service Workers in schools. Ensuring staff have a good awareness of effective interventions to support pupils is therefore a pre-requisite for this to be successful. To address need at all levels, there has been a significant focus placed on support for pupils with SEBN within the ASN Training Strategy. The emphasis within the training strategy is on emotional literacy, resilience and promoting positive relationships, which is key to preventing difficulties arising in the first place or escalating once they have presented. However training is also provided on meeting higher level needs including mental health issues and managing challenging behaviour.
- 3.2 When needs increase, most secondary schools have a base, a special unit or room that can be used to provide respite or a safe place for pupils to have 'time out' of

the curriculum or away from social pressures that they may find difficult to manage. Some primary schools have established nurture bases to serve a similar purpose and provide more intensive support in school. In the mid, there are currently 3 nurture provisions, with a further provision being established in session 2015/16. These support a small number of pupils (generally 6-8 at any one time) and are usually focused on the early stages.

- 3.3 External support services provide specialist assessment, consultation and intervention where required. This includes the Educational Psychology Service, Primary Mental Health Worker Service, the Promoting Positive Relationship Team and Family Teams who work closely with all schools. In addition, in the Mid Area there are 2.6 Peripatetic Pupil Support Teachers who work across the Area providing tuition within the community to pupils who for a variety of reasons are unable to maintain school attendance.
- 3.4 When needs become more significant and even with additional support, can not be supported in school, a different kind of provision may be required, off the school site and in a more specialised setting. To address this type of need, across Highland there are offsite vocational provisions in the North, West and the South. In the Mid Area Bridgend Centre provides an off-site support and tuition base for up to 20 secondary aged pupils who have been experiencing difficulty in school or who have been excluded from school. They attend on a part time basis and at any one time, most of these young people are working on re-integrating back into their mainstream school. While this provision maintains a link with the curriculum for the pupils who attend, the building itself is in a poor state of repair and it does not currently provide much outreach support or vocational training to support pupils close to school leaving.
- 3.5 The Head Teacher of Black Isle Education Centre (BIEC) has been seconded into a post to support the Mid Area Management Team to consider an additional provision in the Area, providing a vocational focus for those young people who are 14+ for whom a more individualised approach may be required. He is also supporting the process of identifying the range of supports and best practice in the Area and has been engaged in focused discussions with school staff and groups of young people to identify the specific requirements for the Mid. In addition, the ASN Manager in the Mid will undertake a training audit early in session 2015/16 to identify the specific training needs of staff, especially support staff (Pupil Support Assistants), who may feel more vulnerable in their roles supporting some pupils who present with SEBN.

#### **4 Black Isle Education Centre**

- 4.1 As part of the work of reviewing SEBN provision, further discussion has taken place regarding the role of Black Isle Education Centre. Currently the Centre operates as a special school for a very small number of pupils with SEBN. Extensive work has been carried out over a number of years to consider the future of the Centre and a paper has been provided for local members outlining an alternative use for the provision, enabling support to be provided on a flexible basis to a larger number of pupils in the Inner Moray Firth area, who would remain on the role of their local school, while accessing specific activities and/or specialist outreach from Black Isle Education Centre.
- 4.2 Over the past 3 years BIEC has been undergoing several significant changes to

the service delivery model. The drivers for these changes have been noted in previous documentation on BIEC namely; Educational Scotland Inspection report (May 2011), Educational Scotland follow up Inspection report in (January 2013), Educational Scotland continuing engagement Inspection letter in (November 2013). Challenges within the staff team and changes to the staffing levels have also provided opportunities for redesign.

- 4.3 As well as the practical drivers for change, there have been strategic drivers from emerging research on brain development, attachment theory and building positive relationships, that has shaped the development of support services for pupils in SEBN and professional development across Highland.
- 4.4 As a school, BIEC can provide full time placements for a maximum of 10-12 pupils. However in recent years BIEC has been developing a more flexible approach to supporting pupils and although the number of pupils that staff from BIEC have been supporting has been steadily increasing, by January 2016 there will be no pupils on roll. In its current function, 22 pupils receive a service (only 2 actually enrolled in the 'school') and depending on the size of the groups supported through outreach, it is envisaged that up to 30 pupils with SEBN may be accommodated within the current staffing complement, with a more flexible resource allowing for a greater number receiving support.
- 4.5 There is recognition that the current condition of many of the buildings on site at BIEC are in a very poor state and indeed many are no longer fit-for-purpose. The overall site and its location on the Black Isle however offers many opportunities and benefits for SEBN support, currently unavailable elsewhere in the inner Moray Firth Area. Although the primary focus of BIEC would always be for pupils with SEBN, the site could also offer more universal support for pupils engaging in Bushcraft, Eco-Schools work, Sustainability, Rural Education etc, so that the centre could be viewed much more widely than just somewhere pupils presenting with challenging behaviour are 'sent'.
- 4.6 There have been tensions in the past between different models of service delivery at BIEC, with formal inspection reports emphasising the need to offer to pupils a full curricular experience, while the priority as an SEBN provision has been to build positive relationships, develop greater levels of emotional literacy and develop a more robust and positive self-esteem. As it is a registered school in Highland, Education Scotland Inspectors have focused on the more academic aspects and educational attainment and while it is recognised that this is essential for all pupils, for those with SEBN, the more personal developments are generally better achieved through the delivery of an individualised, activity based curriculum, providing the basis from which to be able to re-engage with more standard curricular experiences and to integrate and be fully included socially within a school and community.
- 4.7 These differing views have been considered in various discussions over a long period of time. BIEC has worked well for pupils who have attended in the past, many moving on to sustain positive destinations and benefit as adults from their special school experience and the recognised expertise of the staff who have supported them. However as a school, BIEC can only ever provide a service to a limited number of pupils (max 10-12) and has limited flexibility in the support that could be given more widely. It is therefore recommended to commence a period of statutory consultation to close BIEC as a school and to create a new, purpose built

facility on-site, to meet the needs of a larger number of pupils on a part time basis, supporting them to maintain their mainstream placements through a more flexible approach to education and support.

## **5 Summary**

- 5.1 There are significant numbers of pupils in Highland schools identified as having social, emotional and behavioural needs. The varying levels and types of need presented by this group of pupils requires a range of different interventions and provisions. Some of these are available in the Mid Area already, some exist but require to be redesigned to become more fit for purpose and others are not currently available and require to be created to meet the identified local need.
- 5.2 In large part the needs of pupils are met in schools. To support staff in this, a specific focus of the ASN Training Strategy is aimed at raising awareness of the needs of such pupils and to provide staff with appropriate knowledge and skill to be able to appropriately support pupils with SEBN and to prevent escalation of negative behaviours in more challenging situations. A further training audit will be undertaken by the Area ASN Managers early in session 2015-16 to ensure that staff are able to identify particular training needs that may not be covered within this strategy.
- 5.3 While there are a range of provisions providing support within and out-with schools, these vary across Highland. Guidance has been created to support the development of Nurture Groups in schools and further nurture provision has been recommended as a means to support pupils in the early stages of school in particular. The number of primary schools with nurture provision in the Mid Area is increasing and it is expected that this growth will continue in line with the guidance provided to schools.
- 5.4 Currently off-site vocational centres exist in the North, West and South Areas and there is a need for this type of provision in the Mid also, to provide support to pupils in the latter stages of secondary school, who may be at risk of disengaging from education, with limited vocational skills. Focusing on employability with this group will help them move into and sustain positive post-school destinations. Such a provision would enable partnership working between local colleges and employers, to bridge the gap from school to employment.
- 5.5 Bridgend Centre currently provides academic support for secondary aged pupils. This is an important service however could be provided as part of the new Off-site Intensive Support and Vocational Centre or based within one of the new-build schools planned in the Mid.
- 5.6 To date BIEC has provided additional support for a small number of pupils in the inner Moray Firth. As a school, this support has stood alone, rather than being integrated with other resources. It is now proposed to redesign the role of BIEC and for it to provide both off-site support and outreach / training to complement the range of other resources in the Mid. Some of the preliminary work to support this change has been completed and further outreach will commence in session 2015-16. With the right staff outdoor education has been proven to provide an effective intervention to enhance social skills. The geography of the Highlands and the setting of BIEC provides a huge range of settings where outdoor education can be provided. If members are in agreement with this proposal, the change of use will be

fully implemented within the time frame required for the Statutory Consultation.

- 5.7 There are currently 2.6 pupil support teachers providing tuition within the community for pupils who are struggling to attend school in the Mid Area. They have heavy caseloads and there is a continuing need for this type of outreach support. Ideally these staff should be integrated into a team where they can receive support and their managers can be assured that their practice is in line with accepted best practice. Ideally therefore this service would be included within the various off-site and on-site provisions so that staff can work flexibly within environments to meet individual needs. It is therefore proposed to integrate all SEBN provision the Mid, during session 2015-16, under the management of the ASN Manager and with professional leadership from the Coordinator for Promoting Positive Relationships and for this model to be mirrored in all 4 Areas in Highland.
- 5.8 Having a range of resources and provisions can be seen as a good thing in itself, however to make the most of these services and to ensure appropriately targeted, quality experiences for individual pupils, there is a need to coordinate what is available, help new initiatives get off the ground and share training. In this respect, in each Area the ASN Manager has a critical role in being pro-active in maintaining and developing a highly skilled, enthusiastic staff team, committed to working with pupils with SEBN.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Resources**

- 6.1.1 The work being undertaken in relation to SEBN provision in the Mid and also in relation to BIEC will require capital spending. At this stage there are no specific costings available, although the possible future spend on BIEC has been highlighted within the Capital programme and work is ongoing with both projects to provide indicative costs as soon as possible.

### **6.2 Legal and Equalities**

- 6.2.1 Schools and Local Authorities have a legal duty within the ASL Legislation to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs. In relation to pupils with SEBN, this will include the level of support and differentiation within schools, the appropriate use of resources and adjustments and adaptations to the way some pupils may receive their full entitlement to an education.
- 6.2.2 This aspect of work was initiated within the ASN review to also ensure that the Council's equalities duties are fully met and to consider any relevant changes in relation to meeting additional support needs that would further ensure that any pupil, family member or staff member within a Highland school with a protected characteristic, would be treated equally and fairly.

### **6.3 Climate Change/Carbon Clever**

- 6.3.1 There are no implications for climate change/carbon clever.

## **6.4 Risk**

- 6.4.1 There is a commitment from the ASN Improvement Group to continue to monitor the outcomes for children and young people with SEBN. Evidence from self-evaluations would suggest that we are not consistently meeting our legal duties to provide an 'adequate and efficient' education for a group of children and young people with SEBN and that practice is inconsistent across Highland.
- 6.4.2 There is a risk to staff supporting pupils who present with challenging behaviours that we are addressing through a greater focus on appropriate training to enhance their skills in de-escalating situations and keeping both themselves and their pupils safe.

## **6.5 Gaelic**

- 6.5.1 There are no specific implications, although Pupils in GME will be equally supported by the improvements in service delivery.

## **7 Recommendation**

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the focus on SEBN within the ASN Review and to agree the following recommendations:
- the creation of an Intensive Support and Vocational Centre in the mid to support pupils aged 14+;
  - the commencement of a Statutory Consultation to close BIEC as a school;
  - the re-design of provision at BIEC to create a more flexible service on a part time basis to a wider number of pupils through on-site teaching and support and outreach to schools;
  - ASN Managers to ensure a greater level of integration between all levels of SEBN provision in each Area and provide coordination of support;
  - ensure closer working between Area ASN Managers and the SEBN professional lead, the Promoting Positive Relationships Coordinator.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 3 August 2015

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