

# **CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**15<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION – A.THOMAS**

### **SECTION B – MATTER FOR INFORMATION**

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: All**

#### **Support for Behaviour Management in Schools in Neath Port Talbot**

##### **Purpose of Report:**

To inform members about the progress in the new and updated framework for support for behaviour in schools in Neath Port Talbot (NPT).

##### **Background:**

A review of inclusion was commissioned by the Director of ELLLS in September 2013 to assist the Authority in understanding (a) how effective inclusion is in the County Borough (b) how prepared schools and the Authority are for anticipated changes to the statutory special educational needs framework and (c) whether the current model of service delivery in NPT is sustainable and fit for purpose.

The outcomes of the review were reported to members in March 2014 and in October 2014 members were provided with an update on progress with the implementation of the Inclusion Review Action Plan.

There are many examples of positive behaviour management in schools in the County Borough including the establishment of the peer mentoring professional learning community, the longstanding and effective use of SEAL, nurture, circle of friends and social stories, and the introduction of very effective solution focussed approaches. The Authority remains committed to the positive behaviour management support programme offered by Team Teach.

Notwithstanding the good practice in our schools, the inclusion review concluded that:

- There is no consistent, overall LA approach to positive behaviour management; schools have developed or adopted their own approaches to meet their own needs, with varying degrees of success and confidence
- Provision for behaviour is of variable quality resulting in too many exclusions from school
- The LA needs to develop, with its schools, and as a matter of urgency, a clear and consistent framework of support and provision
- High quality training provided or commissioned by the LA is vital to embed a consistent approach

Members were informed in October 2014 that insufficient progress had been made on those actions associated with improving behaviour and reducing exclusions in schools in NPT.

In primary schools, the number of fixed term exclusions increased in 2013/14 as did the number of pupils excluded and the number of days lost as a result of exclusion. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) accounted for 81% of the pupils in receipt of a fixed term exclusion from primary schools and they lost 86% of the total days as a result of exclusion.

Similarly in secondary schools, 86% of days lost to education as a result of fixed term exclusion were lost for pupils with ALN. 61% of the pupils who received a fixed term exclusion in secondary schools had ALN.

So far this academic year there have been 5 permanent exclusions from NPT schools, 4 from secondary schools and 1 from a primary school.

There is a wealth of evidence linking exclusion with academic underachievement (between 50-76% of permanently excluded children have significant literacy and numeracy difficulties), offending behaviour, limited ambition, homelessness and mental health problems. In 2007 (the latest year for which financial data is available) it was estimated that the aggregate cost to society of permanent exclusions from school is around £650 million.

To address the increase in exclusions in NPT the Head of Transformation seconded an educational psychologist, with considerable experience, knowledge and skills in supporting schools and pupils with behaviour difficulties, to:

- Determine the most suitable, evidence-based, outcome focussed, approaches to behaviour management for NPT schools and pupils at all key stages
- Develop a clear and consistent framework of support using readily available resources and materials
- Compile clear, accessible, comprehensive and easy to use guidance for schools with effective strategies for the management of behaviour
- Develop a strategy for the dissemination of the guidance to schools and
- Identify a fully costed, training strategy to embed the consistent approach

The project has had regard to:

- WG and other guidance on school behaviour policies, exclusion from schools and other relevant evidence based research reports
- The SEN Code of Practice for Wales and the proposed changes to the statutory framework
- NPT's Inclusion Review and the accompanying Action Plan and
- Relevant safeguarding and equalities legislation and guidance

The new document: "Understanding and supporting children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties" complements the structured continuum of support approved by members in June 2012. No amendment has been made to the Use of Reasonable Force to Restrain Pupils Policy presented to members at the same time.

The document is just the first stage of a new approach to LA support for schools in managing behaviour. It provides clear guidance to schools to assist in supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties but it will need to be accompanied by a consistent programme of training provided or commissioned by the local authority to ensure that the strategies suggested are widely understood and embedded in school practice.

In the first instance, the LA intends to launch a pilot in two clusters in a 3 phased approach. The first phase will be to use this guidance as part of a self-evaluation of behaviour management in the selected clusters to establish a consistency of approach. This will be followed by a training programme based on the needs identified in the self-evaluation exercise and the final phase will be

monitoring the outcomes. The Inclusion Review Action Group, comprising a range of stakeholders, will take a key role in the monitoring phase.

The guidance document may be updated in the light of lessons learned from the pilots.

Once the schools have been identified and the LA team has been put in place it is envisaged that the pilot will last for 4 months after which the approach will be rolled out to all remaining clusters on a rolling programme.

It is intended that the outcomes of the behaviour management programme and its impact on exclusions will be reported to members on an annual basis.

### **List of Background Papers**

Review of Inclusion in Neath Port Talbot: February 2014

Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in Neath Port Talbot

### **Officer Contact:**

Andrew Thomas

Head of Transformation

Email: [a.d.thomas@npt.gov](mailto:a.d.thomas@npt.gov)

Tel: 01639 763314