South Ayrshire

I am pleased to provide the response from South Ayrshire Council regarding the questions posed by the Education, Children and Young People Committee. Should you wish any further clarification please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Details on what parts of Additional Support for Learning provision are working well and what are not, and any reasons they can provide which might help to explain why aspects are working well or not.

South Ayrshire Council have invested heavily in the upskilling of staff in several areas which will impact positively on support for learning provision. The outreach nurture team has been created to support schools to develop whole school nurturing approaches. Schools have been supported in the creation of sensory spaces to support our young people in special schools and bases. Staff have access to regular training opportunities around de-escalation. In recent years we have brought our teams of school assistants together for training in this area. Our local authority is participating in a pilot of adaptive teaching approaches which will benefit all learners. Our South Ayrshire Reads team have completed training with all schools across the local authority to highlight and promote the science of reading and support schools with the development and approaches to reading. Our team of Educational Psychologists support all schools and have a team of 8 permanent staff. This team has increased in recent years and now offers a wide range of supports for mental health. Partnerships at strategic level are strong and the recent Children's Service Plan should further enhance partnership working to support our young people and families. The creation of our locality-based Family First model is helping to ensure young people can access support within their locality when they need it.

We are faced with an increasing number of young people with additional support needs and the challenges in supporting young people in their school is complicated. Our plan for training is strong and works well, however changes in workforce can impact significantly on the consistency of approaches and in the delivery of service. Our work with partners is strong in most areas, however this can be a challenge in certain areas and can impact negatively on the system.

What are the barriers to supporting this provision?

Our main barrier if the volume of need versus the resource and availability of skilled workforce.

Any examples of good practice in this area?

We have invested heavily in training of staff through support assistant induction programmes and the areas detailed above. We have dedicated teams within our peripatetic service who offer outreach support to young people through an authority wide referral process. Our outreach nurture provision has successfully supported young people to access the curriculum.

The Inclusion Monitoring Group oversees all referrals for support from peripatetic services. This allows the team to look for patterns and to maximise the support provided by the teams.

Our recent move to locality-based support ensures young people can access support within their local area and are not impacted by rurality.

How does the authority support good relationships with parents and young people, especially where there are disagreements around the provision of additional support for learning and reach collaborative agreement.

Our local authority has established a parent family forum. This forum meets once per term, with a different focus and location each term. This allows parents to network and to establish contacts with other parents who are experiencing similar situations. Our team with the family meetings takes place in schools and take the views of parents and carers on board. Our Child's plan offers parents the chance to share views and contribute to the process. Where there is disagreement about the level of support our schools and parents are supported by the involvement of the inclusion coordinator for the cluster who would provide a mediatory role, where appropriate. Where the issue is not resolved mediation services are used to support.

How many placing requests have been made over the last 5 years by parents or carers wishing that their children be education in a specialist Additional Needs (ASN) unit or school?

Refused	Granted
7	2

And how may requests have been made by parents or carers wishing their children to be educated in a mainstream setting as opposed to a specialist ASN setting. The committee would be grateful for the total numbers, along with numbers of requests refused and granted.

Refused	Granted
0	0

How does the authority ensure that parents and young people are aware of the rights to various remedies under the 2004 Act?

We ensure that parents are made aware of their rights in relation to placing requests, mediation and dispute resolution services and through information contained on the Council website and school handbooks.

The Council also ensures that information and contact details are available through the Enquire website and individual school websites.

School handbooks outline specific information on parental rights in relation to ASN.

Other ways we would ensure parents and young people were aware of the rights to remedies would be:
- Team with the Families meetings
- Meetings with Inclusion Coordinators
- Twitter – SAC inclusion

The Committee is aware that there can be variations in approaches to identification of ASN across local authorities and between primary and secondary schools. The committee would be grateful if you could briefly set out how you ensure that children's additional support needs are identified and SEEMIS records are updated to ensure accuracy of the data.

- Close involvement of Educational Psychologist, cluster support teachers, inclusion coordinators when identifying needs

- Management guidelines around categories for ASN have been created and shared with school staff.

- Our staged intervention guidelines have been updated following extensive collaboration with staff in schools.

- Pupil Support Coordinator meetings have focused heavily on our revised staged intervention guidelines.

- Quality assurance, ongoing monitoring and moderation of SEEMIS takes place between inclusion coordinators and individual schools.

- The central team moderation ASN Levels across the local authority each session and follow up with individual schools.

- Our school visit programme ensures a focus on fulfilment of statutory duties. The local authority has a planned programme of visits to all schools and centres. Information from these visits is moderated and used to inform next steps and priorities.

How does the authority ensure staff have adequate training on Additional Support for Learning Provision?

This is achieved in a number of ways:
- CLPL calendar for teaching and support staff
- Staff review and consultation to identify training needs
- Induction programme for school assistants
- Collaboration with partners to provide training

If parents/carers have a concern about the ASN provision in a mainstream school, what process can they follow to try and get it resolved?

Parents could access support through our team with the family process. If issues were not resolved the inclusion coordinator would contact the parent or carer. If this was a complaint the parent could follow the local authority complaints procedure.

Where the provision of ASN is not working in specific cases in schools, what can teachers do about that? Is there support that can be accessed? What happens if the matter cannot be resolved?

Teachers would approach the senior leadership team within the school in the first instance. The team would then be able to call upon support from a variety of areas within the local authority to review the ASN provision across the school. These supports may include:
- School inclusion coordinator
- Educational Psychologist Service
- Outreach nurture team
- South Ayrshire Reads Team
- South Ayrshire Learns Team

If the matter cannot be resolved or there are continuing concerns the case would be discussed by professionals involved with the school to ascertain the main barrier to achieving success. Should this be a query about the placement of a child, this would be reviewed through the Central Admissions Group. Where there are environmental factors contributing the case can be reviewed by the accessibility strategy group to look at adaptations to the setting. Other environmental factors can be assessed through the use of ecological assessments at school setting. Further training and support would be explored to support the member of staff or school.

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