

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on 28th November 2013

Report of the Interim Executive Director for Children and Young People

Electoral Division affected: All

Lancashire Early Intervention Strategy – Best Start Lancashire

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

This report provides an update on progress of the Best Start Lancashire Project.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement is asked to note the report and comment as appropriate.

Background and Advice

Best Start Lancashire (BSL) is an initiative delivered through children's centres to provide additional early support for children and their families between the ages of 4 and 7 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). The resources (£2.000m) to enable this innovative programme to be implemented in 2011/12 were created through stringent efficiencies. The County Council made a commitment allowing the programme to be continued in 2012/13 at the cost of a further £2.000m with £1.000m in 2013/14. The DfE funded Pupil Premium for schools, targeted at pupils eligible for Free School Meals, is expected to rise to over £1000 per pupil in April 2014, allowing schools to provide family support programmes from their own budgets in 2014/15.

The early support is targeted at children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). There were 7363 "eligible" pupils in the target year groups in Lancashire primary schools in 2012/13, in 2013/14 there are 7598 FSM pupils; an increase of 729 since 2011/12. Children's centres have been allocated £250 per FSM pupil in 2011/12 and 2012/13 reducing to £150 per FSM pupil in 2013/14. This was an additional resource to provide an increased early support offer for schools in their reach area.

Best Start Lancashire, is a key element of the directorate Early Support Strategy and recognises the importance of parental engagement in children's learning, alongside successful early support in schools. BSL uses evidence based strategies/interventions which improve educational achievement and deliver the key intended outcomes shown below.

Key intended outcomes for pupils eligible for free School Meals

- improved attainment in speaking and listening and reading skills at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stage 1;
- the above results to be in line with or above the national average in 2013;
- improved levels of attendance at school in Y1 and Y2 so that persistent absence is below 9.7% for Year 1 and below 9% for Year 2;
- a reduction in referrals to children's social care that do not require the further involvement of social care services (NFA).

Progress towards actions identified in the review of the programme in Jan 2013:

- follow up all red self evaluation impact proformas to ensure that Best Start Lancashire is fully in place and having a positive impact on the target group. Facilitated meetings in schools or centres were held, where difficulties were highlighted, with all red self evaluations received;
- support action planning and evaluation with individual schools and children's centres. Best Start Officer and School Adviser support made available for all schools and children's centres;
- share the positive outcomes from years 1 and 2 which were achieved through;
 - good practice workshops 2012;
 - publication by The National College for School Leadership;
 - examples of good practice on the web site;
 - a master class for school leaders hosted by a school and children's centre.
- Best Start practitioner training offer
 - 961 staff from schools attended the Best Start Courses on Early Support for speaking & listening, reading, mathematics;
 - staff from all children's centres attended the Best Start Courses on helping parents to help their child in speaking & listening, reading, mathematics;
 - 157 school and children's centre staff together have been jointly trained on the evidence based programme, The Solihull Approach – The School Years. This is a resource pack for care professionals who work with school-aged children, young people and parents.
- evaluate the impact of Best Start on building resilience in a sample of families through a research project with UCLAN. This project did not go ahead as the costs were too high. The impact of the programme is already being monitored (see Appendix A) and an analysis of the programme's impact on resilience will be conducted in the Autumn 2013- Spring 2014 term by the Best Start Officer

Impact Data 2013

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2013 - children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) 2013

The percentage of FSM children that achieved a good level of development in 2013 was 39.6%. The performance of pupils in the most disadvantaged areas of Lancashire compares well with both the national average and the performance of similar local authorities. Although a change in the assessment of early years attainment means that this performance is not comparable to the previous year's results, Lancashire's performance overall is likely to compare well with both the national average and the performance of similar local authorities when this information is published in late November 2013.

Year 1 Phonics screening check 2013 - children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)

56% of children eligible for free school meals were working at the required standard as measured by the new Year 1 phonics screening check, a rise of 9% on the previous year. This is in line with the national average for this group of pupils.

Key Stage 1 2013– children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)

75% of pupils eligible for free school meals attained level 2C or above in reading, an increase of 4% on 2012. Although the gap between Lancashire and the national average narrowed by 1% in 2013 it remained 4% below the national average.

Attendance

The attendance data for the year 2012/13 is not available until the Spring Term 2014.

Reduction in the proportion of referrals requiring no further action

Table 1 sets out the number of referrals to Children's Social Care and the number and proportion of those referrals that result in no further action.

Table 1

2011	Referrals	NFA	%
Total 5-7	2138	566	26.5%
School 5-7	212	37	17.5%

2012	Referrals	NFA	%
Total 5-7	2528	514	20.3%
School 5-7	274	35	12.8%

2013	Referrals	NFA	%
Total 5-7	2841	884	31.1%
School 5-7	289	56	19.4%

The results show that there is an increase in the number of referrals being made over the past three years and there is also an increase in the proportion of referrals which are resulting in no further action. It is, however, notable that the rate of increase in referrals from schools is lower than the rate of increase from other agencies.

Performance monitoring

Self Evaluation proformas are being completed by schools and children's centres supported by school advisers and nominated officers during the Autumn term.

To date the 67 children's centre returns detail that 4465 of the 7363 (61%) FSM pupils have received support from the range of services delivered by Best Start Lancashire practitioners during 2012/13.

2647 individual families have received Outreach Support and centres can evidence a reduction in identified need for 1201 of these families(45%).

A number of case study examples are set out in Appendix 'A'.

Key Learning from Year 1 of Best Start Lancashire

Good practice events detailed that Best Start Lancashire has been successful, especially where...

- the children's centre and school work well together, developing a trusting relationship.
- the focus of delivery remains on the needs of children and their families, it is aimed at empowering families and building their resilience.
- there is clear leadership of key people in school and the children's centre that drive the work forward.

- there is a jointly owned and regularly reviewed action plan.
- the activity adds value to what is provided separately by school and children's centre.

Next Steps Autumn 2013/Spring 2014

- Conduct summative evaluation and produce a report.
- Share learning from Best Start Lancashire 2011-2014
- Complete Best Start Solihull Approach– School Year courses spring 2014
- Support children's centres and schools to develop their response to the Early Support Strategy by providing support to;
 - develop plans for sustainability;
 - share models of continued partnership;
 - share examples of successful commissioning of children's centre services by schools.

Consultations

This project has been agreed through discussion with headteachers and children's centre managers. Ongoing consultation exists through the District Children's Trusts, where members are asked to monitor its progress through a regular Best Start Lancashire agenda item.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

The Early Intervention/Support strategy underpins significant aspects of the transforming social care budget option (£3million out of a £6 million total). Failure to deliver on this strategy would impact on the achievement of the budget option.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Report to the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement – 'Lancashire Early Intervention Strategy – Best Start Lancashire' http://council.lancashire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=176&MIId=540&Ver=4	17 January 2013	Andy Milroy, Office of the Chief Executive, (01772) 536050

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A