

COMMITTEE: Joint Committee on Special Educational Needs

DATE: 5th July 2013

TITLE: Report of the SEA Provider Unit

ACTION: To consider the report

BACKGROUND: Description of the work of the Joint Committee's SEA Provider Unit during the Autumn Term 2012 and Spring Term 2013.

SEA Provider Unit Report October Term 2012

1.0 Administration of assessment and review processes

There have been a number of changes to the arrangements and staffing of the administrative team. The Senior Administrative Officer took secondment for three years in April last year, and arrangements were made for two of the clerical officers to undertake some of her duties, and receive remuneration for doing so. Also, some other duties were taken up by the principal psychologist.

At the end of the summer term the 3* officer left her post. It was decided, rather than employ someone else to this work, it would be more appropriate to share the 3* duties between three of the clerical officers, again with appropriate remuneration.

Mr Trebor Roberts came to work with the Joint Committee as Supervisory Officer.

2.0 Specialist Teachers Service

Since it was felt strongly that the present provision was not sufficient to meet the needs of all the children, during the term discussions were begun on how the service could be expanded and developed into the future.

There was also concern that a number of our teachers are nearing retirement age, and it may be difficult to obtain appropriately qualified Welsh teachers to take their place. After detailed discussion, an 'ideal' plan was drawn up, that would entail increasing the present team in terms of teachers, and employing a number of assistants in addition. This was discussed in the Liaison Group. Although it would not be possible to make all the changes, it was possible to consider making some temporary additions within the budget of the Joint-Committee, and it was decided in principal to do this.

At the beginning of the term one of the teachers of children with visual difficulties was absent for several weeks with illness, and another teacher needed to take over some of her her duties. This is particularly difficult with children with visual difficulties, considering the need to teach Braille to some children, and produce materials in Braille.

From October 2012 one of the teachers of children with hearing difficulties was absent long-term due to an injury to her leg.

The teaching team has received training including in 'apps' useful to children with special needs, and have been liaising with specialist teachers in Conwy.

3.0 Educational psychology service

The term began with the psychology team at full strength, i.e. equivalent to 8.1 psychologists, 10 individuals with several working part-time.

During the term one of the psychologists, who worked part-time (0.4 full time), retired. The psychologists helped Ysgol y Parc, Holyhead, to set up a ‘Nurture’ group, i.e. a group which provides children with a lot of attention and positive experiences, to help improve their behaviour. Also the psychologists have been providing courses in Webster Stratton, again an approach to help improve behaviour. A course in Solution Focused Therapy was provided by some of the psychologists to staff of the Gwynedd team Around the Family.

The team began to take up the duties previously fulfilled by the Special Educational Needs Adviser in Cynnal, i.e. preparing a more general advisory service to schools in the area of special needs, including arranging training courses.

One school made additional arrangements with one of the psychologists to work with them individually on projects.

Towards the end of the term it was learnt that two of our psychologists, who each worked 0.5, and therefore together were equivalent to a full time psychologist, had obtained new posts. The results of the questionnaire for schools were received. The response to the questionnaire has been consistently favourable over the years, and the response this time was also good, the answers to most of the questions being better than they have been in the past, and therefore showing improvement.

Question	Former response	This year's response	Improvement?
The service was as expected	83% - 91%	97%	Yes
Received a courteous and professional service	95% - 98%	100%	Yes
The psychologist made a positive difference	74% - 83%	91%	Yes
It is easy to contact the psychologist on the phone	92%	97%	Yes
The psychologist succeeded in the agreed work	89%	97%	Yes
The psychologist helped to understand and clarify issues	80%	100%	Yes
The psychologist helped to create a plan for the pupil to improve	74%	88%	Yes
The psychologist gives practical advice to help children	81%	97%	Yes
The psychologist's records are clear and easy to understand	99%	100%	Yes
The psychologist is useful when working with parents	81%	89%	Yes
Effective with pupils with behavioural difficulties	89%	80%	No
Effective with emotionally vulnerable pupils	93%	85%	No
Effective with children with complex difficulties	98%	97%	No

Effective with pupils with low attainment	92%	92%	No
Effective with pupils with communication difficulties	89%	96%	Yes
Effective where there is multi-agency input	92%	96%	Yes
Effective in supporting the emotional welfare of pupils	86%	91%	Yes

We worked especially on these targets:

Good in the provision of training for schools	64%	72%	Yes
Good in the provision of therapeutic counselling	54%	66%	Yes
Contribution to projects re. policies	42%	79%	Yes

4.0 Additional Information

The tables below show the number of final statements issued within the statutory timeframe of 26 weeks during 2012 (National Performance Indicators).

26 weeks Performance Indicators, Gwynedd 2012	
Total number of new final statements	49
Number of final statements within a 26 weeks <u>with</u> exceptions	25
Number of final statements within 26 weeks <u>without</u> exceptions i.e. within the time limit and no exceptions have been recorded	18
Number of final statements over 26 weeks <u>with</u> exceptions i.e. over the time limit because, or partly because, of external factors	6
Number of final statements over 26 weeks <u>without</u> exceptions i.e. beyond the time limit and no exceptions have been recorded (no one late in presenting advice from outside agencies and no factors beyond the control of the education department and / or the Joint SEA)	0
Performance Indicator 15a: Of the total cases for the year, what was the percentage within the 26 weeks, whether there was an exception or not? (i.e. 40 as a percentage of 44)	87.8%
Performance Indicator 15b: Of those cases where there were no exceptions, what was the percentage of the ones completed within the 26 weeks? (i.e. 4 as a percentage of 4)	100%

Given the increase in the number of statements issued in 2012, the percentage issued within 26 weeks, including exceptions, is a positive reflection of the conscientious work of the Provider Unit.

26 weeks Performance Indicators, Anglesey 2012	
Total number of new final statements	22
Number of final statements within a 26 weeks <u>with</u> exceptions	12
Number of final statements within 26 weeks <u>without</u> exceptions i.e. within the time limit and no exceptions have been recorded	6
Number of final statements over 26 weeks <u>with</u> exceptions i.e. over the time limit because, or partly because, of external factors	4
Number of final statements over 26 weeks <u>without</u> exceptions	0

i.e. beyond the time limit and no exceptions have been recorded (no one late in presenting advice from outside agencies and no factors beyond the control of the education department and / or the Joint SEA)	
Performance Indicator 15a: Of the total cases for the year, what was the percentage within the 26 weeks, whether there was an exception or not? (i.e. 19 as a percentage of 27)	81.8%
Performance Indicator 15b: Of those cases where there were no exceptions, what was the percentage of the ones completed within the 26 weeks? (i.e. 7 as a percentage of 7)	100%

In Anglesey the number of statements issued fell slightly from 27 in 2011 to 22 in 2012. The percentage issued within 26 weeks, including exceptions, increased substantially from 70.4% to 81.8%. A special effort was made within the provider unit to improve the performance.

Spring 2013 Term

1.0 Administration assessment and review processes

In March, one of the clerical officers retired, and arrangements were made to fill her post on a temporary basis.

The work continued with the clerical officers undertaking some of the duties of the Senior Administration Officer, and the principal psychologist undertaking others, and the clerical officers also fulfilling 3* duties.

By the end of the term, this was reconsidered, it being thought that these duties might be shared out in a different way. However eventually it was decided that the current arrangements would continue, since it would be easier to ensure that as many as possible of the duties would be carried out if those doing so were familiar with the usual arrangements.

By the end of the term, also, Mr Gwilym Ellis Jones was appointed as Chief Executive of Cynnal, and Supervisory Officer to the Joint Committee.

2.0 Specialist Teachers Service

The teacher of children with hearing difficulties continued to be absent at the start of the Spring Term, and another had reduced her hours significantly 0.2 from 0.7, and it was therefore becoming difficult to provide a service at the usual level.

The discussion regarding ensuring the development of the service continued. It was decided that funds should be earmarked for the appointment and training of new teachers and assistants. This was possible as a temporary measure within the budget of the Joint Committee at the time.

There have been difficulties in the past where training was offered to teachers without the promise of employment following this, and it was agreed that assistant teachers should be appointed, and training provided while they were working, rather than following the previous pattern.

The teachers continued with their training work, for example the teachers of children with visual difficulties arranging training in using Braille for assistants.

3.0 Educational psychology service

Soon after the beginning of the term, the service was operating with three psychologists fewer than usual. It was necessary to adapt the level of service we were able to offer to the schools as a result of this.

Advertisements were issued for psychologists to take their place. An appointment to the 0.4 post was made, but it was not possible to appoint anyone for the other posts. Towards the end of the term, in addition, it was learnt that another of our psychologists would shortly be absent due to health reasons.

Due to this, providing a sufficient level of service has been challenging.

Despite these difficulties, we have succeeded in visiting every school where needed, and responded to any problems that have arisen. Some of us have attended courses; especially, one psychologist has followed work on ‘Mindfulness’, which brings a new aspect to our therapeutic work, and we are all looking forward to feedback from her in the near future.

4.0 Additional Information

Statutory Processes:

The table below gives an overview of the workload of the Joint SEA in processing statutory assessments, statements etc..They show, in particular, the workload of the statements coordinators (1½ posts).

Number of final statements of special educational needs issued for the first time, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn 2008-2012 (i.e. excluding reassessments/ statutory assessments that do <u>not</u> lead to issuing a statement)		
Calendar year	Number in Gwynedd	Number in Ynys Môn
2008	53	34
2009	42	38
2010	75	41
2011	44	27
2012	49	22

The number of statutory assessments in progress, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn, June 2008-2013		
Date of snapshot	Number in Gwynedd	Number in Ynys Môn
June 2008	34	23
June 2009	39	38
June 2010	36	39
June 2011	18	17
June 2012	57	21
June 2013	67	37

It can be seen that the number of statutory assessments which are in progress has increased significantly in Gwynedd and Ynys Môn.