

Appendix C - Swindon Borough Council Tuition Service Review June 2016

i) The SBC Tuition Service provision was reviewed in June 2016 as part of a commitment made to the Schools' Forum by the Head of Education. This was because of the financial pressures being experienced by all schools in the borough. All Swindon schools have been reviewing their expenditure and it was felt appropriate that the Tuition Service needed to be reviewed at the same time to ensure that it was providing value for money and providing at least a good service.

The review team consisted of the Head of Education, the Head Teacher of St Joseph's RC Academy, the Secondary Commissioner and the Head Teacher of the Virtual School. The review process consisted of the following activities:

- Learning walks to each of the five centres.
- Interviews with staff members and pupils
- Analysis of service documentation and budget information
- Meetings with service senior managers

ii) The Tuition service in its current form came into being in 2009 when it was separated from the rest of EOTAS. This was when there were concerns about the quality of education provision at the PRU. The current Head of the Tuition Service was appointed then to manage the service.

The Tuition Service is a vital service ensuring that all children have an education provision (a statutory requirement) when mainstream provision, special education and other EOTAS services are unsuitable or unavailable. It offers services for extremely vulnerable pupils as a transition service, with the intention of re-integrating into a mainstream or specialist provision. It increasingly supports PEX pupils. This combination of pupils is complex.

The service currently works with 61 pupils (June 2016) of which 13 have EHCPs, 7 are on Child Protection Plans, 13 are in care and 10 are classified as Children in Need. The intention is to provide full time education but for some pupils this is not appropriate. Because of the high level of need, there are pupil meetings every fortnight to discuss every child. The service is delivered in 5 centres in which small group tuition takes place. Tuition also takes place in pupil's homes or an appropriate safe place such as a library. As a guide the service currently has classroom capacity for up to 45 pupils with spaces for between 20 and 25 pupils on individual tuition dependent on number of hours offered.

The current service model was reviewed due to the need to ensure that it provides value for money and is able to effectively meet the needs of the children and young people in its care. This also means building on the best of the Tuition Service, delivering

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- Improved outcomes overall
- Stronger attendance
- An aspiration to provide full time provision where this is appropriate for the pupil.
- Secure SMSC (spiritual moral social and cultural) aspects within the curriculum delivery.
- Reduced fixed term exclusions
- Academic progress
- Strong support for SEMH (social emotional mental health) needs of the pupils
- Effective deployment of staff to meet need

iii) The Tuition service budget is £890,200 of which the most part is spent on staffing (£650,000). The other items of expenditure are the costs associated with the 5 centres, costs for enrichment programmes such as The Shed, Iprovefit, Hinton Marsh Farm and commissioning 3 places at the Oakfield project. The service also commissions the use of the The Independent Psychological Service (TIPS), the cost of a dedicated youth engagement worker, educational psychologist and targeted mental health worker and a number of smaller items such as examination costs, training, travel, subsistence etc. College courses are also commissioned.

iv) It is recognised that the Head of Service and his central administrative team work very hard and with commitment to every child to ensure that no pupil is turned away from the service and that educational provision is in place. During the review a number of key issues were identified.

a) **Attendance** – attendance data shows a wide variation in pupil attendance at learning sessions varying from between 44% to 75%. In addition, when centres were visited on a number of occasions there were either no pupils present or just one. It was recognised that ensuring pupils attend regularly is not straightforward bearing in mind the personal challenges that many of these young people have and there are referrals to the Education Welfare Service to address non-attenders. It is also a statutory duty to ensure that education is provided. However, there is a real value for money concern when teachers and teaching assistants are provided and attendance is low. The Tuition service in the past has explored using an e-learning option for part of its provision which may be an appropriate way forward.

b) **Leadership capacity** – this is a major concern in the service. There is one teacher who has leadership responsibilities as Teacher in Charge. She undertakes the performance management role for the whole service of 20 staff including

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teachers, tutors and teaching assistants. This role also includes organising supply cover for staff when unwell as well as having the role of organising meetings to discuss pupils' progress and related issues which take place frequently. The core curriculum offer is GCSE English mathematics and science. One teacher takes a leadership role for English however no other teacher has any leadership responsibility for example for curriculum areas despite a number being on the top of the upper pay spine. The service has bought in time from an adviser to support performance management and provide some curriculum advice but this has not been available this year. The head of the tuition service is not a teacher and therefore cannot undertake these roles. There is a need to address this issue by ensuring that there is leadership in curriculum areas and other aspects of the work of the service. Staff management could also be addressed through having Centre managers in each of the teaching centres used by the service.

c) **Class Size** – in the learning walks that took place during the review, group sizes were often very small and did not really provide value for money. The maximum planned group size is currently five pupils due to their varying needs and to ensure that the pupils in the group can get on and work together. Due to their attendance levels, however, groups are often far less than five. It was felt that the planned group size needed to increase to 8 pupils per group. It was also felt that there could be alternative ways of delivering some aspects of the curriculum through for example e-learning packages or video conferencing (these strategies are used in other local authorities). This could also mitigate some attendance issues.

d) **Teaching & Learning** – it was quite difficult to assess the quality of teaching and its impact on learning as in a “school review” due to the low number of lessons observed as explained in a) above. In the learning sessions which were observed, lessons were often well planned enabling pupils to make progress in their learning. However, it was difficult to assess progress over time for a number of reasons. The service does not have an effective tracking tool although this is now changing as the model used by EOTAS is being adopted to track progress. In some pupil work files there was little evidence of written work.

Talking to teaching staff, it is apparent that they are quite isolated in their learning settings and have little chance to engage with other teachers in mainstream settings. CPD takes place within the service with few links to either a mainstream school or the wider EOTAS. They have little chance therefore to enhance their curriculum knowledge or teaching skills through observing or working with others. This could be addressed by having stronger links with EOTAS, attending secondary subject leader networks, being involved in Swindon wide CPD e.g. Oct 31 SASH day and also have specific links with mainstream/special secondary schools.

e) **Pupil progress** in terms of SEMH needs to be tracked more effectively across the service. There is considerable evidence that pupils do make progress in terms of their social and emotional development which is a critical aspect of this service which

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works with children and young people that have not coped in mainstream or sometimes other settings. There is no doubt that some staff work exceptional hard with these pupils with some success. The Tuition service, however, does not currently use any tracking measures to monitor its overall impact on SEMH making it difficult to demonstrate overall effectiveness.

f) **Accountability** – The Tuition service has regular termly service meetings with the Secondary Commissioner to review the working of the service but does not have a “governance” body like EOTAS or like a school. It is also not inspected by Ofsted as it is not a school. This means that it is not formally accountable to any external body (although it has accountability through the council) as such and there is no school representation or formal governance arrangement. This has led to some “drift” in the service and a lack of scrutiny in terms of outcomes, systems and for example performance management. Financial accountability is in place through the borough’s finance team.

g) **Buildings/Centres** – currently the tuition service operates from 5 different centres all of which were visited at least once during the review. It was recognised during the review that the number of centres could be reduced. This would produce a financial saving as well as providing an opportunity for reorganising provision to make it more effective. A plan is in place to reduce the number of centres from 5 to 4 initially and then to 3 by September 2017. An issue which should be mentioned was the poor external state of repair of all the centres (and sometimes internally) but particularly Westbourne and Ferndale.

h) **Timetables** – No lessons with pupils are scheduled for Mondays which is used for all staff to have PPA time. It is also used when possible to have meetings with pupils with parents/carers to discuss a range of issues such as progress, transition and individual needs etc. Although recognising the need for the meetings to take place, in a mainstream environment often meetings such as these would take place after school time using the whole school week and also fit in with parents/carers availability. Furthermore, with all teaching staff not teaching at the same time, it makes emergency cover for staff very difficult to manage as staff cannot cover for each other. This arrangement also challenges the delivery of 25 hour provision, which needs to be addressed. A further issue is that as all staff are centre based, they will teach all core subjects of the curriculum unlike in a secondary school where there are subject specialists. This wasn’t explored in depth in the review but it could mean that a subject like mathematics is not always taught by a subject specialist.

i) **Enrichment** – in order to provide closer to a full time education for pupils and to enhance the curriculum offer, a range of enrichment activities are offered to the pupils. It wasn’t possible to explore these in depth in the review but the offer is held in high regard by the staff and pupils alike. The Oakfield project is highly regarded by schools providing a unique service to some KS4 pupils. The Shed is also valued highly as is provision commissioned at Hinton Marsh Farm. There is also good

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provision for PE through Iprovefit and through sessions at Oasis. College provision s also commissioned to give pupils the chance to develop vocational skills.

j) **Staffing** – the tuition service does have a number of staffing issues which it would be inappropriate to discuss in detail in this report. Many staff in the service work hard and are fully committed to the service but this is not consistent. In one centre, staff stated that they didn't believe that IAG or mitigating the risk of pupils becoming NEET was part of their role. Also, there was sometimes a lack of awareness of data related issues which was said to be held "centrally" such as attendance and pupil progress which is not acceptable. This points to the lack of management capacity to address these issues.

k) **Transition** – the service has a transitions manager whose role is to ensure that all pupils leaving the service have a successful transition back to mainstream or into college provision. At the time of the review, 17 of the 20 Yr11 pupils had a transitions plan with 3 being at considerable risk of being NEET. This is considered a success by the Head of Service due to the nature of the young people. In terms of reintegration back into secondary provision, about a third of cases are successful. It was suggested during the review that these case studies are written up as evidence of successful practice and what can work.

Key recommendations

1. The Tuition service should be returned to EOTAS and no longer be a completely separate service.

Discussions should take place with the Head of EOTAS with a view to returning the Tuition service to this provision. This would help resolve the relative isolation of the service and its staff, provide more support for and strengthen service management and produce some financial savings which can be reallocated to improving and supporting attendance. EOTAS is due to be inspected in the autumn term and any move would take place after the inspection.

Once the service is returned to EOTAS, a review of the service management should take place to address some of the issues identified such as curriculum and centre leadership.

EOTAS has a formal management committee clerked by governor services to which it is accountable with headteacher and parent representation. In the interim, it is proposed that the Head of EOTAS join the Tuition service management group. EOTAS has a website which could be used to make more publically available the work of the Tuition service.

2. Reduce the number of Tuition centres to three and further explore a further reduction to two or one centres.

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This would reduce building costs and also make service management and organisation more straightforward. It is recognised that an advantage of using different centres does keep pupils apart and allows pupils to be appropriately grouped but this in itself causes problems of staff isolation and potential safety concerns. This needs to be pursued with the council to identify suitable premises or the development of current facilities.

3. Explore the possibility of delivering of some aspects of the curriculum through remote e-learning & on-line lessons

Delivering some aspects of the curriculum in this way could have a considerable number of advantages. A number of the young people who are supported by the Tuition service do have considerable issues when learning in groups and this could negate this factor. Lessons would be taught by subject specialists which does not happen currently with staff being centre based. This could also mean that all pupils in a year group would be learning English for example at the same time. Thus capacity would be used more efficiently. A number of local authority tuition services use e-learning and this should be explored further.

4. Performance management to be supported by LA school improvement staff in the short term

As noted in the report, the teacher in charge has an onerous responsibility in terms of performance managing staff. In the short term, this should be taken on and supported by school improvement and other appropriate staff with the LA. This would include undertaking lesson observations, book scrutinies and data analysis. Three LA staff are currently serving Ofsted inspectors.

5. Increase the maximum group size from 5 pupils to 8 pupils

Currently the maximum allocated group size is five pupils but this is impacted on by low attendance as is noted in the report. It is difficult to justify the small group sizes and staffing ratios when sometimes no pupils turn up for lessons or it is just one or two pupils. There are some concerns about increasing group size due to the balance of pupils and their relationships with each other so this will need to be carefully managed.

6. Pupil performance tracking

It is essential that there is much more informed and better tracking of pupil progress and performance academically and in terms of social and emotional development across the tuition service. It also needs to be recognised by all staff that knowing the details of pupil attendance, achievement and progress is their responsibility. Whilst the service performs a required statutory duty, it also needs to demonstrate its effectiveness and be formally accountable.

7. Exploring Best Practice

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To visit other Tuition Services to explore best practice in the areas identified as key issues to inform an action plan. New policies and practices should be informed by learning visits to other tuition services. It would also be sensible to ensure that there is joined up practice between St Lukes School, EOTAS and the Tuition service as there is considerable overlap in terms of the type of pupil that uses these services.