

DECISION-MAKER:	SCRUTINY PANEL A		
SUBJECT:	INTRODUCTION TO THE PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS INQUIRY		
DATE OF DECISION:	7 OCTOBER 2010		
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

SUMMARY

For the opening meeting of the inquiry examining primary school educational attainment for children with special needs, papers are attached to outline the current definitions and strategies in place for special educational needs (SEN). There will be a brief presentation to highlight the key issues around the provision and commissioning followed by questions to the witnesses from the panel. Cllr Paul Holmes, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Learning will also be attending the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) The panel is recommended to consider the background information provided and comments made by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Learning and witnesses from Children's Services and Learning and Southampton National Health Services and use the information provided as evidence in the inquiry.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To enable the panel to compile a file of evidence in order to formulate findings and recommendations at the end of the inquiry process.

CONSULTATION

2. Stakeholders are being consulted throughout the inquiry process. The final Terms of Reference and Inquiry Plan attached in **Appendix 1** were approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 21st September 2010. The Executive Director of Children's Services and Learning, Assistant Director of Commissioning, Head of School Standards, Principal officer for Prevention and Inclusion, Executive Director of Health and Adult Social Care and Southampton NHS have been consulted in its development.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. None

DETAIL

4. A brief presentation will be made to the panel from witnesses present highlighting the key issues around the support, provision and commissioning for children with special educational needs. The local context of current performance with trends, national context and any problem areas in relation to particular special needs or areas will also be outlined.
5. The panel is invited to have an open discussion on the city's approach to supporting children with special educational needs in primary schools with the cabinet member, and supported by the witnesses giving evidence.
8. The Primary School Educational Attainment for Children with Special Needs Inquiry terms of reference and plan are included as **Appendix 1**.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

8. Not applicable

Revenue

9. Not applicable

Property

10. Not applicable

Other

11. Not applicable

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

12. The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Other Legal Implications:

13. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

14. None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Primary School Educational Attainment for Children with Special Needs Inquiry Terms of Reference and Inquiry Plan
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Documents In Members' Rooms

	None
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Background Documents

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|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) (Executive Summary)
The CYPP full plan can be viewed on www.southampton.gov.uk by following Council/partners > Decision making > Council strategies, policies and plans > Children and young people's plan 2. Southampton SEN Strategy 2007-10 including SEN definitions and categories; 3. Summary of related Ofsted Inspection outcomes. 4. Southampton schools inspection judgements 5. NI104 Attainment gap SEN/Non-SEN Key stage 2 pupils 6. Southampton descriptors for School Action 7. Southampton descriptors for School Action Plus 8. Southampton SEN National Strategies Report September 2010 | <p>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</p> |
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	None	
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Background documents available for inspection at:

FORWARD PLAN No: Not applicable **KEY DECISION?** No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	Not applicable
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Terms of Reference and Inquiry Plan

Primary School Educational Attainment for Children with Special Needs Inquiry

1. **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel:** Scrutiny Panel A
2. **Membership:** Councillors Fitzgerald (Chair), Kolker (Vice Chair), Damani, Morrell, Odgers, Thomas and Willacy.
3. **Purpose:** To understand and consider how children of primary school age with special educational needs (SEN), including children with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), are supported by primary schools and the Primary Care Trust to achieve their maximum potential and prepare for secondary education.

4. **Background:**

The Education Act (1996) defined children as having special educational needs if they had a learning difficulty significantly greater than the majority of those of the same age.

The Code of Practice (DfES 2001b) clarified this further by outlining how only children and young people for whom it was necessary to take some additional or different action to enable a pupil to learn more effectively should be considered to have special educational needs.

Children and young people with special educational needs deserve to be educated in the most empowering environment and in their local mainstream school whenever appropriate. Teachers aim to meet the diverse needs of children with special educational needs by ensuring they develop an inclusive curriculum in which all pupils gain full access and entitlement to education. Teachers are increasingly receiving support to work flexibly and creatively to adapt learning environments that are conducive to learning for all. A range of services support schools in creating inclusive settings are provided by Southampton City Council such as outreach from the special schools, the Specialist Teacher Advisors, the Specialist Behaviour Team, Educational Psychology and the SEN Inspector and Adviser.

The grade for the progress of learners with SEN and learning difficulties and disabilities during Ofsted inspections in our primary schools has been consistently "Good" (2007/8 and 2008/9). Under the new framework 2009/10 the average grade for the 'quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress' has continued to be "Good".

The SEN Code of Practice (DfES 2001b) promotes a common approach to identifying, assessing and providing for all children's special educational needs. The code advocates a continuum of provision – a graduated approach. Schools meet most children's learning needs through "differentiation" of the curriculum, which means teachers tailoring their approaches to suit individual pupils' different learning needs and styles.

If pupils require support that is additional to and different from the quality first curriculum they may be placed at **School Action** of the Code of Practice. If external agency support is required to enable the school to support the pupil's educational needs then a pupil will be placed at **School Action Plus**. Some pupils who require external agency support will not necessarily also be experiencing special educational needs, for example, a pupil who has social care involvement might not have SEN and should not, therefore, be recorded as a pupil at School Action Plus.

5. Objectives:

- a. To understand what special needs in primary schools are and how these are currently identified and supported. Does this comprehensively cover all the special needs of children in primary school, including children diagnosed with ADHD?
- b. To understand the difference between the medical, educational and social models for special needs of children;
- c. To review the current attainment levels for children with special needs and consider if any clear gaps exist in any particular need or area;
- d. To consider the local context of service provision and identify any best practice or barriers that exist to service provision now and potentially in the future; and
- e. To reflect on the experiences of parents and children with special needs going through the primary school system and how their experience may be improved.

6. Methodology and Consultation:

- a. Undertake desktop research, including Ofsted reports and national organisations undertaking work on this issue to clarify the definition of special needs
- b. Identify best practice
- c. Seek stakeholder views
- d. Conduct interviews with cabinet member leading on issues related to educational attainment and special needs, Executive Director for Children's Services and Learning, Heads of Services and other relevant officers.

7. Proposed Timetable: 4 meetings from October 2010 to March 2011.

8. Inquiry Plan

Meeting 1: 7th October 2010

- Introduction to how children with special needs are identified and supported in the primary school system;
- To explain the current service provision through Southampton City Council and other agencies such as PCT; and
- To outline local context of service provision current performance with trends, national context and highlighting any problem areas in relation to particular special needs or areas.

Attending the meeting:

Cllr Paul Holmes	Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Safeguarding
Lesley Hobbs	Principal officer, Prevention and Inclusion
Julie Wharton	SEN Inspector
Julia Katherine	Principal Educational Psychologist
Jamie Schofield	Service Manager - Children's Disabilities
Paul Nugent	Head of Standards

Meeting 2: 4th November 2010

- School's perspective - to identify examples of best practice and barriers to supporting children with special needs in primary schools;
- Child's perspective - case study example/s of secondary school children who have been through the SCC primary school system;
- Parent's perspective – positives / difficulties experienced and perceived gaps in support;
- Community perspective – how does the current perspective/process support the needs of the community as a whole including critical links to services such as Housing and Transport?

Attending the meeting:

Lesley Hobbs	Principal Officer, Prevention and Inclusion
Parent representation	Through Parent Partnership (Mencap)
Donna Chapman	NHS Commissioner for Children's Healthcare
Aileen McNaughton	Associate Director for Children and Families in Solent Healthcare
Lisa Osborn	Chair, Southampton ADHD awareness/support
Paul Nugent	Head of Standards
Julie Wharton	SEN Inspector
Jackie Partridge	Springwell School, Head teacher
Liz Filer	Bassett Green Primary School, Head teacher

Meeting 3: 19th January 2011

- Direction and future priorities of the city council;
- Potential impact of changes in Government policy and funding;
- The future of SEN and other special needs such as ADHD; and
- Consider any outstanding issues from previous meetings

Attending the meeting:

Lesley Hobbs	Principal officer, Prevention and Inclusion
Paul Nugent	Head of Standards
Julie Wharton	SEN Inspector

Meeting 4: 3rd March 2011

- To agree recommendations and draft final report
- To cover any outstanding issues from previous meetings if appropriate