

Inclusion & Learning update to DEF

Report of the Director of Children and Young People's Futures

Recommendation:

That the forum:

- a) Note the direction of travel indicated within the draft strategy.
- b) Note that the inclusion and learning service redesign has commenced.
- c) Support the implementation plan for FSM auto enrolment.
- d) Agree that the above 3 items are added to the agenda for future DEF meetings.

1. Background:

1.1 This report provides an update on the activities and progress of the Inclusion and Learning Team from November 2024 to January 2025. Key developments include the initiation of the team redesign and the proposed Inclusion and Learning (Education) Strategy for Devon.

2. Inclusion & Learning Strategy

2.1 The Authority is due to consult on and launch an Inclusion and Learning Strategy that builds on the SEND Strategy and identifies strategic priorities, an implementation framework and effective monitoring procedures:

Proposed Strategic Priorities

A. Building Inclusive Learning Communities

- **Principled School Improvement:** Facilitate a locality based [School Improvement model](#) that is inclusive, sustainable and student centred.
- **Collaborative Leadership:** Develop a shared vision of inclusion across all schools and education providers in Devon, underpinned by the principles of Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision.
- **Cultural Change:** Foster a culture of shared responsibility for inclusion, where diversity is seen as an asset that enriches learning for all.
- **Peer-to-Peer Learning:** Facilitate collaboration among schools to share best practices in inclusive teaching and leadership.

B. Strengthening High-Quality Universal Provision

- **Inclusive Classroom Practices:** Ensure all educators are trained to deliver high-quality, inclusive teaching that supports a range of learning needs.

- **Professional Development:** Provide ongoing training and resources to support schools in implementing inclusive strategies.
- **Collaborative approaches to improving Mental Health:** Brokering multi agency partnerships to address Mental Health challenges and create local solutions.

C. **Promoting Belonging and Engagement**

- **Trauma-Informed Training:** Deliver training on trauma-informed approaches to help staff create emotionally safe environments where all learners feel valued and supported.
- **Attendance as a Priority:** Use insights from the **Education Endowment Foundation's Supporting Attendance** to address barriers to attendance through early intervention, relationship-building, and family engagement.
- **Student Voice:** Empower students to co-create their learning environments, ensuring they feel heard and included in decisions that impact their education.

D. **Fostering Partnerships with Families and Communities**

- **Family Engagement:** Strengthen relationships with families by providing clear communication, accessible resources, and opportunities for co-production of policies and practices.
- **Community Collaboration:** Work with community organisations to provide wraparound support, promoting a sense of belonging for learners within and beyond school.

E. **Embedding Accountability and Continuous Improvement**

- **Inclusion Audits:** Regularly assess the inclusiveness of school environments, policies, and practices to identify strengths and areas for growth.
- **Outcome Monitoring:** Track attendance, achievement, and well-being metrics to evaluate the impact of inclusive practices, ensuring alignment with principles of Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision.
- **Transparent Reporting:** Share progress publicly to build trust and demonstrate commitment to inclusion.

2.2 Whilst the draft strategy is subject to change, as a result of consultation, we intend to publish the strategy during the Spring Term. Partners have indicated that the absence of a coherent strategy for Education in Devon has inhibited collaboration, partnership and progress in ensuring that all of Devon's young people are able to thrive in our Education settings.

2.3 The strategy will be structured around 3 key analytical questions that will shape monitoring procedures:

- a) **Are children safe? Do they feel safe?**
- b) **Are children attending? Are the places of education fit for purpose?**
- c) **Are children achieving? Are we providing the opportunities and support they need to achieve?**

3. Inclusion & Learning Service Redesign

3.1 The redesign of the Inclusion and Learning Team commenced on January 6th, 2025. Phase one focuses on establishing the leadership team and a locality model supported by a central team, which will drive the strategic direction and operational effectiveness of our inclusion and learning initiatives. This restructuring aims to enhance leadership and oversight, ensuring robust financial and practice decision-making.

4. FSM Auto – Enrolment Implementation plan

4.1 [Implementation](#) of FSM auto-enrolment has frequently been discussed at DEF. We have created a plan to ensure all eligible children in Devon receive their entitlement to Free School Meals (FSM) through an auto-enrolment system, inspired by successful implementations in North Yorkshire and other regions.

4.2 Officers have utilised Department for Education resource to identify best practice examples nationally. The implementation plan has clear time-scales and updates on the scheme will be provided to Forum.

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