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**To:** Cabinet – 12 October 2009

**Subject:** **REVIEW OF SPECIALIST UNIT AND DESIGNATED PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS – LEAD SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** This report provides an update of the progress of the implementation of lead school provision in Phase 1 and sets out the capital cost implications for lead schools in the Phase 2 areas.

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## **Introduction**

1. The implementation of Phase 1 of the Review of specialist units for children with additional needs began in September 2008 in the Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) in Ashford, Shepway, Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley (pilot area). A briefing note explaining the aims and objectives of the review is attached as Appendix 1. From September 2008 to March 2009, lead schools used their start-up funding of £39,235 to begin the work of developing the provision. The new formula funding arrangements as agreed by the Schools Funding Forum were put in place in April 2009. The lead schools received new budgets calculated in accordance with the new formula, with transitional funding adjustments being made for schools that had existing units to ensure smooth transition.
2. All lead schools in the pilot area are progressing although there are different development needs between new lead schools and those that previously had units. All schools, along with other professionals in the Partnerships, are embracing the change with energy and commitment and are working through issues as they arise. This will inform the Phase 1 evaluation to ensure that children and young people will have access to an appropriate and quality service with a view to changes being implemented County-wide in April 2011.
3. Lead schools represent one key strand of the range of specialist support available in each Partnership to advise and provide guidance and training to mainstream schools. Other specialist services are available to mainstream schools as Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) plan, develop, coordinate and manage a continuum of services and provision delivered by Kent's special schools and other specialist services. Lead schools are already working with and alongside the highly valued special school outreach/in-reach services. In addition, partners and colleagues from services such as Specialist Teaching, Psychology and Health Therapy Services are all committed to ensuring a co-ordinated commissioning approach to increasing the capacity and confidence of mainstream schools. This approach supports children and young people across all need types and helps to provide equity and fairness of access. LCSPs have demonstrated innovation and flexibility to deploy

the resources available to them to achieve better outcomes for all children and young people in the locality.

## **Evaluation**

4. The evaluation of the pilot is underway. As part of the evaluation process, we will seek the views of all schools, professionals, parents and carers in the Phase 1 area. Some of this work has already started.

5. Parents and carers were invited in July 2009 to a number of meetings arranged in the Phase 1 areas to seek their views. At the same time, we sent a questionnaire to all parents and carers of children and young people with Statements of SEN in the Phase 1 areas and also made the questionnaire available online. This is the first of several consultations with parents and carers that will take place.

6. The Phase 1 lead school self-assessment survey that was carried out in April 2008 was repeated this year in June. The first survey had a good response rate, and more provisions responded this time (25 out of 32 (83%) in 2008 and 29 (91%) in 2009). The responses were very encouraging and lead schools report they are experiencing improvements in a number of areas. A summary of the self-assessment survey is attached at Appendix 2. The survey will be repeated at the same time next year.

7. As well as evaluating how the lead school model develops and operates, we will also be evaluating the funding arrangements that have been put in place. This will help determine what changes need to be made in relation to the implementation of Phase 2 from April 2011. Issues are being addressed as they arise and information is being gathered on an on-going basis. At the end of the evaluation period, we will assess how the funding arrangements have supported lead schools by consulting all the relevant parties and bringing the responses together with information collected throughout the period of the pilot.

## **Capital Implications**

8. The report to Cabinet in September 2008 appended details of the then known capital costs for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 schools totaling £2,860k. These costs have been updated and have increased. Many elements are already identified within the capital programme. 52 lead schools in Phase 2 have no capital implications. This list will be reviewed to ensure that an accurate total can be determined. There are also two Phase 1 lead schools included with capital improvement works totalling approximately £43k, bringing the estimated total capital costs across both Phases to approximately £4m. The development of the capital programme over the next few months will inform, identify and pick up the current detailed information needed to enable Cabinet to make decisions in Autumn 2010 for Phase 2.

9. Officers leading the process of lead school implementation are working closely with officers responsible for managing the Building Schools for the Future Programme and the Capital Primary Programme (CPP). This is to ensure the needs of lead schools are taken account of at the planning stage and the most efficient use of available funding.

## **Timetable**

<b>PHASE 1 – PILOT</b>	
Pilot Schools receive setting up allowance	September 2008
Pilot schools receive first year budgets	April 2009
Evaluation of pilot report written	Summer 2010
Evaluation report presented to KCC Cabinet	Autumn 2010
<b>PHASE 2</b>	
Proposals for Phase 2 to KCC Cabinet, subject to response to evaluation report	Autumn 2010
Phase 2 schools receive setting up funds	Late Autumn 2010
Phase 2 schools receive first year budgets	April 2011
Pilot schools fully implemented	April 2012
Phase 2 fully implemented	April 2013

## **Recommendations**

10. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Note the progress of the Lead School implementation programme.
- b) Note the progress of the evaluation process.
- c) Note the capital cost implications identified in paragraphs 8 and 9.
- d) Note the small change to the timetable at 4 above (when Phase 2 schools would receive first year budgets subject to the Phase 1 evaluation).

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**Lead School Programme  
Briefing Note to accompany Cabinet Paper  
28 September 2009**

**1. What are the aims of the change?**

In 2004, Members agreed to carry out a review of Kent's mainstream units and designations. The objectives of the Review are to:

- ensure the pattern, diversity and organisation of provision reflects the changing needs of pupils;.
- support all schools complying with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act;
- reduce the long distances travelled by many children on a daily basis to limit stress for them and their families and reduce the expenditure on transport;
- ensure that mainstream provision is complementary to that which is available in Special Schools;
- ensure equity of access to support across the whole county by addressing gaps in provision in many areas and in particular by increasing provision for children with Autism;
- develop mainstream resourced provision in order to encourage a sharing of expertise and an enhanced role in building capacity of neighbouring schools.

The proposal for ensuring delivery was the development of a lead school specialist service. The Lead School Programme is currently being implemented in Phase 1 (Ashford, Shepway, Gravesham, Dartford and Swanley and District) as a pilot and will be evaluated to inform how the lead school will operate.

Members and the Schools Funding Forum (SFF) agreed the main areas on which the evaluation would focus, which included an element for evaluating the funding arrangements.

A full evaluation plan was agreed by the Lead School Programme Steering Group. In summary, the evaluation will collect qualitative information (from all parties, including parents/carers and CYP) and quantitative data. A timetable was agreed by Members and the report of the evaluation, with recommendations, will be presented to Members in September/October 2010. The SFF will consider recommendations in relation to the funding arrangements.

## **2. How are we going to measure whether improvement for Young People has been realised?**

For CYP, we would want them to experience provision:

- Closer to home with less travel and being able to stay within the community with their peers.
- That will meet their needs, enabling progress to be maintained or improved.
- In which they feel included, confident and happy.

To assess this, we will

- Interview/survey young people – including through the Youth Council.
- Interview/survey their parents/carers.
- Collect data on end of year progress from the schools by tracking individual CYP.
- Collect data on Key Stage results – this will be longer term.
- Interview/survey schools.
- Collect other SEN data from Impulse eg numbers placed locally, Tribunal appeals.
- Showcase some case studies.
- Review home to school journeys and costs.

Some of this work has already begun and meetings are scheduled to take place this term.

## **3. What were the parents' views so far?**

### **(a) Earlier Public Consultations**

Extensive consultation by area took place on the Lead School proposals for Phase 1 during June and July 2007. The outcome was reported to Cabinet on 17 September 2007. The Cabinet report has a detailed appendix which sets out the comments by stakeholder groups, including parents.

Consultation in each Phase 2 area (7 in total) took place between November 2007 and January 2008. The outcome of these consultations was reported to Cabinet on 6 February 2008. Again, there is an appendix to this report which provides detail of feedback by area.

In summary, the overall response to the proposals was positive but there were some significant concerns raised:

- Necessity for robust monitoring and evaluation of Lead School provision - Lead School standards have been developed since by a working group made up of Special Schools, Lead School staff, Specialist Teachers and the Advisory Service
- Need for all the specialist support within a locality to be joined up including support from Special Schools, Therapy services, Specialist Teachers. There is good evidence within the Phase 1 area that local task groups for each need type are becoming well

established in most areas and the lead school model has been developed to reflect the fact that it is one source of specialist support within a continuum of provision.

- Communication with parents is a recurring issue – parents wanted more information more regularly and in Phase 2 areas wanted consultation documents to be mailed to a wider group of all parents of children with SEN
- Resourcing of provision must be sufficient to enable former ‘unit’ staff to take on an extended role. There were concerns about the level of funding and the potential dilution of support
- Condition of accommodation in some of the existing units in Phase 2 areas These needs have been identified and included in the Capital Implications report to Members

Note – There is a huge amount of detail available on the views of parents in each area with records of responses from individual parents and transcripts from each of the public meetings if required.

**(b) Phase 1 Evaluation – Parents’/Carers’ views gathered to date**

Initial focus groups with parents have taken place and we are still receiving responses to questionnaires. Some of the issues raised previously have been raised again. So far, some parents and carers still have concerns about:

- Not being given enough information about the lead school - in some cases, some knew nothing about it.
- Not being given enough information about their individual child – some parents/carers just seemed to need someone to talk to.
- The school not putting in the support the Statement says their child needs.
- Their child being ‘excluded’ and not being made to feel welcome or part of the school community.
- Lack of therapies, particularly speech therapy.

When the results of the earlier consultations were made known, measures were taken to address some of the issues. We have put measures in place to improve communication between the LA and parents/carers and to assure parents and carers that future changes will be informed by the evaluation, in which they will play a key part. We continue to emphasise that we are operating a pilot which is being evaluated.

The implementation of the lead school model has been kept under constant review, and we have been making adjustments to accommodate operational issues as they arise, without compromising the integrity of the original concept agreed by Members.

#### **4. What are we doing to accelerate improvement in the standards of Lead School provision in the Phase 1 areas**

There are teams in each locality planning the development of the lead school and identifying training needs and using a variety of options for addressing the need. Specialist Teaching Service managers and Achievement and Access coordinators are key players in this process and are supporting the development of Lead School provision in their specific dimensions of need. Survey responses from individual Lead Schools are being analysed by these specialist staff to identify issues and to address them through support, training and advice etc.

Special Schools have been particularly helpful in sharing expertise and assisting Lead School staff to attend training at their schools and to access teaching resources.

Responses to particular standards or areas of activity are also being analysed to identify common concerns and areas where improvement is slow for all or a number of schools. Strategies will be put in place to respond to these, for example bringing together Lead Teachers for specific packages of training around delivering outreach.

Finally, there is a small number of schools within the pilot areas where there is a lack of sufficient engagement with task groups/support mechanisms and overall progress is too slow. The Lead School Programme Steering Group is addressing each of these cases individually and agreeing the most appropriate course of action in consultation with the local LCSP Manager and Area Children's Services Officer.

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## **Review of Special Units and Designated Provision**

### **Report on the outcome of the Phase 1 Lead School Survey – Abridged version** **July 2009**

#### **Introduction**

All lead schools in Phase 1 were invited to complete a survey pro forma which was made available online and in hard copy. This is the second time the schools completed the survey. The first was in June 2008 when briefings were arranged to explain the procedure and rationale. In most cases, the Teacher in Charge or the person appointed to lead and manage the new provision completed the survey.

The results of this survey are being used to analyse individual lead school activity and progress as well as providing an overall picture of progress in implementing the lead school programme. The analysis of individual schools will inform the planning of Local Authority support for pilot lead schools over the coming year and all lead schools are being encouraged to use the outcome of the survey to plan activity in the coming year

In this report, results have been aggregated and compared to the results of the June 2008 survey in order to give us indication of overall progress towards the objectives of the Review and to inform our evaluation of the Phase 1 pilot.

#### ***Survey response***

29 Lead School Provisions replied out of a possible 32, one returning anonymously. The 91% return provides a good basis from which to judge progress towards the aims of the review. A careful analysis of each return shows a high degree of internal consistency when the answers are placed against the known practice within the school, or placed alongside each other. The responses appear to have been well considered and reported honestly.

#### **Current and Future role of Lead Schools**

Progress has been made in the number of lead schools involved in outreach activity of all types in the last year. In particular, the number of schools benefiting from lead school advice and training has increased. For example, in the case of training in 2008, 3 lead schools were each supporting 1 school in the locality. In July 2009, 15 schools reported supporting between 1 and all schools in their locality. This increase in activity is evident across all of the need types and across all pilot partnership areas.

In the case of outreach support to individual children, the number of schools involved and children benefiting remains low, however, this area of work has seen a 45% increase overall. There has been no increase in the number of schools involved in providing flexible



placements within the lead school. In the case of *new* lead school provision, the increase in activity is also marked with only 1 of the 10 new lead school provisions delivering outreach in 2008 compared to 7 in 2009. The survey has provided valuable information to assist in planning some focused work to ensure all schools are in a position to deliver outreach support and, in particular, to ensure there is a more significant increase in the provision of support to individual children.

There is evidence within the survey results that Lead Schools have undertaken significant staff training over the last year. At awareness and understanding level there has been an increase in the number of schools undertaking training and the number of staff now qualified. There has not been an increase in the number with advanced level qualifications (training for advanced level qualifications can take up to two years.) A number of the new lead schools recruited teachers with advanced level qualifications to start in September 2009. Recruitment and training of lead school staff are an ongoing focus of the review and there will be targeted support to ensure that all schools have at least one advanced level qualified staff member.

A large number of schools continue to support pupils within their 'base' provision. This will be the case for a number of years as the impact of the new policy becomes embedded in practice. There has been an increase in the number of pupils on the roll of the lead schools being supported through the lead school specialist staff but who are not in the 'base' provision. This is a positive development. As yet, there has not been an increase in the number of pupils on the roll of non-lead schools with some flexible or temporary access to the lead school 'base' provision. However, there has been an increase in the referral rate through the various routes (SEN and Resources, Partnership Based Review and local schools) for lead school support for pupils attending non-lead schools and this demonstrates that the lead school is being seen as a valuable specialist resource within the locality.

### **Working with other professionals**

There is an overall increase in the number of lead schools within the pilot areas working as a team with a range of specialist staff groups, both across the partnerships and within lead schools. As the lead school model becomes more embedded in practice locally, we would expect to see this increase to a significant level. It is encouraging from the data that partnership working between lead school and special school staff has doubled since the last survey. .

### **Estimate of Standards Reached**

As part of the survey, lead schools were asked to rate their stage of development on a scale of 1– 4 against a number of standards (tabled below), 1 being the most developed and 4 the least. It is encouraging to note that there is a significantly lower percentage of lead schools placing themselves at 4 (least developed) compared with 2008 (30% in 2008, 18% in 2009). There are also signs of increasing confidence amongst lead schools in activities that relate to new areas of responsibility for them, such as partnership working, working with other schools (outreach), provision of training and contributing as a key player to the delivery of the Partnership Provision Plan. This is a very positive outcome in terms of the implementation of the lead school model. While both the 2008 and 2009 survey ratings show schools are less

secure about partnership working and offering flexible placements than they are about learning opportunities and staff expertise, there have been improvements.

The table below compares 2008 with 2009 and shows the summary ratings under each of the 16 standards that were surveyed. The total score for each standard has been calculated by multiplying each rating by the number of schools which gave that rating and then adding them together. For example, 24 schools provided a rating for the standard 'working with other schools in the cluster' as follows: 16 lead schools rated it 4, 4 lead schools rated it 3, 1 lead school rated it 2 and 3 lead schools rated it 1. This gives a total score of 81 ( $16 \times 4 + 4 \times 3 + 1 \times 2 + 3 \times 1 = 81$ ).

Therefore, in 2009, schools are most confident about 'care practice' which scores 42, and least confident about 'providing flexible placements' which scores 83. The level of schools' confidence in different standards can then be compared year on year. The outcome is as follows:

	2008 Return		2009 Return	
<b>Standard</b>	<b>Weighted score</b> (a lower score denotes greater confidence)	<b>Ranking against schools' confidence levels</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
<b>Working with Parents</b>	45	1	46	2
<b>Pastoral Support</b>	47	2	46	2
<b>Care Practice</b>	48	3	42	1
Learning Opportunities	52	4	50	3
<b>Staff Expertise</b>	54	5	52	4
<b>Partnership Working</b>	56	6	53	5
<b>Transfer and transition</b>	56	6	53	5
<b>Leadership</b>	56	6	53	5
<b>Resource Deployment</b>	62	7	52	4
<b>Accommodation</b>	64	8	60	6
<b>Working with Other Schools in the cluster(s)</b>	81	9	77	10
<b>Working within the Cluster Provision Plan</b>	81	9	65	7
<b>Policy</b>	82	10	67	8
<b>Flexible Placements</b>	83	11	83	12
<b>Provision of Training</b>	83	11	75	9
<b>Working with Special Schools</b>	86	12	81	11

The responses to the survey this year suggest that schools are most confident in care practice and least confident about providing flexible placement arrangements. Pastoral support, working with parents and learning opportunities figure amongst the highest levels of confidence. Provision of training, working with special schools and working with other schools are still rated quite low. The point that was made in the 2008 report still remains pertinent; the results reflect the functions that schools traditionally know best and the functions they are less secure about. However, while the overall ranked positions have not changed significantly, the results show an upward trend for some of the new functions and this is very encouraging, especially given the short timeframe within which much of this development has taken place.

In summary, while some of the changes that schools report are small, they are nevertheless very positive and encouraging. Lead schools have only been running for 3 terms and the first term was heavily focused on early development work. The trend is upwards and we are confident we shall see this continue over the course of the next year.

A full version of this report is available on the Unit Review website  
[www.kent.gov.uk/unitanddesignationreview](http://www.kent.gov.uk/unitanddesignationreview)

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**September 2009**