

CABINET

20 SEPTEMBER 2011

Title: Proposed Establishment of an Additionally Resourced Provision at Monteagle Primary School	
REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES	
Open report	For Decision
Wards Affected: Eastbury	Key Decision: Yes
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Accountable Divisional Director: Jane Hargreaves, Head of Quality & School Improvement	
Accountable Director: Helen Jenner, Corporate Director of Children's Services	
Summary: <p>This report presents a proposal for Monteagle Primary School to establish an Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) for pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs who have been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. Children with Asperger's Syndrome are described as being on the autistic spectrum. The provision is to be open from the start of the Spring Term 2012.</p> <p>This proposal has been initiated for the following main reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The lack of suitable, local specialist places for pupils of primary school age with autism which has resulted in a number of young children travelling to Colchester.2. The expectation that there is provision for pupils with special educational needs to be taught in local mainstream settings where this is possible.3. The value for money provided by additionally resourced provisions, as opposed for instance to costly out-of-borough placements <p>Further benefits include;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. The provision of on-site specialists.5. Improved access to specialist staff	

Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet is recommended to agree the establishment of an additionally resourced provision at Monteagle Primary School for children with statements of Special Educational Needs who have a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome.

Reason(s)

This proposal will assist the council in providing specialist provision to children of primary school age who have complex needs related to Asperger's Syndrome. The law requires the council to make provision for children's special educational needs appropriately. The council does not currently have the capacity to meet the increased numbers of children who are autistic. The alternative would be to purchase expensive out-of-borough places at high cost.

1. Background

- 1.1 The expanding population in Barking & Dagenham and the growing numbers of children identified with learning difficulties and disabilities require an increase in specialist provision. Forecasts show a further 200 special school places will be needed by 2016 for children with profound and multiple special educational needs in line with high levels of population growth and oversubscribed current provision. Addressing the need for additional provision is a key Council priority.
- 1.2 The growing school population in Barking & Dagenham has therefore placed considerable strains on schools. Provision for pupils with significant learning needs is currently made through one large special school, Trinity School, and also at Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) attached to schools. As a result of population growth, the Authority is struggling to place a number of children who have significant and challenging special educational learning needs.
- 1.3 Based on information available from the early years and health teams, it is clear that additional specialist mainstream provision will be required to enable children to access a mainstream place.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed to establish a unit provision at Monteagle Primary and, as part of future developments, to establish further primary units to meet the needs of a range of children with complex SEN needs.
- 2.2 A draft SEN provision development plan has been completed and was circulated to the schools forum in the Summer Term 2011.
- 2.3 The Borough currently has no specialist Autistic Spectrum Disorder provision for Asperger's Syndrome in ARPs at any primary schools. There are two secondary ARPs which provide for Autism.
- 2.4 The Monteagle ARP will be staffed by an experienced specialist teacher and supported by three specially trained learning support assistants. The Council will provide specialist training in order to develop the ARP as a centre of excellence.

- 2.5 The aim is to ensure that sufficient specialist education places are available to be able to provide for all of the borough's children and young people within local settings. The building in which the SEN unit is to be run, located at Stamford Road (previously known as "The Acorns") is conveniently close to the school.
- 2.6 The cost of this provision will compare favourably with that of out-of-borough provision.
- 2.7 Consultation regarding the ARP at Monteagle Primary School has taken place and includes discussion at a Governing Body meeting held on 17 November 2010 and at the Schools Forum meeting held in the Summer Term 2011. Further, a letter was sent to parents, carers, guardians and pupils of Monteagle Primary School on 6 June 2011.
- 2.8 The school will manage the ARP under the supervision of the Headteacher, who has a reporting responsibility to Governors.
- 2.9 A Notice was published in The News on 23 July 2011. The notice period ended after six weeks from the date of publication on 2 September 2011. The notice has been on display at both the main public library in Barking and on the School notice-board.
- 2.10 The provision of the ARP addresses inclusion and the needs of children with special educational needs. The proposed new ARP will allow the Local Authority to meet the needs of some young people who at present would have to be placed out-borough. The development of this unit also responds to parental pressure for local special schools and ARP places where currently demand exceeds local capacity.
- 2.11 The present proposal will enable the council to fulfil its statutory obligations to this group of children with significant complex autism. It will be a cost-effective alternative to potential out-of-borough placements.

3. Financial Implications

Implications verified by: Tracie Evans, Corporate Director

- 3.1 The start up and running costs for this ARP are to be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant. The cost in 2011-12 to the DSG will total £187,500 (£100,000 start up plus £87,500 running costs for September 2011 to March 2012). Annual running costs thereafter will be £150,000.
- 3.2 Compared to the external SEN placements that cost between £30,000 to £40,000 per place with an additional £5,000 to £10,000 required for transport, the ARP will generate significant savings of £60,000 to £150,000 per annum. Therefore, the set up costs of £100,000 will be fully recovered within two years. These related to necessary adaptations to the building and this has allowed for a suitable working environment for both the staff and the pupils. New furnishings have been purchased including the appropriate type of workstations. Also included are costs in respect of preparing and decorating the converted classroom. The level of the unit cost of resource provided compares favourably with the cost of external provision which can be significantly more.

- 3.3 Funding has been agreed for the teaching staff at a ratio of one specialist teacher and three learning support assistants per six pupils. The unit will cater for six children ages 5 to 11 with complex and challenging autism. This is based on six pupils at a base cost of £25,000 per pupil.

4. Legal Implications

Implications verified by: Fiona Taylor, Group Manager, Legal Services

- 4.1 This report recommends the establishment of an additionally resourced provision at Monteagle Primary School for children with special educational needs that have an Asperger's Syndrome diagnosis. The additional provision is provided under Section 19 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006. The School Organisation (Prescribed alterations to maintained schools) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the alterations that can be made by governing bodies and local authorities which includes the addition of provision reserved for pupils with special educational needs. The authority has a duty to consider the provision of need required for children with special educational needs in its area and ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential.
- 4.2 The proposals have been published in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the required procedural and implementation arrangements are being followed.

5. Other Implications

- **Risk Management** - We need to make provision as a statutory obligation for additional pupil places in the borough and these proposals mitigate the risk of failing to provide suitable numbers of places for pupils' learning. The number of children with Asperger's Syndrome has increased, partly owing to the growing pupil population; hence the need for additional special needs places. The consequences of not providing more places in-borough is the increased cost of sending growing numbers of SEN children to other placements outside of the borough and this leads to less overall control over their education and reduced control of the associated financial costs.
- **Safeguarding Children** – The SEN unit will be staffed with an experienced specialist teacher supported by three specially trained learning support assistants. The local authority has a very experienced team of specialist inclusion advisors who would continue to support the development of the ARP as a centre of excellence.

A senior, specialist educational psychologist (for Autism) provides further assessment of children's needs. For children whose behaviour or levels of independence may be a concern, a risk assessment is undertaken. This will identify the specific interventions to be put in place and will be regularly evaluated.

- **Property/Asset Issues** - A former educational building that was known as the ACORNS has been allocated for this SEN provision.

6 Options Appraisal

- 6.1 Do Nothing – This would mean children with ASD and Asperger’s Syndrome would need to go to out-of-borough placements at a significantly higher cost than this proposal.
- 6.2 Create additional places at Trinity School. This is not possible as the school is already at full capacity or would mean displacing current pupils at the schools.
- 6.3 Create an additionally resourced provision at Monteagle Primary School. This is seen to be the best option as the school are keen to provide this SEN unit and therefore has the backing of the staff and the headteacher.

7. Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

Legislation which allows this – Education and Inspections Act 2006
DfE Guidance – “Making Changes to a Maintained Mainstream School (other than Expansion, Foundation, Discontinuance & Establishment Proposals)”
Council Policy House
Children & Young People Plan
Every Disabled Child Matters Charter
Inclusion Strategy
Notice published 23rd July 2011
Consultation Letter dated 6 June 2011

8. List of appendices:

None