



# Walsall Council

## Walsall Children's Services

**Report to:** Schools Forum

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Subject:** The Achievement of Vulnerable Learners – funding support

**Contact:** Karen Grandison/Sue Egersdorff ([egersdorffs@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:egersdorffs@walsall.gov.uk))

**Purpose of the report:** To respond to the request made at the last forum meeting as indicated by minute note below.

### ***Resolved***

*That the report be noted. That a report be submitted to the next meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 on the funding for vulnerable learners*

### **Executive Summary**

1.1 This Report outlines how £100,000 can be used to support vulnerable learner provision across Walsall schools. It recognises the feedback from the Schools Forum meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Members of Schools Forum may wish to target other activity/development rather than the ideas presented in this paper.

1.2 The Report recommends that the funding is used to focus on building capacity across Priority Work-strand Five of the School Improvement Recovery Programme, '***The Achievement of Vulnerable Learners***' (See appendix A). The Work-strand has four key improvement areas that mirror the National Achievement for All Programme priorities:

- **Leadership and governance** – to support schools to maintain a focus on the aspirations, access and achievement of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils
- **Teaching and learning** – leading to improved progress for all pupils whatever their SEND and/or vulnerabilities
- **Parent/carers engagement** – improvements in parent/carers engagement with school and their child's learning

- **Links with Early Help Strategy** and wider outcomes – improved integrated working with early help, health, social care and other multi-agency services to support participation, enjoyment and achievement of vulnerable learners in all aspects of school life

1.3 Through Work-strand Five, the Local Authority is committed to working alongside schools to develop a positive narrative around vulnerable learners and to evidence:

- what a good offer of intervention will look like
- developing options and strategy about how to achieve it
- integrated thinking about shared accountabilities, roles and responsibilities

The definition of vulnerability is also intended to be a broad one, extending beyond pupils with SEND to include any pupil who may for whatever reason be at risk of underperformance eg. young carers, domestic abuse, risk taking behaviours, child poverty, child neglect, trauma

1.4 The overarching intention is to impact on pupil achievement and learning in the following focus areas:

- deliver improvements in progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics
- successfully narrowing the gap – improving the progress of identified pupils to meet national averages
- professional development to build capacity and capability to support and understand children displaying behavioural challenges
- clearer joined up accountability processes around the progress, attendance and attainment of pupils accessing pupil premium
- support to engage parents more effectively in their child's learning
- improving wider outcomes such as behaviour and attendance, with particular attention on reducing persistent absenteeism

1.5 In addition the Workstrand '***The Achievement of Vulnerable Learners***' is intended to support all schools to:

- Meet the expectations of the Ofsted Framework
- Provide evidence for the accountability measures in terms of the progress of pupils receiving pupil premium
- Provide best practice resources for all schools to access around the effective use of pupil premium
- Support the effective implementation of the new SEND Code of Practice from September 2014

1.6 Walsall Schools already have an established connection with the DfE supported Achievement for All Programme. The intention is to use the current expertise within the LA to establish a working group to steer the implementation of Work-strand 5 by overseeing the development and prioritisation of work and associated spend. This will ensure that capacity building and sustainability of frontline professionals underpin this work and enable the effective dissemination of practice to all schools whilst also learning from national leading edge research and developments. The following allocations of spend are therefore approximates and can be adjusted to reflect the views of the working group.

1.7 It is proposed that the funding is allocated against the four Work-strand Improvement priorities to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting of impact and added value. The proposed detail of activity for each priority is outlined in the attached Work-strand Plan:

- **Leadership and Governance c. £35000**
- **Teaching and Learning c.£35000**
- **Parent/carers engagement c.£15000**
- **Links with wider outcomes and Early Help Strategy c.£15000**

1.8 As outlined in the previous paper, it is important to use this funding to support developments that will increase the confidence of frontline professionals in schools and their leaders across a range of levels to ensure investment results in sustainable gains in practice and expertise. Members of Schools Forum may, however, wish to use some or all of the money differently or make additions to the Work-strand Plan from their knowledge and evidence base of particular Walsall wide improvement priorities.

#### 1.9 Accountability and progress

It is proposed that a working group of SENCOs and appropriate LA officers will oversee and direct this work and associated spend. The membership of the Group could be agreed through Schools Forum. Progress of the work would be reported through Schools Forum and the Assistant Director for Access and Improvement who would hold accountability through the School Improvement Recovery Programme.

#### 1.10 Summary

As requested, this Report provides further detail about the designated funding for the achievement of vulnerable learners and demonstrates its alignment with the School Improvement Recovery Programme through which the work of the Working Group will be fully transparent and formally reported.

# **Walsall School Improvement Recovery Programme**

## **Priority Workstrand Five**

*The achievement of vulnerable learners*

Workstrand Lead: Karen Grandison

V2 March 2014

## **Rationale for *Vulnerable Learners* workstrand**

Walsall's ambition is for every child to attend a good and outstanding school and to have every opportunity to thrive and achieve. This includes children who for a range of diverse reasons may be vulnerable or disadvantaged and includes children with SEND.

Currently, too many of these children attend Walsall schools that are not judged to be good and outstanding which makes this an area of immediate focus for the School Improvement Recovery Programme.

Walsall has a strong connection with the DfE supported Achievement for All Programme. The intention of this workstrand is to use the expertise within the LA and share more widely the good practice that is already in place within local schools whilst also learning from national leading edge research and developments

## **Focus for *Vulnerable Learners* workstrand**

The focus of the workstrand is adapted from the national Achievement for All Programme with the intention of impacting on pupil's learning by:

- delivering significant improvements in progress and attainment in reading, writing and maths
- successfully narrowing the gap – improving the progress of identified pupil to meet national averages
- clearer joined up accountability processes around the progress and attainment of pupils with SEND, FSM and LAC
- improving wider outcomes such as behaviour and attendance, significantly reducing persistent absenteeism
- leading to a whole-school impact with improved outcomes across the school
- helping to significantly improve school relationships with parents.

In addition the *Vulnerable Learners* workstrand is intended to support schools to:

- meet the expectations of the OFSTED framework with a proven impact in all four key inspection areas
- provide evidence for the accountability measures highlighting the progress of the lowest attaining 20%
- provide evidence of effective use of the pupil premium.
- Prepare for and support the implementation of the new SEN Code of Practice from September 2014

## Four Key Improvement Priorities

In line with the national Achievement for All Programme, the workstrand has four key improvement priorities around which improvement work will be planned, monitored and evaluated.

### Priority 1

**Leadership and governance** – to ensure schools maintain a focus on the aspirations, access and achievement of vulnerable and disadvantaged children

### Priority 2

**Teaching and learning** – leading to improved progress for all children whatever their SEND and/or vulnerabilities

### Priority 3

**Parent/carers engagement** – improvements in parent and carers engagement with schools and their child's learning

### Priority 4

**Links with Early Help Strategy and wider outcomes** – improve integrated working with health, social care and other multi-agency services to support participation, enjoyment and achievement of children in all aspects of school life

## Strategic Intent

The strategic intent behind the *Vulnerable Learners* workstrand is to improve the learning outcomes of vulnerable and disadvantaged children at pace, ensuring that developments align with and add value to the Council's emerging Early Help and School Improvement Strategies, supporting schools to understand children's vulnerabilities holistically. This will help to ensure that all practitioners working directly with vulnerable children and young people will model:

### Aspiration

- High expectations for all, including themselves
- Setting ambitious goals and striving for excellence
- Being passionate in everything they do

### Access

- Honesty and openness, with respect for all
- Ensuring opportunities for sharing, growth and development
- Excellent communication and collaboration within and between services

### Achievement

- Celebrating and building on success, recognizing and replicating what works
- Work in partnership to achieve common goals
- Ensuring a relentless focus on high quality and high impact

*(adapted from Achievement for All, 2011)*

## Where are we now – areas requiring focus

**Following a wide ranging review of multi-agency and wider children's services data and intelligence the following areas have been highlighted for focus and further consideration. Some of these areas can also be cross-referenced with Walsall's corporate Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-16.**

### LA level:

- Readiness for implementation of the Education Health and Care Plans and new Code of Practice from the perspective of schools, Local Authority and key stakeholders
- Development of the LA Local Offer with the immediate intention of reducing the need for formal assessment, identifying gaps in provision and providing a robust evidence base for improving progress and securing better outcomes at school and local level
- Securing effective transitions for vulnerable children and young people as the Children and Families Bill 2013 extends the SEND system from 0-25years of age
- Effective data collection, collation and analysis
- Preparation for systems and processes that effectively support the implementation of personalized budgets for vulnerable children
- Commissioning arrangements that evidence a strong working relationship between education, health and social care are based on children's individual needs
- Implementation of the free education entitlement offer for vulnerable two year olds
- Successful implementation of the children's centre services restructure and early intervention family support offer

### Early years setting and school level:

- Understanding of school readiness
- Good and outstanding provision for vulnerable two year olds
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile outcomes
- Progress and attainment of vulnerable learners at all phases
- Early language and vocabulary development
- Reading at Key Stage One
- Literacy and Mathematics attainment at Key Stages One and Two
- Absence and attendance
- Effective use of Pupil Premium



- Influence on parental engagement and home learning environments
- Effective promotion of the characteristics of effective learners and self study skills
- Environments for learning

### **Child and young person level:**

- Understanding the learning needs of 0-3 year olds with focus on the two year old learner.
- Provision for gifted and talented children and young people
- Looked after children and young people
- Children and young people placed out of borough for whatever reason
- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and migrant children and young people
- Children and young people missing education ie pupils with SEN excluded from school
- Home educated children and young people
- Children and young people as carers
- Children and young people living with vulnerable adults
- Children and young people experiencing domestic abuse
- Children and young people living in poverty

# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT RECOVERY PROGRAMME

## Work Stream Five: Vulnerable Learners

Lead: Karen Grandison

Objective and actions	Lead & delivery deadline	Success measures and/or evidence base & key deadlines	Impact for children & young people
<b>1.Leadership and Governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure schools are ready to implement the new SEN code of practice from September 2014</li> <li>• Support schools to disseminate best practice in terms of use of the Pupil Premium to raise standards for the most vulnerable</li> <li>• Ensure schools share a common understanding of the causes of vulnerability in its widest sense and its impact beyond SEND</li> <li>• Provide targeted Governor development opportunities to raise Governor awareness of vulnerable learner improvement priorities</li> <li>• Work with senior and middle leaders and SENCOs to ensure effective evidence based improvement planning for vulnerable learners</li> <li>• Support HTs in the recruitment, retention and succession planning of well qualified, high quality SENCOs</li> <li>• Support HTs to ensure SENCOs are allocated appropriate time and</li> </ul>			

<p>resources and are able to influence decisions so they can deliver good outcomes for vulnerable learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish shared scorecard to agree indicators against which to measure progress and impact for vulnerable learners</li><li>• Ensure HTs and SENCOs prioritise and deliver high quality CPD for staff in relation to effective interventions for children with special educational needs</li></ul> <p><b>2.Quality Teaching and Learning for vulnerable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve the quality of teaching and learning for vulnerable learners through earlier identification and intervention according to need.</li><li>• Support a Borough wide focus on the teaching of basic skills across all aspects of language and mathematics learning</li><li>• Support schools to improve the teaching of reading and early language development from pre-school into school and beyond</li><li>• Support schools to develop and implement effective provision maps to meet the needs of children with</li></ul>			
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<p><b>special educational needs</b></p> <p><b>3.Parent/carers engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote a wider understanding of child development by the introduction of the Five to Thrive approach and associated focus on development aware parenting and effective home learning environments</li><li>• Align work more closely across Children’s Services through effective Early Help Strategies to ensure the most vulnerable families are well supported to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually</li><li>• Improve work with families where children and young people have elected not to attend school</li><li>• Encourage schools to consult with parents in developing and reviewing their local offers</li></ul> <p><b>4.Links with Early Help Strategy and wider outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish senior leadership group for Vulnerable Learners that brings together School Improvement, Early Help Services and others at regular</li></ul>			
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<p><b>intervals to think strategically around key improvement priorities and to monitor progress at LA level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>• Work more closely with multi-agency partners and the developing Early Help Area Teams to identify vulnerable early learners and intervene appropriately as soon as possible</b></li><li><b>• Work with newly formed Early Help Area Leads and their School Ready and Parenting Lead to establish effective parental support and raise awareness of home learning environments</b></li><li><b>• Monitor impact of Children’s Centre restructure and locality working on school ready outcomes</b></li></ul>			
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