



Walsall Council

Walsall Children's Services

Report to: Schools Forum

Date: 16 June 2009

Subject: Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy

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Purpose of the report: To appraise School Forum of the proposals to pilot the Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy in Walsall. The proposal has been endorsed by the Next Practice Network.

Disadvantage Subsidy Pilot Recommendations

That the Next Practice Network support the proposals to pilot the Extended Services Disadvantage Subsidy on the following premise::

- The disadvantage subsidy should be piloted across 3 extended school clusters
- The pilot is based on eligible children across the Borough, as opposed to the most deprived areas
- The pilot should be used to investigate factors of diversity and spread that would help the successful roll out of the disadvantage subsidy to all schools in 2010/11.

The pilot should be used to establish the needs for successful co-ordination of activities.

Background

- The Children's Plan, published in December 2007, set out plans to make £265.5 million in funding available to schools between 2008 and 2011. This funding is designed to assist schools to meet the Every Child Matters outcomes by providing a comprehensive range of exciting, high quality extended services, and ensure that these are accessible to all children and young people.
- Funding is to directly support economically disadvantaged children and young people and children in care accessing extended school activities and help narrow the gap in outcomes for these children. Activities will be delivered through extended schools programme of activities, with funding used at school level. The subsidy funding is ring-fenced at Local Authority level and LAs are expected to passport all funding on to schools or budget holding school clusters. The funding is intended to support one or more clusters in each LA in the first year, enabling Local Authorities and school clusters to begin to develop approaches in advance of the national roll out of funding in 2010-11 for all clusters of schools.
- The 2009-10 allocation for Walsall to pilot the disadvantage subsidy is **£234,441**. The Training and Development Agency (TDA) has based the funding on approximately £300 per child, which means that in Walsall we can serve around **780 children** this year. The funding is not weighted according to levels of deprivation in geographical areas and every child who meets the eligibility criteria has an equal entitlement, regardless of where they live.
- The TDA have assumed a take up rate of 60% based on the take up of free school meals; It obviously follows that if take up is much higher in any given cluster then the total amount available to spend on each child will be reduced within that cluster.
- The TDA have suggested that as a minimum the eligibility criteria should be based on free school meals and Looked After Children (LAC). Local

Authorities can develop a more sophisticated data set if they wish, although this would obviously be more complex, and clusters are also free to define their own levels of disadvantage based on local knowledge.

- The guidance states that we need to “ensure that the participating cluster(s) have characteristics which will support the successful implementation of the subsidy”; the capacity to co-ordinate within a cluster will therefore be a key feature of the pilot learning. However there are different models of co-ordination which it would be beneficial to test out and our recommendation is that we work with 2 or 3 clusters in the first year in order to ensure that we develop good learning and robust systems for the full roll out in 2010/11.
- There is an expectation that some clusters should be able to “hit the ground running” in summer 2009.
- This activity will not necessarily require significant amounts of additional commissioning work but will require participating schools to consult with their identified children and young people and their parents regarding activities to be provided.
- Pathfinder Local Authorities have developed a more positive branding with their pilot schools and clusters and we would welcome input from the pilot clusters to achieve the same in Walsall.

Proposal

- The Disadvantage Subsidy should be piloted across 3 extended school clusters, which have different characteristics, enabling us to reach our target number of children and gain maximum learning from the pilot stage.
- In selecting the 3 clusters, it is suggested that: the first cluster should be from an area within the top three highest number of free school meal pupils, the second cluster should be from a cluster with free school meal percentages between 15 and 26%, and one cluster from an area that has less than 10% of free school meals pupils (See Appendix 1)
- We also recognise that there are different challenges in areas of lower deprivation, e.g. how to ensure that children benefit from the subsidy “invisibly” and are not stigmatised by their peers.
- In combining the various factors of diversity and spread, with what we know about cluster capacity to engage with this agenda and co-ordinate activities this year we have identified three possible clusters. This does not mean that these are the only ones which could have been chosen however we believe they meet the overall TDA requirements and have agreement in principle from the TDA Regional Programme Lead
- The funding allocations for the 3 clusters would be based on free school meals data and a 47.5% take up. This will allow an increase in funding for these clusters during the second phase (based on 60% take up), negating the need for reduced funding, which is often the case following pilot projects.

- Finally within this combination of areas we have tried to get a mix of ethnic and social diversity, as well as workable co-ordination arrangements. We therefore suggest the following clusters:

Group 1 (Bloxwich West): there is good cluster co-ordination in place, good ownership of the extended services agenda across all schools in the cluster and a high to middle ranking of eligible pupils

Next highest disadvantage

Group 2 (Palfrey): good co-ordination led by a Full Extended School, experience and good ownership of the extended services agenda across all schools in the cluster and the 3rd highest ranking of eligible pupils

Group 7 (Aldridge): there is strong cluster leadership but without a formal co-ordinator, strong sponsorship of the extended services agenda and a lower ranking concentration of eligible pupils.

Comments

Consideration was given to offer the pilot funding to the most geographically deprived cluster eg. the Blakenall/Leamore cluster, however, this would not provide the “across the board” learning from all children eligible for the subsidy. In addition there are a number of challenging issues facing the Head teachers within the area as a significant number of them in the Leamore area are new in post.

In consultation with the schools, the Alumwell cluster (group 3) has been split into 3A and 3B, which effectively means that neither of these two sub clusters would have the highest percentage of free school meals (Appendix 1 is based on data supplied by the TDA and does not separate between the two sub clusters). This applies equally to the Frank F / Central cluster (group 12).

The Darlaston Cluster, whilst having a higher percentage of free school meals compared to Bloxwich West, does not have all schools within the cluster at full core offer and the secondary school is focused on the proposal to become an academy. There is little to differentiate between the Aldridge (Group 7) and Pheasey (Group 11) and either group could be selected. The suggestion for the Aldridge cluster to become part of the pilot is based purely on the current level of engagement with the Extended Services Development Consultant.

Offer

- The extended services team would work with the clusters to identify possible additional criteria for selection beyond the FSM data.
- The extended services team would provide all pilot schools with a toolkit of letters, SLAs etc for schools to use or not as they wish
- The extended services team would broker TDA support to work with pilot clusters in developing their offer

Conclusion

- If delivered effectively the project can support a range of both standards-related and well-being outcomes under national indicators. It will do this by engaging with families and giving children access to extended services, who could not otherwise afford to do so.

Cluster	Schools	Pupils	FSM Pupils	Overall FSM%		Select Cluster(s) (by inserting an 'x')	FSM Pupils In Scope	Total Funding Estimate
(as recorded on the TDA Extended Schools system)								
Group 08 Blakenall	7	1,493	561	38%	266			
Group 03 Alumwell (Split Cluster 3A and 3B)	10	3,281	1,029	31%	489			
Group 02 Palfrey etc	8	3,122	902	29%	428	x	902	£129k
Group 04 Darlaston	8	2,762	705	26%	335			
Group 01 Bloxwich West	6	2,279	523	23%	248	x	523	£75k
Group 12 Frank F/Central (Split Cluster 12A and 12B)	11	4,268	965	23%	458			
Group 05 Bentley/Willenhall	9	3,101	607	20%	288			
Group 06 Pelsall/Shelfield	9	3,113	542	17%	257			
Group 10 Pool Hayes	9	4,656	796	17%	378			
Group 09 Brownhills	12	4,027	643	16%	305			
Group 14 Bloxwich East	6	2,301	355	15%	169			
Group 07 Aldridge	6	3,918	219	6%	104	x	219	£31k
Group 11 Pheasey	6	3,634	184	5%	87			
Group 13 Streetly	5	2,662	88	3%	42			