



Walsall Council

Walsall Children's Services

Report to: Schools Forum

Date: 11 March 2014

Subject: Achievement of Vulnerable Learners

Contact: Sue Egersdorff – School Improvement officer
Karen Grandison – SEN officer

Purpose of the report: For Schools Forum to consider the allocation of £100,000 from surplus to support the achievement of vulnerable learners across Walsall schools

Recommendations: See content of the report

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report considers how, if allocated, £100,000, can be used to support the achievement of vulnerable learners across Walsall schools. Support for vulnerable learners has been identified as one of the five priority work-strands in the Walsall School Improvement Recovery Programme

1.2 The report recommends that the funding is used to focus on building the capacity and capability of the school workforce in line with Achievement for All evidence based research of what works, in terms of raising the achievement levels of vulnerable learners. This includes:

- delivering significant improvements in progress and attainment in **reading, writing and mathematics - closing the gap** – improving the progress of identified pupils to meet national averages

- improving wider outcomes that impact on learning such as **behaviour and attendance**
- improving the **engagement of parents in children's learning**
- improving **transitions for vulnerable learners as the Children and Families Bill 2013 extends the SEND system from 0-25years**
- understanding issues of vulnerability that go beyond children with SEND. Following a need analysis, provide **bespoke training sessions on identified topics** and **direct input to specific groups of children and young people**. For example, unmet attachment needs, emotional and social intelligence, impulse control, trauma recovery, child poverty, relational poverty, conduct disorders, mental health and wellbeing and allocating resources appropriately.

2. Additional school support

2.1 It is important to use this funding to support developments that will increase both the capacity and capability of the school workforce and represent added value that is replicable, scaleable and sustainable over time.

2.2 Therefore in addition to the above the intention is to support schools to:

- meet the expectations of the Ofsted Framework in relation to vulnerable pupils
- provide robust evidence for the accountability measures highlighting the progress of the lowest attaining 20%
- provide evidence of the effective use of Pupil Premium including support for the sharing of practice
- support the implementation of the new SEN Code of Practice from September 2014 and in particular the development of integrated Education, Health and Care plans for the most vulnerable
- develop the professional knowledge and expertise of SENCOs alongside opportunities to network and engage in action research and practice sharing across schools and phases
- support SENCO's and other experienced staff to consider becoming Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs)

2.3 We need to build the capacity SENCO's and middle leaders to work with other professionals across Children's Services in line with the ambition outlined in Walsall's Early Help Strategy to ensure services are effectively co-ordinated around the particular needs of the vulnerable child and their family. Some resource could effectively be deployed to support this integration at a local level

2.4 Research seminars and action learning sets on specified themes – these would be organised following a needs analysis and on the basis of identified actions

against the work-strand improvement priorities set out in the School Improvement Recovery Plan.

3. Summary

If Schools Forum agree funding should be allocated to the achievement of vulnerable learners and agree with the broad improvement priorities and intentions set out above, a small group of SENCOs could consider in more detail how resources could be best used and improvement activity prioritised over the next 12 months.