

EVALUATION OF THE DEVELOPING LOCAL PROVISION PROJECT (DLP)

OCTOBER 2022

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Purpose of the paper

The following report is an evaluation of the Developing Local Provision Project after the first year of its implementation. The evaluation is provided to supply leaders of the council with the requisite information to enable a decision to be made on the future of DLP. This evaluation does not relate to the Early Years DLP as this project has only been running for one term and therefore will be reported on separately in March 2023.

Evidence used to compile report

The evidence base used for this evaluation draws on a range of both quantitative and qualitative data including;

- Termly Reports from schools and termly analysis outlining progress towards KPIs, spend, engagement of schools, wider learning, and barriers/challenges
- Consortia Partner Reports and termly analysis
- Reference Group Evaluation
- Reference Group Feedback Sessions Presentations from consortia, networks on progress and impact.
- Parent/Carer Surveys
- Reviews of the views of children and young people are to be undertaken in the first half term Autumn term 2022

Aims, Context, Range and Scope of DLP

Aims

The aim of the DLP project was to enable and empower mainstream school leaders to work together in localities to identify needs and resources needed for Children and Young People (CYP) with SEND and to access the necessary provision easier and quicker to support early intervention to improve outcomes.

Context (National and Local)

The DLP project, in its entirety, is a two-year school led pilot project funded by £7m per year from the high needs budget.

The DLP is a strategy that aligns well with that of the DfE shared in February 2021, who stated their biggest area for reform was to reform SEND provision in mainstream settings by enabling schools to access resource earlier and quicker and incentivise them to work together to intervene earlier by putting a greater share of budgets into the hands of local school leaders. The DfE states that they recognise that this SEND provision would be above what an individual school would be able to arrange and thus would promote cooperation and inclusion through a clear funding incentive and accountability structure.

At the time of the initiation of the DLP project, Birmingham had failed its Local Area Inspection in 2018 and again in 2021. In both inspections the progress and outcomes, attendance, exclusions, and employment opportunities of CYP with SEND were judged as requiring improvement.

Contextual data at inception of DLP also showed that Birmingham had significantly lower numbers of CYP with SEND in mainstream schools and higher numbers in special schools, thus many CYP were

not educated in the locality in which they lived, and many were travelling significant distances to get to school. Parents and carers confidence and satisfaction were also reported as very low as a result Birmingham identified the following three strategic priorities:

- Enhance the capacity of mainstream schools and settings to work together to provide for pupils in their local area and to plan the provision that they need
- Reduce reliance on high-cost specialist placements in out of City schools
- Enable pupils to access high quality provision as close as possible to where they live

And the following related KPIs were in place – although at that time there was limited focussed work taking place to address these

- Increase the number of pupils whose needs are met within mainstream schools locally without the need of an EHCP
- Improved performance, attendance, and achievement of vulnerable pupils within localities, consortia
- Lower home to school transport costs
- Reductions in numbers of pupils in independent placement
- Reductions in NEET for pupils in vulnerable groups
- Reductions in numbers of pupils from vulnerable groups on home tuition, children out of school
- Improved satisfaction of parents and pupils (measured through surveys)

However internal locality data analysis, at the time, also reflected that priorities were different in different areas of Birmingham so that generic citywide Key performance indicators were not always appropriate.

The DLP project was therefore designed to support and address these priorities and to align their approach to the recommendations of the DfE at that time Since then the DfE Green Paper March 2022 has also been published and reinforces and validates the DLP approach reporting that they are working towards:

- *changing the culture and practice in mainstream education to be more inclusive and better at identifying and supporting needs, including through earlier intervention, and improved targeted support.*
- *Improving mainstream provision, through excellent teacher training and development and a ‘what works’ evidence programme to identify and share best practice including in early intervention*
- *By 2030, all children and young people will benefit from being taught in a family of schools, with their school, including special and alternative provision in a strong trust or with plans to join or form one, sharing expertise and resource to improve outcomes*

Principles of DLP

The principles of DLP were agreed and shared with schools. These principles were as follows:

- To facilitate and empower schools to work together collaboratively and in partnership in localities *(to better meet the needs of children and young people at the universal and targeted levels of need)*
- Recognising and valuing the participation of all schools regardless of context.
- To build solutions, breakdown barriers and develop and improve current provision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families in the locality within which they live

- To strengthen the system to reduce variability and to promote and ensure inclusion and equity of provision for all
- Approach based upon transparency, openness, trust, and empowerment
- To promote and value creativity, innovation and evidence based and research led approaches
- Working towards long term sustainable improvement alongside short-term solutions
- Maximise efficient and effective use of resources with accountability for impact on the outcomes for children and young people

The expected outcomes of the project were also agreed and shared with schools:

- Objective 1: The needs of more pupils with SEND and their families at the universal and targeted levels of need are identified and met locally through increased resources, provision, and a more highly skilled workforce
- Objective 2: There is greater inclusion of children educated in their local community school and higher achievement among pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities, through more efficient and effective use of resources and as a result of effective and innovative school partnerships using evidence-based and research led approaches and strategies
- Objective 3: Outcomes and engagement, including progress and attendance for vulnerable pupils in primary and secondary schools in localities are improved and exclusions, children out of school, pupils in segregated provision including children on home tuition and children and young people who elect to home educate are reduced
- Objective 4: Improved and innovative provision for secondary pupils from vulnerable groups in the locality results in improved performance, engagement, attendance and progress and reductions in exclusions, children out of school and NEET population

Organisation of Partnership working for the DLP

Working with the Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP), it was agreed to use the existing structure of primary consortia (primary schools organised into 16 consortia partnerships) and secondary networks (6 partnerships of secondary schools in localities). It was also agreed that the DLP project work should be led by headteachers rather than SENCos. These consortia and networks had not worked around SEND previously in a highly focussed way and the strengths and leadership of these consortia and networks was variable.

Conversations with schools also indicated that schools were not always fully aware of their responsibilities around SEND or of the full context or strategic vision and direction across the LA for SEND, largely due to the many changes in leadership at all levels across Birmingham City Council.

At the time of the outset of the DLP, across the LA, the work of BCC teams and health professionals, working with EPs were building pathways within a locality so that children who would previously have been provided with EHC plans were better supported locally with the aim of involving heads to support more equitable and broader provision.

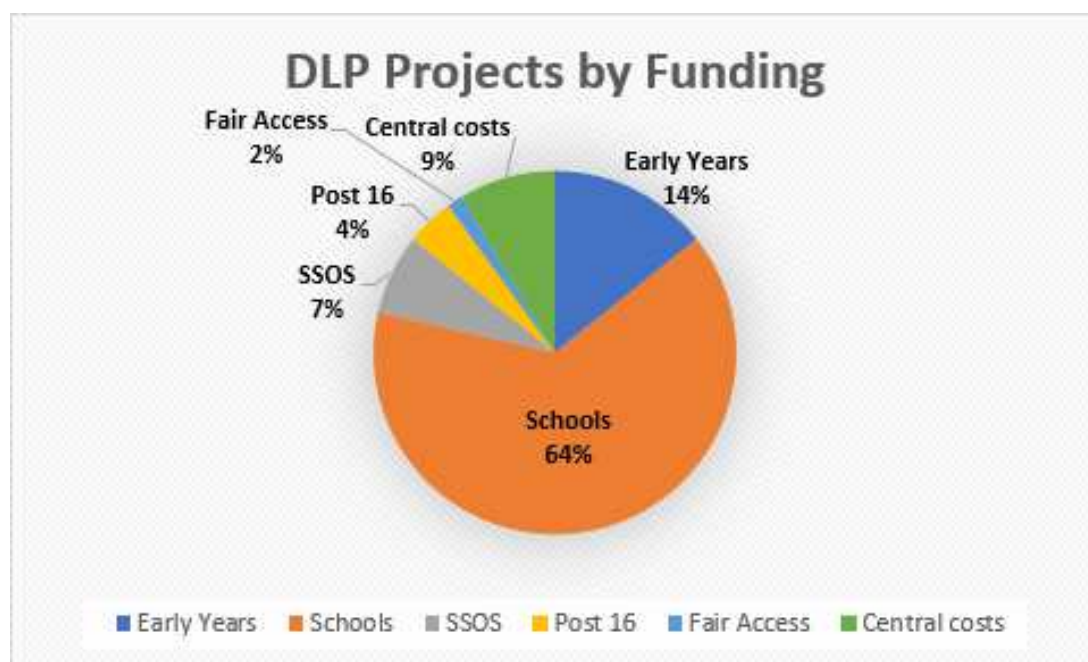
Secondary 'sharing panels' in localities were well established and had been in place since 2005

Although it was always an expectation that special schools would get involved in their consortia or network projects locally, they were not involved in meetings with the LA at the outset of the project specifically for two reasons. Firstly, some headteachers in the special school forum reported to the LA and to members of the council that special schools were unhappy at the use of the HNB for a mainstream project and as result, presented as a very real barrier to progress particularly as much

challenge from them was delivered in meetings with mainstream headteachers and with finance teams in the LA where schools were being encouraged to sign up to DLP.

Secondly, it was also agreed that it would be more prudent to bring special schools into the project later so that mainstream schools were not encouraged or tempted to defer and delegate the leadership of this project to the special schools, defeating the object of this work. However, special schools were all attached to consortia and networks to support the potential for involvement which has been achieved in some localities.

Range of projects supported by DLP funding



In addition to the 30 DLP projects being implemented across Birmingham's mainstream schools, there are four other work streams seeking to achieve strategic goals aligned to the DLP. These are

- Early Years Districts – 11 projects (allocated £1m which was shared equally across the 10 districts)
- Post 16 (1 project)
- Special Schools Outreach Service (1 citywide service)
- City wide project for vulnerable pupils not on a school roll – (Fair Access) (1 project)

Each of these four areas requires a separate decision about their future. The following evaluation focusses primarily on the projects centred on the 16 Primary Consortia and 7 Secondary Networks.

These projects involve schools and settings working together in partnership in localities with a range of partners e.g., LA support Services, Educational Psychology Services, Speech, and Language Services, SEND consultants and inspectors including ex HMI to implement a range of projects and working to an agreed set of KPIs which were developed following audits of need and analysis of SEND data for their locality. Plans and strategies have been wide and varied

For example:

- SEND and specialist training and development across partnerships of schools
- Locality SEND /DLP newsletters, websites, conferences, summer schools
- Assistant Educational Psychologists appointed to consortia
- Hubs for intensive support
- LA working with schools to reinstate pupils out of school-on-school roll
- Post 16 – directories of best practice and Quality Mark for Post 16 provision
- Early Years – stay and plays
- School SEND peer reviews with HMI and headteachers /senior leaders
- Transition – secondary schools working with 30+ feeder primaries
- SEND champions across schools

Summary of project themes

	Sp,L & C	SEMH	Autism	ADHD	Family	Consortia Specialist Worker *	External Specialist Worker *	Behaviour Support	Early Years
Sparklers (C)									
Cole Heath A/B (C)									
Erdington (N)									
Perry Barr (N)									
Sutton Coldfield (N)									
Aston Nechells (NW)									
Handsworth (NW)									
Ladywood & Soho (NW)									
Eastwards (E)									
FAYS (E)									
Saltley Plus (E)									
Hall Green (S)									
Kings Norton (S)									
Northfield (SE)									
Quinbourne (SE)									
Senneley's Park									

	Literacy	SEMH	Autism	ADHD	Family	Network Specialist Worker	External Specialist Partners	Specialist Curriculum Hubs	Transition
South West									
South									
East	*								
Central									
North - Sutton Coldfield									
North									
North West									

How the DLP is funded

The DLP was funded with £7million per year, for two years from the High Needs Budget. The initial process for allocating funding to schools was based on a formula related to the HNB formula. Each school was given a notional allocation based on a calculation using:

- factors of social deprivation worked out as a percentage (weighted at 27.5%),
- pupil numbers (57.5% weighted),
- number of low attaining pupils across a 3-year average (working below expectations) (15% weighted)

These notional amounts were agreed for each school. The average amount allocated to each primary school was £8,300 and to each secondary school, £23,300. Schools allocations were then aggregated into a total for the consortia/networks based on every schools' allocation in that locality.

Upon formal agreement of a project proposal, the funding was allocated via a Conditions of Grant Agreement between the LA and the "banker" school within a consortia/network.

The Conditions of Grant Agreement is a legal document agreed with LA officers, Legal and data Teams and schools which every DLP project lead had to sign on behalf of all schools and settings in their project, requiring them to provide termly reports on progress and impact of the project on a range of areas including engagement of schools progress towards KPIs related to pupil outcomes and budget.

The DLP budget overall was allocated in the following way:

- Schools £4.5 m
 - Early Years £1m
 - Special School Outreach £500,000
 - Post 16 £300,000
 - City wide project for vulnerable pupils not on a school roll £100,000
- Central costs for L and M of project (over 1.5 years allowing for slippage /lead in) £600,000
This includes BCC costs and those for the BEP commission

How is the effectiveness of the DLP tracked and monitored

At the outset of the project, LA Primary Strategic lead (who was a recently retired BCC headteacher from an outstanding school) and the Secondary Strategic Lead (who is the CEO of the Birmingham Education partnership) rolled out and monitored and reported on the start-up of the project, in the sector, escalating and resolving barriers to progress, sharing successes and reporting concerns to the DLP steering group. The DLP project lead and project manager report on progress to the SEND programme office monthly. This also involved strategic discussions with MAT leaders and CEOs with the BEP CEO to encourage involvement of MATs where possible, to align their work with the DLP projects in their localities

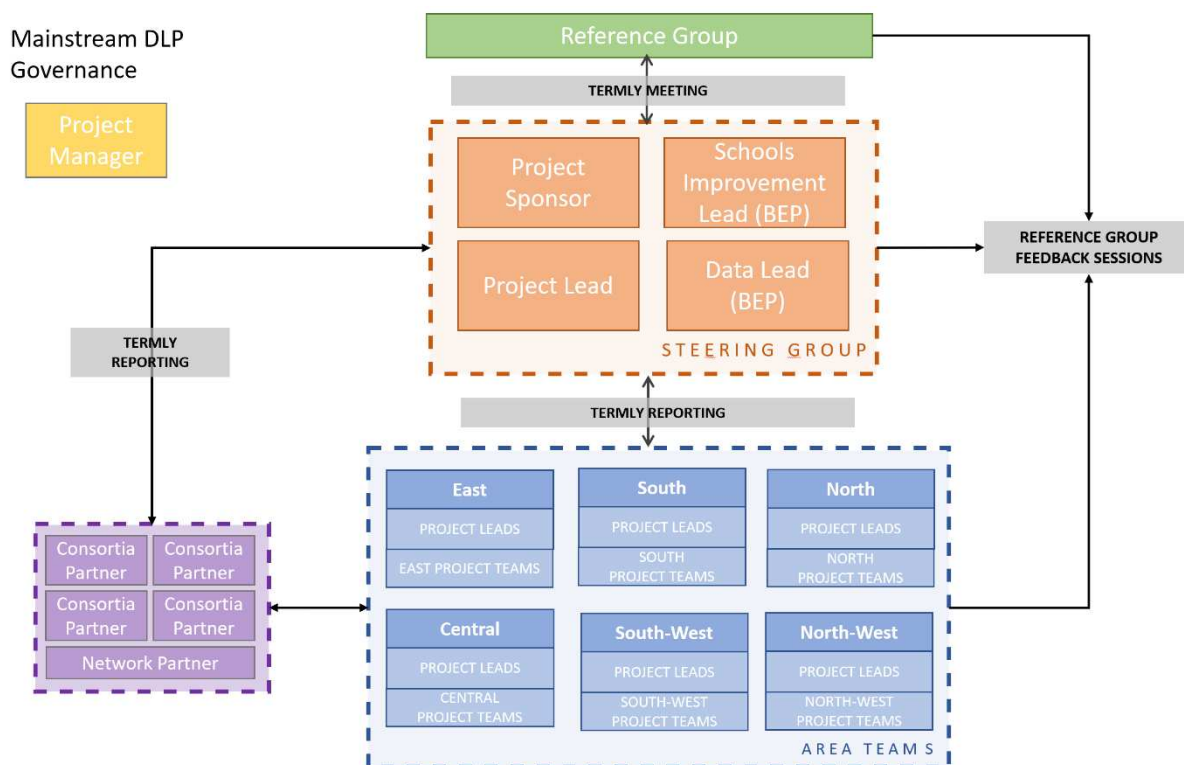
Once projects were running, Consortia and Network Partners were commissioned from BEP to offer support and challenge to the Consortia and Networks at project level. Each Consortia Partner undertakes a DLP discussion with every project lead and every school that they are involved with and provides a termly report to the DLP steering group on each project

Project Leads also submit a termly report to the DLP steering group reporting on engagement of schools, budget spend, progress towards KPIs and impact on outcomes for CYP, barriers to progress and wider learning – (See [Appendix A](#) for worked example)

These reports are analysed and areas of significant achievement, areas of concern, lack of progress or impact or under or overspend are followed up with relevant project leads. Every term each project lead reports to the Reference Group on progress and impact of project and the reference group offers significant levels of challenge and support.

How the DLP is governed

The Governance of the Mainstream DLP Project can be seen below.



The Structure

The Governance of the DLP Project was designed to align with the Primary Consortia and Secondary Networks Infrastructure that the Project was built on. This would allow for clear reporting and communication lines. Each Consortia/Network Project has a designated project lead, whom is the point of contact for all project communications, queries, and discussions via the Steering Group. They are also responsible for sending in Project Termly Reports and being the conduit/representative of the Consortia/Network at project level.

The Steering Group

The Steering Group deals with the day to day running of the project, supports projects and project leads, *offers strategic direction*, and is held accountable by the Local Authority. The Steering Group is made up of the following members:

Position	Name
DLP Project Lead	Debbie Holmes (BCC)
School Improvement/ Secondary Strategic Lead	Tim Boyes (BEP)
Data Lead	Roger McBrien (BEP)
Project Manager	Kudzai Madzivanyika (BCC)
AD BCC Rep	TBD

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The Reference Group

The Reference Group is an advisory group that meets with both the Steering Group and Project leads on a termly basis. The group is instilled to provide professional recommendations, support, challenge, feedback and ensure the steering group is running the project as intended. The Reference Group is a collective of the below:

Position	Name
AD BCC Rep	TBD
DLP Project Lead	Debbie Holmes
School Improvement/Secondary Strategic Lead	Tim Boyes
Data Lead	Roger McBrien
Project Manager	Kudzai Madzivanyika
Special School Representative	Charlotte Stubbs
Secondary Head Representative	Pete Weir
Secondary Head Representative	Katherine Marston
Primary Head Representative	Oliver Wilson
Primary Head Representative	Rob Meadows
CAT, PSS Rep	Terri Cawser
CAT, PSS Rep	Rebecca Hughes
Educational Psychologist Representative	Pauline Bromfield

The Journey - What has happened /been done over the last year

- The DLP has been supported by comprehensive handbooks, both for the set up and for the implementation of the DLP.
- Training and workshops have been held at the request of headteachers or as a result of a need identified through monitoring procedures
- There has been a schedule of meetings with headteachers and MAT leaders which initially involved meetings with school leads/headteachers leading projects, both individually and as strategic groups. There has also been a regular update meeting with the reference group to both share information and to seek feedback from the sector and to inform strategy decisions. Meetings were also held for training e.g., funding and the setting up of the COGA, how to report impact, Sharing projects
- Initially meetings were convened by members to gain insights and feedback on DLP
- Meetings of the Steering group are held weekly to review and define/refine strategy.

- Strategic Lead for Primary and Secondary rolled out start up presentations to consortia and networks for buy-in and information giving
- Numerous individual meetings have been held with project leads as requested and required.
- Reference Group – Membership made up of Primary and Secondary Heads, LA Heads of SEND Services including PEP and Senior BEP Officers.
- Partnerships were provided with a SEND Audit together with the Contextual Locality data to identify priorities within their Consortia/Network
- Numerous internal communications across all services were delivered
- Produced locality contextual data which included academic performance, attendance, exclusion, and mobility of SEND which compared against Birmingham and national averages
- All projects were provided with support from SEND officers and data specialist to review and refine projects and set measurable KPIs.
- All partnerships submitted a costed project proposal (see [Appendix B](#)). Project proposals were reviewed by steering group and reference group – either approved or sent back for further detail or information
- Appointment of Consortia Partners in BEP to better support and monitor projects
- Termly Evaluation reports from CPs
- Workshop sharing good practice and measuring and reporting impact
- Post-16 project was strongly supported by BEP in start up
- City wide project for vulnerable pupils not on a school roll – supported by BEP with headteachers and monitoring through weekly meetings
- EY DLP start up and roll out
- Termly Reports and presentations to Reference Group from partnerships inc Engagement, Progress against KPIs, Parent/Carer feedback, funding, wider impact, barriers, and learnings
- Newsletter circulated with key messages and examples of impact across BCC and to schools

EVALUATION

Context of evaluation

The impact of DLP has many facets and due to the scale and range of the DLP (44 projects), it is impossible to report on all projects and progress towards their KPIs. There is a summary report with highlights to reflect the impact of many DLP projects on their KPIs on progress and outcomes for CYP.

Examples of Progress towards KPIs

Eastwards

- Percentage of children with SEND reaching Early Learning Goals (ELG) in Communication and Language (CL) in listening attention and understanding increased by **12%**
- Percentage of children with SEND reaching ELG in speaking and reading inc, comprehension increased by **14%**
- Percentage of SEND pupils at expected standard in reading at KS2 increased by **20%** from 23.2% to 43.4%

Erdington

- Number of fixed term exclusions for children using "Motional" resources reduced by **95%** from 20 to 1
- Number of fixed term exclusions for children with ADHD reduced by **93%** from 15 to 1

Kings Norton

- Percentage of CYP (EHCP and SEND SUPPORT) working at threshold of phonics decoding in year 1 increased by **24%**
- Permanent exclusions reduced by **82%** from 17 to 3

Fays

- Percentage of fixed term exclusions / suspensions reduced by **78%** from 32 to 7
- Percentage of CYP on reduced timetables reduced by **52 %** from 25 to 12 across the last 3 terms (Autumn 21, Spring 22 & Summer 22).

Saltley Plus

- Percentage of SEND children passing the phonic screening in year 1 increased by **29%**

Erdington 2

- Percentage of CYP with SEND achieving age-related expectations in speaking development (C&L) increased by **27%** from 22% to 49%

Sutton Coldfield

- Percentage of Early Years CYP making expected progress in Communication & Language increased by **22%** from 12.5 to 34.5%
- Percentage of CYP with speech and language needs working at expected levels of progress in reading, writing and maths increased by **13%**

Hall Green

- Percentage of CYP with SEND working at expected levels of progress in reading, writing and maths increased by **14%** from 8% to 22%

South West

- Attendance for the most challenging/vulnerable 1% increased by **6%** from 70% to 76%
- Reading age for the most challenging /vulnerable 1% increased by **5yrs 2 mo** from 10yr 2mo to 15yrs 4mo

North West

- Attendance for CYP with SEND increased by **4.3%** from 93% to 98%
- Reading age for CYP with SEND increased by **12 mo** from 12yr 5mo to 13yr 5mo

North West 2

- Attendance for CYP with SEND increased by **14%** from 84% - 98%
- Sentence comprehension for CYP with SEND increased by **11%** from 80% - 91%
- Word recognition for CYP with SEND increased by **11%** from 61% - 72%

East Speech and Language Therapy

- Word awareness receptive and expressive vocabulary skills within the curriculum increased by **37%** from 16% to 53%
- Language level (social thinking and problem-solving skills) increased by **14%** from 57% to 71%
- Attendance for CYP with Speech & Language Communication difficulties increased by **5%** from 81% to 86%

South

- Number of pupils with fixed term exclusion reduced by **53%** from 15 to 7pupils.
- Number of pupils referred to sharing panel reduced by **60%** from 6 to 2 pupils
- Number of pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties receiving fixed term exclusions reduced by **60%** from 15 to 5 pupils

Post 16

- Percentage of young pupil with SEND in Year 11 without employment, education, or apprenticeships (sustained destinations) reduced to **1.12%** (from 7.12% to 1.12%) for the DLP Cohort
- Percentage of young pupils with SEND in years 12-13 who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) reduced to **1.69%** (from 7.4%) for the DLP Cohort

DLP City wide project for vulnerable pupils not on a school roll

- Average number of days between referral and placement reduced to **9.4 days** (from 17.9 days)
- Average number of days between placement and starting schools reduced to **12.4 days** (from 37.8 days)
- Number of challenging cases waiting for more than half a term for placement reduced to **0 cases** (from 10 cases)

Engagement of schools

After one year of the implementation of the DLP project there is evidence of 90% engagement of mainstream primary and secondary schools in the DLP across Birmingham. Where schools are not engaged this is not because they have not been invited but where they may not be engaging in their consortia or network partnerships or meetings. This is also the case for special schools (where only 33% are engaged) and Resource Bases (26%), who have chosen not to engage with their locality projects although invited.

Impact on Parents and Carers and Children and Young People

Involvement of parents and carers was a non-negotiable aspect of the project proposals. All projects were required to baseline the views of parents and carers, and this was completed. However, some projects have yet to evaluate the impact of the project on the views of parents and carers due to the need for time for the project to be implemented and therefore whilst parent carer feedback generally has been good, it has not been consistently collated or analysed yet across the projects. This is a priority for the Autumn term report 2022.

Similarly, although projects individually have collected feedback (often creatively) from Children and Young People, (see [Appendix C](#) - Central newsletter) a priority for all projects this term is to survey, analyse and report the voice of CYP in relation to the DLP support they have received over the first year.

Wider Impact of DLP as reported by schools and stakeholders

Headteachers and SEND officers reported that the DLP has had a significant and wider impact on the culture in schools and across headteachers: They reported and highlighted 'significant development and improvement' in the following areas as direct impact of DLP:

- Improved collaboration and more breaking down of barriers between schools
- Schools are taking responsibility for schools and CYP in their locality ('Our' children and young people)
- Increased openness and trust to share good and bad around SEND practice and performance
- A good foundation has been laid for future locality working. We know which groups of school's work.
- There is more real and effective collaboration, engagement and relationships with the LA, BEP, Specialist Services, Mainstream and some special schools.
- Transfer of information is quicker and slicker enabling schools and LA to place children out of school on to the roll of schools due to the City wide project for vulnerable pupils not on a school roll project. Heads report that it has been a good bridge builder between schools and 'sharing panels'
- Improved and developed leadership in schools through developing leadership outside of their own schools. They have observed and learnt from other leaders
- Schools and Headteachers are driving and leading the system around SEND with SENCos
- The reference group of headteachers and senior officers are providing strong challenge and informing strategy
- Schools are sourcing their own resources - undertaking peer reviews reflecting on their own practice and learning from others to secure improvement in their SEND provision
- Partnerships of schools are taking ownership of KPIs and have improved their understanding and reporting on impact on outcomes
- Localities and partnerships are creating their own identities in relation to SEND – DLP newsletters, summer schools, websites

- LA & Schools are sharing projects effectively (City wide project for vulnerable pupils not on a school roll and Special school Outreach Support)

Partnerships causing concern

Based on the termly reports provided by each project lead, 25% of projects have been identified as requiring some additional support. Where these have been identified additional and proven DLP leadership capacity has been secured and in almost all cases there is evidence of rapid improvements.

The common features of these partnerships who have been slower to progress are:

- They were not a strong or effective partnership that was working well together before DLP
- As a result, data collection across the partnership of school has been either slow or inconsistent and sign up for the project was slow
- They have not identified additional capacity for the leadership of the project
- They have had difficulty recruiting additional support to lead and/or administer the project
- They have had difficulty sourcing the support /expertise they need
- They are still keen to make DLP work

Funding

Whilst we agreed that we would support proposals that included costs for administrative or coordination of the project, we did not promote this at the outset mainly because of the resistance to the project and use of high needs funding - that was mainly driven by members of the council and special school headteachers – and a minority of mainstream headteachers.

However, the roll out of the project quickly identified that this was key factor in the success of projects and therefore it could be argued that administration costs at the outset should have been a requirement of project proposals. All partnerships were allocated this funding halfway through the first year to accommodate this requirement.

At the end of the first year, many consortia and networks are recording an underspend. When discussed with these partnerships, the reason for the underspend was mainly due to COVID19 which delayed the start of some projects but also led to difficulties in recruiting staff and securing the programme delivery they had chosen. Headteachers also reported that due to the relatively short lead in time and the fact that this was a radical change in culture and ways of working, and the lack of trust in the LA to honour financial commitments, they erred on the side of caution but would in the future be able to spend the amount allocated and more. Changes in the LAs financial systems and the associated blocks in the system this created, also led to issues in getting the money out to schools in a timely way.

The costs for the strategic leadership and management of the DLP have been largely paid for through the LAs central budget and a significant amount of additional and non - commissioned (and therefore unfunded) support has been provided by BEP CEO and senior leaders, especially during the roll out and set up of projects, who have remained driven and faithful to the project to ensure its success.

Monitoring, Reporting and Governance

Monitoring of the project delivery was commissioned out to BEP who appointed a team of consortia partners who were ex - or existing headteachers. Mostly this has been strong with good relationships being built with schools and valuable feedback provided to inform future planning and enabling swift resolution of issues arising. On rare occasions, existing and past close relationships of

these BEP staff with schools did not always provide an objective view or present a corporate view and approach.

Reporting of the project has improved over the year. Termly reports from schools were initially weak with little evidence of impact and the reports reflected a lack of understanding of how to measure and report impact as opposed to outputs. Schools also reported that they were not always clear on timelines for reporting and more prompts for deadlines would have helped. At the request of schools and consortia partners, a workshop on “Reporting and Key Performance Indicators” was held and was well regarded. As a result, the end of year reports were much stronger with good recording of progress over time using quantitative data, term on term, and schools now have dates for reporting for the academic year in advance.

Termly reports from consortia partners are variable. Most are strong and insightful, but some report opinion rather than fact and some reports of consortia partners does not mirror those of schools.

The governance of the project by the reference group of headteachers and Local Authority officers has been a real strength of the project. The concept of headteachers challenging and supporting each other and taking ownership and responsibility for the delivery of the DLP citywide has been wholly embraced. Headteachers especially and also LA senior SEND officers have been robust in their challenge of projects in relation to impact, appropriateness of resources, programmes and training purchased and spend.

Governance at the higher level of the LA programme management has not been as effective due to the many changes of programme management teams and systems for reporting and in the lack of resolution of issues many of which have been reported over time and not addressed.

Learning from DLP

In almost all cases the projects that were most successful most quickly had the following features:

- Partnerships that were already established and strong and who had good professional relationships made better progress.
- Partnerships who identified the need and costed their project for administration or organisational leadership to drive the project from the outset were quicker and more effective in start-up and implementation
- Partnerships where relationships were strong enabled headteachers to resolve differences of opinion without the risk of breakdown of relationships
- Where schools in the partnership signed up to and understood the need to return data at requested times and where reporting impact in quantifiable data was understood and accepted.
- Where partnerships set up and owned their own DLP Websites, newsletters, celebration events, standing agenda items at Headteacher meetings.
- Headteachers reported that working under a principle of the project that clearly stated the requirement to be creative and innovative in their thinking, enabled them to try out ambitious projects, learn what worked and what did not and to adapt and amend their thinking and resource allocation as required. This they reported was a real strength of their learning and of the DLP.
- Engagement from Special Schools was not good as a result of a decision by DLP leads at the outset to work with mainstream schools only (initially to ensure mainstream headteachers took the lead but also to reduce the very negative input from some special school headteachers that was undermining the project).

Leaders of overall DLP project reported the following learning from DLP

- DLP worked best when they had public and strong backing and leadership from members, director, and assistant director of SEND and project was aligned to a DFE strategy
- A strong project manager who highly effectively 'project managed the delivery of the project, who managed the DLP budget, who negotiated and oversaw the legal and data requirements and who removed barriers, enabling the project to run efficiently and effectively, rather than lead the project, was a significant strength and success factor of the project
- The LA working with BEP in the strategic planning and roll out of the project was invaluable and enabling. because of their knowledge of schools and their existing relationships with many headteachers and their relentless support and commitment to the DLP project from the outset.
- Headteachers rightly reported that there was Insufficient lead in time as the project required a significant change in culture and ways of working and training and development for leaders around partnership working budget management measuring impact.
- Schools requested more opportunities to see what other projects and localities were offering. (Addressed through interactive Local Offer DLP map where projects will be showcased).
- The DLP project has shown the importance of direct and sometimes difficult conversations with headteachers in support of SEND improvement. The LA needs to build its capacity to work more closely with heads and / or develop its partnership with BEP to achieve what is needed in this area.

- If the current process for monitoring is to continue, a robust Service Level Agreement needs to be in place to ensure that the quality and standard of required monitoring and reporting is delivered and underperformance of personnel is addressed robustly and proactively.
- The key messages around the requirement and benefits of accountability should have been more forcefully communicated at the outset of the project, especially for the early years DLP

Limiting factors

- Lack of a clear brief from the beginning of the project and changes of leadership at every level in BCC resulted in insecure messages and constant revisiting of vision and strategy
- Limited ownership, understanding and or strong leadership from members /leaders across the council and internal teams at the outset of the project
- Lack of confidence of schools in LA's ability to lead, sustain and deliver a project due to historic failures of similar projects and two failed SEND inspections
- Weak infrastructure in council to support setting up of a school led project –Finance Commissioning, Legal, Data
- Lack of timely development of a robust Condition of Grant Agreement & Data sharing agreement and clarity of roles of professionals to support this process
- Changes in LAs financial systems leading to blockages in allocating funding to schools
- Opposition from special schools and members of the council and some internal teams due to insufficient consultation and sign up at the outset, mostly because of the use of the HNB
- Radical change in culture and ways of working for Schools and Local Authority
- Limited culture of shared responsibility amongst schools – collaboration and relationships between headteachers weak in some areas
- Some research reflects that sharing best practice is not always the best way to improve practice and encourage collaboration with schools, therefore promoting projects above others was a risk – leading to gaps in communication.
- Weak culture of accountability in or across BCC or with schools
- COVID19 – project was rolled out at the height of COVID where schools were under significant other pressures and experiencing high staff and pupil absence and
- Lack of understanding of impact (v outputs) and how to report it in partnerships was a barrier to showing impact
- The lack of up to date LA data especially at Post 16 impeded the reporting of impact and especially for the Post 16 project the sector reported
- Lack of joined up working and support across school's directorate and especially lack of support from schools and families division which was sometimes vocalised in schools and public forums which on occasions worked against project
- Limited school improvement function or role or accountability in permanent LA structure or in BEP commission - for improving progress and outcomes of CYP for all schools and no official commission for our school improvement partnership organisation.
- Caution of schools around funding – spending and lack of security around future funding and confidence in integrity of LA

Roll out of DLP mostly across education, needs development and better communication across BCC Children's services

Recommendations

- Decision on future of DLP and funding before January 2023 - see “Options”
- Ensure members of the council and leaders own and support decision
- Leaders to make decision on where DLP is sited in permanent LA structure and agree accountable officer (AD)
- Communicate decision on future of DLP with dates, funding and timelines accountabilities /expectations across all schools and Local Area
- Agree and communicate funding formula to be implemented to schools – provide explicit advice on administrative /coordination support
- Agree where data support is going to be sourced and ensure funding is available
- Ensure Communications officer is responsible for organising and all communications
- Ensure clear guidance is given to schools on strategy and process for budget for DLP 2023 onwards asap to ensure sufficient lead in time (January 2023)
- Monitoring and reporting from BEP continues and this should be secured through a robust SLA.
- Ensure interactive map is completed for Local Offer Website efficiently
- Ensure project management is working at higher level to address and escalate and resolve barriers
- Ensure new DLP has requirement to baseline views of parent’s carers and CYP at the outset and provide specific expectations for when these need to be reported
- Review and invest time and support for the role of special schools in DLP projects and ensure there is a tighter brief for engagement of special schools and resource bases
- Review and address any inefficiencies in the Infrastructure of LA (Legal, Monitoring, Finance, School Improvement, SEND) to support the project

Where should the DLP be sited in the Local Authority?

All options are based on the following:

- a) Permanent senior SEND school improvement advisor /inspector role being created to lead project and drive SEND school improvement across all schools in Birmingham
- b) Project management or Business administration support
- c) BEP DLP contract or additional accountabilities added to existing BEP contract for supporting, monitoring, and reporting on DLP with partnerships
- d) All evaluation recommendations adopted

Option A – Schools & Families Directorate as a school improvement role led by a new LA SEND advisor

Pros

- School improvement conversations with Headteachers on SEND
- Headteacher level discussion on SEND pupil performance including attendance and suspensions
- Strong message that SEND is responsibility of everyone and not SENDCo/SEND specialists, building on the developmental work that BEP has supported to date
- This approach to further working with BEP by Schools & Families Division could result in
 - Less siloed working between schools and families teams, BEP, SEND and other services within BCC around school improvement
- DLP working through BEP provides an opportunity for growing capacity, alignment, and efficiencies in making the most of involvement and partnership with BEP
- Ability to work with heads on driving LA SEND and Inclusion Strategies

Cons

- No perceived role or remit for SEND improvement currently in this division
- Reluctance/ refusal of ownership in the schools and families division currently

Option B– Pupil Support Services (PSS)

Pros

- Knowledgeable on SEND
- Specialist teachers part of development of provision
- Good relationship with SENDCos

Cons

- Limited leverage with Heads
- Conflict of interest – supporting schools to set up services that may be in competition with their own offer
- Lack of capacity
- SEND focused rather than School improvement focused

Option C – Accountability with AD for SEND through a BEP commission

Pros

- BEP currently the chosen School Improvement partner of LA
- Relationship with many headteachers and schools already established
- Know and support the DLP currently and signed up its success

Cons

- Capacity of AD for SEND to hold BEP to account alongside so many other accountabilities
- Perception that SEND is only the responsibility of SEND services
- Relationship with heads has thus far has been “enabling” and supportive- this will need to become a more robust support and challenge function going forward
- Loss of control of High Needs Budget
- Challenge to schools from AD for SEND difficult when many areas of provision are failing

Option D – Commissioning Services

Pros

- Work would be commissioned with a tighter and more focussed brief on delivery, expectations, and outcomes
- Tight contractual arrangements
- No additional administrative burden
- Process for governance and monitoring inbuilt and managed objectively

Cons

- Business process could detract from strong focus and expectations on SEND
- Officers challenging would not have SEND background or understanding – could lose integrity of aim of project
- Relationships with schools could become business /process /bureaucratic only relationships
Reporting and monitoring too distanced from work on the ground

FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DLP – OPTIONS

Option 1 – Cease DLP (i.e., the initial needs and/or operating models are proved wrong)

Pros

- No funding taken from the High Needs Budget
- Money could be invested in a different LA project or in increasing service capacity to deliver and support developing provision in mainstream schools
- LA has control of funding

Cons

- LA lose credibility and confidence and support of schools and especially headteachers
- Unpopular decision with most headteachers
- Infrastructure and benefits of DLP wasted /lost
- Missed opportunity to build relationships and trust with headteachers
- Loss of potential evidence of impact on pupils’ outcomes in localities

- Not following national direction of travel as reported by DfE Feb 2022 and in “Green Paper” 2022 (groups of schools working collaboratively around SEND in Localities)

Option 2 – No change - carry on as we are with recommendations included (i.e., this level of spend on collaboration requires no ongoing support or scrutiny)

Pros

- Schools know the systems, templates, and process – embeds DLP
- Popular choice with schools
- Equity across the city as all schools continue to be invited

Cons

- Risk of underspend continuing in some partnerships who are not fully committed or strong
- Risk that DLP is not developed or enhanced or proven successful partnership working is further exploited

Option 3 – To make engagement in the DLP optional with prescribed LA interventions for localities who don't opt in to DLP (including all evaluation recommendations)

Pros

- Higher chance of higher and stronger impact of projects
- Less time for LA and schools spent chasing schools and partnerships who are not fully engaged
- Risk of underspend lowered as partnerships who apply will be fully committed and have infrastructure to lead and drive project
- Data returns will be quicker
- Schools / consortia who do not participate effectively have supported interventions ensuring all vulnerable / SEND pupils can benefit > increased equity

Cons

- Lack of equity across the city for CYP accessing additional resource support from DLP
- Partnership work in some areas will continue to be weak, and where this persists supporting is expensive
- Impact on improving mainstream provision Citywide -as an LA priority – will be weakened
- Less investment in some areas for developing mainstream provision. This model still requires longer term modelling and costing

Option 4 – Carry on as we are (with recommendations included) and invest more funding in the DLP for successful consortia and networks /projects through enhanced allocations

Pros

- In successful projects potential for more impact and higher impact on pupil outcomes
- All schools develop and refine systems in place and become more successful and efficient in improving provision and outcomes through this way of working
- Further developing leadership capacity in schools in localities for SEND
- Schools taking more responsibility and ownership for improving SEND
- LA seen to support and reward success of project and achievements of school's partnerships
- Better and more opportunities for LA to build relationships, confidence, and trust with headteachers around SEND
- Capacity to lead and monitor project would be greater

Cons

1. Higher accountability for use of funding
2. We are still in the early days for some partnerships therefore limited evidence of capacity for some to deliver an enhanced project
3. Increasing inequity, strengthening the strong and accepting under performance

Recommended Future Model

Given the options listed above, below is the recommendation from the DLP Project team based on one years' evaluation. The future model of the DLP that is to be considered moving forwards includes all recommendations listed in the recommendations section on page 19.

Leadership and Accountabilities of DLP

With regards to the Leadership and Accountabilities of the DLP project at senior level, we make the below recommendations.

- The Lead and accountable SRO for the DLP is the AD for Schools and Families division.
- A responsible officer with SEND School Improvement/ inspector/advisor (DLP Lead) experience to lead and drive the DLP (and Improving Outcomes) within the Schools and Families Division (this would need to be a new post).
- Project Manager/ Business support role to support the DLP Lead with tracking all of the projects, documents, finances, meetings, communications, etc.
- Robust commission from the LA commissioning team to BEP enabling support on embedding, monitoring, reporting and challenging DLP Projects, leads and localities to ensure focus remains on impact of progress and outcomes on Children and Young People. BEP also have a role to play in providing intelligence from the sector to inform next steps & strategic direction.

Strategic Planning of DLP

The recommendation is that the Steering Group continues as it has proven vital in planning and driving the DLP Project. This Steering Group membership should be reviewed by the AD for SEND and AD for Schools and Families to ensure strategic foresight is kept but includes in its membership the DLP Lead, the DLP Support Officer and BEP School Improvement Lead and PSS Leader. The Steering Groups role is to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Provide leadership and direction | • Link and facilitate projects |
| • Be accountable for the impact of the project | • Provide solutions, escalate, and assist in removing blockages where relevant |
| • Monitor and challenge progress | • Ensure Governance is adhered |
| • Plan and ensure the project objectives and according to defined objectives and outcomes | • Manage and communicate to all levels of stakeholders appropriately |

Equally vital, the Reference Group, which is an advisory group of Headteachers (Primary, Secondary and Special), Principal EP, Head of PSS, EY Rep and the Steering Group, should continue to meet regularly. This group has been extremely effective by providing challenge, steer, and insight from different areas within the city. The Reference Groups role is to:

- Be an advisory group to the Steering Group
- Make recommendations where required
- Enable a sector perspective to be expressed and used to influence proposals and decisions
- To work with steering group to work through areas of concerns
- Assist in communication and marketing of the project
- To provide feedback from the sector to inform project planning
- To provide effective support and challenge to ensure the successful implementation and impact of the project
- Hold project leaders to account for effective use of funding, the progress of the projects and the impact on pupil outcomes for CYP

Delivery and Implementation

The DLP Project was rolled out to all localities with a strong message that all mainstream schools should participate and be proactive within the partnerships' project. Although the engagement of schools is high and the success overall is positive, some projects have not been as successful or shown strong enough impact to date or have proved too problematic for headteachers leading projects in localities where partnership working isn't strong. Therefore, we believe the best approach moving forwards would be the following:

- DLP should become optional for the localities (Primary Consortia and Secondary Networks) and these partnerships should write costed proposals and bid to access DLP funding

To extend and develop the DLP project further, project proposals must include at least 90% engagement of schools, menu of directed KPIs related to underperformance data, percentages of CYP to be included and directives on budget spend and reporting and involvement of Special School and RBs.

- Where schools and/or localities do not wish to participate in the DLP project, a prescribed menu of SEND intervention is provided to ensure equity and all pupils across the city have access to additional support

Funding

The funding for the mainstream schools project (excluding SSOS, EY DLP, Post-16 & the City wide project for vulnerable pupils not on a school roll – (Fair Access) that is allocated should be reduced from £4.5mil to £4mil as this was the total amount claimed by schools from the allocated amount.

- Central resource and administration costs will need to be considered separately from the allocated funding to schools depending on how LA agrees DLP should be led e.g., through existing roles and resource, through additional responsibilities (new role or added to existing role in Schools and Families)
- Funding formula agreed whereby notional amount for each school is allocated (based on same DLP funding formula) and aggregated into a total for the partnership of schools engaging. Of the schools not engaging, their notional amount will go into a central pot to fund the prescribed menu of intervention.

