

Stakeholder Briefing

Ofsted and CQC publish Shropshire SEND report

Overview:

An Ofsted and CQC revisit to special education needs and disabilities (SEND) services in Shropshire has found sufficient progress has been made, in three out of six areas of significant weakness.

The revisit, which took place in November 2022, followed an initial inspection in 2020 of the local area's arrangements for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Inspectors looked at a range of information about the performance of Shropshire and considered the views of children, young people, parents and carers, education leaders, the parent carer forum and Shropshire's Information and Advice Support Services, and practitioners and officers from the local authority and health services.

Key findings:

The report published today by Ofsted and the CQC has found that Shropshire has made sufficient progress in the following three areas:

Strategic leadership and planning across the area, including the use of data to accurately commission and plan services. The report recognises that the strategic leadership has strengthened considerably despite the financial pressures, staff turnover and the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The inclusion of health services' input into the area's SEND action plan. There is greater clarity of roles and responsibilities across education, health and social care and leaders work in partnership and have a keen focus on children and young people with SEND.
- The rate of exclusions for children and young people with an EHC plan and the rate of fixed-term exclusions for those receiving SEND support. Leaders' actions to address the high rate of exclusions and suspensions for children and young people with SEND across

Shropshire have been successful. They have led to a significant number of exclusions being prevented since the last inspection.

The report highlights that “while many strategic plans are at a very early stage of implementation, they are the right plans and provide a secure base on which to build on the emerging improvements thus far. The pace of change and improvements made by the strategic leadership team have particularly accelerated over the last 12 months.”

The report also recognised that the involvement of the parent carer forum (Parent and Carer Council (PACC)) has increased at a strategic level.

Further progress is still required to address three outstanding areas. These include wait times for children and young people on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnostic pathways; wait times for those needing assessment and treatment from the speech and language therapy services; and the quality of input from education, health and care into Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment and planning.

Our response and next steps:

We fully accept the findings in the report, and we will use it to drive the changes that we need to see.

Since the local area inspection, we have continued to work on our SEND priorities and have made a good start addressing the concerns identified by Ofsted and CQC in 2020.

We are particularly pleased that the significant changes we have made with regards to our strategic leadership have been recognised and we have made huge steps to ensure that we are working better together with our partners.

However, that’s not the only thing we are doing to ensure that our children and young people live their best lives. We are working with parent carers to improve the co production of SEND services and resources for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, their families, and the practitioners who support them, resulting in a better service which meets their needs.

SEND Champions have also been identified from within Children’s Social Care to further embed SEND as a golden thread within the workforce.

We are really encouraged by some of the good practice we continue to learn from, and share, to prevent suspensions and exclusions in Shropshire schools. We continue to prioritise multi-agency engagement, develop new approaches and look for ways to provide earlier support and advice to prevent situations form escalating.

We have an action plan to address the three outstanding areas of concern and we will continue to work hard with partners, parents and children to ensure that those who rely on our support get a better experience.

We continue to invest more in SEND provision and better services, this has included investing in capacity to improve EHC as well as strengthening our leadership.

The progress we have made, and the changes we have made embedding SEND within leadership roles, means we can now focus our efforts on the delivery of services and the wider SEND programme.

Ofsted and CQC will not carry out any further revisit unless directed to do so by the Secretary of State. Any further steps required of Shropshire will be determined by the Department of Education and NHS England.

Further information:

To read the report in full, please visit <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>