

## Termly Visit to SENDCO

7<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Following on from my previous meeting with Mrs Shimmin I focussed my visit on these questions:-

1. What is the current situation in school i.e how many pupils are requiring interventions and support?
2. How has this impacted upon workload both for Mrs Shimmin and the staff?
3. Have we had instances of pupils unable to access specialist support because of budget implications?
4. General evaluation of LA revised system.

At present there are 51 pupils requiring some form of intervention. Obviously the level varies depending upon need. Under the present LA system paper work is required from the first time under the category of "Cause for Concern". This is completed by the class teacher to raise initial awareness of potential need progressing to Pupil Passports if necessary. [Pupils requiring interventions and are placed on the special needs register] At present there are 5 pupils at this stage. The system continues to additional needs and the need for Pupil Support Plans. There are 41 pupils in this category. The final category is "STAR [high needs]/EHCP" SEND support plan. There are 5 pupils at this stage. Funding is bewildering and scarce!

The workload at present is extremely heavy. Time and resources are limited and stretched. We are only too aware of the current situation of budget restraints and staff reduction. Staff are endeavouring to meet the demands of SEND but I have great concerns for the future both for the children and our staff!

We work with appropriate outside agencies but have been faced with making difficult choices. A pupil who has received Speech and Language support needs a further course to continue his progress but WE DO NOT HAVE THE FINANCE TO DO THIS!!!! The NHS do offer Speech and Language support, but this seems rather random but free. The system has to change in order to meet the needs of our most vulnerable pupils. All pupils have an entitlement.

The LA has adopted "A Graduated Approach". This should involve ALL AGENCIES liaising and working with each other to meet the needs of our children. 'A priority for 2018-19 SEND Support Services SLA requires review as current arrangements lead to inequality of access to specialist services and pose a challenge to effective meeting of needs.' [SEND update N'land Autumn 2018]

Wise words but the reality is we face an increasing challenge to meet the needs of ALL our children. At the moment we are struggling to tread water. Staff are working flat out to maintain our very rigorous work with SEND pupils. I do not know how much longer we can work at this level.

Ideally I would like to be part of a discussion with Northumberland LA which identifies the difficulties facing some schools with a high percentage of SEND. One size does not fit all and as a result the system in my opinion is not fit for purpose. At times it seems we at Eastlea are being financially penalised for our ethos of being "Fully Inclusive".

D. Oliver, March 2019