

SEND Monitoring Visit November 5th 2018

I met with Mrs Shimmin (SENDCo) as part of my monitoring responsibility as Governor with Responsibility for SEND.

There have been a number of changes made by NCC SEND Team which are intended to improve the existing system. These changes have been introduced quite recently so it remains to be seen if they prove to be successful. Changes take time to implement and evaluate so watch this space!

The needs of our children are often demanding and diverse. There is a high proportion of pupils with Speech and Language difficulties and what appears to be an increasing number of Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties. We pay a considerable amount [over £8,000] into the SLA for SEND services and have to predict our potential needs. For example 4 days behavioural support; 6 days speech and language/Literacy service. This prediction is virtually impossible to be accurate! If we use up our allocated time we then have to find additional funding.

Everyone is aware of budget restraints so Heads /SENDCos are faced with a moral dilemma. Which pupil gets what and for how long?

This in my opinion is not a decision that a Head should have to make. IF a pupil needs specialist support then this should be available on a needs basis and not based on a financial consideration or a post code lottery, Miss Beeston has said there is a feeling of inequality in the ability to deliver appropriate SEND services.

NCC SEND acknowledge the current arrangements lead to inequality of access of specialist services and support.

"SEND SLA Support Services SLA requires review as current arrangements lead to inequality of access to specialist services and pose challenge to effective meeting of needs"

"Think Tanks will be established this term to facilitate sector led solutions" [NCC Priorities 2018-2019]

In spite of all of this, I am confident that within Eastlea all staff are fully aware of the needs of every pupil via detailed assessment and interventions. There is evidence that all relevant paperwork is in place and this is carefully monitored by Mrs Shimmin. Our children where necessary are monitored from an 'Initial Concern' [the first record of any concerns raised by staff, carers or children] and continue if needed to via other steps to ultimately an EHCP. There are many steps in between and fortunately not all children require this level of support.

We do however have many children needing support and it is down to the sheer dedication and professionalism of our staff who strive for the best despite cuts to our budget.

Meanwhile time passes and we all have concerns that some children may not be able to access the services they need. This is totally unacceptable and has to be addressed ASAP. This message I'm sure will be echoed by many throughout the county.

Diane Oliver 11th November 2018