

Schools Forum

24th June 2014

Funding Early Education for the benefit of all

This report relates to maintained schools and academies

Recommendation

The Schools Forum is recommended to:

1. That Schools Forum agrees in principle that subject to additional DSG being allocated to the Early Years Block (report elsewhere on the agenda) that £40,000 is allocated to each of the six Warwickshire Nursery Schools acting as Early Years Teaching Centres to:
 - Bring parity with funding models applied to Primary, Secondary and Special Schools within the county
 - Facilitate their role as Early Years Teaching Centres, working to improve quality across the Early Years sector to reduce the tail of underperformance from its inception
 - Endorsement of a further detailed long term funding review of the Nursery Schools to allow the Maintained Nursery Schools group to be financially sustainable and eligible for a DfE national pilot initiative in which they are able to pursue options, such as academisation or foundation status, in line with other School groups that will create a route to future structures.

1. Introduction

1.1 The objective of this report is to receive an endorsement from the Schools Forum for uplift funding and their agreement to a fuller long term funding review of Warwickshire's Nursery Schools, which deliver the Early Years Teaching Centre (EYTC) model leading to:

- Use of a small percentage of the additional DSG in 2015/16 to facilitate their financial sustainability, necessary until a suggested review of the Early Years Single Funding Formula.
- To allow a pilot to continue that will support Maintained Nursery Schools to access future structures in line with other School groups.
- By financially securing the Maintained Nursery Schools they may continue to develop, through their EYTC status, a robust approach to School and sector

support for early years education in Schools and childcare provision across the private and voluntary sector

- This in turn will support the EYTCs to focus upon their remit to narrow the achievement gap through tackling the tail of under achievement from its inception

2.0 The National Context

2.1 The recent Ofsted report 'Early Education' published April 2014 made a number of recommendations borne out in a subsequent speech by Michael Wilshaw "Unsure Start" and then supported by Elizabeth Truss MP. In essence, increasing attention is being given to the significance of early years education. Warwickshire's outstanding Nursery Schools 'Early Years Teaching Centres' (EYTCs) are well placed to lead the vanguard in developing the needs and potential for outstanding cross county practice.

2.2 The December 2013 Education Select Committee Report identifies that:

We are particularly concerned about Government policy towards maintained nursery schools. They offer capacity and a recognised level of expertise which needs to sit at the centre of the Government's proposals on Early Years Teaching Schools.

We recommend that the Department for Education set out a strategy for ensuring the survival of those that remain and for encouraging the further development of the network of nursery schools with children's centres throughout the country.

There is an under-utilised source of expertise and training within the sector in the form of outstanding and experienced practitioners in the centres. To explore how to make best use of this resource, 'Early Years Teaching Centres' have been set up as a two year project, funded by the DfE, to use skilled practitioners in outstanding children's centres/nursery schools as trainers for staff in their own and other centres. The aim is to establish a network of "Early Years Teaching Schools" along the lines of the Teaching Schools developed by the school sector.

2.3 A 2 year project between 2011 and 2013 demonstrated the success of this approach. To expand and develop this further, the Nursery Schools need additional uplift funding to bring a period of financial stability that will allow a timeframe for a further more detailed review of funding and access to pilot schemes that will facilitate access to future structures in line with all other School groups.

2.4 The EYTCs also wish to initiate proper and appropriate discussions with a view of integrating and improving the current county Early Years Quality Assurance and Training service into their already established training arm to offer a sustainable, nationally recognised traded service that will benefit the development of Early Education across the county.

3.0 Warwickshire Nursery Schools Context

- 3.1 Warwickshire has 6 Maintained Nursery Schools, formally 9; three have already been closed or merged. (Camp Hill Nursery School, Bulkington Road Nursery School, Lillington Nursery School)
- 3.2 A Maintained Nursery School is exactly the same in its organisation as an infant school, junior, school, middle school, primary school, secondary school and special school. It has a DfE Number and a section 5 School inspection and a Governing Body. Nursery Schools are led by a Headteacher with teaching staff who hold qualified teacher status, ref: appendix 1.
- 3.3 Current funding design has led to the 6 remaining Nursery Schools in Warwickshire being placed outside of the Schools block because they are funded by the same Single Funding Formula mechanism (SSF) as wider childcare provision, which is predominantly provided by the private and voluntary sector. They are Schools, who happen to be placed in the Early Years block because of the age range of the children attending. This creates financial instability for the Maintained Nursery Schools who have to meet the costs of a school but with no base allocation to recognise these costs.
- 3.4 Maintained Nursery Schools receive no base funding. This equates to £95,000 for all other School Groups. This also means they have no direct funding for SEN/d pupils, Looked After Pupils or those eligible for Pupil Premium.
- 3.5 There is currently limited local knowledge and acknowledgement of Warwickshire's Maintained Nursery Schools, although they have a national reputation for excellence. This is leading to a position whereby they may be lost as a resource to communities and the education sector as a whole.

4.0 Why Invest in Nursery Schools?

- 4.1 More than just a Schools group....a valuable resource that attracts national funding for children and families in Warwickshire and leads research
- Warwickshire Maintained Nursery Schools formed a consortium, 'Warwickshire Consortium of Nursery Schools' (WCNS), in 2010 and have since gained Early Years Teaching Centre (EYTC) status in 2011 as part of a national DfE project. 1 of just 16 EYTCs nationally.
 - Their success in this initial 2-year project led to an invitation to continue their role as EYTCs and lead a further DfE project, 'Being Two'. 1 of just 9 EYTCs nationally. This has attracted funding of £40,000 to support staffing costs and allowed 11 settings (95 practitioners) to benefit from an intensive, research based, year long training program that is supporting some of the 'weakest' settings to improve their provision for the most vulnerable two year olds. A further 22 settings will be offered free support in year 2 of the project; this will include schools establishing new provision for two year olds.

- WCNS has also been leading a 'nationally significant and innovative' 3 year project that allows young children, 2-4 years, to access 'brief intensive therapeutic' support to intervene in cycles of emotional disturbance. This project has attracted national funding of £75,000, over 3 years, from two foundations. The year 1 data is currently being reviewed by the local CAMHS commissioner. The results in year one have been powerful and indicate 'significant change' in outcomes for children and their families and the aim is to influence new service development.
- WCNS also works in partnership with a training company, WEAVE, delivering high quality training programs and bespoke support. In January 2015 WCNS will fully run this service as a trading arm and will begin to look to generate income for future sustainability. WCNS training is being commissioned by other Counties, for example Derby have re-designed planning in their Nursery Schools as a result of WCNS training on documentation.
- The work of WCNS was part of the evidence presented to the Education Select committee in 2013 that led to unequivocal support from this committee for EYTCs. The Committee recognised integrated centres with Nursery School head teachers leading them as the most successful group in terms of changing outcomes for children and families.
- WCNS are part of a pre-policy group who are working nationally with central government to develop a new route to future structures for Maintained Nursery Schools. This work with Lord Nash (Academies minister) and Graham Smith (Head of Education Select Committee) with interest from the London School of Economics (LSE), and a group of London accountants, is looking at the development of a national pilot that allows parity with other Schools groups in developing new structures. As this work progresses a paper will be completed that details the social value of Nursery Schools against actual costs with an aim of detailing social investment. The outcome of this work will be a pilot in which Nursery Schools are allowed access to future structures that is currently limited by legislation.

5.0 Key Early Years Issues for Warwickshire

5.1 Warwickshire has 6 Nursery Schools, 53 Nursery classes and 303 private and voluntary sector (PVI) organisations providing a combination of care and education places. Within this group there are now 46 organisations across the PVI sector alongside 37 Nursery Classes in Schools, that 'require improvement' or worse.

5.2 Just 26% of Warwickshire children eligible for a free school meal achieved the benchmark of a 'good level of development'. This places Warwickshire 141st out of 152 Local Authorities. All of the WCNS EYTCs excel in this aspect, with 83% located in 'vulnerable or deprived' communities and their Ofsted reports and data indicates children 'make good or outstanding progress regardless of background or vulnerability'.

- 5.3 Moderation training in 2012/13 was inconsistent resulting in the GLD at EYFS in 2013 to falling below national averages.
- 5.4 The recent “Unsure Start” report, by Sir Michael Wilshaw April 2014, references the evidence that shows “Children Centres, in the main, are not closing the educational gap” High numbers of two year olds in Warwickshire will begin to access education in children’s centres from September 2014. The children’s centre commissioning process in Warwickshire has led to contract award for 29 of the 39 Centres to an external National provider without educational specialism. The EYTCs are national leads for the ‘Being Two’ DfE project and could support quality assurance for vulnerable two year olds as part of their remit.
- 5.5 The Local Authority will be held responsible for the tracking of children from birth to adulthood through education, and not only those children that appear on risk registers, as children in need and so on. Any LA needs a clear methodology in developing the concept of corporate parent and the EYTC have the potential to bring this to the fore having been recognised as national leads in assessment and use of data and tracking.
- 5.6 The HMI report, ‘Early Years’, April 2014 and a subsequent speech by Elizabeth Truss identified that the direction of travel is the further development of early years places for 2 year olds within Schools. The development of high quality places will require knowledge and expertise which is readily available within the maintained Nursery School model in their role as EYTCs. The EPPE study (2004) identifies that Nursery Schools are best placed to support cognitive development and that this is still an aspect that requires support in a Nursery classes where sustained shared thinking was observed ‘less often’. Nursery Schools, recognised as EYTCs, are well qualified to support new provision in ‘all through schools’ while ensuring a focus on the specialism of early years remains that supports cognitive development at a key point in a child’s life.
- 5.7 Educationally speaking, current data and rankings imply the county is weaker in securing a positive start to children at the beginning of their journey through education. This will impact on all sectors of education within the county unless remedial and structural changes are made at a county wide level. This will have a continual impact on primary education in the first instance and latterly, secondary education in terms of Ofsted inspections and achievement based on levels of progress

6.0 Maintained Nursery Schools buck the trend and offer greater social value

- 6.1 It is the remit of the EYTCs to contribute to quality improvement across the sector. The ethos of ‘Every Child is Our Child’ underpinned the initial 2-year DfE project, which used a ‘locality based’ model of frequent training and professional support with the impact of an 18% improvement in the Ofsted grades of the settings and Schools involved at the time of measurement.
- 6.2 The Specialist Head teachers are effective system leaders who are well placed to develop training and support models in addition to delivery of their current training packages and School to School support provided via the consortia model,

(appendix 3 testimonial). They are already having impact on Schools who have used them, with work being referenced in subsequent improved Ofsted reports. Research shows that children's achievement in the early years depends on the quality of the early education they receive (EPPE project 2004). Improving the quality of provision is therefore likely to improve the achievement of those children who attend. Higher quality is known to exist where practitioners are more highly trained which is also borne out in better inspection outcomes.

6.396% of Nursery Schools in the most deprived areas are outstanding compared to 64% of all other providers

6.435% of practitioners working in Nursery Schools have a degree level qualification, compared with 10% of practitioners in private day nurseries and pre-schools 22% of practitioners in children's centres and 1% of child minders

6.5 Looking at the overall effectiveness of ALL early years providers inspected between 1 September 2012 and 31 October 2013 just 7% are outstanding compared to 58% of Nursery Schools. Warwickshire Nursery Schools, mainly located in deprived communities (83%), buck the trend in their provision of high quality education; 100% are good or better.

6.6 They have more highly qualified staff and their children make outstanding progress. In particular their ability to track the progress and learning of children ensures that those with additional special educational needs and vulnerabilities related to family income receive tailored support and make the same progress as their peers.

7.0 Proposal to Action

7.1 How would an investment' in the Maintained Nursery School group benefit children in Warwickshire? (ref: appendix 2: why do early years matter?)

- If financially secure and supported by a commitment to protect resources, including specialist knowledge and skills. The EYTCs have the skills and capacity to support improved outcomes across the key issues raised above.
- Uplift funding would be spent in the following way

£40,000 one off award from the additional DSG in 2015/16, prior to a full review of the Single Funding Formula in 2016/17.

£25,000 of which will be used to provide the equivalent of a Schools 'base fund' to support the costs, ensuring financial sustainability and retention of high quality staff, for example practitioners to support children with high level SEN/d. The Schools currently spend up to £20,000 a year providing specialist 1:1 support for children with high level needs

£15,000 will be used to provide release time for the Head, teachers to focus their skills upon the development of a quality improvement role and a traded arm to generate income

7.2 This will allow quality improvement to be facilitated through:

- On-going contribution of early years expertise to the existing Consortia models
- Provision of low cost CPD for nursery/reception teachers.
- WCNS would work with the Local Authority to develop a strategic vision and approach to quality improvement across the sector to support settings and Schools experiencing particular difficulty. For example auditing quality, identifying strengths and weaknesses, supporting assessment, moderation and approaches to early intervention
- Development of a strategic link to what remains of the local authority Early Years Quality Assurance and Training team, to create an operational model with the Nursery Schools.
- The transition from a partnership arrangement with a training company to the development of a full trading arm to support future sustainability. This enables wider support across a range of stakeholders, e.g. Governors, Health, Social Care, Higher Education
- Additionally, financial stability would ensure the survival of the 6 Nursery Schools over the longer term, as a benefit to the largely deprived communities that they are located in and their potential contribution for all children in Warwickshire aged birth to 5.

8.0 This approach contributes to national policy

8.1 The Government's White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching', published in November 2010, was clear that "The primary responsibility for improvement rests with schools, and the wider system should be designed so that our best schools can take a greater responsibility, leading improvement work across the system." This reflected the view that schools not only have to take responsibility for their own improvement but also play a role in supporting the improvement of other schools. The amended funding model for Nursery Schools would allow us to meet this aim as well as go beyond it by generating a much needed service regionally, sub regionally and nationally.

9.0 Benefits to stakeholders

9.1 The Local Authorities vision seeks to 'champion the learner'.

Benefits to stakeholders include:

- Schools: – Support will be shaped and driven by schools and settings for schools and settings.
- Governors – This approach creates an effective mechanism to support governor training and support. Governors will be clear about effective practice within early years education
- LA – A joint strategic vision will clearly define the role and functions of the LA with regard to early years, supporting more transparency, a clearer focus on outcomes and increased accountability.
- Parents/Carers – A shared delivery model creates a mechanism to support more joined up thinking that will encourage schools and partners e.g. Public Health, to work collaboratively recognising the impact on the wider community.
- Higher Education / Practitioners - The expertise of early years system leaders will ensure tomorrow practitioners are highly trained and adequately prepared.

10.0 Final Comment

10.1 The Education Select Committee is unequivocal with regard to the direction of travel

- We support the development of Early Years Teaching Centres as an effective way of passing on best practice and promoting workforce development. Nursery schools with children's centres should be at the centre of these hubs.
- The NCTL should also continue their work on systems leadership in early childhood education and their work on leadership standards in the early years.

10.2 This proposal supports this direction of travel currently being recommended for future policy and provides a catalyst for EYTCs to work more strategically to improve the outcomes for young children in Warwickshire.

10.3 In addition it seeks to address in the long term limited access to future structures for Nursery schools on par with other school groups and uplift funding to provide greater financial stability to ensures the survival of Nursery School education in Warwickshire with all the future potential it holds.

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Appendix 1:

Clarification of the status of Maintained Nursery Schools as a Schools group within the Education Act:

Maintained Nursery Schools are defined as 'Schools' within the Education Act

Education Act 2011 (C. 21) Part 2 P 4: 4.c

(4C) In subsection (4B) (a) "maintained school" means—

(a) a community, foundation or voluntary school,

(b) a community or foundation special school,

(c) a maintained nursery school, or

(d) a pupil referral unit;

"non-maintained special school" means a school that is approved under section 342."

Appendix 2:

Why do the earliest years matter?

There is widespread agreement about the importance of Early Years

“We have found overwhelming evidence that children’s life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life. It is family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years that together matter more to children than money, in determining whether their potential is realised in adult life”[1].

“Even greater priority must be given to ensuring expenditure early in the developmental life cycle (that is, on children below the age of 5) and that more is invested in interventions that have been proved to be effective” [2]

“These early years are absolutely central to the developmental fate of a child, yet until recently they have received virtually no attention. A huge cultural shift must take place. Resources must be invested in the early years of children, concentrating on those most at risk, whose parents/carers are least able to provide what the child needs” [3]

1. The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults, The report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances Frank Field December 2010
2. Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010 Michael Marmot February 2010
3. 3 Getting it right for children and young people Overcoming cultural barriers in the NHS so as to meet their needs A review by Professor Sir Ian Kennedy September 2010

Achievement at KS1 has a direct correlation to Achievement within the EYFS, it is known that once children are behind at the EYFS stage it is very difficult for them to catch up

The quality of provision attended makes a difference, in particular for 2 year olds research shows that unless a child attends a setting which is good or better attendance at early years provision make no difference to cognitive gains

Appendix 3:

Mrs J McNally

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School,

Avenue Road,

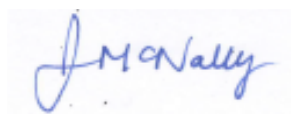
Stratford Upon Avon

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I was appointed Headteacher of St Gregory's Catholic Primary, 5 terms ago. One area of development both for the school and my own professional development is the Early Years Foundation Stage. I believe it takes a very talented and dedicated practitioner to lead and manage an outstanding EYFS setting. My school and I have been truly blessed by being appointed Amanda as our Learning Improvement Officer. The EYFS area has been an Ofsted Priority and her skills and expertise both as a credible EYFS Lead Practitioner has been of great benefit to us. During her visits she has supported the schools' EYFS practitioner in the moderation of pupils learning; developing the EYFS planning format to ensure more child initiated learning and has assisted me as Headteacher in joint observations, enabling me to direct the learning and teaching in my own EYFS setting, ensuring that provision is the best it can be. In addition to this, Amanda has also facilitated visits to her own setting for my EYFS staff on how to set up and organise an outstanding EYFS learning environment.

In the current educational climate, with the decline of local authorities and the push for school to school support, it is vital that we do not lose proven and credible educational establishments, that can assist us in raising standards in our own settings.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Amanda for her time, expertise and continued support for a fellow colleague.



22.05.14