

ChIDS Reference Group
Wednesday 10th June 2009
Catherine Street

1. Present: ED, AF, J M-C, CP, JT, SL.

Apologies: GA, EB, DF, LJ, CM, AN, KO, HL, SD.

Welcome and introductions.

- It was decided that there will be a day time meeting at the beginning of the month and keep the end of the month meeting in the evening. Will possibly have the day time meeting on the 30th June/1st July.

2. Lamb Enquiry.

- AF - Lamb Inquiry website - there is a questionnaire for parents (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/lambinquiry/evidence.shtml>) under the heading 'Call for Evidence' asking for parent's views on the statementing process. The questionnaire gives parents the opportunity to put their point across.
- JT – discussion followed about the statementing process and parent's experience.
- Further discussion about delegated funding to schools, special schools and monitoring.
- Plymouth have maintained their special schools whereas some authorities have closed their special schools.
- Members agreed that the statementing process should be monitored on a national level. The Lamb Inquiry acknowledges that the statementing process needs to be improved.
- There were comments around trying to ring-fence the money for SEN / statemented pupils, to ensure that it is spent appropriately.
- Money delegated to mainstream schools – for pupils at School Action, School Action Plus and for the majority of children with a statement - there is an expectation that mainstream schools should be meeting their needs.
- Need to improve the system so that it's not just the loudest parents that get heard.
- Delegated funding should be far more transparent- why can't parents know how much money schools receive to meet the needs of children? JT will take this question to the strategic board.
- Support services- PALS, Education Psychologists etc are funded by the local authority. Schools that are independent from the LA would have to buy into those services.
- AF is the newly appointed Principal Educational Psychologist.
- Some discussion followed about the role of the EP in carrying out assessments as part of the statutory assessment and parent's confidence in that.

- Suggestion made that a parent friendly questionnaire could be sent out to parents asking for their views about Educational Psychologists. JT will take this back to PJ.
- Emphasis on any questionnaires needing to be parent friendly.
- Recommendations from the Lamb Inquiry - engaging parents at all levels. Information is given to parents but it is not explained.
- Local authorities are not good at publishing information around SEN policies etc.
- OFSTED questionnaire – Parent Partnership Services nationally have been asked to seek the views of parents of children with SEN / disabilities.
- The group looked at the OFSTED questions aimed at parents. OFSTED have not previously focused on SEN. The questions are very broad.
- The questionnaires have been given to the PSAs in special schools to seek the views of parents.
- Discussion about school's self evaluation (SEF), OFSTED and the School Improvement Partner (SIP).
- If a school is classed by OFSTED as a cause for concern then the school has to evidence that they have involved parents and gathered their views to help inform the school improvement process.
- Review of Plymouth's Inclusion Strategy
- The strap line is 'belonging and achieving; ensuring opportunities and access to lifelong learning for every child'.
- Parent Partnership will be consulting with parents through the Parent & Family Forum and through this reference group.
- Some discussion about the questions that should be asked.
- Suggestions made - 'do you feel that your child belongs to the school community?'
- Some discussion around the fact that children with SEN probably feel that they belong to the school community but not the wider community because of lack of access to many social aspects of the wider community.
- The second question is 'do you feel that they are given every opportunity and provision to meet their full potential?'
- The group felt that just focussing on two questions is good, it opens up to a lot of discussion.

3. AOB

- There is no feedback from the phase 2 AHDC grant application yet.
- PALS (Plymouth Advisory Learning Support Service) are based at the Mannamead Centre, children are referred to PALS by their schools.
- There is a dyslexia centre at Stonehouse.(information in the directory)

- The Disabled Children's Services Indicator- NI 54 questionnaire - has been sent out to parents in thirty local authority areas. (Plymouth not included in this round).

4. Next Meeting

- **Tuesday 30th June, Catherine Street.**
10:00 am. – 12:00 pm.

Proposed date for July – Wednesday 2nd July
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm.
Catherine Street