

Appendix B – SEN: Planning to Meet Future Needs – Summary of Responses from headteachers

Introduction

A total of 24 schools responded to the consultation. These included:

- 1 nursery school;
- 17 primary schools;
- 1 ‘all-through’ school;
- 2 secondary schools;
- 3 special schools.

Only 1 school with an ARP responded.

In addition, a meeting was held with all four nursery schools and Oakleigh Special School to discuss the early years’ issue in the consultation and a fuller written response was received from Mapledown Special School. The document was also discussed at a meeting of all primary headteachers.

The level of responses was low, but the general impression is that headteachers had few issues with the general direction of the proposals and are looking to the Council to provide the leadership for the future direction for planning for the nature of the provision for children and young people with special educational needs.

Question 1 on the survey asked schools to identify themselves. The remaining questions related to the proposals in the document.

Proposal 1: Maintaining Levels of Inclusion

Q2: What additional support (e.g. training, access to expert support services) will schools require in order to maintain, or further improve, Barnet’s current levels of inclusion?

18 responses were received to this question. The majority of these referred to the need for training, both in the new processes for assessment and Education, Health and Care Plans and in best practice in provision for children with SEN, particularly those with autism and speech, language and communication difficulties. Schools mentioned recent training for SENCOs, which was considered to have been very effective, and would welcome more of this support.

A second theme was access to specialist support services, including advisory teachers, outreach support from specialist provisions and Education Psychologists. This theme was also reflected in schools’ desire to ensure good access to therapists, both speech and occupational.

Funding was also regarded as an important issue, in terms of both revenue funding to support schools meeting the needs of high levels of SEN, and capital funding for the adaptation of buildings to offer low sensory environments suitable for children with ASD.

One secondary school referred to the need for better liaison between primary and secondary schools on transition and suggested there was a need for additional facilities for students who cannot cope in mainstream schools and recognition in primary schools of the great difference between secondary and primary.

Proposal 2: Early Years SEN

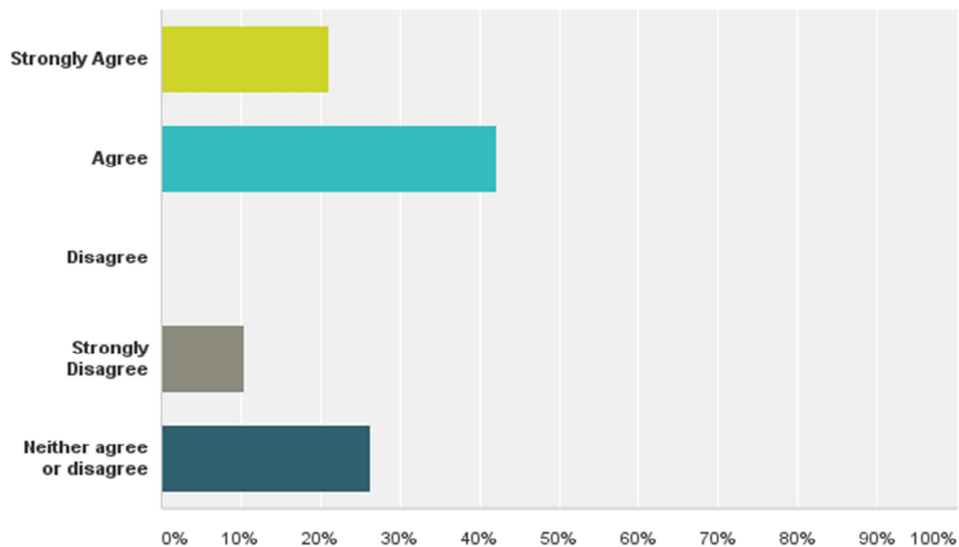
Q3: Do you agree with the proposal to remove the current time limitations with regard to the Early Years Inclusion Fund to promote further the Barnet Inclusion Policy?

A total of 19 schools responded to this question. The balance of opinion is in agreement with the proposal. Responses are illustrated in the table and chart below.

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strongly Agree | 21.1% | 4 |
| Agree | 42.1% | 8 |
| Disagree | 0.0% | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 10.5% | 2 |
| Neither agree or disagree | 26.3% | 5 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 19 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 7 |

Q3 Do you agree with the proposal to remove the current time limitations with regard to the Early Years Inclusion Fund to promote further the Barnet Inclusion Policy?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 7



A special meeting was held with the headteachers of the four nursery and Oakleigh Special School to discuss this and wider issues of SEN in early years settings. The main issue discussed was the effect of the changes in the funding of nursery schools. Access to the additional funding for children with SEN through the Early Years Inclusion Fund has, until now, been restricted to Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers, as local authority maintained nursery schools previously benefited attracted a higher level of funding than other providers. As the nursery school subsidy has been reduced, the headteachers proposed that all early years settings should have equal access to the Early Years Inclusion Fund.

Q4: Are there other issues you have noted regarding the interface between Early Years providers and schools affecting children with SEN that should be considered?

10 responses were received to this question. These pointed to the need for training of staff and

access to specialist professionals to support settings in developing their capacity to meet the needs of children with SEN. Early intervention was identified as important in ensuring children with SEN make good progress, but there was some frustration with the time it can take to access external support, e.g. therapies. There was also a concern expressed at the level of support available, including funding, during the assessment process, which could take some time. It was acknowledged that there was further work to do to improve further the transition from early years to primary education.

Proposal 3: Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs)

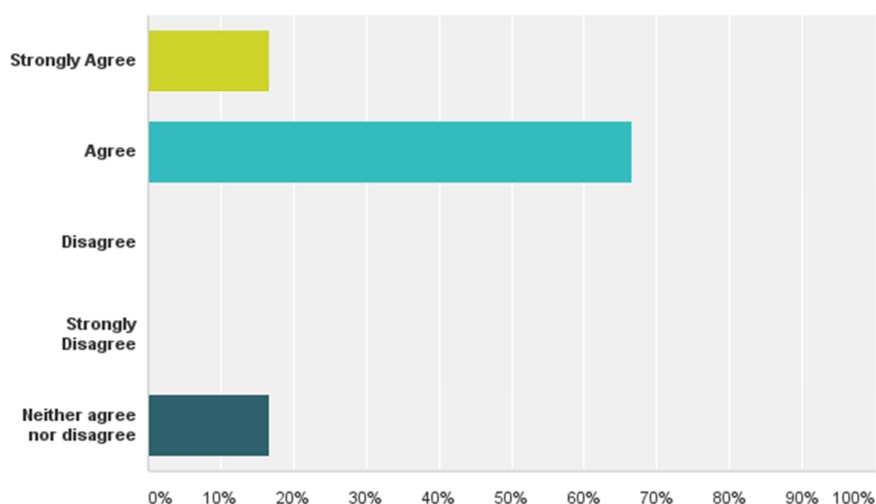
Q5: Do you agree with the proposal to recommission the service provided by ARPs, establishing greater clarity in the specification of provision required and a measured balance with the local context of the host school?

A total of 18 schools responded to this question. The balance of opinion was in favour of the proposal. Responses are illustrated in the table and chart below.

| Answer Options | Response Per cent | Response Count |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 16.7% | 3 |
| Agree | 66.7% | 12 |
| Disagree | 0.0% | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0.0% | 0 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 16.7% | 3 |
| | <i>answered question</i> | 18 |
| | <i>skipped question</i> | 8 |

Q5 Do you agree with the proposal to re-commission the service provided by ARPs, establishing greater clarity in the specification of provision required and a measured balance with the local context of the host school?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 8



Q6: Are there other particular factors for the LA to take into account during the development of a new commissioning framework?

Only 7 responses were received. There is general agreement that ARPs are an important feature of local provision and that they are part of a wider spectrum of support settings for SEND. Clear and consistent expectations for those provisions were generally welcomed.

Proposal 4: Commissioning of Therapies

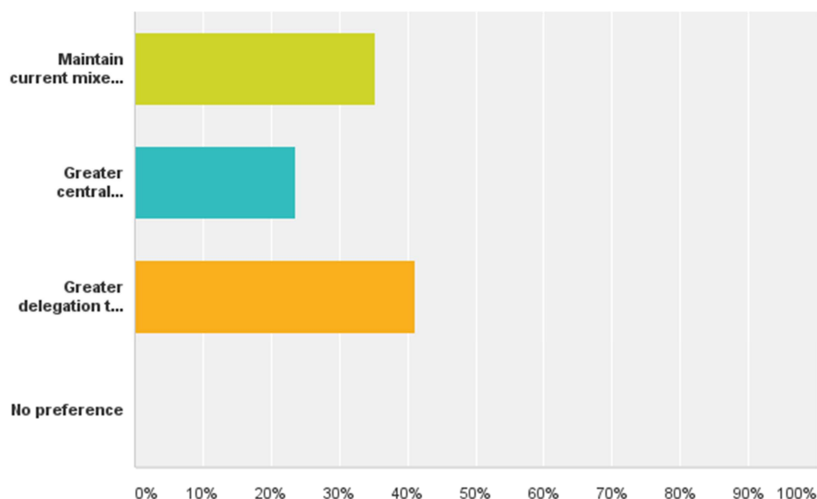
Q7: The document discusses the advantages and disadvantages of three options for the future commissioning of therapy services: maintaining the current 'mixed-economy' model, greater central commissioning of therapy services or a move to greater delegation to schools. Please tick your preferred option below:

A total of 17 responses were received for this question. The table and chart below illustrate the balance of opinion. Whilst a third of respondents felt comfortable with the current arrangements, a higher proportion of respondents were in favour of greater delegation of funds, rather than greater central commissioning.

| Answer Options | Response Per cent | Response Count |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Maintain current mixed economy | 35.3% | 6 |
| Greater central commissioning | 23.5% | 4 |
| Greater delegation to schools | 41.2% | 7 |
| No preference | 0.0% | 0 |
| answered question | | 17 |
| skipped question | | 9 |

Q7 The document discusses the advantages and disadvantages of three options for the future commissioning of therapy services: maintaining the current 'mixed-economy' model, greater central commissioning of therapy services or a move to greater delegation to schools. Please tick your preferred option below:

Answered: 17 Skipped: 9



Proposal 5: Provision of Additional Specialist Places

Q8: Other than those set out in the document, are there other advantages or disadvantages for any of the options that you believe should be considered?

There were 7 responses to this question, including a detailed response from Mapledown Special School. It was recognised that ARPs could only deal with a defined range of SEN. ASD was clearly identified as the major concern and the concentration on expanding specialist provision for this need was welcomed. Special Schools currently offering ASD places were understandably concerned to ensure that the nature of any new ASD special school did not lead to a two-tier system. One school requested that the desires of faith communities be taken into account in the future plans.

Mapledown Special School commented on their particular position in the future proposals as follows: *Mapledown is already 'imagining' its future as part of the Brent Cross South Re-Development. Based on recent and current trends we had drafted a planned expansion from the present eleven classes (79 pupil capacity) to fifteen classes (108 capacity). This would give the school six PMLD Classes (currently we have five) six ASD Classes (currently four) and three SLD Classes (currently two). Our proposal is slightly higher than the Documents' suggested expansion to 96 (Page 46). We feel that the Document significantly underestimates the potential for increasing numbers mainly because so many of our current and recent pupils have simply arrived from out of borough and usually out of the UK.*

Q9: What other potential implications of each or any of the options do you anticipate for the total continuum of SEN provision?

There were five responses to this question. These noted the following:

- The criteria for provision and parental preference being in conflict

- The pressure on the Direct Schools Grant as the High Needs Funding Block will need to grow in line with the increasing numbers of SEN if quality of provision is to be maintained
- The danger of new Barnet provision being occupied by children from other boroughs.

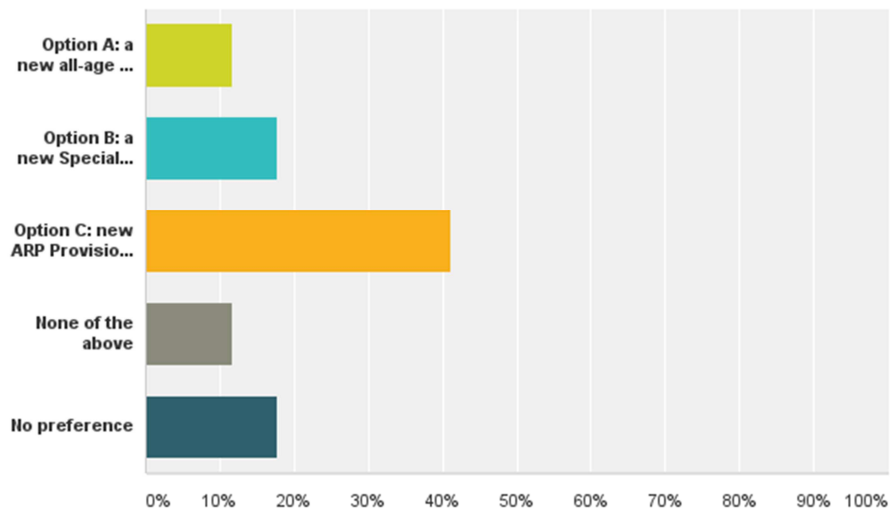
Q10: Do you have a preference for one particular option from the three proposed?

There were 17 responses to this question, as follows:

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Option A: a new all-age ASD School | 11.8% | 2 |
| Option B: a new Special School Sixth Form Centre and new Primary ARPs | 17.6% | 3 |
| Option C: new ARP Provisions to meet the whole of the additional need requirement | 41.2% | 7 |
| None of the above | 11.8% | 2 |
| No preference | 17.6% | 3 |
| answered question | | 17 |
| skipped question | | 9 |

Q10 Do you have a preference for one particular option from the three proposed?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 9



The answers tended to reflect the sector of the respondent, with mainstream schools preferring ARPs and special schools Option A or B. Overall, the number and spread of the responses give no clear guidance.

Q11: If you have selected none of the above, do you have an alternative option you wish to be considered?

Only 3 respondents to this question, all from special schools, which favoured expansion of the special school sector, but with different emphases.

Summary

The low level of written responses was disappointing, particularly given the higher level of headteachers' contribution in the creation of the document. It may be that this in fact indicates that headteachers were generally in support of the proposals and only felt the need to comment where their views diverged from the proposals. This will be tested in the Director's meetings with headteachers in the Autumn Term.

16 July 2015