

Enhancing Inclusive Practice Fund - Chailey (Case Study)

What have we learnt?

The following learning has been collated having reviewed the data, and from conversations and questionnaires with schools, providers, parents, practitioners and children and young people following the initial working groups and the yearly 'Keeping in touch' meetings.

See the strand learning and illustrative Case studies of projects by strand (attached).

Generic Learning

Recruitment has been a challenge for many projects, and many have had to be creative in terms of sharing, backfilling, training, and developing existing staff or inducting staff new to education but with relevant skills sets or experience.

Collaborative work needs excellent regular communication to ensure that all parties have similar expectation and a collective belief that the project will meet their needs. This has been an issue for some in terms of 'identifying the bar for referral' for example.

Collaborative working needs staff to be flexible to work effectively across different ethos's etc.

Systems such as supervision, Lone Working and Safeguarding need to be clear, consistent, and managed across the partnership.

Projects can support and act as drivers towards whole school initiatives such as developing a sense of Belonging or pupil mental health and wellbeing.

All reporting projects have identified significant improvements in attendance, behaviour and parental confidence for a number of the pupils engaged in the project.

Several projects suggested that their projects will reduce the number of EHCP and Special School applications over time.

Creating branding for the project e.g. The Bridge can create a stronger community partnership and joint ownership feel rather than a situation where one school is 'doing something' to others.

Strand 3 Improving expertise and availability of SEN support for local school alliances.

Early Learning:

- *Peer support was highlighted as a valuable component enabling teachers to feel that they were able successfully to include children with special needs*
- *Working in teams is an effective way of supporting individual members of staff to improve the quality of inclusive provision*
- *High quality targeted support, working closely with parents, teachers, SENCOs, and Teaching Assistants can have a significant impact on inclusivity.*
- *MODELLING good practice working alongside teachers and TAs has been effective*

Case study

The Chailey project:

In the north of East Sussex, the Chailey cluster of ten primary schools are experiencing a high number of pupils with ASD and these schools are struggling to meet the needs of these pupils due to a lack of expertise and capacity. As small rural schools they only have part time SENCOs with a maximum of two days of SENCO time a week to help support these pupils.

The project has addressed the identified need for enhanced support by recruiting two specialist teachers with SEND experience to work with five schools each across the Alliance. The role of the recruited staff is to work with staff in each school to support these pupils with their needs in their school. Their focus is the pupils with ASD Level 2 and ASD Level 3. This has been achieved through 1to1 (especially speech and language) and group work (through Sensory Club) with identified pupils, team teaching with staff; observing staff and offering developmental feedback; observing pupils and offering strategies to support them, modelling good practice and then leading professional development for staff. Where appropriate the new specialists have worked to integrate pupils into the mainstream setting with the SENCOs as well as helping them to effectively support the implementation of EHCPs to ensure impact and where necessary build evidence for new EHCPs. There has also been work with parents to ensure they are onboard and feel their child's needs are being met. They are now working with TAs (Teaching Assistants) and teachers to ensure that all lessons are fully inclusive and address the needs of ASD pupils.

Each school receives support for approximately 1 day a week of contact time, with built in time for the new staff to prepare and complete administration. There is also professional development support which is attended by staff from all 5 schools as appropriate to their development needs.

They now have a clear indication of the success of the new roles, so much so that they plan to continue this role once the project has finished if they are able to fund it ourselves.

In addition, the practitioners work closely with CLASS (Education East Sussex Communication, Learning, Autism Support Service) and TASS (Team Around the school Service) to develop an expert offer, initially working with one child per school to allow time to develop skills and support SENCO with ANP reviews, which has been beneficial for the pupils and staff. They work directly with the children offering specific support according to need.

Success/ impact on from this project in school to date:

The project has had a profoundly positive impact on children with ASD, school staff, and the overall school environment. By fostering strong working relationships with both children, parents and schools, the practitioners have significantly enhanced the well-being and educational experiences of students with autism. Increased school attendance, improved behaviour regulation, and a greater sense of safety and happiness among students are clear indicators of the project's success. Staff have reported increased confidence in supporting students with ASD, leading to more inclusive classrooms and a richer curriculum for all students. The project's emphasis on high-quality staff training has resulted in a more knowledgeable and effective teaching force, capable of meeting the diverse needs of their students and should provide a level of sustainability. While there is still room for improvement in supporting some students to achieve consistently high levels in all subjects, the overall impact of the project is undeniably positive and has laid a strong foundation for continued success.

The Fletching Ofsted Report 2024 commented:

'Pupils feel safe and are confident that the adults who work with them will help and support them. This includes any pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who may need additional support. The school has prioritised high quality training for all staff. As a result, teachers have expert knowledge in the different subjects that they teach. Teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils need to be taught and when.'

Comments from Executive Head:

“The main impact that the Project's had is improving teachers and all the staff's confidence in being able to offer an inclusive curriculum and provision for children with autism within our mainstream primary schools”.

Teachers view from the programme:

“Our support we have received from the experts have been valuable in putting together a comprehensive package that showed each teacher the triggers for children in their class and the ways in which they could re-regulate the child. This has allowed every teacher to recognise when a child behaving in a slightly different manner, they can then put the strategy into action to reduce the child being heightened and overwhelmed, in a quick response leading to more time in the classroom for learning the support”.

TA view of the programme:

“The support I've received through training and CPD has been really helpful in delivering programs and activities to the children on the SEND spectrum, I can utilize the knowledge that I have and go into any setting now with much more confidence and support the children”.

Parent view:

“Isaac now speak in class whereas before he was pretty much mute, he didn't speak to teachers unless it was essential, and I think that's this project has built up his confidence and staff understand him better. This has allowed his to speak more” If he has been in the sensory room and had the support from the teachers, we know he won't get that explosion when he comes home and it's just a much better home life for us. I think this project should be in every school”.