

Enhancing Inclusive Practice Fund FSN (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 early 'Keeping in touch' meetings.

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 2 Early identification and early intervention in nursery provision to support transition into KS1.

Early Learning:

- This strand focusses on an equitable start so all children can begin their education journey on an equal footing with their peers and early identification of SEND children can help stop them falling significantly behind their peers before they enter primary school SEN.
- Early ID allows teachers to put in place effective provision sooner and help them to a 'soft landing' at transition.
- Red flags that could indicate a learning disability include Problems with pronouncing words. Difficulty in learning the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- In their early years, children with SEND often require intervention and targeted support aimed at improving key developmental skills and wellbeing.
- Children with speech and language disorders and delays are identified earlier, they make faster progress and have a better chance to catch up to same-aged peers.
- Nursery and school EYFS assessments are different which can lead to challenges around identification of level of need and make transition more difficult.

Case study

Fellowship of St Nicholas (FSN):

St Nicks Nursery in Central St Leonards has been chosen as the pilot project area due to a significantly high and increasing number of children with SEND needs. This area, ranked among the 10% most deprived nationally, is characterised by elevated levels of transient residents, multiple occupation housing, and a diverse community.

Data shows a dramatic rise in children identified with SEND behaviours and welfare concerns, with a substantial gap in support from external agencies. This, combined with overwhelming feedback from parents prioritising SEND support, strongly indicates a critical need for additional resources and interventions to ensure that the children are EYFS ready and able to settle into their new setting and make progress post transition.

FSN is working across their nurseries to improve early identification of SEND and develop specialised one-to-one support for children with SEND before working with their primary partners to ensure a soft transition. This support has been complemented by intensive parent engagement to improve school readiness and confidence.

They work closely with families, the primary school and ESCC Early years to co-design the support, ensuring the children's needs and perspectives are central to the process.

By providing ongoing support throughout the transition to primary school to help children with SEND successfully integrate into mainstream schools.

The early impact of the project has demonstrated initial success in enhancing children's speech and language development, a key focus area for primary schools. Group and individual interventions have shown positive results and are being expanded across all nurseries. Children's confidence and school readiness are improving, as evidenced by increased parental satisfaction.

Collaborative work with schools through three-way meetings has strengthened partnerships and increased parental support. These positive outcomes indicate promising progress towards the project's overall goal of improving children's transition to mainstream school.

Comment from the Lead practitioner, Hailey Thwaites:

“This project has allowed us to create a strong relationship with the local primary schools that will take our SEND nursery children. We have been able to early identify SEND needs and experiment early interventions to allow for a smooth transition to mainstream primary school. This has led to co-creating a detailed profile of the SEND child, with the parent involvement, putting child's needs at the heart of it, with information about support works for this child”.

Parent comment:

“The project has helped my daughter. She's changed a lot from when she first started, her communication has improved, with talking, she's been able to do more and talk in sentences now, before it would be hard to figure out what she was saying and one-word answers”.