

Divisions Affected - All

Cabinet

October 2023

Area SEND inspection of Oxfordshire Local Area Partnership Report by the Interim Corporate Director for Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to

- (a) **NOTE the report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector;**
- (b) **NOTE the indicative action plan development process and proposed governance;**

Executive Summary

2. The County Council is jointly responsible with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND in Oxfordshire.
3. There was an inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) between 13 July 2023 and 21 July 2023. The report was published on 15 September 2023.
4. The inspection's outcome was that "There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which the local area partnership must address urgently".
5. The Council has unequivocally accepted the report as have partners.
6. Following publication of the report, His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) requires the local area partnership to prepare and submit a priority action plan (area SEND) to address the identified areas for priority action. Deadline for this submission is 27th October 2023.
7. The Priority Action Plan is being co-developed by the council and partners through 3 workshops, from 25th September to 3rd October. Discussion on progress took place with DFE representatives on October 6th.

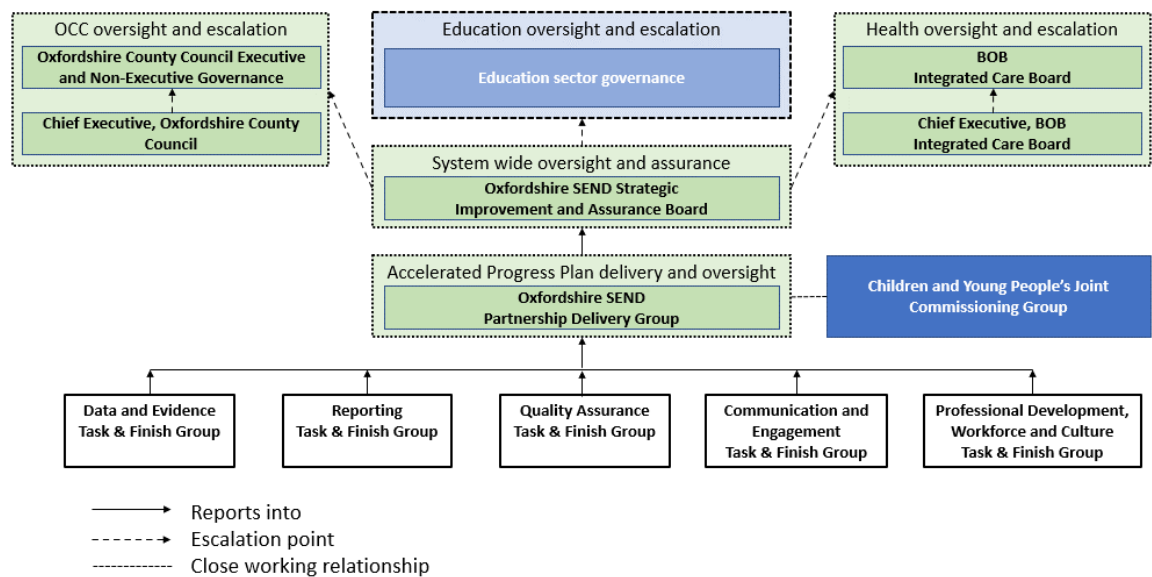
Report

Priority Action Plan

8. The Priority Action Plan (PAP) will be developed via 3x partner agency workshops. The first was held on Monday 25th September, with the others taking place on Thursday 28th September and Tuesday 3rd October. At these workshops, partners work together to develop an initial PAP, addressing the 5 priority actions and 4 areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. Workshop participants are comprised of the Oxfordshire SEND Partnership Delivery Group (see 13/14 below), Oxfordshire Parents Carers Forum, Headteachers and Academy Trust representatives, and members of the Education Commission. This ensures a collective partnership approach.
9. The draft PAP will be presented to the first meeting of the Oxfordshire SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB – see Governance and Monitoring below). This meeting will also ratify proposed governance arrangements and Terms of Reference for the SIAB.
10. The finalised PAP will be signed off by Martin Reeves (OCC, Chief Executive) and Nick Broughton (Chief Executive, BOB ICB).

Governance and Monitoring

11. Proposed governance arrangements are below:



N.B.: The above chart was originally presented to Health & Wellbeing Board on 5th October. Subsequent to this, the proposed Task & Finish groups have been amended. There are now 4 groups proposed, namely: Working Together, Journey of the Child, Preparation for Adulthood, and Leadership & Partnership.

12. As per its Terms of Reference, the Oxfordshire SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB) will meet monthly (with a review after 6 months) to provide strategic system and partnership leadership, assurance, and oversight of the areas of weakness identified in the inspection, across the local

area system in Oxfordshire for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. It is proposed that the SIAB will have an independent chair.

13. The Board will provide oversight and assurance for the partnership delivery of the SEND Strategy, Action Plan, the Engagement and Participation Strategy and the SEND Communications and Engagement Strategies which contain additional and complementary work to the nine improvement priorities. The Independent Chair of the Board is accountable for reporting to the Department of Education and NHS England, progress against delivery of actions and outcomes within the Action Plan arising from the local area SEND inspection.
14. The Board will be supported by the Oxfordshire SEND Partnership Delivery Group (PDG) and, as necessary, any time limited Task and Finish Groups to respond to the areas of weakness. The SEND Partnership Delivery Group will take forward the co-ordination of partnership activity and monitor progress and impact of delivery in detail. It will liaise with OCC's Operational Groups who are responsible for local authority project delivery.
15. Membership of the SEND Partnership Delivery Group comprises staff from OCC, NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), Oxford Health, Oxford University Hospitals, and Oxfordshire Parents Carers Forum. It will provide monthly assurance reports into the Board, and the SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board Chair will meet with the Chair(s) of the SEND Partnership Delivery Group to ensure rapid tasking and clear accountability between the strategic and delivery assurance arrangements.
16. As per the Area SEND Inspections Framework, Ofsted and CQC will carry out a monitoring inspection around 18 months after the initial inspection. This will assess the extent to which the local area partners are taking effective action to address the areas for priority action set out in the inspection report, and the impact of actions on the weaknesses identified. These findings will be used to determine any further required intervention and/ or support (see [Area SEND inspections: framework and handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-send-inspections-framework-and-handbook)).

Corporate Policies and Priorities

17. The report and its recommendations relate explicitly to the following priorities: tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire; prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.

Financial Implications

18. Consideration of the action plan will include assessment of the financial implications involved.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter,
Director of Finance, lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

19. Consideration of the action plan will include assessment of any legal implications involved.

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley,
Director of Law and Governance, anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

20. Consideration of the action plan will include assessment of any staffing implications involved.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

21. Consideration of the action plan will include assessment of any equality and inclusion implications involved.

Anne Coyle
Interim Corporate Director for Children's Services
September 2023

Annex: Area SEND inspection of Oxfordshire Local Area Partnership