

Interim Report on the Graduated Response Project

Purpose

1.1 To share the emerging findings and impact of the Graduated Response Project

In Summer 2020, funding was agreed for an 18-month project which aimed to ‘pump prime’ school to school collaboration in support of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This amounted to £230,200 which was split between two teaching schools – St Martins and St Giles Special Schools – with the expectation that leaders from these schools would lead and coordinate the work.

1.2 The project was proposed to last five terms – starting in Spring 2021 and concluding at the end of the Summer 2022. This report aims to share emerging recommendations and impact information up to May 2022.

Recommendations

2.1 To note the impact of the graduated response project and the emerging recommendations whilst being aware of the effect of Covid-19 on schools’ capacity to engage in face-to-face training at key points during the five terms.

2.2 To note early recommendations:

- To consider how we plan for sustainability, developing the next tier of Derby SENCOs
- To challenge and support schools to give a greater priority to the voice of the learner and their family
- To consider how the progress of a SEND learner can be evidenced through mainstream curriculum programmes
- To identify and recognise strong practice in mainstream settings
- To support Derby leaders to be braver.

Reason

3.1 Although good progress has been made in making inclusion a central focus for Derby schools and academies, there is still more work to be done. Leaders in primary and secondary phases have identified inclusion as a priority for work in 2022/23 and there are some areas where success can be claimed. The project comes to an end in a few

weeks and has provided some useful learning for the city. Other workstreams have contributed to gains made – a strength of the last four terms has been the increasing synergy between different partners.

4.1 Supporting information

See accompanying background information and impact data.

This report has been approved by the following people:

| Role | Name | Date of sign-off |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Legal | | |
| Finance | | |
| Service Director(s) | Pauline Anderson | |
| Report sponsor | Pauline Anderson | |
| Other(s) | | |

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|---------------------|
| Background papers: |
| List of appendices: |

Background to the Graduated Response Project

In Summer 2020, funding was agreed for an 18-month project which aimed to ‘pump prime’ school to school collaboration in support of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This amounted to £230,200 which was split between two teaching schools – St Martins and St Giles Special Schools – with the expectation that leaders from these schools would lead and coordinate the work. The project was a pilot designed to test out a collaborative school inclusion improvement structure between specialist and mainstream schools based on a set of principles:

- That one of the strongest drivers of greater school inclusion is high quality professional development that builds staff confidence and expertise in response to changing patterns of need.
- That collaboration across sectors will lead to improvements in provision, earlier support for children and families, and better use of resources.
- That sustainability will come from developing the expertise of leaders and staff in schools and changing the culture of schools in respect of SEND provision.
- That this is a further area where Derby could develop focused locality working in order to maximise impact for children and families.

The aims of the project were outlined at the start:

- Implement new ways of working across the mainstream and specialist school sectors so that children and young people with SEND make good progress in their education and are well supported from the earliest stage *in mainstream settings*.
- Improve staff confidence in mainstream settings in meeting the needs of children identified as SEN support and those with EHCPs – including deepening knowledge of effective strategies to meet particular needs and by providing quality first teaching.
- Develop Specialist Teaching Assistants who have specialist subject knowledge and are deployed effectively within schools, responding to need and providing strength and expertise
- Provide wider learning for the City’s SEND Strategy and its response to the financial pressures caused by increased demand for EHCPs.
- Develop the school workforce across mainstream and specialist provision through a new team of specialist leaders in SEND provision and create long term centres of excellence that can support other local schools.

The project was planned to run from January 2021 until July 2022. Once funding had been agreed, schools and academies were identified for variety of reasons to ensure a range of contexts, age ranges and other indicators such as use of suspensions (formerly known as fixed term exclusions) and persistent absence, both high and low. Some schools or academies actively requested involvement. The schools and academies listed below formed the initial list although Derby Moor withdrew near the beginning due to staff changes.

1. Brackensdale
2. Redwood
3. Parkview
4. St Peters
5. Griffie Field
6. Allenton
7. St Albans
8. Pear Tree Jnr
9. Lakeside
10. Gayton Jnr
11. St Chads
12. Alvaston Jnr
13. Ashwood Spencer

14. Chaddesden Park
15. Ridgeway Inf
16. Portway Jnr
17. Carlyle Inf
18. Wyndham
19. Ravensdale Jnr
20. Homefields
21. Shelton Jnr
22. Derby Moor
23. Noel Baker
24. West Park
25. Landau Forte College
26. Da Vinci
27. DPA
28. CoDA
29. Bemrose
30. Merrill
31. Littleover
32. Saint Benedict
33. Derby Cathedral School

Initially the intended Impact was captured as set out below:

- Improved school leader and teacher confidence in planning and delivering the best provision for children and young people with SEND in mainstream provision, particularly those with more complex needs
- Improved effectiveness of support staff (and development of specialist knowledge and expertise) in meeting children's needs
- Improved deployment of staff in supporting whole school inclusion strategy
- Improvements in practice and inclusion leading to optimum progress in learning for children and young people with SEND
- Maximising resources to improve outcomes for SEND learners in mainstream provision
- Stronger collaboration and knowledge of 'what works' (on assessment and curriculum delivery) within the local context of Derby schools and greater ownership for city wide inclusion.

A Graduated Response Steering Group was formed and agreed key performance indicators which firmed up some of the areas listed above.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Reduction in fixed term exclusions, including repeat exclusions, for SENDK
- Reduction in the use of part-time timetables for vulnerable pupils, both SENDK and EHCPs
- Reduction in persistent absence of SEND CYP (case studies)
- Reduction in pupils requiring EHCPs following their needs being met effectively as part of earlier intervention (Case studies)
- Evidence of needs being met at Steps 1 and 2 of the Graduated response (case study evidence)
- Increase in parental confidence (baseline and later survey and/or reduction in numbers of complaints)
- Increase in teacher confidence (baseline and later survey)

Progress of the Graduated Response Project

The progress of the project was captured through the regular meetings of the Steering Group.

February 2021 During Spring 2021, planning meetings took place, the Graduated

Response project was launched to school leaders and first contact was made with the project schools.

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| May 2021 | Initial visits were made to each of the project schools up to June 2021. Schools commented on the rigour of the process which they found challenging initially. An early feature was a reluctance on the part of schools to involve parents and carers. |
| July 2021 | <p>Covid-19 had an effect on the pace of visits and some took place remotely. Some second visits were pushed back into the Autumn term. Emerging themes at this stage were set out as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum – a tension between the subject curriculum and making adjustments• Consistency including in the deployment of teaching assistants• Learner and family voice <p>Plans for Autumn were firmed up including CPD, the input of health, especially SALT at this stage, and the development of case studies.</p> |
| October 2021 | KPIs were reviewed. Data was available for many of the KPIs but parental confidence was continuing as a theme with limited data to measure whether the project was having any impact. At this stage, parental complaints to the Inclusion Service were a possible line of enquiry. Training was well received by schools including requests for INSET day support and personalised training such as for girls and autism. |
| December 2021 | <p>Data for exclusions and suspensions provided a mixed picture at this point in the project. Permanent exclusions had reduced for primary and secondary phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary permanent exclusions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2018/2019: 27 pupils○ 2019/2020: 18 pupils○ 2020/21: 5 pupils• Secondary permanent exclusions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2018/2019: 63 pupils○ 2019/2020: 38 pupils○ 2020/21: 4 pupils <p>The project does not claim exclusion impact here – other workstreams such as the Behaviour Strategy and SEND Peer Challenges will have had some effect as well as the lockdowns when fewer pupils were in face-to-face education. Nevertheless, these figures are encouraging.</p> <p>However, trends in use of suspensions was less positive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary suspensions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2019/20: 36 pupils of whom 37% were SEND○ 2020/21: 24 pupils of whom 50% were SEND• Secondary suspensions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2019/20: 231 pupils of whom 36% were SEND○ 2020/21: 337 pupils of whom 47% were SEND |

Schools and academies were reporting an increase in pupil anxiety and SEMH needs linked to Covid-19. There were also impacts on staffing, who were catching Covid-19, and the limited expertise and availability of supply staff. The project was beginning to identify the need for succession planning as experienced leaders and SENCOs began to retire or move on.

Project leaders began to develop a template to capture impact data.

| Graduated Response Project Update – April 22 | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | | Delivery Dates | |
| | | Anticipation | |
| Progress Commentary | Activities / Themes | Comments | Status |
| <p>The GRP continues to move forward positively against the backdrop of COVID-19 associated challenges with staff absence and capacity.</p> <p>Spring 2 has seen continued ability / support for participant schools both on the and virtual along with an acceleration of other parts of the pilot project. Every Teacher (CYP) now well attended (aka attendance) and increased very positive feedback. A number of schools are now taking up the opportunity (usually allowing to release staff to work alongside specialist colleagues (involvement arrangements)).</p> <p>It's pleasing that colleagues from participant schools are very much taking the initiative to connect with specialist counterparts e.g. subject and curriculum leads sharing resources and expertise. This effort great legacy for a sustainable legacy for this project.</p> <p>Positive meetings with children's services (if a number of training dates are in the diary along with support for individual needs. Right sign up for sessions is close down to staff absence and challenges with release / capacity.</p> <p>Recorded sessions again reveal appear the best way to engage colleagues with facilitator conversations and sharing of practice as a follow up.</p> <p>We look forward positively to a busy summer term of activity with visits, staff exchanges, responsive CPD and SALT / OT support all in the diary.</p> | <p>Reduction in fixed term exclusions, including repeat exclusions, for SEND</p> <p>Reduction in the use of part-time timetables for vulnerable pupils, both SEND and EHCP</p> <p>Reduction in persistent absence of SEND CYP (case studies)</p> <p>Reduction in pupils requiring EHCPs following their needs being met effectively as part of earlier intervention (Case studies)</p> <p>Evidence of needs being met at Steps 1 and 2 of the Graduated response (case study evidence)</p> <p>Increase in parental confidence (baseline and later survey and/or reduction in numbers of complaints)</p> <p>Increase in teacher confidence (baseline and later survey)</p> | <p>Baseline data showing positive impact and significant reduction particularly when removing 1 school from the set who's measures / experiences show the detail.</p> <p>Positive response to the anxiety from reporting of stress across the case (OT & other two groups) / align well with greater support and potential inclusion outcomes metrics.</p> <p>Positive case studies in both primary & secondary partner schools (detail anonymised case studies)</p> <p>Early stages in the life cycle of this project to deliver meaningful data have however brought change in beliefs, values & attitudes towards inclusion (case comments)</p> <p>Positive case studies in schools across the GR project. Examples of needs are increasingly connecting with specialist colleagues to develop their practice.</p> <p>Repeat conversations with parents booked in for term 2, summer visit. Continued queries with parent groups / forums.</p> <p>Every Teacher a teacher of SEND session feedback / School visits / Tack & CPD</p> | <p>Green</p> <p>Yellow</p> <p>Yellow</p> <p>Yellow</p> <p>Yellow</p> <p>Yellow</p> <p>Yellow</p> <p>Yellow</p> <p>Yellow</p> <p>Yellow</p> |
| | <p>Key risks / Issues and mitigation</p> <p>1. Continued challenges with staffing / Covid-19 related restrictions impacting on visits / CPD interventions.</p> <p>2. Release / capacity of lead school staff to support partner schools.</p> <p>Project team continue to be very flexible in delivery and respond to the needs of participant schools and colleagues. Virtual GRP allowed us to reach a significant number of colleagues across the city at a time that didn't impact on the day to day running of school (recording also helps us meet a larger audience).</p> <p>In virtual visits & experiences where possible have been requested & positive to how they have connected the gaps / challenges, developing relationships and increasing capacity.</p> | | |

February 2022

The project team continued to struggle to find data which represented any changes in parental confidence. Information about complaints to the Inclusion Service tended to be linked to timescales for EHCP assessments rather than graduated response in schools. PCT were asked if useful information was held with them – subjective feedback continued to suggest that parental involvement and confidence remained poor.

The project was seeing impact on teacher confidence – by this point 1000 teachers had accessed at least one session and 100% reported greater confidence afterwards.

April 2022

Themes were emerging more strongly – autism, the use of OT and SALT expertise, SEMH increased needs, the interplay with behaviour support and discussions about the subject focus of the curriculum and the wish to visit different settings to develop understanding of the impact of this on SEND.

No raw data was yet available but parental feedback linked to anxiety, supporting attendance, autism, sensory processing, sleep, behaviour, PDA and trauma. The forthcoming conference – The Kindness Principle – is an example of synergy between different areas of work.

Schools were continuing to experience issues with capacity linked to Covid-19 and there were delays when staff could not be released.

There are two more meetings scheduled, in June and July, after which a final evaluation will be completed. In the meantime, there are some overall positive features that are worth noting:

- There are very open lines of communication and dialogue between project schools. Relationships and connectivity are developing well. Cross sector and cross phase work is becoming more common.
- Derby has many passionate and highly skilled SENCOs.

- SEND and inclusion have become a high priority for Derby school leaders. There is positive momentum towards greater inclusion supported by a number of projects ongoing across the city.
- Connections are being made with the wider community of SEND practice.








However, barriers remain. We could not have chosen a more challenging time to deliver this project. Covid-19 has impacted on staff absence and capacity. Now that restrictions have lifted, the return of primary assessments and GCSEs has made engaging opportunities for support and training difficult for some schools. It has become clear that some school leaders carry significant loads – we need to grow the next generation of SENCOs and support schools to distribute knowledge and expertise more widely. There is still a lot of work to be done to capture learner and family voice and to ensure that all voices are equal.

As we move towards decisions about next steps, we need to be careful with the number of projects linked to inclusion so that we retain clarity and alignment. Provision for SEMH is emerging as a key issue – schools are starting to see the impact of Covid-19 on pupil behaviour and the disproportionate use of suspension for SEND pupils remains a concern.

Overleaf, there is the latest version of the RAG-rated KPI summary.

Graduated Response Project Update – June 22

Delivery Status
Amber/Green

| Progress Commentary | Priorities/Themes | Comments | Status |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Summer 1 has seen a busy period of activity for the GR project with school visits / CPLD / SALT & OT input and crossover / contributions to other work streams across the city.</p> <p>Engagement from schools across the project has increased and there is a sense of urgency to make the most of the support as we rapidly approach the end of the pilot next half term.</p> <p>GCSE's / SATs and the significant number of projects across the city continue to challenge and at times overwhelm schools. Colleagues have asked for a simple 1 page overview of SEND / Inclusion input & support in a number of meetings.</p> <p>The OT aspect of the project has now begun with training sessions on sensory processing completed and planned for next half term. The right colleagues are connected and the offer will support & align with the wider OT offer across the city. A request has been made for this aspect to extend into the autumn term.</p> <p>CPLD behaviour and positive behaviour support sessions are planned for this half term and may a pre cursor to a working party / wider piece of work next year given the spike in SEMH challenges. (a recorded attachment & trauma session will also be made available)</p> <p>We look forward positively to a busy last half term of the project. As always many thanks to participating schools and also the steering group for your continued support.</p> | <p>Reduction in fixed term exclusions, including repeat exclusions, for SENDK</p> | <p>Data shows a positive picture re GR schools being less likely to exclude / suspend than schools not participating in the project. However suspensions are rising & disproportionate for SEND learners.</p> <p>**Caveat that lots of other projects impacting on the exclusions data along with GR**</p> |  |
| | <p>Reduction in the use of part-time timetables for vulnerable pupils, both SENDK and EHCPs</p> | <p>Schools continue to respond well to the amnesty work in the city and are far more proactive in this space. Again multiple work strands across the city impacting here.</p> |  |
| | <p>Reduction in persistent absence of SEND CYP (case studies)</p> | <p>Positive case studies in both primary & secondary display an effective GR in a number of settings. Increasing SEMH needs are presenting challenges around attendance for a number of schools.</p> |  |
| | <p>Reduction in pupils requiring EHCPs following their needs being met effectively as part of earlier intervention (Case studies)</p> | <p>Early stages in the life cycle of this project to reflect meaningful data here however tangible change in beliefs, values & attitudes towards inclusion</p> |  |
| | <p>Evidence of needs being met at Steps 1 and 2 of the Graduated response (case study evidence)</p> | <p>Positive case studies in schools across the GR project. Examples of teachers independently connecting with specialist colleagues to develop their practice.</p> |  |
| | <p>Increase in parental confidence (baseline and later survey and/or reduction in numbers of complaints)</p> | <p>Repeat conversations ongoing in summer visits</p> |  |
| <p>Key risks / issues and mitigations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continued challenge with staffing competing priorities e.g. GCSE / SATs along with COVID related absence impacting on visits / CPLD opportunities Release & capacity of lead school staff to support partner schools. Project leads continue to be very flexible in delivery and sensitive to the needs of participant schools and colleagues. Virtual CPLD allowed us to reach a significant number of colleagues across the city at a time that didn't impact on the day to day running of school (recording also helps us reach a larger audience). <p>In school visits & experiences where possible have been impactful & positive in how they have connected the right colleagues, developing relationships and increasing capacity.</p> | <p>Increase in teacher confidence (baseline and later survey)</p> | <p>CPLD / support feedback remains very positive. Another data grab / comparative next half term at the end of the pilot.</p> |  |

