

Performance Report: Special Schools

Education, Children and Families Committee

9 October 2012

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report is a summary of the performance of the City of Edinburgh's special schools for session 2011-12. It has two main purposes:
- to provide information on the developments in evaluating performance in special schools
 - to provide a baseline evaluation of performance within and across special schools for future reporting to Council

2 Main report

Background

- 2.1 The Children and Families department makes provision for almost 85% of children and young people with significant Additional Support for Learning Needs within mainstream schools and centres. Approximately 1000 learners with a complexity of significant additional support needs have their needs met within 13 special schools or in specialist provision places located within mainstream schools.
- 2.2 Three special schools are primary only and six schools/services are secondary only. Two schools have nursery to secondary aged learners and the remaining two schools have primary and secondary aged learners.
- 2.3 A range of needs is met. The factors giving rise to additional support needs include: social and behavioural needs, autism spectrum disorder, significant visual/sensory/health and medical needs and learning disability. Almost all learners in special schools have a complexity of needs. Places in special schools are allocated through the Professional Assessment Group (PAG). Almost all special schools are operating at full capacity.

Improvements in performance

- 2.4 The City of Edinburgh Council recognises the importance of having robust evidence-based evaluations of performance in all 13 special schools. There have been significant challenges in providing meaningful and reliable

information across special schools due to the different needs met within the schools.

2.5 Over the last two years, considerable progress has been made in developing systematic, robust and meaningful processes for effective self-evaluation of improvements in performance in special schools. A process has been developed and shared with all specials schools to inform effective standards and quality reporting from session 2012/2013. This process has been positively endorsed by Education Scotland (formerly HM Inspectors of Education) in recent inspections.

2.6 The work has included developing a coherent and customised data set across the special schools to support schools in the self-evaluation process. All schools have customised the data set to meet the needs of their school population whilst still working within a standardised and coherent framework.

The data set includes:

- attainment data relating to National Qualifications (NQs) and the achievement of individualised targets set by the school within Individualised Educational Programmes.
- achievement data from other awarding bodies, e.g. Caledonian Awards, Junior Award Scheme Scotland (JASS), Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.
- statistics reflecting:
 - the positive destinations young people move on to beyond school,
 - attendance levels across each session
 - numbers of exclusions.
- Additional data and information relating to other aspects of achievement, including the number of learners who become independent travellers, successfully complete a work experience placement, participate in the forest schools project.

2.7 Using the customised data set all schools have evaluated performance using the national How good is our school 3? (HGIOS) framework. The evaluations are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: The number of special schools at each level of HGIOS 3 evaluation as determined through self-evaluation.

Evaluation Level from HGIOS 3	Number of schools
1 - Unsatisfactory	0
2 - Weak	1
3 - Satisfactory	3
4 - Good	7
5 - Very Good	2
6 - Excellent	0

Overall, the evaluation of improvements in performance across special school is good.

- 2.8 The figures in Table 1 will provide the baseline figures for future reporting on an annual cycle to the Council. In session 2012/13, officers from the authority will support schools to validate their evaluation of improvements in performance and to seek ways in which further improvement can be made. The sharing of evaluations and data sets across schools will be developed to enable schools to benchmark, where appropriate, and increase their knowledge and understanding of new and alternative ways to support improved performance.
- 2.9 Areas of strength from session 2010/11 to 2011/12 include the increase in the number of learners registered and achieving Junior Award Scheme Scotland Awards, the number of learners achieving Duke of Edinburgh Awards and the achievement of the 3rd whole school green flag ECO School award by 3 schools.
- 2.9 Attainment in National Qualifications across special schools ranges from Access 1 units to course awards at intermediate 2. In session 2011/12 the number and range of subject presented across special schools has increased providing a great breadth and depth across the curriculum.
- 2.10 Future reporting to council will include the progress made from the baseline performance figures for each school and highlight strengths within and across special schools. Deeper analysis of the range and levels of qualifications will be presented in future reports and the priorities for improvement will be provided and set out within the improvement planning framework at school and Authority level.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in evaluating improvements in performance in special schools.

4 Equalities Impact

- 4.1 There are considered to be no infringements of the rights of the child and a positive impact on children and young people with disabilities and other protected characteristics.
- 4.2 A positive impact in measuring improvements in performance in special schools will identify areas of strength which can be shared across all schools to improve outcomes for learners.
- 4.3 An equality and rights impact assessment will be undertaken on subsequent progress reports on the evaluation of improvements in performance in special schools.

5 Environmental Impact

- 5.1 There are no adverse environmental impacts arising from this report.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Council is recommended to:

- a) note the progress being made in improving performance in special schools and the intention to report on further progress in one year.

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Appendices	None
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Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	National Outcome 3 - We are better educated, more skilled, more successful, renowned for our research and innovation National Outcome 4 - Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens National Outcome 5 - Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
Background Papers	