COGNUS LIMITED

Report to Schools Forum

Date of meeting: 20 FEBRUARY 2019
Title of paper: SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT
Prepared by: COGNUS
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1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Schools Forum on delivery of DSG funded services and to provide options for future reporting.

FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1. The Schools Forum is asked to NOTE and DISCUSS:

i) the contents of this report.

3. KEY INFORMATION / ISSUES ARISING

DSG Reporting

3.1. Over the last 18 months Cognus has reported performance against the KPIs previously agreed with Schools Forum. The exception being Paving the Way which Cognus developed in partnership with Sutton Parent Carers Forum and members of Schools Forum, set up since we agreed KPIs with Schools Forum. A detailed Paving the Way report is attached as an appendix to this report and outlines very good outcomes and impacts so far.

3.2. The main challenge faced in reporting is that there has been a shift away from front line delivery of interventions directly to children, towards capacity building with school staff and undertaking assessments leading to school staff providing the interventions.

3.3. This is reflected in the chart below which outlines our perception of the work that Cognus now delivers.

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1 Reserved from publication due to personal information or information which could easily identify the person: Freedom of Information Act Section 40.
3.4. The main mechanism to measure the impact of this way of working (not directly delivering interventions) is to contact each school staff member asking them to provide feedback. Our concern is the volume of work resource that this could require from schools as well as Cognus, when compared to the potential benefit.

3.5. The services that Cognus deliver (funded via DSG) from 1st April onwards directly to children and young people could be considered as Paving the Way, Virtual School, Travellers Education and Admissions.

3.6. The Company is developing new KPIs (through the evolution of the Commissioning Agreement) with the London Borough of Sutton that are more outcome and therefore impact focussed. The proposal that we would like to discuss with the Schools Forum is that we report against the new impact based KPIs for the services with the highest level of contact with children and young people and to report on these in more detail based on an annual cycle in a following the example set by the Paving the Way project.

3.7. The Company will also report on the services where it is felt these add value to the discussion at the Schools Forum, for example making sure that we keep the Schools...
Forum up to date on the progress of the Early Years Team and updates about the School Improvement service.

3.8. Cognus will still align reporting to the contract management cycle on all services as laid out by the London Borough of Sutton ensuring full accountability. We will continue to do this against current KPIs until new KPIs are in place, but we see April 2019 as the best starting point to ensure we capture impact against a full financial year.

4. Performance reporting

Admissions

4.1. We have coordinated the Admissions processes with over 5,350 applications in the last year; this has risen by 1100 over a 10-year period, and up by nearly 300 on last year. These rises, and associated processes, have been incorporated within existing resources and all applicants tracked into education.

4.2. In terms of numbers in 2018 on respective National Offer Days:
   i) 97% received one of their six preferences (London average 93% secondary, 97.5% primary)
   ii) 75% secondary applicants received a first preference offer (London average 66.01%)
   iii) 86% primary applicants received a first preference offer (in line with London average), with all applicants receiving an offer

4.3. Working with the local authority, place sufficiency is calculated and changes in admission number negotiated to:
   i) Ensure there are places for all local children
   ii) Enhance the chances of parents receiving a preference offer
   iii) Reduce primary surplus places (90 places were removed from primary allocations, which would have been additional surplus, having a negative financial impact on schools)

4.4. Over 2200 in year applications have been processed to date and over 2000 telephone calls have been lodged with the Contact Centre since April, with over 3000 emails from parents since September; all of these are responded to within a 48-72-hour turnaround
Autism

4.5. The Company has provided year to date:
   i) Strategies to Support to 53 children/young people;
   ii) 404 phone consultations to education settings.

4.6. The volume of support being provided by the Autism service through phone consultations has been increasing across the year. The team through these consultations have been providing school staff with strategies that can be applied immediately, but also in the longer term to other children.

4.7. The team attempt to collect feedback from schools on the impact of the service on the children that we support, but a limited amount of feedback has been received. We are currently following up with schools to enable us to report on the impact of the service.

4.8. The Autism service funding will cease as planned from 31st March and as a result the team are talking to schools about how support may be provided. The challenge being affordability in the future.

   English as an additional language

4.9. The service had a spell where the requests for support were very low, since schools have received clarity that the service is active and available the number has increased, although there is capacity for further referrals and support.

4.10. Effort has been put into training and capacity building through the provision of a CPD session for school staff and the sharing of best practice strategies.

4.11. During the last few months of DSG funded EAL services the manager has confirmed that few schools would be able to purchase the services in the future.

4.12. Whilst this would not be enough for Cognus to employ a member of staff, we have been in negotiation with schools who have specialist expertise within their staffing group. This would allow schools to buy-in services with Cognus brokering the expertise from the most appropriate person.

   Language and communications

4.13. During the year to date 480 phone consultations have taken place with schools to provide support and advice. Strategies are given to schools to enable them to put measures into place.
4.14. Plans to increase capacity within schools are well underway, 5 schools have completed and a further 16 schools have signed up for ELKLAN training at a nominal price of £50 per person for the £450 course, the balance being funded by DSG funding. The impact will be increased ability for schools to support children with speech and language needs in the future which will help schools who cannot find the funds to purchase external support.

4.15. This service will not be funded after 1st April 2019 and schools need to be aware of the need to buy in language and communications. We are concerned that schools may not be able to purchase this support.

Travellers

4.16. 221 consultations specifically targeted at increasing engagement and improving outcomes have been delivered on a one to one basis.

4.17. Nationally, Gypsy-Roma pupils and Irish Traveller pupils remain the lowest performing groups in schools. At Key Stage 2, 16% of Gypsy Roma pupils and 20% of Irish Traveller pupils reached expected academic standards by the end of the academic year 2016-17, compared with the National Average of 74%. In the same academic year, the Attainment 8 Scores for pupils of Irish Heritage and Gypsy Roma pupils were 23.8 and 18.0 respectively, again well below the average National Attainment 8 points score of 49.9 (Detailed pupil characteristics data has yet to be published for the academic year 2017-18.)

4.18. The work undertaken by the Traveller Education Service has one main objective, to improve outcomes for pupils of Gypsy and Traveller heritage through increasing and sustaining engagement in education.

4.19. Impact of work from September 2018 to the present:

Increased engagement

4.20. EYFS intervention has ensured all pupils ascribed as ‘Traveller’ at the beginning of the academic year have been given the opportunity to obtain nursery placements thus providing children with the best opportunity to overcome a lack of exposure at home to educational toys and books. 1:1 intervention has focussed on supporting families to apply for places as well as secure the relevant funding. An early start for ‘Traveller’ pupils is critical in dispelling cultural myths about schooling.

4.21. All children eligible for nursery places have received an allocation. Equally, all pupils eligible to apply for Reception places for September 2019, have been contacted and guidance and assistance has been provided on a 1:1 basis where necessary, we
await the outcomes of the applications. Without the Service’s oversight, many of these children would be missed or would have a reduced choice and often defer starting until placements closer to home are found.

4.22. At secondary level, work has focussed on settling Year 7 pupils into their new schools as well as talking to families with pupils in Year 6 about making applications for High School for September 2019.

4.23. All pupils allocated places at High School for September 2018 have transferred and have settled into their new environments. 1:1 sessions have assisted pupils to develop as independent learners by teaching research skills and assisting in the completion of homework. Social and emotional issues have also been addressed quickly. Links between family and the school have also been strengthened by the service.

4.24. With the exception of one pupil who is already educated at home, all other Year 6 pupils have been contacted and assisted to complete applications for High School in September 2019.

4.25. Without support, many of these pupils would be pulled out of school the first time something goes wrong however minor this may be.

4.26. At secondary level, extensive support to ensure homework is completed, and returned, has prevented pupils from entering the downward spiral of sanctions which can result from acquiring too many negative behaviour points. Homework is often expected to be completed online and/or requires extensive internet research. Few Traveller families have internet connections at home and therefore rely on mobile data which is insufficient to access the sites the pupils need to use. At primary level, intervention has centred on working collaboratively with schools to understand Traveller culture and to look for creative solutions to issues which could lead to permanent exclusion. For example, the service liaised with a family and two primary schools to support a managed move, as well as pupil ‘A’ being placed in a year below chronological age therefore allowing the pupil to engage positively in learning activities.

4.27. 1:1 intervention has also succeeded in addressing inappropriate use of social media through working with both the young people and their families. Much of this work has been around stereotypes and bullying. This has prevented disaffection and potential exclusions.
4.28. A key element of the work undertaken by the service is the ability to work with families across a range of other organisations. The in-depth knowledge, as well as the trust built between the families and the service, has enabled team members to persuade families to complete EHAT (Early help forms), EHCP forms, and assist families to attend meeting with those in authority in schools. This has not only increased the engagement of parents in their child’s education but has meant schools are aware of family circumstances and can work around them.

4.29. Once engaged in education, the focus for the service is on increasing rates of academic progress and therefore improving long term outcomes for Traveller pupils.

Improve outcomes

4.30. 1:1 pupil intervention at primary school focusses on narrowing the gap between the attainment of Traveller pupils and their peers by increasing rates of progress. For example, with reference to all year 6 pupils in receipt of intervention throughout the Autumn term 2018 to improve their knowledge and application of grammar, 50% moved from less than expected progress to age related expectations, 33% moved from age related expectations to above expectation and 17% stayed at age related expectations. At secondary level, intervention focusses on areas of learning that have not been understood or missed due to Travelling and/or intermittent attendance. Without support, pupils and their schools would find this hard to manage. Pressures within schools mean there is not always the time or resources to identify and address these gaps.

4.31. Interventions, coupled with support for homework and preparation for assessment, means pupils are more willing to participate in assessment and therefore perform better i.e. an outcome rather than no outcome.

4.32. Through increasing engagement with families, the service has challenged schools to address inequalities ensuring Traveller pupils with learning difficulties are prioritised in the same way as all other pupils. Thus in the autumn term 2018, Education and Health Care Plans have been initiated or monitored for 11 pupils.

4.33. Proactive intervention in EYFS has not only familiarised settings about cultural differences but has also prevented gaps in learning from commencing. For example, in one school, pupil L was deemed to be in need of a full assessment because he could not sit still, did not tidy away toys and was slow to settle in phonic sessions. Conversations between the service, the family and staff in school about cultural norms and expectations, as well as, 1:1 support for phonics, avoided the need for a full assessment and L reading level 3 phonics books towards the end of the term.
4.34. Through monitoring the attendance of Traveller pupils, the service works with schools to find creative solutions to resolving concerns and thus preventing the escalation of poor attendance. For example, primary pupil J was consistently late for school which was having a negative impact on learning. During the autumn term the service successfully obtained agreement and funding from the school for J to attend breakfast club which resulted in an overall improvement in attendance.

4.35. Safeguarding of pupils from the Traveller community is taken very seriously by the service. The team is often the first to be made aware of children who have left the borough to go Travelling or move to other locations. The service liaises with schools and CME teams across the UK to ensure, where ever possible, children leaving Sutton are made known to services and schools in their new area. Equally, on behalf of the council, the service attends all incursions/encampments in the area to check on the education and welfare of the children in the group.

4.36. It is the capacity of the service to link across social and academic needs of the Traveller community that continues to ensure pupils of Traveller heritage have a good experience in school and make progress.

4.37. The service also provides a point of contact and information for the Council – Gypsy Traveller Board.

4.38. Home visits to support families have continued with 46 taking place during September and October. During this time 27 families have also been supported to ensure smooth transitions.