

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 9 March 2022

Subject: Special Educational Needs and Disability Local Area Inspection

Report of: Director of Education

Summary

In November 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission conducted a joint inspection of Manchester to judge how effectively the local area has implemented the special educational needs and disability reforms introduced in 2014. The outcome letter following this inspection has now been published. This report highlights the main areas of strength and areas for development set out in the letter.

Recommendations

Committee members are recommended to:

1. Note the report and positive letter from OFSTED/CQC and acknowledge the significant number of strengths identified particularly the strength of partnership working and co-production with parents /carers in the local area.
 2. Note the progress being made in the areas for development including communication of the local offer.
 3. Consider the developments in respect of the revisions to the Home to School Transport Arrangements.
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Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Continuing to improve SEN provision will contribute to improving educational outcomes, aspiration and job opportunities for pupils with SEND and contribute to Manchester's young people becoming happy, safe and successful adults.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Improving educational outcomes of pupils with SEND and continuing to improve the experience and opportunities for children and young people with SEND will better enable them to gain qualifications and contribute to Manchester's economic success. Increasing the numbers of Supported Internships and Supported Employment places will ensure more disabled people become economically active and Manchester's employers benefit from a more diverse talent pool.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Continuing to improve provision, through co-production, for children and young people with SEND will ensure increased opportunities and outcomes for one of our vulnerable groups - children with SEND.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Investment in modern, energy efficient and high-quality education infrastructure drives reductions in carbon across the estate of schools.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Investment in existing and new education provision will enhance the City's attractiveness to potential residents and contribute to the development of high-quality neighbourhoods.

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Background documents (available for public inspection): None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In November 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission conducted a joint inspection of Manchester to judge how effectively the local area has implemented the special educational needs and disability reforms introduced in 2014. The [findings from the inspection](#) have now been published on the Ofsted website and [Manchester Local Offer](#) website.
- 1.2 This inspection process was introduced in May 2016 and apart from when inspections were halted during the peak of the pandemic, Manchester could have inspected at any point since then. The Ofsted [annual report](#) 2020-21 showed that 123 local area SEND inspections had been carried out by August 2021. Just over half of those (66) had been required to produce a Written Statement of Action after inspectors identified 'significant weaknesses'. Seven of the eight areas inspected in 2020-21 were required to produce Written Statements.

2.0 Background

2.1 Inspection Process

The area is given five days' notice and the inspection takes place over five days. During this time, parents and carers of children with SEND living in Manchester were invited to complete an online survey about their lived experience of having a child with SEND in the Local Area. Information about this was sent out to all settings, schools and colleges as well as directly to parents/carers of children and young people with an Education, health and care plan (EHCP). The survey was also promoted on our website and using social media. A total of 995 parents and carers responded to the inspection survey. In addition to this, inspectors spoke to around 70 parents/carers directly as part of focus groups or during site visits and over 100 staff in focus groups and on their visits to schools, colleges and clinics. They also spoke directly to young people including representative from our Change Makers Group and a group of Supported Interns as well as students at The Manchester College. Inspectors looked at 40 education, health and care plans which they randomly selected. The Local Area also chose to submit a detailed self-evaluation of SEND provision and provided some reports which had been taken to Children and Young People's Scrutiny committee both before and during the pandemic.

3.0 Outcomes of the inspection

- 3.1 Whilst the inspection does not result in a graded judgement, it was extremely positive and identified many strengths. Following the inspection, the Local Area receives a letter outlining the strengths and area of improvement identified by inspectors. Inspectors pleasingly concluded that senior leaders had an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development in the local area; most importantly the were no areas considered to have any 'serious weaknesses', unlike many others across the country.

3.2 We are very proud that inspectors have acknowledged the many strengths of Manchester's implementation of the SEND reforms including:

- Leaders' strong vision for improving the outcomes of children and young people with SEND
- The support for families during the pandemic
- Our co-production with families, Manchester Parent Carer Forum, Parent Champions and the young people's Changemaker group
- Early identification and support for children with complex needs
- The 'start well pathway', the healthy child programme and identification of communication and other needs of early years children
- Strong multi agency collaborative working to support families
- The graduated response working well across the 0-25 age range and outreach support to mainstream schools
- The wide range of post 16 education and training options
- Improvements in quality and timeliness of EHCPs
- Joint commissioning, such as the new intensive support short breaks and outreach
- Reduction in exclusions through the implementation of the inclusion strategy
- Leaders are not afraid to pilot new and innovative ways of working, such as M Thrive

These strengths represent the tireless multi-agency work which has been undertaken since the SEND Reforms were introduced in 2014. The range of these strengths show that children and young people with SEND and their families receive high quality provision which is in line with our vision that all children should be safe, happy, healthy, successful and independent.

3.3 The main areas for development highlighted in the Ofsted/CQC letter are:

- The 'tell it once' aspect of the SEND reforms does not always work well in Manchester
- Many parents are frustrated with the school transport system, this has been exacerbated by the pandemic
- The local offer is not understood by all parents
- Families awaiting assessment or therapeutic interventions require more support while on waiting lists
- Outcomes and provision in some EHCPs need to be more personalised
- Many parents are anxious about their child's future and require advice and support at a much earlier stage to help the family make decisions
- Some young people need more support to help them prepare for adulthood
- There can be delay in finding appropriate adult mental health services for young people transitioning from CAMHS

3.4 It was and should be recognised that the Local Area had already identified many of these areas for development and work is already underway. An area of specific attention is that relating to the provision of Home to School Transport, which families have reported is problematic and the policy, which has been informed by the statutory SEND and transport reforms, eligibility and

guidance issued in 2015 is not 'user friendly'. The underpinning principles of which are wherever possible families should be enabled to take their children to school and young people should be taught how to travel independently and safely to school.

- 3.5 A review of the processes and administrative staff that support the Home to School Transport arrangements was undertaken in 2020 and changes made. The service has continued to monitor and review the impact of the changes made and whilst this has taken place throughout the pandemic it has been identified further work is required to make the Home to School Transport Policy be more accessible, refinement of the administrative processes and more importantly the delivery model. Subsequently, in order to progress this area with pace and traction, a third-party organisation with a track record of supporting organisations through the design and implementation of change in this area of work has been commissioned. They are already engaged with key stakeholders, including:
- Parent/ carers
 - Young People
 - School Heads
- 3.6 It is anticipated this work will be concluded by April 2022 with clear recommendations and supporting options appraisal for the operating model.
- 3.7 The multi-agency SEND action plan which outlines the activities to improve all of the aforementioned areas will be monitored and reviewed through the SEND Board which is chaired by the Director of Education. Following the inspection report, the multi-agency SEND action plan will be reviewed and a revised version co-produced with stakeholders.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 As the letter states, leaders are not complacent - they know what is working well and priorities for future action. We continue to be ambitious for our children and young people with SEND. Manchester is fortunate to have staff across its education, health, care and voluntary sectors who are passionate about improving services, support and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.