



SEND Matters: Bulletin December 2023

This newsletter, focused on SEND matters, is from the Plymouth City Council Education, Participation and Skills (EPS) service. We aim to produce this around half termly with an audience of all stakeholders. The newsletter covers key aspects of developments for children with SEND led by EPS.

Council looking at SEND sufficiency. The council at the most senior levels are taking forward discussions and plans to ensure SEND sufficiency of places: i.e. enough SEND specialist places in Plymouth – either in special schools or in resourced bases in mainstream schools. We now have a clear idea of what provision will be needed and have sought expressions of interest from schools. We expect to announce more detail in the first quarter of 2024. More information: amanda.paddison@plymouth.gov.uk

Special units in mainstream schools

We are very appreciative of the work our seven special units do providing specialist education in the following schools.

Support Centre	Designation	Placement Capacity
Eggbuckland Vale DEC	(Primary only) Deaf Education centre	18
Goosewell Support Centre	(Primary only) Communication & Interaction difficulties together with Cognition & Learning	10
Mayflower Support Centre	(Primary only) Communication & Interaction difficulties together with Cognition & Learning	12
Thornbury Language Support Centre	(Primary only) Language	18
Eggbuckland CC Hearing Support Centre	(Secondary only) Deaf Education centre	12
Stoke Damerell Support Centre	(Secondary only) Communication & Interaction difficulties together with Cognition & Learning	14
Tor Bridge High Language Support Centre	(Secondary only) Language	10

SEND Improvement plan agreed. Our Plymouth partnership of professionals, alongside Plymouth Parent Carer Voice (PPCV) and Youth Ascends, has jointly worked, to produce the [local area SEND improvement plan](#). This provides our forward route to improve key areas identified in our local area SEND inspection report which was published October 2023. The plan sets out what school leaders, Plymouth City Council and NHS Devon will do differently over the coming months.

A child friendly version of the plan will be released shortly. More information: michael.page@plymouth.gov.uk

New staff joining our Plymouth City Council SEND team. We are pleased to welcome Lucy Bourne as Tribunals Officer.

We also confirm that Deborah (Debbie) Degan, Interim SEND Service Manager and development lead, is overseeing all aspects of provision and service linked to EHCPs. Amanda Paddison, Acting Head of SEND is focusing on the SEND sufficiency work and SEND transport. More information: annie.gammon@plymouth.gov.uk

Inclusion task and finish group. Colleagues from a range of schools, from the Department for Education, from multi academy trusts (MATs) and from the council have been working with Chris Harrison (from SEND4Change) on aspects of inclusion in mainstream schools and our whole system. There has been particular work done on providing better for pupils at secondary level who are at risk of exclusion. Work is under three broad headings: minimising, managing and monitoring mobility; developing a graduated inclusive offer and developing provision. More information: chris.c.harrison1960@gmail.com

Headteachers talk about SEND. A meeting with headteachers on November 27th emphasised the role that all mainstream schools have in supporting children with SEND. The PCC led event welcomed 70 school and college leaders, alongside councillors to the event. More information: annie.gammon@plymouth.gov.uk

Headteacher and SENCO Conference 10th January.

A conference for headteachers and SENCO's is being held on 10th January with a focus on planning and implementing high quality inclusion in mainstream schools. DfE and Ofsted representatives, other education and local headteachers, are among speakers. More information: julie.reed@plymouth.gov.uk

Plymouth graduated approach. The drafting process is well underway to improve the Plymouth graduated approach framework, alongside the support documentation for schools and settings. This sets out what schools do to support children in identifying special needs and making reasonable adjustments. Through our work with stakeholders, we will refine this documentation and the citywide offer across the early spring term (2024) to launch our new framework for use by the summer term.

The areas of focus are:

- *To create an ordinarily available resource (this means what should be provided by all schools as standard practice) document for schools and EY settings to support all provisions in embedding best practice, accessing the appropriate guidance and being genuinely inclusive by design;*
- *To refine the graduated approach framework presentation so that resources are easily accessible and user friendly for maximum impact;*
- *To work in partnership across education, health and care to ensure the early help offer runs through our graduated approach;*
- *To enhance the training available to our practitioners across the city;*

- *To evidence where inclusive approaches are working for our children and young people to strengthen best practice sharing;*
- *To enhance the outreach (training) offer for mainstream provisions to benefit all children and young people.*
- *To support families in understanding the graduated approach and their role to play.*

If you would like to be involved in the development of the above, please contact Lisa directly: lisa.mcdonald@plymouth.gov.uk

SEND Service Staffing. We recognise that the SEND Service needs additional capacity over time. I am pleased to confirm that we are taking forward plans for some capacity to deal with some immediate pressures and long term capacity. This includes additional educational psychologist input.

For information contact: annie.gammon@plymouth.gov.uk

Children with Disabilities Team: From the 30th of October the Children with Disabilities Team has moved to be within the Children Young People and Family Service (CYPFS). The interim Service Manager is Keeley Slack and Head of Service Danielle Tweedie: keeley.slack@plymouth.gov.uk and danielle.tweedie@plymouth.gov.uk.