

Details of current service provision

Schools in financial difficulty and exceptional unforeseen costs

Schools in financial difficulty

The LA's Staffing Reduction panel with key disciplines represented continues to meet (virtually) to consider requests for redundancies and access to those funds. The LA's policy of charging schools for a share of redundancy costs, includes a potential contribution to be made from this budget for maintained schools that are likely to overspend within the next two financial years if no action is taken.

In 2021/22, redundancy expenditure was £0.131m for maintained primary schools against the budget of £0.221m – this supported 4 maintained primary schools.

At the end of March 2022, 8 primary maintained schools were in a financial deficit.

Intervention Support (schools in financial difficulties)

The DfE expects a de-delegated budget for exceptional unforeseen costs to finance those costs which it would be unreasonable to expect governing bodies to meet.

Further detail on the use of the following funds is set out below:

Interim Headteacher Team

The purpose:

The LA interim headteacher team support schools where an interim leadership solution is needed or schools who find themselves in a vulnerable position and require external support to strengthen leadership capacity to drive improvement. As well as providing interim leadership support, all new headteachers or acting headteachers in maintained schools are able to attend a comprehensive induction programme where they are able to learn about all aspects of school leadership with other colleagues across Lincolnshire.

In 2021/22, interim headteacher team expenditure was £0.221m for maintained primary schools against the budget of £0.258m

The interim headteacher team:

- Provide part or full time interim headteachers in schools where the headteacher is absent and no leaders from within the school are able to step into the role
- Are usually deployed in schools deemed as vulnerable by the LA or graded by OfSTED as Requires Improvement or Inadequate to support rapid improvement
- Spend varying amounts of time in each school as this is determined by the school's own capacity for sustaining the improvements
- Provide a programme of leadership induction for all new headteachers in maintained schools.

Primary Maintained Intervention Funding

The purpose

The Intervention Fund supports maintained primary schools to make rapid, identified improvements where school finances would otherwise prevent this from happening. The funding enables schools identified as vulnerable, to continue to be good schools or to rapidly improve to become a good school.

Amount of funding received and spent

For 2021/22, £0.281m funding was utilised against a budget of £0.336m. These needs were identified through a combination of locality leads, interim headteachers, call-in or strategy meetings.

Schools bid for specific amounts and send in plans which detail the amount, the reason and the expected impact of the additional funding. The school has to show that they do not have the funding in their own budget to enable them to make the necessary improvements or changes. The following process exists:

- Specific school bids that meet threshold and address school improvement priorities
- Supporting the commissioning of intervention and resources to improve outcomes for learners at school
- Ensure schools remain connected to the sector led system to support school improvement where action needs to be taken

Locality Leads would continue to suggest intervention bids where they are appropriate and support the bid writing so that it is focused on the correct priorities to have the most impact. They would continue to monitor the impact and maintain a view of the school moving forward to ensure that outcomes are improved and the legacy of the funding can be seen.

How funding was spent

The Intervention Funding budget enabled maintained schools facing financial difficulty who needed access to school improvement support. Schools were required to show that bids would be sustainable and would improve outcomes for pupils. The School Intervention Funding policy was applied consistently and appropriately over the course of the financial year. The applications were reviewed by the Head of Education Strategy and Head of School Standards.

Individual bids were very specific to each school, but activity included:

- Purchase expert teaching and leadership support to provide professional development and training for staff in areas of need
- Support external partnership and networking activity to encourage collaborative working and connection with the broader sector with a focus on Reading, Writing and Mathematics
- Curriculum development to ensure schools are well placed for providing a broad balanced curriculum
- Accessing Governance training through the Strengthening Governance Offer via National Leaders of Governance and partners

Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners

Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)

The Service Area

The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) was reconfigured in September 2011 to form the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET). The current team has a two tier structure that advises and supports schools to accommodate the needs of ethnic minority and Traveller children. The officers support schools to work with families and ensure that they are able to access services available to their children, particularly education. They support the integration of specific children as well as help schools to develop and maintain systems that are needed to provide a fully inclusive and safe environment for these particular groups of young people. The team leaders are able to offer more specific advice required by schools to support children with English as an Additional Language (EAL). The service receives positive feedback from schools, services and families.

Background to need

Approximately 10% of pupils in Lincolnshire school have English as an Additional Language. A high number of these have been in the country for a relatively short period of time or have started reception as an EAL learner. A large number of these EAL learners are in maintained schools across the county. In some of the schools there are only a few pupils making it challenging for these schools to resource the need and grow the expertise within their setting. The pandemic had a significant impact on the progress of EAL learners as they missed crucial time in school where most of them develop their skills in English through integrating with their English speaking peers. Covid-19 also impacted on the Traveller community many of whom isolated themselves to their site or home in fear of the pandemic. EMTET has been essential in supporting these families to be confident to return to school.

EMTET work with those schools that lack knowledge or experience of good practice in supporting Ethnic Minority pupils, Travellers or pupils with EAL, or where the school has tried a number of strategies and seeks specialist support for further advice. There is a growing demand for support in relation to communication with parents, children with special needs and integration of Traveller children.

The continual growth in the number of EAL learners reflects the growing number of children born in the county and starting school with English as their second language. This has resulted in a gap in achievement in the foundation stage outcomes for children with EAL compared with their peers. From September 2019, EMTET became an integral part of the county's plan to improve the outcomes for children in the foundation stage, particularly those with English as an additional language who were performing 14% below their peers. The support in early years will hopefully impact positively on the children's readiness for school.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, all visits to schools and homes ceased and the focus of the service was to ensure that schools were equipped with resources to help parents who do not speak English understand the regulations around Covid-19 and school attendance as well as resources that would encourage continued learning at home. Much of this support continues but has been adapted as children return to school. Support consists of:

- help with contacting vulnerable families whose first language is not English through bilingual volunteers
- liaising with the Traveller community to ensure wellbeing and help to reintegrate back into school
- information about COVID-19 and government guidance in various languages collated and made accessible to schools for further dissemination.
- EAL specific resources created and made available to schools to provide to families.
- the development of materials to support Ethnic Minority children's transition and reintegration into the school environment.
- work with the Early Years team to provide support around primary transition.
- continued liaison with individual families and schools to provide relevant support.
- the roll out of the 'Embrace' Programme; a series of school challenges to encourage conversations and an exploration of different ideas around race and ethnicity.
- termly online, school drop-ins to provide advice, guidance and resources to school as well as facilitate networking.
- training for other LCC school services

All school and home visits have now re-commenced and the service is operating as normal.

The Black Life Matters discussions have triggered schools to revisit their ethos and teaching around race equality and discrimination. The team have provided support and resources to schools and families and are fully involved in work that is planned for the future in this area including work linked to Prevent and challenges around the increase of right wing extremism.

The service continues to be able to adapt to current urgent need such as the recent unexpected arrival of Afghan Asylum Seekers. The team are able to aid the admission of these children and provide on-going support within the school to ensure the best possible experience for children and their families and improved changes of successful integration and progress.

The purpose of the Service

The overall aim of the EMTET is to provide a service to schools and families that support the following objectives:

- Improving the safety and well-being of Ethnic Minority and Traveller children (supporting families to find a school place and settle into education).
- Improving access to learning particularly those with EAL (advising schools of good EAL practice through training and consultancy).
- Supporting transition (supporting family's knowledge of school admissions, school systems, transport, free school meals etc.).
- Improving conditions for learning that reflect culture and lifestyle, and value diversity - training and workshops to school staff and young people, working with parents to improve integration.

Budget received/ spent

The service is funded, in part, by a de-delegated contribution (from maintained primary schools) of £0.186m. This is a fixed budget with an annual consideration of number of maintained schools/pupils.

The service has 1.6fte team leaders and 4.4fte officers all on 38 week contracts. The £0.186m funds 80% of the total service cost. The remaining part of the service supports the emergency work required do i.e. getting a child a school place, support around Traveller sites, Afghan refugees etc.

Outcomes for the Service (for the period April 2020 – March 2021)

- Supporting approximately 45 children in 34 schools through a single child referral process (this may lead to impact on wider family and/or whole class/school). 24 of these were maintained, and 10 were academies (which the latter is purchased). This number was lower than previous years due to Covid-19.
- Work with early years settings and primary school (reception) to support successful transition and readiness for school including 7 referrals from settings
- Training and consultancy advice for schools and school staff on supporting pupils with EAL and cultural awareness
- Training for trainee teachers at Bishop Grosseteste University
- Supporting the admission and reintegration of Ethnic Minority and Traveller families into school
- Supporting the home-school learning of Ethnic Minority and Traveller children
- 5 requests for Diversity and Traveller Awareness workshops with young people. These have been scheduled for delivery now school visits have been reinstated
- Providing support for Polish and Russian A Levels (buyback arrangement)
- Coordinating racial incident reporting and assisting schools to deal with racist related behaviour.
- Use of bilingual supporters to help school engage with children and families

Future Developments

- Continue providing advice and support to schools and families in the safest possible way.
- Utilise relevant technology to provide development and networking opportunities for school staff.
- Continue partnership working with the Early Years team to ensure EAL and Traveller children's school readiness.
- Liaise with external agencies to provide joint support to ethnic minority children and their families.
- Develop school initiatives to promote equality and community cohesion.
- Create resources to help schools cater for the needs of EAL and Traveller children.
- Continue online school Drop-In sessions
- Further develop and deliver the Embrace Programme
- Further develop and coordinate bilingual support for schools
- Resumed first language assessments in Polish, Russian and Lithuanian