

Details of current service provision

Schools in financial difficulty and exceptional unforeseen costs

a. 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 2019/20, redundancy expenditure was £0.138m for maintained primary schools against the budget of £0.250m – this supported 7 maintained primary schools. Although the number of maintained schools with overspends have reduced to 14 at March 2020, the impact of Covid-19 on schools income and expenditure during 2020/21 is still to be fully understood. Maintained schools have been asked to return updated medium term financial plans by the end of September 2020 where they will be going into an actual deficit by the end of March 2021 assuming nothing changes. The DfE Covid-19 School Fund eligibility is restricted, and support for loss of private income (for activities such as before and after school clubs, or fee paying meals) are not eligible to be claimed for.

b. 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. The team comprises of 2.6 FTE interim headteachers. During the 2019/20 financial year, one of these post-holders was seconded to a service manager role and expertise from the sector was used to support leadership in schools in addition to the other two members of the team.

As well as providing interim leadership support, all new headteachers or acting headteachers in maintained schools are funded to attend a comprehensive induction programme where they are able to learn about all aspects of school leadership with other colleagues across Lincolnshire delivered by Lincolnshire Teaching Schools.

The interim headteacher team:

- Work alongside headteachers and leadership teams in vulnerable schools
- 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
- Liaise with governors, teaching schools, neighbouring schools and locality leads to find longer term support for leadership teams where appropriate or local interim leadership solutions
- Provide a rapid response to urgent requests for support
- 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.

Outcomes

Five schools benefitted from direct headship placements from the Interim Headteacher Team in 2019/20, three of these schools now have a stable leadership solution. The schools have benefitted from the Interim Headteacher Team stabilising their position, ensuring improvement and supporting transition to long term leadership arrangements. In addition, nine schools have benefitted from funding to support leaders to improve standards and to secure more rapid improvement to maintain good inspection judgements or secure improvements to move from requires improvement to good. With the lack of school data at all key stages this year, it is not possible to be able to report on specific improvements in these 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 the 2019/20 financial year the budget funded 67 different schools for specific issues. These were identified through a combination of locality leads, interim headteachers, call-in or strategy meetings or through governors and leadership teams.

In 2019/20, the Intervention budget was £0.348m and all of this has been utilised. 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. Amounts in bids ranged from £500 to £15,085.

How funding was spent

The Intervention Funding budget enabled maintained schools facing financial difficulty or declining standards to take remedial action to prevent poor OfSTED outcomes. The ability to provide this support has also enabled greater levels of school improvement activity to take place. 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 Interim Head of School Standards.

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

- Year 6 intervention focusing on Reading, Writing and Mathematics
- Purchase intervention resources that supported and complimented agreed school improvement priorities
- Support external partnership and networking activity to encourage collaborative working and connection with the broader sector with a focus on Reading, Writing and Mathematics
- Purchase teaching school support to provide professional development and training for staff in areas of need
- Accessing Governance training through the Strengthening Governance Offer via National Leaders of Governance and partners

Outcomes

The LA rating system of schools shows that 38 of the schools are rated green with no known issues and 26 of the schools are now viewed as being vulnerable rather than high risk or schools causing concern. The others show improvements in different aspects but still require further support. There is a high level of confidence that the impact of the intervention funding is positive in terms of outcomes for children and young people and in gaining traction to improve schools.

Where schools have been subject to OfSTED or HMI monitoring visits, there have been positive comments about the support that has been made available from having this fund available.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic all statutory tests were cancelled for 2020 and therefore analysis of the impact of spending on published outcomes for pupils is unavailable.

Proposals for 2020/21

The proposed budget is intended to be utilised in a similar manner to support vulnerable schools to make rapid improvements. The intention would be to use it in the following way:

- 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.

c. 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 has received positive feedback from schools, services and families.

Background to need

There are 10,923 pupils in Lincolnshire school that have EAL. Of these around 3,586 have either been in the country for less than 2 years 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. EMTET will 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 are 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. This support included;

- A system for schools to help them contact vulnerable families whose first language is not English through bilingual volunteers (mainly LCC employees working in partnership with EMTET).
- Liaising with the Traveller community to ensure wellbeing and access to important information.
- 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 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 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 £0.173m. This is a decrease of £15,943 compared with 2019/20 budget due to a drop in pupil numbers and schools the per pupil apportionment of the original budget to academy schools..

The service has 1.6fte team leaders and 4.2fte officers all on 38 week contracts. To part-mitigate the annual budget reduction the service continues to offer its services to academies to generate income. The £0.173m funds 78% of the total service cost.

Outcomes for the Service (for the period September 2019 – March 2020)

- Supporting approximately 172 children in 59 schools, 45 maintained schools and 15 academies. schools, through a single child referral process (this may lead to impact on wider family and/or whole class/school)
- Work with early years settings and primary school (reception) to support successful transition and readiness for school including 24 referrals from settings
- Training and consultancy advice for schools and school staff on supporting pupils with EAL and cultural awareness including SEN/EAL cluster groups
- Supporting the admission of Ethnic Minority and Traveller families into school, particularly reception.
- Delivered 30 workshops (Diversity, Learning in another language, Traveller awareness, Well-being) with young people around cultural and language awareness and understanding equality
- 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.