

SUBJECT:	Additional Learning Provision/ Specialist Resource Bases
MEETING:	Performance and Overview Committee
DATE:	14th May 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To report to members the outcome of the Local Authority Additional Learning Provision (ALP) review of our Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) in line with the expectations of the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021. To provide update of progress towards the recommendations from the review.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are recommended to note the outcomes of the report and to request a follow up report in a year's time to further establish progress against the recommendations of the review.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review – Background & Context

Monmouthshire local authority (LA) does not have a discrete special school catering for learners with significant and complex additional learning needs (ALN). Since local government reorganisation in 1996, Monmouthshire LA has developed a model of specialist provision, which places special education at the heart of identified mainstream schools. This model ensures that children and young people remain as close to their communities as possible and have meaningful inclusion opportunities with their mainstream peers, whilst also benefitting from specialist teaching and resources.

In collaboration with SRB Leads and LA Officers we are committed to keeping Monmouthshire children and young people close to their communities which is central to our approach to inclusion. We have invested in this over time. We have made use of ALN and capital grant funding to improve the physical environment, resources and training of our SRB staff, as well as increasing staffing in correlation with pupil numbers. The development of the SPOT (specialist provision and outreach team – comprising of SRB Lead Teachers, Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer, Educational Psychologists and LA Officers) Network to share best practice and ensure a consistent approach across specialist settings. This has resulted in our SRBs being able to meet the needs of children and young people with more complex ALN.

Currently there are three primary Specialist Resource Bases (SRB) and two secondary SRBs which provide additional learning provision (ALP) for children and young people with highly complex learning and neurodevelopmental needs.

New SRB provision is included in the new 3-19 school being built in Abergavenny. This will have capacity for 16 primary places and 55 secondary places. The pupils currently attending Deri View SRB became part of the SRB in the new school from September 2023, and will move into the new building during the academic year 2024-25.

SRB location	Capacity	Numbers on Roll Sept 2023	Numbers on Roll Sept 2024
Overmonnow Primary School	24	22	23
Pembroke Primary School	24	25	29
Deri View Primary School	8	8	See King Henry VIII 3-19
Monmouth Comprehensive School	55	67	67
Caldicot Comprehensive School	55	53	46
King Henry VIII (3-19) School	16 + 55	Deri View Primary	16

3.2 Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review – Purpose

The purpose of the ALP Review and associated quality assurance cycle is to ensure that there is a consistent approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with complex ALN in Monmouthshire. The review process has also contributed to the development and planning of specialist provision to meet current and future needs, and particularly the development of the specialist resource base (SRB) in the King Henry VIII 3-19 school in Abergavenny.

3.3 ALP Review - Process

In relation to SRB settings, the Monmouthshire Review of LA ALP consisted of two phases (see Appendix 1).

Phase 1: Analysis of information submitted by the SRB Lead Teacher. Conclusions

- There are key documents, policies and procedures that all SRB settings have in common. It would be beneficial in terms of consistency and quality, for SRB leads to collaborate on producing one version of core documentation including key policies, procedures etc. These core documents can then be adapted and used by each individual SRB to reflect their settings/context.
- It would be beneficial for SRB leads to collaborate on planning for the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales including Cynefin.

Phase 2: Review Visits (March – May 2023)

The following themes emerged from the ALP Review visits; there was a strong correlation between strengths identified in each of these aspects and high quality and effective SRB provision.

- a. SRB organisational structure and staffing.
- b. The SRB environment (internal and external)
- c. The SRB curriculum including assessment and monitoring arrangements
- d. Opportunities for inclusion.
- e. SRB funding and resources

3.4 Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review

Overall Outcomes

- There were examples of high quality, innovative documentation and SRB specific policies and procedures.
- All SRBs are led by skilled and experienced Lead Teachers and nearly all SRB Lead Teachers were either on or linked to the host school's senior leadership team.
- Relationships between pupils and staff were positive.
- All SRB settings have a designated area of the school with access to appropriate sensory and hygiene areas.
- High quality visual aids were used in the majority of SRBs to good effect.
- Nearly all SRBs have an appropriately developed curriculum adapted to individual needs, with impactful interventions to support development.
- The advantages of being based in mainstream school communities were acknowledged by all.

Overall Recommendations

- The ALP Review process highlighted the lack of consistency across SRB settings in terms there being an equal 'offer' across the county. This could place the LA at risk if parents/carers lose confidence in MCC SRB settings.
- Collaboration between SRBs needs to be improved in relation to sharing of good practice, interventions, processes and procedures to reduce duplication and time taken to produce documentation.
- There needs to be agreed processes around recruitment of staff and SRB job descriptions and person specifications.
- The ALP review highlighted that there is no formal 'contract' between the LA and schools that host SRB provision. A robust partnership agreement between host schools and the local authority would support both the LA and host school to ensure that roles and responsibilities of both parties are identified in relation to maintaining high quality SRB provision.
- The ALP review highlighted that the local authority does not have processes in place to measure of impact of SRB provision in relation to pupil progress and effective interventions.
- The ALP review showed there was variability in the demarcation of finances and accountability.

3.5 Development of the Additional Learning Provision and Partnership Lead Role

The outcomes of the ALP Review, alongside other developments in ALN, led to the development of a two-year seconded post. This was secured through ALN grant and as such links to key focus areas for the Inclusion Service:

- SRB Development – Refining existing practice and provision to ensure highly effective ALP for children and young people placed in each SRB.
- Quality assurance of ALN and ALP – Developing, implementing, refining and reviewing systems around the quality assurance of practice and provision across mainstream schools in line with the ALNET Act 2018 and the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021.
- Implementation of the ALN Act – School support, development and training.
- Post 16 ALN Strategy – Development of a Post 16 Strategy for CYP with ALN, which ensures clear and robust processes and systems around transition and securing appropriate Post 16 placements.

The overarching feedback from the ALP Review was shared with all SRB Lead Teachers and Headteachers in the Summer Term 2023. Individual meetings with the SRB Lead and host school Headteachers for each SRB took place in the Autumn Term, these provided specific and evidence feedback from the review. As a result of the review meeting, clear Action Plans were developed with SRB Lead teachers to address areas requiring development. Each Action Plan reflects the feedback of the ALP Review, with overarching priority objectives, clear actions and intended impact; reviewed with the ALP and Partnership Lead each term. Reviews provide a brief update with a RAG (red, amber, green) rating. For settings where requirements for greater levels of improvement were identified and a need for support to achieve this, at least half termly coaching and support sessions are in place.

Key priorities for SRB identified in individual SRB Action Plans include:

- Development of appropriate staffing structures in-line with the agreed ratios, with a school-based understanding of funding allocation
- Improving the environment and ensuring total communication approaches are embedded
- Refining the curriculum offer and pathways available, with highly effective assessment processes which demonstrate small steps of progress
- Further enhancing inclusive practice and access to the wider community

All SRBs have engaged positively in the process and are enthusiastic in their drive for continuous improvement to meet the needs of the children and young people within the SRBs. We are able to evidence positive improvements and progress towards the identified priorities in nearly all cases.

Key developments as a result of the ALP Review:

- Reviewed and revised staffing structure to ensure parity across SRBs through an increased staffing budget
- Developing approach to pupil-led funding with clear criteria and referral routes
- Identified projections for the next seven years of SRB entry
- Revised criteria for admissions at primary and secondary, developed with clarity with SRB Leads and Educational Psychologists
- Clear and robust transition process for entry into SRBs at School Entry and moving from mainstream Year 6 to SRB Year 7
- Collective creation of shared policies in the areas of SRB; Intimate Care; Relationships and Behaviour; Curriculum and Assessment
- Development of a shared training plan to sit across SRBs, providing the core, advanced and specialist training required for SRB staff
- Initial train the trainer models developed in Manual Handling and Team Teach (core training) to provide a more strategic and sustainable approach to training needs
- Task and finish group has created job descriptions and person specifications, as well as suggested interview questions, tasks and pupil engagement activities for SRB teachers, HLTA and teaching assistant posts
- A shared and agreed overview of the additional learning provision (ALP) available through our SRBs for all areas of need
- Developed community engagement and inclusion opportunities available, with a specific focus on work placement / experience at Post 16
- Continued opportunities for sharing of best practice across the SRBs through SPOT Network meetings and visits between settings

- Initial whole staff across SRB twilight training to consider the vision and ways forward for our SRBs
- A drafted partnership agreement, demonstrating the role of the Local Authority and the host school in maintaining excellent provision and practice in SRBs for consultation with host school Headteachers and SRB Leads during the Summer Term 2024.

Development of our SRB in King Henry VIII 3-19 is underway, with a Lead Teacher having been recruited and now in place, recruitment for two new teachers complete and TA posts being advertised. Transition is underway for the children joining the provision in September 2024, alongside the development of the environment.

3.6 Risks

Across the UK, the number of children and young people with complex ALN is increasing, resulting in greater demand on specialist placements. Regional South East Wales Special Schools are at full capacity. Alternative options are independent specialist provisions which are at high cost.

We have extended our SRB provision, including the King Henry VIII 3-19 SRB with 55 places in secondary and further 8 places in primary and an additional class in Pembroke SRB. Current forecasting predicts the requirement for an increasing number of SRB places (forecast suggests 20 further places are required at primary in the next two to three years), in addition to places for children and young people with more profound ALN (currently secured through out of county special schools / independent special schools). Our focus is maintaining the vision to keep children and young people close to their local community. Therefore, further investment in existing SRBs and development of new SRBs will be required to meet these future needs.

4. REASONS:

Chapter 7 of the ALN Code indicates that local authorities **must** keep under review the arrangements made both by the authority, and by the governing bodies of the maintained schools in its area, for children and young people who have ALN. Keeping ALP and other arrangements under review, is a key part of local strategic planning and decision making. It will enable local authorities to assess current and likely future needs and secure sufficient provision and services to meet those needs.

The duty involves the local authority considering, at a strategic level, what provision there is to meet needs; whether that provision is sufficient and if insufficient in any respects, considering what to do to remedy the matter; and consulting as the authority considers appropriate during that process. As part of the review process the ALN Code indicates that a local authority **should** also review data and evidence on the effectiveness of current provision in meeting children and young people's needs and improving the outcomes they achieve.

5. CONSULTEES:

CYP Directorate DMT

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/government/legislation/the-additional-learning-needs-code-for-wales-2021)

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