

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SCHOOLS FORUM

25 February 2020

AGENDA ITEM

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Speech, language and communication support in Maintained Nursery Schools

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To recommend to Forum that current additional funding for the Ludwick Enrichment Group is repurposed to support an increased need for SLC support in Maintained Nursery Schools across Hertfordshire.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Ludwick Enrichment Group currently receive £55k to support a maximum of 10 children with SLC needs. Support is delivered to the children whilst they access free early education. The Early Years SEND workstream, responsible for reviewing the service offer for early years children in Hertfordshire recommended that the funding be withdrawn as although the quality of support was not in question, the equity of the provision was. All 14 Maintained Nursery Schools were consulted, and the majority requested that the currently funding was shared between the 14 Maintained Nursery Schools. The schools would match fund the amount received and use it to commission additional bespoke SLC support to meet the needs of their cohorts.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Forum is asked:
 - (i) To agree to repurpose £55k from Early Years Centrally retained funding to support the development of bespoke SLC support in all 14 Maintained Nursery Schools.
 - (ii) To agree this funding should be allocated to Maintained Nursery Schools in proportion to pupil numbers at each school.
 - (iii) To continue to fund Ludwick Enrichment Group until the end of the 2019/20 academic school year, to allow a short transition.

Background

- 4.1 Ludwick Enrichment Group has been operating in Ludwick Maintained Nursery School for over thirty years. The group has, during this time, been funded from various sources. Currently the group is funded through EYDSG. The quality of the provision is very good, and parents have been very supportive of the group. The children attending the group are predominately from the local area which is felt to be inequitable.

5. Contents of report

- 5.1 Maintained Nursery Schools were consulted regarding the future of the Ludwick Enrichment group as requested by Schools Forum. Headteachers reported that they have all seen a significant increase in speech, language and communication as being a barrier to learning. Through discussions it was suggested that an appropriate use of the learning from the exemplar Ludwick Enrichment Group would be to replicate similar provision across all fourteen Maintained Nursery Schools. In addition to the funding the Maintained Nursery Schools would receive from EY DSG the schools suggested match funding which would further enhance the bespoke support that could be established in each school. In this way the redirection of resources would lead to an improvement in the quality of provision for children with SEND across the county. Ludwick Nursery school did not oppose this proposal.

6. Conclusion

Ludwick Enrichment Group is a high quality but relatively high cost provision which is only available to a small number of children in the Welwyn/Hatfield area. Children outside of this area are unable to benefit from a similar provision. After consulting with Maintained Nursery Schools it is recommended that the current funding be repurposed to expand similar provision across the county to benefit considerably higher numbers of children.

There will be no change in the net amount of money directed towards this broad service area.