

High Needs Block Budget 2020/21			
Report being considered by:	Schools Forum on 9 th March 2020		
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Item for:	Decision	By:	All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out the current financial position of the high needs budget for 2019/20 and the position known so far for 2020/21, including the likely shortfall. It also sets out the invest to save proposals which were agreed by the Schools Forum on 20th January 2020.

2. Recommendation

2.1 To note the predicted shortfall and agree the deficit budget for 2020-21.

Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Council or the Executive for final determination?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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3. Introduction

3.1 Setting a balanced budget for the High Needs Block continues to be a significant challenge; funding received for this block has only seen minimal increases for several years, yet the demand in terms of numbers of high needs pupils and unit costs of provision has continued to rise. Place funding has remained static in spite of increasing numbers, and in 2015/16 local authorities took on responsibility for students up to the age of 25 with SEND in FE colleges without the appropriate funding to cover the actual cost. The number of children with EHCPs is increasing, mainly, but not entirely due to the change in age range up to 25 years.

3.2 Up until 2016-17, West Berkshire was setting a balanced high needs budget. Since then, the budget has been under pressure on an annual basis, with savings identified each year to reduce the overspend. A decision was made to set a deficit budget for the first time in 2016/17.

3.3 Savings of £219k were implemented in 2017/18 and a further £306k in 2018/19. Despite these savings a budget was set in 2018/19 which included a planned overspend of £703k. The budget set for 2019/20 included a planned overspend of £1.6M.

3.4 The pressure on the high needs block is a national issue, and many local authorities have significant over spends and have also set deficit budgets. South East regional benchmarking data shows that in West Berkshire overspending on the HNB as a % of the total HNB budget is one of the lowest in the region, but nevertheless it is an issue of ongoing concern.

3.5 Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Appendix A show where the predicted 2020-21 costs exceed 2019-20 budgets.

3.6 In 2020-21, the Government has increased in Local Authorities' HNB budgets. In West Berkshire's case, the HNB budget will increase from £20,070,067 to £21,667,304, an increase of £1,597,237 or 8%. There will also be an in year import / export adjustment which is difficult to estimate at this stage. The current year import / export adjustment was £30,000.

3.7 The net shortfall in the 2020-21 HNB budget, is **£3,359,176**. This includes a predicted 19/20 overspend of **£2,174,560**.

3.8 The increase can be explained as follows:

- Overspend of £521,000 in 2018-19, carried forward
- Deficit budget of £1.6M set in 2019-20, due to increased pressure in a range of areas including maintained special schools, non maintained special schools, resourced units, EHCPs in mainstream schools, FE College placements, PRUs and children with EHCPs in PRUs.
- Additional pressures in 20-21, over and above the deficit budget set in 2019-20, which relate to mainly to top up funding for children with EHCPs in a variety of settings. See Appendix A sections 2 and 3 below for more detail.

3.9 An extensive review of SEN provision and services took place during 2018, with full involvement of all stakeholders, including parents and schools. This resulted in a new 5 year SEND Strategy for West Berkshire which was approved by West Berkshire Council and the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group in November 2018. The Strategy seeks to address rising costs in the High Needs Block. It has 5 key priority areas:

- Improve the capacity of mainstream schools to meet the needs of children with SEND
- Expand local provision for children with SEND in order to reduce reliance on external placements
- Improve post 16 opportunities for young people with SEND, including better access to employment
- Improve preparation for adulthood, including transition from children's to adults' services in Social Care and Health
- Improve access to universal and targeted Health services for children with SEND

3.10 Work is now under way to implement the strategy, which should achieve savings in the High Needs Block over the next five years, but savings will take time to be realised. It is likely that in the short term costs will actually increase whilst new provision is being set up, as there will be an element of double funding whilst new provision grows before out of area placements start to reduce.

3.11 Details of the services paid for from the high needs budget and the corresponding budget information are set out in Appendix A, together with an explanation of the reasons for budget increases.

4. Summary Financial Position

4.1 The latest estimate of expenditure in the High Needs Block budget for both 2019/20 and 2020/21 is set out in Table 1. The figures are based on services continuing at current staffing levels (with the exception of some invest to save proposals which are detailed in Section 6 of Appendix A). The figures assume the current/known number and funding level of pupils.

4.2 Most of the DSG allocation for the high needs block is now confirmed. Part of it is estimated and will be based on the actual number of pupils in special schools in the October 2019 census, and import/export adjustments based on the January 2020 census and February 2020 ILR.

TABLE 1	2019/20 Budget £	2019/20 Forecast £	2020/21 Estimate £
Place Funding	6,016,000	6,016,000	6,082,000
Top Up Funding	12,119,960	11,967,039	12,865,755
PRU Funding (top ups only)	1,089,100	1,345,500	1,375,915
Other Statutory Services	1,501,180	1,501,842	1,541,650
Non Statutory Services	801,470	795,960	1,063,270
Support Service Recharges	127,286	127,286	186,330
Total Expenditure	21,654,996	21,753,627	23,114,920

HNB DSG Allocation	-20,070,067	-20,100,067	-21,667,304
0.25% SB Transfer			-263,000
In year overspend	1,584,929	1,653,560	1,184,616
HNB DSG Overspend from previous year	521,000	521,000	2,174,560
Total cumulative deficit	2,105,929	2,174,560	3,359,176

4.3 There is a forecast shortfall of **£1,184,616** in the 2020/21 HNB.

4.4 Proposals for savings, together with proposals for invest to save projects, are included in this report.

4.5 A consultation has taken place with schools on a proposal to transfer a percentage of the Schools Block to the HNB in order to fund a range of invest to save projects, with the aim of reducing expenditure in the long term. Schools were asked to select their preference from a transfer of 0.5%, 0.25%, 0.125% and 0%.

4.6 16 schools responded to the consultation. 9 voted for a transfer of funds and 7 voted for no transfer of funds. Of the 9 who supported a transfer of funds, 3 voted for 0.5%, 4 voted for 0.25% and 2 supported a transfer but did not say which option they preferred.

4.7 On this basis it was proposed that a 0.25% transfer from Schools Block is made to the HNB, to fund the invest to save proposals set out in Section 6 of Appendix A. This was agreed by a narrow margin at the Schools Forum on 20th January 2020.

4.8 Some savings options were put forward but a decision was taken by the Schools Forum not to take any of these savings because of the negative impact on children with SEND and the risk of additional expenditure being incurred on statutory services as a result of discretionary provision being reduced.

Appendix A sets out the detail of the budgets included within the High Needs Block, and the reasons for the pressure on the 2020-21 HNB budget.

5. Appendices

Appendix A – High Needs Budget detail and Invest to Save options

Appendix B – Evaluation and Impact Data

Appendix A

High Needs Budget Detail

1. PLACE FUNDING – STATUTORY

- 1.1 Place funding is agreed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and has to be passed on to the institution, forming their base budget. Academy and FE places are included in the initial HNB allocation but the agreed place numbers are then deducted and paid to the institution direct (DSG top slice). From 2018/19 pre 16 resource unit place funding was reduced from £10,000 to £6,000 per place, and each pupil within the unit is included in the main school formula funding allocation.
- 1.2 The ESFA will not fund any overall increases to places. If additional places are needed in academies or FE colleges, a request can be made to the ESFA. However, any additional places agreed would be top sliced from West Berkshire's HNB allocation in 2020-21; no additional funding is made available.
- 1.3 Requests have been made for an increase of 17 places in academies and FE, but this is offset by a reduction of 13 FE places, so the net increase is 4. Further detail is given in a separate report on planned places.
- 1.4 It is not possible to increase planned places in maintained schools unless there are surplus planned places available for reallocation, which is not the case. The shortfall in planned places for children with EHCPs attending West Berkshire maintained special schools or PRUs, so this funding is taken from the maintained special school and PRU EHCP top up budgets, creating additional pressure in those areas.

TABLE 1 - Place Funding Budget	2019/20 Budget			2020/21 Budget		
	No. of Places	£	Current No. of Pupils	Proposed No. of Places	£	Difference in number
Special Schools pre 16 (90540) –	286	2,860,000	405	286	2,860,000	0
Special Schools post 16 (90546) –	79	527,000		79	790,000	0
Special Schools –post 16 (DSG top slice)		263,000				
Resource Units Maintained – pre 16 (90584)	35	234,000	30	35	230,000	0
Resource Units Academies – pre 16 (DSG top slice)	94	628,000	88	102	684,000	8
Mainstream Maintained – post 16	5	16,000	7	5	25,000	0
Mainstream Academies – post 16 (DSG top slice)	14	82,000	14	16	96,000	2
Further Education	139	746,000	135	133	737,000	-6
PRU Place Funding (90320)	66	660,000	72	66	660,000	0
TOTAL	718	6,016,000		722	6,082,000	4

2. TOP UP FUNDING – STATUTORY

2.1 Top up funding is paid to the institutions where we are placing pupils who live in West Berkshire (we do not pay our institutions top up funding for pupils who live outside West Berkshire). **Table 2** shows the budget and forecast for 2019/20 and the estimate for 2020/21.

TABLE 2 Top Up Budgets	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	Pupil numbers
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 10)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Special Schools Maintained (90539)	3,300,420	3,383,249	3,463,450	3,758,740	295,290	3,986,360	303
Non WBC special schools (90548)	1,098,070	1,009,156	1,065,960	992,664	-73,296	1,194,295	47
Resource Units Maintained (90617)	293,020	274,236	270,350	310,156	39,806	313,650	33
Resource Units Academies (90026)	854,270	822,634	946,530	809,871	-136,659	948,280	94
Resource Units Non WBC (90618)	107,000	126,702	143,580	154,248	10,668	130,600	9
Mainstream Maintained (90621)	541,560	658,073	667,330	803,593	136,263	779,450	248
Mainstream Academies (90622)	185,170	247,075	267,460	349,970	82,510	389,600	118
Mainstream Non WBC (90624)	75,000	78,343	73,030	94,658	21,628	70,590	22
Non Maintained Special Schools (90575)	840,100	747,940	1,030,380	1,019,300	-11,080	1,068,200	27
Independent Special Schools (90579)	2,436,400	2,218,567	2,683,020	2,405,841	-277,179	2,797,000	43
Further Education (90580)	1,396,140	1,270,010	1,408,870	1,197,998	-210,872	1,087,730	103
Disproportionate HN Pupils (90627)	100,000	83,609	100,000	70,000	-30,000	100,000	-
TOTAL	11,227,150	10,919,594	12,119,960	11,967,039	-152,921	12,865,755	

2.2 Most top up budgets are under pressure, with the type of placement creating the greatest pressure shown below in order of cost.

- West Berkshire maintained special schools
- Mainstream top ups (academies)
- Non maintained special schools

- Resourced units in maintained schools
- Mainstream top ups (maintained)
- Non West Berkshire special schools

2.3 However, there are also significant savings on three of the top up cost centres:

- Further Education
- Independent special schools
- Resourced units in Non West Berkshire schools

2.4 The predictions of cost for 2020-21 take in to account known pupils whose needs can no longer be met in local schools, together with some cases which are due to go to the SEND Tribunal. It is not possible to predict all pupils who may need placements in 2020/21. The figures assume a middle ground between the best case scenario and the worst case scenario (financially) in terms of Tribunal outcomes.

2.5 West Berkshire maintained special schools

This pressure reflects increasing numbers in our special schools, the need to compensate for inadequate planned place funding through the top up budget and some very high needs pupils needing additional support to maintain their placements.

2.6 Mainstream top ups (academies)

There is pressure on the budgets for EHCPs in mainstream schools (both maintained and academies). This relates to an increase in the average cost of an EHCP in a mainstream school, together with an increase in overall numbers of EHCPs. There was a significant increase in the number of EHCPs issued in the 2018-19 academic year. There are robust systems in place to manage demand, and criteria for EHC assessments have not changed, so the increase suggests an increase in the numbers of children with significant needs.

The total numbers of EHCPs has increased as shown below since implementation of SEND Reforms in 2014. This represents an increase of 33% in just under 6 years.

Jan 2014	770
Jan 2015	751
Jan 2016	822
Jan 2017	897
Jan 2018	892
Jan 2019	912
Nov 2019	1026

2.7 Non maintained special schools

This increase in this budget is predominately due to a very ill child who has returned to the area and will need a specialist placement.

The majority of placements made in non maintained special schools continue to be for children with SEMH and ASD, plus a smaller number of HI placements.

2.8 Resourced units in maintained schools

This pressure relates to some pupils in resourced units requiring higher funding bands due to the complexity of their needs.

2.9 Mainstream top ups (maintained)

There is pressure on the budgets for EHCPs in mainstream schools (both maintained and academies). See 2.6 above. There has been a notable increase in the number of children with EHCPs who are of nursery age.

2.10 Non West Berkshire special schools

There is a current underspend in this budget due to pupils moving out of Northern House School to join I-College and 2 pupils predicted to go to Thames Valley School who have now been placed at The Pod (New I-College provision).

There will however be a pressure on this budget for next year due to 3 pupils requiring places at Holybrook School (SEMH) from September 2020, 4 other pupils in mainstream moving to SEMH provision and 1 to TVS. The cost of these additional placements is offset by leavers but there is still a net increase.

2.11 Further Education

There is a predicted underspend on this budget in the current financial year. The budget for 2019-20 was based on the number of students with EHCPs attending FE Colleges in 2018-19, but numbers in 2019-20 are down on the previous academic year. It is not entirely clear why this is the case, but appears to be partly due to more young people moving in to employment. In addition, one student left an Independent Specialist College placement (ISP) after 2 years of a 3 years course, generating a significant saving. One student will be leaving an ISP early at Christmas who was expected to stay until the end of the academic year.

The predicted costs for 20/21 are based on current numbers and represent a significant reduction in predicted expenditure.

It should be noted, however, that this budget is volatile as it covers young adults who have the right to leave education should they wish, sometimes unexpectedly.

Students with high level needs can also opt to re-enter education at any time up to the age of 25 years. In addition, a change to the ESFA funding guidance means that the host Local Authority is responsible financially for place funding for students over and above the agreed number of planned places who are placed by other Local Authorities. It is not possible to predict what the impact of this will be in 2020-21. Any additional costs are reimbursed through the import / export adjustment but not until the following financial year.

2.12 Independent special schools (ISS)

There is a predicted underspend in this budget caused by a number of factors including delays in sourcing suitable placements in some cases, placements being made at Engaging Potential rather than independent special schools, one pupil moving to Elected Home Education, some negotiated reductions in fees and some children moving out of area.

It is anticipated that costs in 2020-21 will also be lower than the 2019-20 budget, although the discrepancy will not be as great as the current underspend. Provision needs to be made for 2 pupils with ASD potentially moving into private schools (one is a Tribunal case), 1 pupil with ASD seeking an independent SPLD special school placement via Tribunal, 2 pupils with ASD moving in to ISS placements and 2 pupils with ASD in LA special schools potentially moving in to residential ISS (one case is via Tribunal).

2.13 Resourced units in Non West Berkshire schools

Taking in to account existing placements and proposed new placements, costs in 2020-21 will be lower than the 2019-20 budget due to some pupils changing placement.

3. PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (PRU) – STATUTORY

3.1 **Table 3** shows the budgets for PRU top ups.

TABLE 3 PRU Budgets	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	Pupil numbers
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 10)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
PRU Top Up Funding (90625)	542,950	800,225	757,700	847,980	90,280	818,400	83
PRU EHCP SEMH Placements (90628)	0	223,699	331,400	497,520	166,120	557,515	
Non WBC PRU Top Up Funding (90626)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	542,950	1,023,924	1,089,100	1,345,500	256,400	1,375,915	

3.2 The current year budget was based on the previous year's forecast. Schools Forum agreed to pilot a 50% contribution from schools for pupils that they placed. Further details can be found in a separate report. Permanent exclusions and sixth form are funded 100% by the High Needs Block less the average pupil led funding contribution recovered from schools. The estimate for 20/21 PRU Top Up Funding is based on the profile of pupils at I-College in the summer term. A more up to date figure may be available after the autumn term figures are known.

3.3 The number of pupils with EHCPs being placed in PRUs is increasing as this can be an appropriate and cost effective provision for some young people. A new provision for pupils with EHCPs was set up in autumn 2019, The Pod. The top up and place costs have been allowed for in the 2020-21 estimate as new planned places for maintained provision cannot be made available. These placements are usually more cost effective than independent and non-maintained special school placements.

4. OTHER STATUTORY SERVICES

4.1 **Table 4** details the budgets for other statutory services.

TABLE 4 Other Statutory Services	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	Pupil numbers
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 10)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Applied Behaviour Analysis (90240)	75,000	116,192	119,120	181,720	62,598	136,580	16
Sensory Impairment (90290)	175,750	241,928	236,000	231,320	-4,680	227,590	190
SEN Commissioned Provision (90577)	456,000	487,772	527,150	527,150	0	567,650	14
Equipment for SEN Pupils (90565)	10,000	11,954	15,000	7,000	-8,000	15,000	-
Therapy Services (90295)	240,760	276,331	261,470	261,470	0	261,470	-
Elective home Education Monitoring (90288)	27,990	22,801	28,240	23,740	-4,500	28,240	150
Home Tuition Service (90315)	245,000	230,567	102,080	102,080	0	0	
Medical Home Tuition (90282)	0	0	119,920	119,920	0	205,000	
Hospital Tuition (90610)	45,000	37,390	36,000	22,000	-14,000	39,060	4
SEND Strategy (DSG) (90281)	0	0	56,200	25,442	-30,758	61,060	N/A
TOTAL	1,275,500	1,424,935	1,501,180	1,501,842	662	1,541,650	

4.2 Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

4.2.1 This budget supports a small number of children with EHC Plans for whom the Authority has agreed an ABA programme. ABA is an intensive intervention programme for children with autism which aims to modify behaviours which are typical of ASD in order to allow children to function more successfully in school and in society.

4.2.2 This budget also covers the cost of children with EHC Plans accessing other bespoke educational packages where this is the most appropriate and cost effective way of meeting their needs, including SEN Personal Budgets.

4.2.3 The increase in costs represents a small number of children with ASD and high levels of anxiety who were school refusers and required a bespoke package to support elective home education provided by parents through Personal Budgets.

4.2.4 The predicted cost for 2020-21 is slightly lower than the current budget, in spite of the overspend in 2019-20, because two particularly large packages of support have recently ceased.

4.3 Sensory Impairment

4.3.1 Support for children with hearing, visual and multi-sensory impairments is purchased from the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service. This includes support from qualified teachers of HI and VI, audiology and mobility support.

4.3.2 The budget requirement will be slightly lower next year due to a small increase in numbers of children requiring support.

4.4 Engaging Potential

4.4.1 Engaging Potential is an independent special school commissioned to provide alternative educational packages for 14 young people in Key Stage 4. Students placed at Engaging Potential are those who have EHC Plans for social, emotional and mental health difficulties and whose needs cannot be met in any other provision. This can include young people who have been excluded from specialist SEMH schools. The unit cost of a place represents good value for money compared to other independent schools for SEMH which typically start at around £70K per annum. The increase in cost for 2020-21 relates to reduced income for young people placed by other Local Authorities and an increase in premises costs.

4.5 Equipment for SEN Pupils

4.5.1 This budget used to fund large items of equipment such as specialist chairs and communication aids for pupils with EHC Plans. The budget has been reduced a number of times in previous HNB savings programmes and was removed entirely in 2018-19 on the basis that schools would meet these costs. However, this created a pressure for nurseries as they do not have delegated SEN budgets, and for resourced schools which have a disproportionate number of children with specialist equipment needs. It was agreed in 2018-19 that a budget of £10,000 would be made available to meet these needs. In 2019-20 it was agreed that the budget should be increased again to £15,000 as demand for equipment for children in nurseries and resourced schools was increasing. The budget is not fully spent this year but there are likely to be more equipment requests in the final 4 to 5 months of the financial so it is recommended that the budget stays the same for 2020-21.

4.6 Therapy Services (Contract with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust)

4.6.1 The therapy services budget covers the costs for children with SEN who have speech and language therapy or occupational therapy in their EHC Plans.

4.6.2 Therapy services are provided by the Authority solely to children who have the need for a service stipulated and quantified in their EHC Plan. It is a statutory duty for the Local Authority to provide these therapies in these circumstances.

4.6.3 It is anticipated that there will be a small percentage increase in this budget in 2020-21 to reflect staff pay increases, but this information has not yet been made available by the service provider.

4.7 Elective Home Education Monitoring

4.7.1 The Elective Home Education monitoring sits within the Education Welfare and Safeguarding Service. There is a statutory duty to monitor arrangements for EHE made by parents. Elective Home Education numbers are growing, both locally and nationally. In August 2019 the part time teacher who was in post resigned, which gave the opportunity to evaluate the post and consequently advertise for an EHE Officer to work for three rather than two days. The current year forecast is a £4,500 saving, due to the change of staff terms and conditions.

4.8 Medical Tuition Service

4.8.1 The Medical Tuition Service (previously Home Tuition Service) is a statutory service providing home tuition to children with medical conditions and illness that prevent them accessing full-time school. This service was moved from I-College to the Local Authority with effect from September 2019 with savings and next year's budget already agreed by Schools' Forum. £23K saving has already been taken in this financial year and there will be a £17K saving in 2020-21 as a result of transferring this service in house.

4.9 Hospital Tuition

4.9.1 The Local Authority is obliged to pay the educational element of specialist hospital placements, usually for severe mental health issues. These placements are decided by NHS colleagues and we have no influence over the placement or duration of stay. As numbers and costs are impossible to predict, it is proposed that the 2020-21 budget remains the same as 2019-20.

4.10 SEND Strategy Officer

4.10.1 In 2019-20 the Schools Forum agreed to fund a SEND Strategy Officer for three years initially to support implementation of the SEND Strategy 2018-23.

5 NON STATUTORY Services

5.1 Table 5 details the non-statutory service budgets for 2018-19, 2019-20, and estimates for 2020-21. These services are non-statutory so there is more potential scope to make savings, although a reduction in any of these budgets is likely to increase pressure on statutory budgets.

5.2 The table shows the budget for these services in 2020/21 assuming that the services continue and there are no changes to staffing levels.

5.3 Table 5 also includes four proposals for invest to save initiatives; an increase in the Vulnerable Children Grant, investment in the Therapeutic Thinking initiative in order to ensure it is sustainable, removal of LAL charges and expansion of the ASD Advisory Service.

TABLE 5 Non Statutory Services	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	Pupil numbers
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 10)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Language and Literacy Centres LALs (90555)	82,400	93,800	98,400	98,400	0	116,200	26
Specialist Inclusion Support Service (90585)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	68
PRU Outreach Service (90582)	61,200	61,200	61,200	61,200	0	61,200	21

TABLE 5 Non Statutory Services	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	Pupil numbers
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 10)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Early Years Inclusion Fund (90238) moved to EY Block	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Special Needs Support Team (90280)	319,170	309,706	325,660	317,660	-8,000	308,130	N/A
ASD Advisory Service (90830)	141,550	140,063	146,210	148,700	2,490	208,390	1,152
Vulnerable Children (90961)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	179,400	52
Early Development and Inclusion Team (90287)	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	0	51,950	102
Dingley's Promise (90581)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	56
Therapeutic Thinking	0	0	0	0	0	58,000	N/A
TOTAL	774,320	774,769	801,470	795,960	-5,510	1,063,270	

5.4 Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)

5.4.1 This budget funds the primary LALs at Theale and Winchcombe schools. The LALs provide intensive literacy support for primary children with severe specific literacy difficulties. 48 places per year are available across the two LALs.

5.4.2 The budget was reduced in 2018-19 when charging for LAL places, at 50% of the real cost of the place, was introduced. Since charging was introduced, take up of places fell from 48 to 33 in 2018-19 and 26 in 2019-20.

5.4.3 A number of schools have stated that they would like to purchase LAL places but cannot afford to do so. Children who do not access LAL places due to cost maybe more likely to require an EHCP, with associated costs, and are likely to present at secondary school with very low literacy levels.

5.4.4 It is recommended that the LAL budget is restored to its original figure of £116,200 and charging is removed. This proposal is set out in more detail in section 6 below.

5.4.5 This proposal was agreed at Schools Forum on 20th January 2020.

5.5 Specialist Inclusion Support Service

5.5.1 This service provides outreach support from West Berkshire's special schools to mainstream schools to support the inclusion of children with learning and complex needs in their local mainstream schools.

5.5.2 This budget has been subject to reductions in the previous financial years with the special schools providing the service absorbing the cost.

5.6 PRU Outreach

5.6.1 The PRU Outreach Service offers consultancy / outreach support mainly to students who have been attending the iCollege and are starting to attend a mainstream school. Schools may request Outreach for any pupil causing concern but it is dependent on capacity.

5.7 SEN Pre School Children

5.7.1 This budget provides one to one support to enable children with SEN to access non maintained and voluntary pre-school settings.

5.8 Cognition and Learning Team

5.8.1 The Cognition and Learning Team (CALT) provides advice, support and training to mainstream schools to help them to meet the needs of children with SEN. Staff are experienced SENCOs with higher level SEN qualifications.

5.8.2 Many primary schools are reliant on this service to supplement their own SEN provision and expertise, especially schools where the Head has to act as SENCO or where there is an inexperienced SENCO.

5.8.3 This is a partially traded service. All schools receive a small amount of free core service, but the majority of support now has to be purchased by schools.

5.9 ASD Advisory Service

5.9.1 The ASD Advisory Service provides advice, support and training for mainstream schools on meeting the needs of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The purpose of the service is to enable children with ASD to be successfully included in mainstream schools wherever possible.

5.9.2 The context for this service is vastly increasing numbers of children with ASD diagnoses and mainstream schools having more and more difficulty meeting the needs of these children. The majority of our placements in non-West Berkshire special schools, independent special schools and non-maintained special schools are for children with ASD.

5.9.3 It is recommended that this service is expanded in order to provide more assistance to schools to meet the needs of children with ASD. This proposal is set out in more detail in section 6 below.

5.9.4 This proposal was agreed at Schools Forum on 20th January 2020.

5.10 Vulnerable Children

5.10.1 The Vulnerable Children Fund is a small budget used to help schools support their most vulnerable pupils on an emergency, unpredicted or short term basis.

- 5.10.2 The budget has gradually been reduced from £120K over the past few years. This is a well used resource that helps schools support vulnerable pupils with complex needs.
- 5.10.3 The budget has been used up for this financial year which impacts on the Local Authority's ability to support schools to meet the needs of pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties.
- 5.10.4 It is recommended that this budget is increased in order to provide more assistance to schools to meet the needs of children with SEMH. This proposal is set out in more detail in section 6 below.
- 5.10.5 This proposal was agreed at Schools Forum on 20th January 2020.

5.11 Early Development and Inclusion Team

- 5.11.1 The service comprises of 1.7 teachers who are specialists in early years and SEND. Children under 5 who are identified by Health professionals as having significant SEND are referred to this service. Staff initially visit children in their homes (if they are not yet in an early years setting) in order to promote their educational development and model strategies and resources for parents to use to support their child's progress.
- 5.11.2 EDIT teachers also assist with the transition to early years settings and schools, providing support and training for staff to help them to meet the child's needs, and continuing to visit for a period of time to provide ongoing support and advice. They also help to coordinate support which the family is receiving from other professionals.
- 5.11.3 The service is currently supporting approximately 100 children. It has been reduced in size in recent years from 3.4 to 1.7 staff.

5.11 Dingley's Promise

- 5.11.1 Dingley's Promise is a charitable organisation which provides pre-school provision for children under 5 with SEND in West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham. It is the only specialist early years SEND setting in the private, voluntary and independent early years sector in West Berkshire. It provides an alternative to mainstream early year's settings, where experience and expertise in SEND can vary greatly. Parents are able to take up their early year's entitlement at Dingley's Promise, rather than at a mainstream early years setting, if they wish. However, Dingley's Promise are only able to claim the standard hourly rate for providing the early years entitlement as mainstream settings, in spite of offering specialist provision, higher ratios and more one to one support.
- 5.11.2 In 2017-18, the service was running at a loss and there was a risk it would cease to be viable in this area without some Council funding. It was agreed in 2018-19 that a grant of £30,000 would be made to Dingley's Promise in order to maintain the service in this area.

6 Invest to Save Proposals

The proposal to transfer 0.25% of the Schools Block to the HNB in order to fund the following initiatives, with the aim of achieving savings in the longer term, was agreed at Schools Forum on 20th January 2020.

6.1 Proposal to fund Therapeutic Thinking Officer

- 6.1.1 Over 120 school staff and West Berkshire employees have attended engagement days which helped them to understand how to support children and young people in schools in a trauma informed way. In addition, over 70 school staff and LA employees attended three day train the trainer training in order to upskill themselves to deliver training in therapeutic thinking in their own settings. Other local authorities that have adopted a similar approach have seen impressive outcomes. For example, one local authority found that in schools where head teachers were trained as trainers there was a 60% reduction in fixed term exclusions, an 89.5% reduction in exclusion days and no permanent exclusions. This was achieved within a year.
- 6.1.2 Both the engagement day training and the 3 day training have been evaluated positively. The evaluation is outlined below.
- 6.1.3 The Therapeutic Thinking Invest to Save Project has had a significant impact on staff skills and reported practice. In order to sustain change across West Berkshire it is recommended that a 3 year fixed term post of Therapeutic Thinking Officer is funded to lead network meetings for school leads, develop policy and practice within West Berkshire and in schools and to continue to deliver the engagement and train the trainer courses.
- 6.1.4 Some work has been done to start implementation of Therapeutic Thinking but progress has been severely limited by having no dedicated capacity to embed this approach.
- 6.1.5 In order to ensure that therapeutic thinking can be moved forward in a timely way, it is proposed that a new Therapeutic Thinking Officer is recruited, funded from High Needs Block. In order to attract candidates of suitable calibre, and in order to maintain momentum on Therapeutic Thinking projects, it is suggested that the post should be offered on a temporary contract for 3 years initially.
- 6.1.6 The post is likely to be a Band K post which equates to a salary range from £36,876 to £44,632. Assuming an appointment at the mid-point of the scale, and taking on costs and start-up equipment purchase into account, the estimated annual cost of the post would be £58K.
- 6.1.7 Without this post there is a serious risk that the potential of the Therapeutic Thinking to realise savings in the HNB will not be realised. It is difficult to be precise about the savings which could be achieved through creation of new provision. However, the following should provide a broad illustration of potential savings from one of the projects in the strategy.
- 6.1.8 A reduction in permanent exclusions by 25% maintained for three years would equate to approximately 17 less permanent exclusions in that time period which would result in a saving of £340K. Some students from this group go on to be placed in schools which cost an average of £62,000 per place per year, therefore

there is the potential to save £428K over 3 years if for example 2 of the 17 students spend one year in such provision.

6.2 Proposal to increase Vulnerable Children Grant

- 6.2.1 This is a small budget of £50,000 held by the Local Authority to support vulnerable pupils with complex needs. It can be used to help schools support their most vulnerable pupils on an emergency, unpredicted or short term basis.
- 6.2.1 The budget is well used and has helped to maintain children in their mainstream schools and avoid exclusions. Schools have appreciated being able to access funds relatively quickly for their most vulnerable pupils. However, the grant is in high demand and has already run out for the current financial year, meaning no further children can be supported.
- 6.2.2 If this budget were to be increased, it would allow more support to be given to schools to help them meet the needs of vulnerable children, including those with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- 6.2.3 Increasing this budget by £125,400 to £175,400 would allow the Local Authority to:
- Provide VCG funding for more children and / or for longer periods
 - Provide funding to schools when they admit a child who has been permanently excluded from another school
 - Support schools with implementation of Therapeutic Thinking approaches, eg. funding to support implementation of personalised therapeutic plans

6.3 Proposal to remove charging for LAL places

- 6.3.1 In September 2018, charges were introduced for placements at the Language and Literacy Centres at Theale and Winchcombe schools. Charges are based on 50% of the real cost of the place. These charges were introduced in order to alleviate pressure on the High Needs Block.
- 6.3.1 The LALs can provide 48 places per year for Year 5 students who have persistent difficulties with literacy and need an intensive programme delivered by a teacher qualified in specific literacy difficulties. Outcomes data for pupils who have attended the LALs shows that they make very significant progress prior to returning to Year 6 and then transitioning to secondary school.
- 6.3.2 Prior to the introduction of charging, all 48 LAL places were taken up every year. Since charging was introduced, the number of children accessing the LALs reduced to 33 in 2018 and 26 in 2019 and could fall further again in 2020 given the significant financial pressure on schools.
- 6.3.3 A survey of primary school headteachers has clearly demonstrated that a large number of primary schools would like to refer pupils to LAL but cannot afford to do so. 77% of schools who responded said that they had referred children to LAL in the three years prior to charging being introduced, but only 36% had made referrals since charging was introduced. A number of schools commented that they would like to refer to LAL but the charge was prohibitively expensive, especially for small schools.

- 6.3.4 There is some emerging evidence that the reduction in children being able to access LAL is linked to an increase in requests for EHCPs and an increase in potential appeals to the SEND Tribunal for places in specialist schools for children with dyslexia, with associated costs.
- 6.3.5 It is also possible that secondary schools will begin to see an impact of the reduction in children accessing LAL in terms of literacy levels of Year 7 cohorts and the numbers of children needing intensive support for literacy.
- 6.3.6 It is proposed that the charges for LAL places are removed so that all children who need this provision can access it and in order to avoid pressure for EHCPs and specialist placements for children with literacy difficulties.
- 6.3.7 The LAL budget is already subsidising places by 50% of the cost and fully funding the vacant places, so the cost of removing charging altogether would be relatively low at £17,800.

6.4 Proposal to expand the ASD Advisory Team to include Specialist Higher Level Teaching Assistants for deployment in schools

- 6.4.1 The number of children diagnosed with ASD has increased very dramatically over the last 10 years and continues to increase. Schools have developed good skills in meeting the needs of children with ASD and have access to support and training from the ASD Advisory Team. However, children with ASD can be challenging for schools to support and manage. We are seeing an increase in exclusions of children with ASD as well as an increase in specialist placements for children with ASD.
- 6.4.2 The West Berkshire SEND Strategy 2018-23, which was coproduced with parents, schools and other stakeholders, includes a proposal to recruit two Higher Level Teaching Assistants to the ASD Advisory Team, subject to identification of resources. There are currently two teachers in the team and one Autism Adviser who works with families. Service evaluations show that the support of the team is highly rated by schools, but team members are very thinly spread across the 1,152 children with ASD in our mainstream schools. The addition of HLTAs to the team would be a cost effective way of increasing capacity.
- 6.4.3 The objective of this additional resource would be to build capacity and expertise in schools, help schools to meet need effectively, maintain children in mainstream wherever possible and to support joint working between home and school, working alongside the Autism Adviser for Families
- 6.4.4 The HLTAs would work with individuals or groups of pupils in order to model strategies suggested by Advisory Teachers in class and support in producing and using resources. They could also run workshops for TAs in school and other staff. Work would have to be time limited but could help to avoid situations reaching crisis point.
- 6.4.5 The posts would be graded E to F. Assuming appointments at the mid point of the scale the cost would be £57,800.

Evaluation and Impact Data

Cognition and Learning Team (CALT)

The Cognition and Learning Team sends out an evaluation survey to schools every other year. The last one was done in summer 2019 and the next one is due in summer 2021. Ratings from schools in the 2019 survey were as follows (37 schools responded):

Overall rating of the service	100% scored good or excellent
Quality of reports	94% scored good or excellent
In school training	100% scored good or excellent
Timeliness of response	97% scored good or excellent

The survey also asked whether the team had had an impact on staff and pupils. The responses were as follows:

	Yes	No	N/A
Improved staff confidence	89%	3%	8%
Improved provision for pupils with SEN	94%	0%	6%
Improved outcomes for pupils	81%	0%	19%

It is notable that a high percentage of respondents felt there had been an impact on staff and pupils, including pupil outcomes. Where respondents did not answer yes it was generally because they felt the question was not applicable in relation to the type of support they had received, rather than that there had not been a positive impact. The comments from survey respondents are set out in Appendix C (i)

The CALT team supported some schools to deliver the SNAP intervention programme. Children were on the programme for an average of 16 weeks.

Average progress made was as follows:

Word Accuracy - 4.5 months gain for every one month on the programme

Reading Comprehension – 3.3 months gain for every one month on the programme

Specialist Inclusion Support Service (SISS)

The SISS Service evaluation survey was last sent to schools in summer 2017. Ratings from schools in the 2017 survey were as follows (15 schools responded):

Overall rating of the service	84% scored good or excellent
Quality of reports	84% scored good or excellent
Recommendations	100% scored good or excellent
In school training	100% scored good or excellent

The survey also asked whether the team had had an impact on pupils, staff and parents. Respondents were asked to rate the level of impact on a scale of 0 (no impact) to 5 (high impact). The responses were as follows:

	0	1	2	3	4	5	%

							score 3 or above
Pupils	8%	0%	0%	23%	62%	8%	93%
Staff	8%	0%	0%	8%	54%	31%	93%
Parents	8%	8%	0%	31%	38%	8%	77%

When considering impact, respondents were asked to consider:

Pupils: Progress, self- esteem, inclusion

Staff: Confidence, knowledge & skills, attitudes

Parents: Partnership with parents

93% of respondents felt that there had been a positive impact on pupils and on staff. A summary of comments from survey respondents is attached at Appendix C (ii).

ASD Advisory Service

The ASD Advisory Service sends out an evaluation survey to schools every other year.

The last one was done in summer 2018 and the next one is due in summer 2020.

Ratings from schools in the 2018 survey were as follows (21 schools responded):

Overall rating of the service	76% scored good or excellent
Quality of reports	67% scored good or excellent
Recommendations	81% scored good or excellent
In school training	90% scored good or excellent

The survey also asked whether the team had had an impact on pupils and staff.

When considering impact, respondents were asked to consider:

Pupils: Progress, self- esteem

Staff: Confidence and resilience

This question was not scored; comments are included in Appendix C(iii).

Respondents were also asked:

Does the ASD Advisory Service meet your needs as a school?

12 of 21 respondents said yes. Where schools felt the service was not meeting their needs, this appears to relate mainly to the limited capacity of the service (1.95FTE teachers to a caseload of approximately 700 children in mainstream schools), for example, some schools wanted more frequent visits.

Are there any other needs you have that are not being met?

8 out of 21 respondents said no. Respondents who said yes wanted a level of service which would be difficult to provide from existing resources.

A summary of comments from survey respondents is attached at Appendix C(iii).

Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)

The Language and Literacy Centres collect data annually on the average progress, in months, of children who have attended the centre, at the end of a 7 month intervention.

The table below shows the data for the 2018-19 academic year.

Test	Salford Reading	WRAT Reading	HAST Spelling
Average gain in months	15.7	12.5	15.2
Average gain in Standardised Score points	3.7	6.0	8.9

A summary of comments from parents and schools is attached at Appendix C (iv)

Appendix B (i)

CALT Evaluation Survey Comments 2019

1. How would you rate the reports, advice and recommendations provided by the service?

- a. It's all very sound, based on evidence of what works. There is often quite a lot of recommendation and I wonder if it should be made more overt to parents that it may not be possible to put all the recommendations in at the same time.
- b. xxx will always go above and beyond. In what has been a challenging year she has been a force of calm for children, parents and staff.
- c. Feedback is also given to parents where it was deemed to be helpful and supportive.
- d. xxx will always go above and beyond. In what has been a challenging year she has been a force of calm for children, parents and staff.
- e. Clear reports detailing difficulties and strategies on how to support in class as well as interventions. As usual it can be difficult with lowering numbers of TAs to implement one to one interventions, so the class strategies are very useful.
- f. xxx has produced very thorough reports which details the needs of the children.
- g. "Reports are extremely useful and parents appreciate the level of detail provided.
- h. Reports contain a variety of suggestions that we can work through and try with the children.
- i. "
- j. "Support and guidance is always well explained and provisions/interventions suggests can usually be applied with minimal cost. As with all things, staffing to deliver can be an issue, but obviously this is not a fault of CALT!
- k. xxx is always happy to guide and support me, especially over the last few months when things have been tricky for me personally."
- l. the reports are clear and to the point without lots of jargon. We use the reports as working documents using the recommendations and resources.
- m. "Reports are prompt and informative.
- n. Pupils needs are clearly identified, discussed and advice /support materials provided."
- o. Reports are very detailed and thorough.

- p. Reports are clear and easy to navigate. The advice provided for the provision and next steps for the pupils is supportive and relevant.
- q. Brilliant service - always really helpful and can answer any questions SEN related! Reports are completed quickly so that we can implement the advice soon after a child has been seen.
- r. Very thorough reports and the recommendations are achievable and realistic to be implemented.
- s. The programmes devised have shown impact for reading and spelling.
- t. "Highly efficient and accurate
- u. Really helpful and friendly "
- v. Reports are very clear and easy to read, making them useable for staff and parents.
- w. Not used the service directly
- x. "The support is invaluable to us as a school, widens my knowledge and enables me to support our more complex children. The provision advised has been useful and enabled me to look at free alternatives that I was not aware of.
- y. Reports are always comprehensive and enable me to have really useful conversations with parents. In some cases with parents the report validates what we offer as a school is good practise. "

2. How would you rate the usefulness of the pupil reports?

- a. The team produce easy-to-read, easily understandable reports that are highly informative and very accurate in their precise support.
- b. Not only do they give a clear picture of strengths and difficulties but they are also used as working documents with strategies and recommendations for classroom practice and individual support.
- c. It gives a detailed view of the children's needs and provides important evidence for future assessments needed. It also helps us to plan the interventions the child requires and how to help them reach their potential.
- d. Some of the report recommendations can be very similar even though the children can present differently in class.
- e. See previous response!
- f. Can be used to support writing of SAPs and as a discussion focus for parents. One report helped child get the correct referral to paediatrics following a physical assessment.
- g. "Very useful for informing SAP targets and provision.
- h. Used to support access to other services e.g. recommendations for SISS involvement.
- i. Always interesting to read the pupil voice when they are talking to someone less well known to them.
- j. "
- k. CALT speak to the school about what capacity they have to provide intervention and tailor it to our school. There are specific interventions that pupils can be supported individually as well as in small groups which makes planning the provision easier. They provide good evidence to support onward referrals or EHCP request for assessment.
- l. Gives clear advice for what we should do next and the specific difficulties/gaps a child has.
- m. They are clear and explain the needs of the pupil found through assessments. They give teachers some guidance and parents a clearer picture of their child's needs.
- n. Provision recommendations and accompanying resources have resulted in children making rapid progress.

- o. Very accurate and bespoke and full of suggestions
 - p. Not used the service directly
 - q. With a lack of support staff it can be difficult to complete 1:1 interventions, class based interventions where the teacher can be trained to deliver are useful
 - r. The reports are very comprehensive and are used to inform differentiation in the classroom, SAPS, and any further external professional involvement. They provide an outline for a productive meeting with parents to move forward with the support needed in school and helpful to guide parents to support at home.
- 3. Did the team respond to queries from you in a timely manner?**
- a. Emails and calls are always responded to promptly.
- 4. Were reports received within 2 weeks of assessment?**
- a. Sometimes the same day & when just the data was required for a meeting it was returned very quickly
 - b. Always -often sooner
- 5. How would you rate the in-school training provided by the team?**
- a. N/A
 - b. xxx provided training during an Inset day and for an upcoming staff meeting around SAP's and their quality due to new members of staff and as an outside voice.
 - c. xxx has met with all teachers and provided each one of them with recommendations, sharing her expertise and knowledge.
 - d. We have not used this service this year
 - e. Not applicable
 - f. Tailored to meet the needs of pupils and teaching assistants.
 - g. None received this year
 - h. The team continues to respond to our needs when requested to provide in-school training, ensuring that the training matches our setting.
 - i. Not used this year but in previous years has been excellent.
 - j. The staff are very informative and are able to adapt their style of training to the audience.
 - k. We have had several intervention refreshers which have been very useful.
 - l. The training is bespoke and because our CALT teacher knows our setting and the children, she can include this in training to explain how/why a particular child would benefit from an intervention.
 - m. Highly skilled
 - n. When we have received this service it has been okay and staff have been able to implement it.
 - o. Training delivered by two CALT employees for Precision Teaching intervention to be led by Teaching Assistants. They took on board some of the staffing difficulties I had come across to ensure some elements of the training were emphasised. Good resources were supplied to staff as part of the training.
- 6. How would you rate the service overall?**
- a. Just fantastic, xxx always replies to emails, calls and my regular flapping.
 - b. xxx is always prompt in responding to queries, she sees children quickly and helps us to improve our provision for these children. She is always willing to support the SENCo and is very understanding of the financial boundaries of the school, as well as the practical and logistical constraints we are under to fulfil the needs of the children. xxx is knowledgeable on a wide range of SEN needs and has never been unable to answer a question. She always has practical and achievable suggestions to

make and is very approachable. She is well respected by all staff in school and everyone enjoys working alongside her.

- c. Really informative -I feel like I can always ask questions however daft they might seem. Great sounding board at meetings to talk about what we are trying with some pupils.
- d. All aspects of the service - staff, admin, training, service, advice etc are provided at the point of need. communication is quick and effective - emails answered very promptly.
- e. "Always answer any queries no matter how small.
- f. Case load meetings are really useful and give helpful pointers of both a longer term view as well as how to support children in the short term. "
- g. Sue Whiting is brilliant at supporting me as a SENCo. Her knowledge and experience within her role is useful and she keeps us informed of all relevant updates following research updates. The assessments are completed in a calm and supportive manner - all pupils are happy to work with Sue and other CALT teachers. The reports are comprehensive and there is a consistency in the standard of training they deliver.
- h. A really valuable service that I have found incredibly useful. It's been good to know that support and advice is at the end of an email.
- i. Instant responses to queries, programmes of intervention that have resulted in rapid progress, problem solving approach to identifying barriers and how to overcome them, assessments and reports completed in a timely manner.
- j. For all the reasons stated so far
- k. xxx is so professional and so helpful - it is a pleasure to work with her and I do hope that she remains as our CALT team link next year so we can continue to benefit from her support
- l. I have found this service invaluable as a SENDCo and knowing you are there when I have a query is a very useful.

7. Has the involvement of the Cognition and Learning Team had an impact on pupils and staff?

- a. We have had little contact with CALT this year apart from the LAL assessments
- b. Due to this year and the changes and challenges we have not yet reviewed the intervention data.
- c. xxx met with each teacher across the Partnership, with the SENCo and discussed the children on the SEDN register and other 'concern' children. She provided suggestions and shared her knowledge and expertise with staff, which provided them with a lot of confidence and skills. She has also worked alongside ESAs on improving the quality of interventions. xxx shares knowledge with the SENCO who then is able to adjust provision for individuals accordingly. She has also worked with the SENCO on assessment across the school which is having an impact on outcomes, tracking and staff awareness of the needs of children. xxx is always happy to suggest appropriate provision and provide ideas if it isn't having the impact expected.
- d. If you can identify a barrier and support the difficulties attached to it the above can happen!
- e. It has helped to give direction about where the interventions may be directed. It may be helpful to direct staff with which gap in knowledge should be worked on first. This is because some children have many gaps and it would be helpful for NQTs and parents to have an order on to what to work on first.

- f. "To be reassured that what you believe a child's issue is and that you now have support, if needed, to assist the child with their learning.
- g. To help establish the barriers to a child's learning and have strategies to support that individual child's needs rather than a generic intervention."
- h. advice and resources continue to have an impact on pupils learning - especially spelling. This year support staff have had refresher training for several interventions enabling them to deliver quality support.
- i. Support and provision is more targeted.
- j. Staff always feel well supported and always welcome advice and recommendations from CALT. Pupils are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are on the correct provision and are making expected progress. CALT teacher is able to recommend alternatives if interventions are not working.
- k. Children making, for example, at least 6 mths progress in 3 mths following intervention. Teachers report that they are confident in leading an intervention that is being delivered by a TA.
- l. We have seen an increase in the confidence of staff delivering the recommendations and those targeted children have progressed.
- m. Over the year the team have supported with two more complex children where parents have benefitted from the reports, school have been able to put in individualised interventions and outcomes have been really positive for the learner. Progress data for these children has been good for the school.

8. Please add any further comments you wish to make.

- a. Just an incredible service from xxx, to share her knowledge and expertise. This year her positive outlook has been a real ray of sunshine and really valued.
- b. I have learned so much from Cxxx over the last 3 years and it is privilege to work with her. She is approachable, supportive and knowledgable. xxx is a huge asset to the school and the pupils within it. She has enabled us to provide our SEND pupils with provision that allows them to fulfil their potential and gain in confidence.
- c. I would like to say a big thank you to xxx for all her support this year in the children she has seen, the reports she has written and how she has supported me and my colleagues. Thank you :-)
- d. "Thank you!
- e. Network meetings are useful too and important to those who cannot afford the level of service they might like to choose - so thank you for keeping those open to all.
- f. Always appreciative of xxx's useful advice and willingness to support when resources are stretched. "
- g. Looking at the validity of the Salford test because it is very deceiving when being used as an assessment tool by itself. This is because I have had experience of children being diagnosed with dyslexia or significant Literacy difficulties but not meeting threshold for LAL because of the Salford test.
- h. Every year I continue to find the Cognition and Learning team are a must for a busy SENDCo they are friendly, professional and experienced offering practical and workable advice and solutions, I find the planning meeting at the beginning of an academic year particularly useful.
- i. Thank you for all the support this year!
- j. CALT is an invaluable service for our school. The training and updates at SENCO network meetings keep us up to date. The reports and support for the pupils and teachers is fantastic and tailored to the individuals that CALT are supporting. The

availability of the CALT teacher via email is a great support and all reports are sent within the 2 weeks.

- k. You are one of the best services I work with - thank you.
- l. Fantastic service - so efficient and always happy to help.
- m. Thank you for all the support you provide!
- n. I would not be able to do my role confidently without the support of the C&L advisor.
- o. If we had the money we would definitely make use of the team.
- p. Brilliant service! We love CALT!

Appendix B (ii)

SISS Evaluation 2016-17 Comments

Have you made referrals to SISS for any children/young people?		
Yes	No	Don't know
14	0	0

Comments (Yes):

- 2015 &16
- 2016 & 17
- 2015-16
- Each year
- 3 Foundation Stage children
- 2016
- 2016
- 2017
- Every year
- Year 6 & 5
- 2015-16
- Every year
- Academic year 2016-17
- 2017
- 2014-15

Comments (No):

- N/A

Were the referrals accepted?		
Yes	No	Don't know
13	1	1

1. Use of service “Other” comments:

- Staff were able to look around Brookfields school and talk to staff. We were also given useful resources that might help the children and given practical solutions to problems. We were also given resources for staff to look at to help with planning and assessment.
- Didn't use the service at this school this year.
- Borrowing of equipment

We have used all of the above plus advice sheets/book recommendations and one member of staff has visited Brookfields to talk with the maths dept. Re. Individual maths curriculum being put into place.

2. Rating the service comments:

- Staff have always been responsive and have always sought further advice from colleagues if they could not help on the day.
- We have continued to find this service very useful in helping us to support 3 pupils within our school. K has again been very useful and knowledgeable, providing us with information, advice, support, resources and strategies that we have found much harder to locate/create ourselves. It does feel as though the service is being stretched unfortunately, as the staff appear to have less and less time for each child.
- S was very helpful when sharing ideas and resources for us to use and follow at school. S sought advice from her colleagues before providing us with information to ensure it was accurate and suitable for our purposes. Communication was very good.
- I have always found the SISS service to be excellent. Staff respond promptly to queries and have a wealth of knowledge and are very generous in sharing this both practically and through discussion.
- Gave realistic ideas to manage behaviour and how to improve her language skills e.g. 'now' and 'next' language.
- Any queries are dealt with fully and swiftly. Good contact is maintained throughout the school year. Excellent resources are shared.
- S came to meet the pupil first so he was more familiar with her. She was thorough in her work and adapted resources so he was able to show his skills in the way he communicates.
- SISS has been extremely supportive in assessing one of our pupils and in providing advice and training for staff. I always get a fast response when I contact them. The pupil's mum has valued their input and their honest assessment of what sort of school would be suitable for her son for his secondary education.
- K is very supportive for both staff and pupils when she comes in.
- I was very disappointed that the most recent referral did not include any support as a follow up, not even any recommendations on how to support the child. Previously we have received assessment, recommendations and additional visits, I understand that it was only the assessment referral that was accepted and I was not aware that the same level of support would be forthcoming.
- We referred a child in the summer term of 2016, several meetings were planned in the summer term, including our teacher going to x School to meet with SISS but this never happened. At the beginning of the autumn term, somebody from SISS met with the class teacher and discussed brief action plan and I was to get back in touch with SISS when actions had taken place and attendance of pupil had improved. Following the advice from the EP, we sought support from the ASD team rather than SISS, not both. After a lot of emails, advice led us to seeking support from SISS again and an assessment was done after a few months. We are nearly a year since the first referral was made and only one small assessment has been done on the child, with no further communication from SISS, despite R telling us that they would be in touch again this summer term.

3a. Reports, advice and recommendations comments (Quality):

- Reports are thorough and clear, very useful for staff.
- All of S's recommendations could be used or adapted for our purposes.
- Reports are received promptly and are clear.
- Unable to comment – no report received as yet.
- Advice always appropriate.
- A report was received which gave us accurate information and was ready for the pupil's annual review.
- I have not received any reports following visits this year.
- A report was received which gave us accurate information and was ready for the pupil's annual review.

- Very limited report stating an assessment on the P scales, covering approximately 12 points.
- The advice given has been very useful. The reports have limited use and don't reflect the advice and support we have received.

3b. Reports, advice and recommendations comments (Recommendations):

- 4- recommendations for one child, 1- recommendation or lack of for another child
- Recommendations that we have been suggested and given have been useful.
- A report was received which gave us accurate information and was ready for the pupil's annual review.
- Verbal recommendations helpful at meeting.
- Recommendations have been very useful. It was great being able to visit the school and see the advice in action.
- Recommendations are clear, manageable and practical.
- All of S's recommendations could be used or adapted for our purposes.
- Again, very thorough and clear, with some resources provided to support their implementation

4(a) Did the service respond in a timely manner?

- YES
- Yes, very efficient
- Yes
- Yes
- We sent the referral in January and received the outcome for our referrals in March. The initial visit was then at the end of March. It basically took 3 months from our referral to receive help. This was too long – basically a whole term!
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Appropriate
- Yes it was very quick and worked around the time frame we had for annual review contributions.
- Yes
- It all happened within this timescale
- Yes
- Yes
- Still waiting to hear the outcome
- Results of referral within a short time. The initial visit was made within approximately 6 term time weeks

4 (b) Was written advice received within 2 weeks?

- Yes
- Haven't got that far yet
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- No – we have not received any written reports
- Yes – report emailed within 2 weeks
- Yes
- Yes
- Don't know
- Yes
- Yes
- Just over but S contacted me to tell me she was seeking more advice for the report hence the minor delay.

- Mostly, Follow up emails/advice were always quickly sent out but reports occasionally took longer
- All but one occasion when I knew it would take a few more days

5. Training comments:

- We have not had staff training as such but information received has always been very useful (4) and the visit to Brookfields particularly so. (4)
- The type of language to be used with the pupil.
- Specifically in relation to Down Syndrome.

6. Impact comments:

- Staff have been able to explore some different behavioural strategies and talk through difficult behaviours – in some cases this was reassuring for the school to know we are “on the right track!” In one case in particular it has enabled access to a maths curriculum that the pupil can engage with and a little progress has been seen, which is “good” as the syndrome she has makes long term progress challenging. Staff are more confident in following what is right for the child and the child is having more success.
- The involvement of SISS has very much helped out staff with supporting children with levels of SEN that need a higher and more differentiated level of support. The support from SISS has helped with the inclusion of these pupils within their classes and has improved staff knowledge and confidence when working with these children.
- Staff are able to implement strategies which promote inclusion and progression in learning through curriculum differentiation and assessment advice.
- Staff are more knowledgeable in how they can work with children and this has impacted on their skills and initiative. This has also helped other children in the class.
- Gave staff ideas to be able to improve the pupil’s outcomes.
- Promotes pupil progress, improves partnership with parents.
- Unable to comment as involvement very recent!
- Information, resources and support have been useful especially in dealing with parents.
- The assessment helped us to moderate our own judgements, and will help the school to plan for next learning steps.
- Improved staff confidence – K has given good advice to staff about how they can support the children. Improved staff knowledge and skills – as above. Attitudes towards pupils with SEN – n/a. Improved inclusion of pupils with SEN – n/a. Promoting pupil progress – through assessment it has been clear the progress children have made and what they need to work on further. However we usually receive a booklet and a report outlining what children need to be working on and this year we have not. Supporting pupil self esteem – K was very supportive when one of our pupils was attempting transition and although it was not successful she visited the child in class and reassured him. Improved partnership with parents – n/a.
- Involvement focused the teacher’s attention more on the needs of this particular pupil. It took a long time for his EHC plan to come through and for the SLT to recruit a TA to work with the child so the teacher had a tough job juggling the needs of this child with the needs of the rest of the class. There has been greater impact from the advice and support from SISS since there has been an additional adult in class to help implement it. Mum has been very receptive to reports and advice given. She valued the very honest appraisal of her son’s ability level and advice on suitable secondary placement. She specifically requested that SISS should be represented at her son’s annual review because she values their input.
- Change of staffing has impacted on quality of advice but maybe this is to be expected with a time to gain experience.
- Excellent support on puberty education for an SEN child.
- No involvement yet.
- None as yet.

2 satisfactory	4
3 good	8
4 excellent	8

- Conversations with ASD service and CT are useful to discuss child/difficulties/tasks to develop child.
- Efficient responses to questions and queries. Good training and support for all staff.
- The conversations with parents were useful to give an insight into individuals within a school setting. Discussion of possible strategies was beneficial and written reports were mostly useful.
- When support is available it is good, it is a shame that it is limited due to high demand.
- We had a very difficult child. There were no quick fixes but support was on hand & frequent (which is what we needed).
- Service is good. A fantastic service that provides valuable support to schools, families and most importantly the pupils. Just wish that there was more than 1 person covering all Primary Schools.
- I would rate the service as a 4 as our ASD support this year has been amazing. We have really appreciated the consistent support and guidance.
- Sensible and “do-able” advice.
- For such a stretched service, the team do an excellent job. They offer so much between them and I know they are there if I need them at any time.
- Highly valued service for staff, parents and pupils.
- Support for both staff and parents useful and relevant. However, sometimes expectations of support to be provided within the classroom can be challenging especially in a large class with high SEN needs. It would be useful to have support categorised into order of importance.
- Visits are usually timely, reports are completed in good time and delivered efficiently.
- Our reason for giving a 2 is due to the repetitiveness of the advice given after a quick conversation with staff members. On occasion, observations of no more than 10 minutes occur which doesn't always give a true reflection of the challenges or difficulties a pupil is having. Conversations with staff are not enough to give the staff an insight as to the reasons behind the behaviour they are struggling to manage.
- Support is provided quickly and feedback given promptly compared to most other services. Meeting every newly diagnosed pupil meet the adviser is often unhelpful and in fact can be detrimental.
- Some of the observations of pupils have been very short due to the support teacher arriving late to the school.

3. Reports, advice and recommendations – *please rate and comment*

Please rate on a scale of 1 – 4
(1 poor, 2 satisfactory, 3 good, 4 excellent)

a) Reports

1 poor	0
2 satisfactory	7
3 good	7
4 excellent	7

- Picture of child accurate, written observation of what child doing accurate.
- Very quick turnaround of reports after observation!
- Some felt brief/not personal to individual pupils.

- These are usually sent promptly and are sensitivity written.
- Always received promptly.
- I would rate this as a 3 as the advice and recommendations have been invaluable to both staff and parents this year. It has helped us to move particular things forward more quickly and with more success. Reports have been received quickly and with detailed recommendations that can be clearly understood by all adults.
- Swift return so recommendations are in place that term.
- Detailed.
- Promptly received and clear to read.
- Always clear and thorough.
- Reports arrive quickly.
- Little information given that isn't known but reports are written quickly.

b) Advice/Recommendations

1 poor	0
2 satisfactory	3
3 good	6
4 excellent	7

- Good advice – accurate to the children including asking.
- Useful and relevant. Parents may benefit from meeting to discuss the report with the person writing it.
- A range of recommendations made.
- It is always clear and possible to implement.
- Very clear advice and recommendations which have usually been discussed with staff.
- Recommendations discussed so we can use them – i.e. not something on a report that we cannot manage.
- Easy to follow.
- There were no recommendations beyond what was being done already.
- Occasionally some advice seems a bit generic.
- Advice is repetitive for multiple children and previous reports, often advice given are strategies the teachers are already implementing.
- Pupil comments are often reported as in fact; some strategies cannot be implemented in a mainstream school. Advice given without discussion with pastoral team so often support has been put in but the pupil does not report this to the service, reports then sound like school is not acting on information. Strategies suggested are usually commonly known and used in school, we would like new strategies. Advice given directly to parents about what school can offer – this can be misleading, things are offered that we cannot provide without prior discussion with the school.

4. Training – please rate and comment

Please indicate type(s) of training received by staff:

Specific pupil related	4
General ASD	6
Specific ASD related subject (eg Sensory, Behaviour, etc)	6
Other	1

Please rate on a scale of 1 – 4

1 poor	0
2 satisfactory	1

3 good 7
4 excellent 3

- Not in school this year.
- Staff require more training on helping general ASD and it needs to be delivered in a powerful way.
- Clear calm manner delivering sound & solid advice when needed the most.
- It was a great overview of ASD/ADHD behaviours. Maybe in the future more pupil specific whole school training would be great.
- Staff all really enjoyed the training session and was keen to implement the strategies recommended. I think all adults appreciated the 'well-being' aspect too!
- Not used this year.
- The academic access training was very helpful and relevant. Staff were given lots of practical ideas.
- TA training well received and up to date research interested staff who have been in the job a long time. The workshops are more discussion based rather than actively providing strategies.

5. Impact

Has the involvement of the **ASD Advisory Service** had an impact on pupils and staff?

Comment on:

- a) Building staff confidence
- b) Building staff resilience
- c) Promoting pupil progress
- d) Supporting pupil self esteem

- Yes to all, several children this year.
- Staff have been using breathing techniques shown themselves and with children (where appropriate).
- (a)
- Staff confidence & awareness of strategies to use has improved.
- Staff are more confident in understanding the needs of children with ASD.
- Staff have become more aware of how to meet the needs on a basic level, this now needs strengthening, along with their resilience. Pupils (with ASD) have made good progress.
- Staff confidence & resilience – a big impact. Able to calm staff and offer realistic advice when needed. Pupil progress & self-esteem – limited.
- It ticks a box.
- Supports onward referrals for the pupils. Provides staff with clear recommendations to support pupils' progress in areas of concern. Supports teachers/TAs ability to feel confident about supporting an ASD child which has an impact on their relationships with the ASD pupil.
- I think the ASD Service has helped us with all of the above and more this year.
- It is always good to talk through and adapt approaches if needed. It is good to know what you are doing is good practice. This builds staff confidence and resilience. This in turn supports the pupils. It is really important as a teacher/SENCo that at the point you are running out of ideas someone can offer something new to try – it can give the bit of hope to keep trying in hard circumstances.
- I feel the staff are more confident due to all the recommendations given, which in turn has built resilience although this has only been seen in staff who have fully taken A's advice on board. Pupil progress and increased self-esteem, is variable but this is inevitable for children with Autism.

- The training sessions for teaching staff on ASD and staff well-being was done as part of our INSET. It was helpful to staff in making them aware of their own needs. It was not intended to train staff for our ASD pupils beyond providing a general information session.
- Building staff confidence by confirming that strategies used in the classroom are good.
- The service has helped build rapport between families, students and staff and enabled us as a school to implement suitable support strategies and resolve problems before they become major ones.
- It always useful to have opportunities to discuss any concerns or achievements with those who are more skilled in this area. It is good to have reassurance that what we are doing is right or advise on what we could do to improve and make things easier for all involved.
- Support from the ASD Advisory Service makes us feel that we are able to get advice from someone quickly and easily who knows the school and the constraints we are under as well as knowing the child.
- No impact since as a result of advice and recommendations from the ASD team.
- Provides the pupils with an outlet and someone impartial to speak to. Useful for parents, however it can be unhelpful when parents contact directly without consultation with the school.
- Support reassures staff that they supporting pupils well. We do not learn anything new from the report that we have not already put into place.

6. Does the Advisory Service meet your needs as a school?

- Yes x 12
- Mostly. Staff need further training about teaching to ASD needs within a while class.
- No
- Yes – although I wish visits were more frequent and not reactive to some situations.
- Yes, I find A very accommodating.
- One of the challenges we are facing is that the parents have very high expectations of what the school can offer their children with ASD. In several cases this means that they expect all their desires to be met, these are not always in keeping with what the child wants or what is best for the child. The written reports do not always say what the school is doing towards these issues or support the school if parental requests are not the best option. We sometimes find that the Advisory Service suggestions conflict with those made by other organisations such as the Emotional Health Academy.
- Unfortunately not.
- It does offer support to some but would benefit from some more bespoke programmes.

7. Are there any other needs you have that are not being met?

- No x 8
- More contact/meetings with parents and staff, not just staff. Parents like to hear advice from an expert. ASD team can help support staff when parents don't always agree/accept point of view.
- Undiagnosed – little support.
- Staff training may be beneficial in the future.
- Parents have requested drop in sessions, in groups, with an ASD specialist.
- Yes
- Further discussion with pupils 1-1 would be of benefit to some pupils and hearing their thoughts.
- No, our needs are being met.
- Not that I can think of.
- Drop in sessions for parents to discuss on a regular basis. Drop in sessions for staff especially TA's who are working with the children on a daily basis. Longer observations of pupils to help support staff in identifying triggers and environmental changes they can make to support pupils.

- It would be more beneficial if the service could provide social skill groups. Meet with individuals, based on need, not just because they have a diagnosis. Work with individuals over a few sessions to support with a particular issue e.g. school reusing.

8. Please add any further comments you wish to make.

- Thank you for advice and support.
- A recent transition meeting was useful to try and ensure appropriate provision & support was in place.
- I am eternally grateful for A's continued support and professional approach and M's help this year to support parents.
- Reports are repetitive and offer few real options to use day to day.
- Parents appreciate a dedicated ASD advisory service. Parents always feel listened to and supported well by the teachers.
- Very valuable service – Thank you. With budgets as they are, it is good to be able to have a service to support a very vulnerable group of pupils that is “free” to access. I am sure this service supports children become more happy and secure and therefore successful learners. In an ideal world, an extension of the service might be to support schools who have children on the pathway as this is often the time support before diagnosis – this means potentially more “trial and error” which is stressful for staff and the child. If the team could come in they might be able to narrow down strategies/offer support that might support the individual child at an earlier point.
- Thank you for all your help and support this academic year.
- The staff who provide this service are all very friendly and approachable. They are brilliant with our young people and have helped to unpick some tricky situations. They are also hugely supportive of both staff and parents and working together as we do has really helped to settle some students and allow them to flourish.
- Thank you to A for all your help and support this year.

Appendix B (iv)

Comments from Schools, Parents and Children about LAL Provision

Schools

- (1) Can I also say thanks for all the hard work and effort you have put into supporting our LAL children over the last couple of years. They have made so much progress both academically and personally. I am so disappointed that we cannot afford to continue sending our children to LAL as it is such a super resource for children.
- (2) One of my Year 6s had LAL in Year 5 and then got a place in the ACE unit. The transition from LAL to ACE was managed superbly by your team. Our pupil was privileged enough to receive regular visits from * in preparation to moving into Year 7. This helped her enormously in building confidence and familiarity with what would be expected of her. The pupil struggled right through primary, but showed us that, with support, she could progress and succeed. As a Head, I am delighted and confident that she will continue to thrive at secondary.

Parents

- (1) Having benefitted from it so much we feel it would be wonderful if the programme to even more children in West Berkshire. A huge thank you to Mrs **! It has been a wonderful programme for **.
- (2) LAL is an excellent programme and just what my child needed so I would not change anything about LAL. I just think that it should be for the child in Year 5 and 6. Every school would benefit from Mrs** and her knowledge for the kids that don't learn the same as others. (its not one size fits all)...Lal has definitely worked for, the difference in his school work is amazing. ... he's grown in confidence and that his reading is getting really good!
- (3) He has thoroughly enjoyed attending LAL and knows he will miss his weekly LAL visits with you. He has gained so many skills, whilst I know he can struggle with taking direction, he has applied himself to learning. This is mainly down to your ability to make and provide an ideal environment and techniques that work. I am so pleased we embarked on this journey and we will continue your good work.
- (4) Thank you for all your support and help you have given to ** and to both my husband and myself. I can finally sit and listen to ** read with confidence and hopefully this will be the start of a love of books.

Children

- (1) I've loved it! I think it's helped me because when we went to this place there was this sign and Dad would ask me to read it. I could never read it – now I can. 'Do not climb on this tree because it is ancient.'
- (2) We don't go too fast.. you stop and wait so I can get it.. at school people help me but it's busy so people can't always explain.'
- (3) I think it's helped because I remember when you first came in I wasn't that good at reading and spelling and now I'm more confident. I'm curious about what books I can read next.