

Item: 6

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 14 November 2018.

Support for Learning - Review.

Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider a review of the support for learning service, which provides for children and young people with additional support needs in Orkney's schools.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That a review of support for learning provision in Orkney's schools has been carried out over an 18-month period, with the outcome report attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

2.2.

The key conclusion of the review of support for learning provision, namely that, when advice and guidance around assessment and planning is robustly implemented, it does make a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and families.

2.3.

That the review of support for learning provision also notes:

- That there are inconsistencies of practice in respect of assessment, planning and delivery, within and across schools.
- That not all staff feel knowledgeable and confident about some of the challenges they meet.
- There is variability in the consistency of service provision within Education, Leisure and Housing as well as with respect to the contribution of other partners agencies and services.

2.4.

That work is ongoing to build confidence and capacity with respect to meeting the needs of all learners across staff groups and schools.

2.5.

That development and improvement work is underway and included in the service's National Improvement Framework Plan that will support the recommendations of the review of support for learning provision.

2.6.

That, should the recommendations of the review of support for learning provision be accepted, the 3-year Action Plan, attached as Appendix 2 to this report, will be used to progress the recommendations and inform the ongoing review of the service's National Improvement Framework Plan.

2.7.

That a more specific review of the provision of Support for Learning Assistants within schools has also been undertaken in order to manage the service within the approved budget, which has increased over the last five years but not in line with the increase in the numbers of children and young people identified as having additional support needs.

2.8.

That the full impact of the review of the provision of Support for Learning Assistants will not be known until early 2019 as the changes required are phased in.

It is recommended:

2.9.

That the recommendations of the review of support for learning provision, as outlined in section 10 of Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

3. Background

3.1.

There are a number of factors that form the background to, and need for, a review of provision for young people with additional support needs in Orkney, including:

- The increase in the number of pupils that are recognised as needing additional support.
- Significant changes in the curriculum and examination system.
- A pressing focus on 'closing the attainment' gap.
- The global climate of austerity with the consequential tightening of local authority budgets which includes the changes made to the provision and deployment of Support for Learning Assistants in Orkney that has been taking place over the last 12 months.

3.2

Reflecting on the period 2012 to 2017, there has been a small increase in the pupil population of around 2%. However, over the same period the number of children and young people recognised as having additional support needs has risen by around 8%. For example, there are now:

- More than twice as many children with language or speech disorders.
- Five times as many children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulty.
- Nearly ten times as many children where the main factor giving rise to their additional support needs is family issues.

3.3.

In 2017 to 2018 across schools in Orkney, 25% of children and young people were recognised as having additional support needs. This is consistent with the national average, although there can be big differences between local authorities.

3.4.

The additional support for learning legislation and accompanying Code of Practice, which can be found at <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-code-practice-revised-edition/> says, in effect, that a child with additional support needs is a child who needs additional support to access the curriculum. There is, within the education profession, a recognition and concern that across Scotland there are inconsistencies in practice in relation to how this definition is applied.

3.5.

In general terms, the Code of Practice indicates that there are factors giving rise to the need for additional support which fall into four categories:

- Family circumstances.
- Disability or health need.
- Social/emotional factors.
- The learning environment itself.

3.6.

In a similar way, the Code of Practice outlines three overlapping types of additional support that may be required:

- Approaches to learning and teaching.
- Provision of resources.
- Support from personnel.

3.7.

Support from personnel can be very diverse depending on the particular needs and circumstances and may include some or all of, the following:

- The class or subject teacher.
- Specialist support for learning teacher.
- Support for learning assistant.
- Colleagues from the NHS allied health professionals.
- Educational psychologist.
- Colleagues from Pupil Support.
- Colleagues working within social services.

3.8.

The nature of the support will also vary and ranges from continuous direct support through to advice and guidance on an 'as needed' basis.

3.9.

The process used to bring these resources together, along with the relevant assessment and planning is called Staged Intervention. This helps not only in understanding how needs are being met at an individual level but also the relative level of needs across all the schools.

3.10.

For an individual child or young person this process of Staged Intervention may result in a 'child's plan' being drawn up. The purpose of such a plan is to co-ordinate support and ensure the additional support provided is making the intended difference.

3.11.

In order to make best use of the resources available, it has never been more crucial that 'what works' as far as interventions are concerned is well understood.

3.12.

Whether delivered by teachers, support for learning staff or other provisions offered in schools or by specialist services offered by Pupil Support, Educational Psychology and partners working with children, young people and families, interventions need to make a difference.

4. Review Methodology and Findings

4.1.

The review was led by staff within the Education Psychology Service and Pupil Support Team. In carrying out the review, consideration was given to a data sources and research methodology. The principles laid out in How Good is Our School, 4th Edition, were taken into account, as were the principles of positive psychology and approaches to organisational change.

4.2.

The review found many examples of good practice and could confidently confirm that 'when it's done well it works well'. However, a number of inconsistencies or differences also became more noticeable. For example, not all staff felt knowledgeable and confident about some of the challenges they meet and there were inconsistencies in how needs were being assessed. In addition, there was variability in the consistency of service provision within schools, the Education, Leisure and Housing service and with respect to the contribution of other partner agencies and services. Using the good practice as the foundation, the recommendations throughout the review report, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, signpost a number of aspects of practice that should be encouraged and developed, as well as some which should be reviewed or stopped.

4.3.

Particular themes and ideas emerged through analysis of the data gathered during the review which highlight key elements of effective support for learning.

4.4.

The recommendations, comprising Section 10 of the review report attached as Appendix 1 to this report, are organised under three headings:

- Leadership – Without effective leadership at all levels, the likelihood of achieving a positive outcome is diminished. This includes a clear commitment to inclusive practice and getting it right for every child.
- Quality Assurance – Without quality assurance there is increased likelihood of inconsistencies in practice within and across schools. This includes ensuring that staged intervention and the assessment and planning process is being implemented consistently and is well understood.
- Learning – Without a culture of learning, the individuals and teams who support Orkney's children and young people will not be sufficiently skilled or confident in the roles they are carrying out. This includes professional learning for head teachers, teachers, support for learning teachers and support for learning assistants.

4.5.

Development and improvement work in relation to some aspects of the review's recommendations is already underway and included in the service's National Improvement Framework Plan. In addition, a three-year action plan, attached as Appendix 2 to this report, has been prepared. The action plan will be updated annually, accompanied by a report linked to the relevant quality indicators for How Good is Our School 4 and used to inform the service's National Improvement Framework Standards and Quality Report and Plan.

5. Support for Learning Assistant Provision

5.1.

The review notes that it is often assumed that providing additional support for a pupil in the form of dedicated time from a Support for Learning Assistant will automatically lead to improved progress. However, local experience, borne out by national research, would suggest that it is the quality of work being carried out that makes the difference.

5.2.

Recently, a significant review and restructuring of the workforce, equating to a reduction of around twelve full time equivalent staff, has been undertaken in order to keep the provision within the allocated budget.

5.3.

Prior to restructuring, all allocations were 'needs led'. This meant, based on an initial assessment, an allocation of support for learning assistant time would be made in order to meet the needs of the child/young person. However, over time this led to an overall increase in provision, and little or no 'recycling' of the existing support. The cumulative effect was that while support could be offered to children who might not otherwise have qualified, there was insufficient budget available.

5.4.

For a number of years, budget overspend of nearly £350,000 was sustained by taking money from other budgets to offset the overspend.

5.5.

With increasing pressure on budgets generally, including significant reductions in some areas, this process of virement became unsustainable. The consequence was the need to reduce spending to align with the budget. This meant a reduction in workforce, which was achieved by ending temporary staffing arrangements as well as through a voluntary process of early retirement and voluntary redundancy.

5.6.

A second stage of redeployment to ensure the remaining staff are allocated appropriately across the schools is currently underway.

5.7.

Initially the approach used relied on key data sets to 'describe' each school. For primary schools and junior high schools, the data sets related to literacy levels at P1 and P3, as well as the number of children at stage 4 and 5 of the 'staged intervention' process. For the two resource schools, Kirkwall Grammar School and Glaitness Primary School, as well as Stromness Academy, a more bespoke approach was taken.

5.8.

Unfortunately, at the end of this process, head teachers felt the needs of pupils would not be met and that insufficient attention had been paid to individual circumstances. This led to a second process of more direct engagement with head teachers. They were asked to work with colleagues from the educational psychology service and their service improvement officer to reflect on 3 key criteria:

- Children and young people with the most complex needs where the deployment of additional staffing resources is essential to their school attendance.
- Children and young people who present a physical (health and safety) risk to themselves, other learners and staff where this risk can be managed through the deployment of additional staffing.
- Classes or groups where the combinations and number of needs indicate that learning can only be managed by the deployment of additional staffing.

5.9.

The schools' requests were then moderated through a meeting of the psychologists and service improvement officers. The outcome of this moderation was then the basis for the allocations currently being applied.

5.10.

While making best use of the available personnel, the number of requests from head teachers indicate that there may be some unmet needs. In terms of full time equivalents, the total of the additional requests would exceed the 12 full time equivalents by which the workforce has been reduced.

5.11.

Based on a review of best value and the associated benchmarking process carried out in 2008, a level of around 15 Support for Learning Assistants per 1,000 pupils in Orkney was thought to be appropriate. If this was adjusted to reflect the increased number of children and young people recognised as having additional support needs, the figure would rise to 16. Prior to the workforce restructure taking place, there were around 17 Support for Learning Assistants per 1,000 pupils.

5.12.

Across Scotland, the number varies greatly, from 12.3 to 27.4 and even more but the most common ratio would be in the 16 to 18 range. Once the workforce restructure is complete, the new ratio in Orkney will be closer to 13 Support for Learning Assistants per 1,000 pupils.

5.13.

The impact of the new level of provision, which will be in place across nearly all schools from the beginning of 2019, should be kept under review. Subject to being able to identify an appropriate source of funding, it may be necessary to make a managed increase in provision in order to ensure the service remains effective. As part of the budget setting process this has been highlighted and included as one of a small number of service pressures.

5.14.

As part of the wider review, the views of parents and carers were considered. The changes in the support arrangements across schools has been carried out since these views were gathered. Consideration should be given to repeating the survey, once these have impacted on schools, in the first part of 2019.

6. Equalities Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

7. Links to the Council Plan

7.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Thriving Communities.

7.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to Priority 3.6 Review the policy and provision for staffing, curriculum and financial management of our schools to ensure resources are most effectively targeted at 'raising the bar and closing the gap'.

7.3.

The proposals in this report have been developed with due regard to Orkney's isles communities.

7.3.1.

The proposed review is not anticipated to have significantly different effects.

8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of Strong Communities.

9. Financial Implications

There are not anticipated to be any significant financial implications arising as a result of the recommendations to this report.

10. Legal Aspects

10.1.

Under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 education authorities must provide adequate and efficient school education for children of school age within their area.

10.2.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 requires that pupils with additional support needs learn in a mainstream school unless specific exceptions apply.

10.3.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended 2009) created the term 'additional support needs' and places duties on local authorities to identify, meet and keep under review the needs of pupils for whom they are responsible.

10.4.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 enshrines elements of the getting it right for every child approach in law, ensuring there is a single planning approach for children who need additional support from services.

11. Contact Officers

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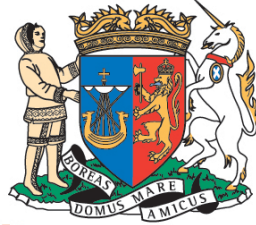
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12. Appendices

Appendix 1: Review of Support for Learning Provisions in Orkney's Schools.

Appendix 2: Recommendations from 3 Year Action Plan.

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment.



ORKNEY
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Support for Learning Review

October 2018

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Executive Summary

Carried out over an 18 month period, this review, carried out as a piece of action enquiry research, explores a number of themes and ideas relating to the culture, systems and practice of how we support learners across Orkney's schools.

The key conclusion is that 'when it's done well it works well'.

That means when the advice and guidance around assessment and planning is robustly implemented we are able to make a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and families. This is something we should be proud of and use as the starting point for improvement.

It is also true however that there are inconsistencies of practice within and across schools; that not all staff feel knowledgeable and confident about some of the challenges we meet; and there is variability in the consistency of own (wider) service provision and with respect to the contribution of our partners agencies and services.

The review summarises the research that was carried out and, based on the various evaluations and reflections made, sets out a number of possible areas for development. These areas for development are identified throughout the report (superscript numbers 1-53) and cross-referenced with the key recommendations.

High level themes have been extracted leading to 18 key recommendations organised into to 3 core areas:

- Leadership;
- Quality Assurance; and
- Learning.

The intent, looking forward, is to build on strengths, share learning and practice and ensure our culture, system and practice help us to get it right for every child and young person in Orkney.

1. Background

There are a number of factors that form the background of this review of our provision for young people with additional support needs in Orkney. At its most general, a global climate of tightening local authority budgets inevitably focuses attention on how best to utilise specialist services, personnel and resources – not least, because of the increasing financial stress on the Support for Learning budget. In order that we make best judgement on such matters it is crucial that we evaluate the effectiveness of what is actually working in our support for learning provisions, whether delivered by specialist services offered by Pupil Support and Educational Psychology, or by support for learning staff and provisions offered in schools.

Another factor relates to the introduction, over the last 5-10 years, of a number of **different approaches to supporting young people**, e.g., low arousal approaches, nurturing approaches, Teacch¹, social pedagogy, mindfulness, restorative approaches – all examples of evidence-based good practice for which we have positive feedback, from professionals, parents and carers, regarding impact. It is felt by many stakeholders, however, that time is overdue to take stock and pursue a systematic overview of how these different approaches work together, and to form an overarching strategic plan as to their implementation.

Increasing demands on resources also brings our **modes of working** into focus. In Orkney there is a mixture of outreach, consultative, and focused working practices – especially among specialist services – and a range of working models – from low to highly staff-intensive – within schools. This review seeks to evaluate these practices. We have evidence and feedback that supports the idea that there is much good practice and value in many of these styles of delivery in their place. We need to explore the possibility of even more effective working, however, and ask if we can reach more young people with ASN and use resources more efficiently.

The need to evaluate approaches to supporting young people, and modes of working, inevitably brings **staff skills and CPD** needs into focus, also. Indeed, feedback from SfL teachers and assistants (as well as class teachers) is very much concerned with training needs around the various approaches to supporting young people and the different modes of working. We have a lot of skilled professionals in Orkney and this review hopes to recommend approaches to maximising the utilisation of those skills as well as becoming clearer as to how we can maintain appropriate skill levels in sustainable ways.

These various factors, taken together, form the basis of this review process. The intention is to build on the strengths and positive elements by constructing a set of actionable recommendations that are sensitive to and respectful of our own context – remote, rural, island.

¹ A specific approach suitable when supporting some children and young people on the autistic spectrum.

2. Methodology

In preparing this report, consideration was given to a data sources and research methodology. The principles laid out in *How Good is Our School* (4th Edition) were taken into account, as were the principles of positive psychology and approaches to organisational change. To ensure a positive impact, a report of this nature needs not only to take stock of 'where we are now' (Looking Inwards), but also to look for inspiring approaches that are in place elsewhere (Looking Outwards), and finally to capture some vision of what we would like the future to hold for Orkney's Support for Learning provision (Looking Forwards).

The qualitative strand to the report is built on a variety of information sources. In our mission to collect 'people's views', we have conducted semi-structured interviews with key members of staff from 14 schools across Orkney, giving a rich source of information about how schools approach identifying, addressing, and monitoring pupil needs. The data from these interviews has been analysed thematically and summarised so as to draw out the salient points, as well as the aspirations and difficulties that participants identified. A combination of interviews and questionnaires also captures the opinions of parents, pupils, and those who work in pupil support roles at Authority Level. Again, the need to gather data about what is happening now (positive and negative), and what difference it is making to individual children, has been balanced by the seeking of information about what changes would make the most difference as we look towards the future. To this end, we also conducted a series of Appreciative Inquiries with teams providing key services in the support of learners with additional support needs. This technique comes from positive psychology and organisational change theory, and enables teams to acknowledge the strengths in what they are already doing, and move on to explore how they can work together towards a jointly created vision of a better future.

'Quantitative data' has been accessed through records that are already in existence (e.g. hours of non-teaching time currently allocated to each school in Orkney). There is data about pupil attainment in Literacy and Numeracy at Primary School through the PIPS assessments which are currently administered throughout Orkney. There is also information available through schools about where all their pupils currently sit on the Staged Intervention Framework, with longitudinal data also made available to us by some schools.

A third strand key to triangulation, identified by *How Good Is Our School* (4th Edition), is that of 'Direct Observation'. Our approach to this strand has been to draw together the combined views of the writers of this report, based on their daily observations in schools and other educational contexts in the course of their work. Some brief case studies have highlighted elements of best practice that can usefully be shared as part of this report.

3. Context

3.1. The National Context

In order to examine the approaches to supporting learning in Orkney, it is essential to reflect on the national context as local authority service planning reflects the Scottish policy context.

Over the last number of years the Scottish Government has had a single purpose – to create a more successful country where all of Scotland can flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth.

In driving forward its goal of improving outcomes for all of Scotland's children and young people, key policies and frameworks have acted to guide local authorities and legislation has embedded key elements of these in law.

The following are the main sets of guidance, policies, frameworks and legislation which have influenced service planning and development in Orkney.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, 2009

The above Act provided a framework for local authorities and other agencies to support all children with their learning. It gave parents and pupils new rights and placed duties on local authorities and other agencies. The Act introduced the concept of additional support needs, including family circumstances and social/emotional needs as factors giving rise to support needs. As amended in 2009, the Act considers these factors more closely; placing duties on the local authority to take account of the likely barriers to learning faced by children looked after by the local authority. The associated Code of Practice (Supporting Children's Learning) was updated in 2017.

Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence drives forward the principle of health and wellbeing underpinning all learning experiences to ensure mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing now and in the future through good relationships, positive behaviour and inclusive opportunities. It is the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people. Personalisation is emphasised to ensure engagement and motivation in order to promote confidence, independence and positive dispositions.

Getting it Right for Every Child, 2008, 2012

Getting it Right for Every Child is the foundation for all work with all children and young people. It builds on universal health and education services by providing a framework for all services and agencies working with children and families to deliver a coordinated approach which is proportionate and timely. Getting it Right provides the 'golden thread' that knits together objectives aimed to improve outcomes for all children and young people providing the methodology of delivering, for example, the social frameworks of Equally Well, the Early Years Framework and Achieving our Potential.

Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 – A Positive Approach to Managing Exclusions, March 2011

This document re-emphasises that all learners, particularly those who need ‘more choices and chances’ will benefit from different approaches to learning in different contexts within and beyond the school, highlighting flexible partnership working to facilitate positive post-school destinations being attained by all.

Opportunities for All: Post-16 Transitions Policy and Practice Framework, 2014

This framework re-emphasises the expectation of the roles and responsibilities for partners involved in supporting the young people into further learning and training.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act strengthened core elements of Getting it Right for Every Child, making provisions to improve the way services work to support children, young people and families by ensuring a single planning approach for children who need support; increasing nursery hours and extending support for young people leaving care up to and including age 25.

The Education (Scotland) Act 2016

The 2016 Act, builds on previous policy and legislation and continues to drive forward aspirations to improve outcomes for all children and young people. Building on the best practice within Curriculum for Excellence, it introduces the **National Improvement Framework** to focus on raising the attainment of pupils from poorer backgrounds. It also extends the rights of children with additional support needs.

3.2. The Local Context

‘Clear and Connected’ Orkney’s Integrated Children’s Services Strategic Plan 2016 – 2018 embeds the Scottish policy context further with its key priorities being to promote wellbeing, develop and sustain positive relationships at all levels and reduce the effects of poverty and disadvantage. The construction of the plan emphasises the importance of effective collaboration between agencies and services to improve outcomes for children, young people and families, especially those who are vulnerable or at risk.

The Council’s **National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan** sets out a clear strategic and operational improvement agenda to raise attainment, close the gap and deliver all key elements of the National Improvement Framework.

4. Personalised Support and Individualised Planning

4.1. Interviews and Facilitated Discussion with Key Staff

All schools in Orkney were invited to participate in an interview project about the provision of Personalised Support and Individualised Planning for the children and young people enrolled at their establishments. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with key members of staff from 14 schools in Orkney (12 Primary Schools, 1 Junior High School, and one Secondary School). These interviews were thematically analysed, and in March 2017 these themes were used as the basis for an Appreciative Inquiry where Orkney's Head Teachers considered together our areas of strength in personalised support and individualised planning in schools across the authority. The Head Teachers went on to focus on identifying our priorities as we look forward.

Details of the whole process are shown in [appendix 1](#).¹⁻¹²

The following strengths and areas for development were identified.

4.2. Key Strengths

4.2.1. Monitoring Support Needs

- Staged Intervention is familiar across Orkney and is referred to as schools monitor support needs.
- Monitoring need is acknowledged as a collaborative process with the Support for Learning Teacher playing a pivotal role with support from partner agencies.

4.2.2. Planning Interventions

- The Child's Plan format has become embedded as a key tool for planning interventions effectively as it is based on solution oriented principles and encourages the use of SMART targets.
- Interventions are often designed in response to patterns of need. Establishing strong positive relationships between the child and their supporters often being the key ingredient to success.

4.2.3. Monitoring Effectiveness of Interventions

- The Child's Planning process in Orkney supports tracking of impact.
 - Its solution-oriented principles focus on 'noticing' what is making a difference and planning to enhance this.
 - This is further developed by formative assessment and the plan-do-review approach which involves children in their own learning, are embedded in Orkney schools, and supported by HGIOS 4.

4.3. Areas for Development

4.3.1. Moderation and Consistency

1	<p>Staged Intervention needs to be focused at a strategic and operational level in order to develop consistency of understanding and use of stages.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 1.4 and 1.5 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>
2	<p>Liaison time needs to be protected to enable teams around children to discuss, debrief and problem solve collaboratively.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.3 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
3	<p>Support for Learning staff would benefit from opportunities to meet together to share knowledge and ideas.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 3.2 and 3.3 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
4	<p>Resource allocation needs to be needs-led through a transparent process.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.5 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
5	<p>Easily accessible online resources and guidance would support effectiveness of input to learners, including access to a regularly updated Orkney Support Manual.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 1.6 and 1.7 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>

4.3.2. Voice of the Child and Parent Participation

6	<p>There needs to be a continuing focus on enabling full participation in planning and reviewing of children, young people and parents. Best practice guidelines should be developed.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 1.1 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>
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4.3.3. Relational Approaches to addressing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs

7	<p>There is a need to embed both at a strategic and operational level positive relationships as being fundamental to learning and to wellbeing. This applies at a universal level but is particularly pertinent to meeting the needs of emotionally vulnerable learners.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 2.1 (Area 2 – Leadership) and 3.5 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
8	<p>Relational Approaches to wellbeing and learning should be promoted at a strategic and operational level. This should be led by policies and guidance following through to the development of whole school and targeted approaches as a necessary support to children, young people and families as well as to members of support teams around vulnerable children and their families.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 1.3 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance), 2.1 and 2.4 (Area 2 – Leadership), and 3.5 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>

4.3.4. Focus on Language, Communication and Literacy

9	<p>There was a desire for the Authority to prioritise development in this area, especially enabling teachers and support staff to grow in confidence to support language, communication, and literacy learning.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership) and 3.4 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
10	<p>Collaborative work with Speech and Language Therapy to develop capacity to meet needs is seen as a crucial way forward.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 2.3 (Area 2 – Leadership) and 3.5 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>

4.3.5. Training / Capacity Building

11	<p>Training is seen as essential to upskilling staff and increasing staff confidence. Consultation processes within schools are welcomed to identify whole-Authority priorities around which to based rolling training programmes.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership), 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
12	<p>Support for Learning Assistants would benefit from development work around social, emotional and behavioural needs. ‘Apprenticeship Models’ are suggested as more valuable than one-off training events.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.3 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>

5. Quantitative Evidence

Schools gather various types of data so as to track pupils' progress. Schools also plan individualised support at different levels of Staged Intervention. When these two strands of evidence are efficiently gathered and recorded, it should be possible to identify whether a particular planned intervention is having the intended impact on a learner's progress. The link between intervention and progress needs to be explicitly reviewed for all children, and where a child is failing to make the hoped-for progress, more detailed and frequent cycles of review and planning will be required.

“There is a shared understanding among professionals in Orkney that assessment is a continuous process that informs planning, and that reviews of the impact of interventions also contribute to the assessment.”

(Orkney Islands Council, 2012)

5.1. Subjective vs Objective measures

Quantitative data (i.e. data that is presented in 'countable' form) can be very useful when measuring a pupil's progress. However, quantitative data is only one strand of information used to assess how well a pupil is progressing. Moreover, despite appearances, not all quantitative data comes from an objective source.

5.1.1. Subjective data

Teacher judgement is acknowledged by Education Scotland as the cornerstone of assessing pupil progress.

“Teacher professional judgement is the key measure of children's progress. It is these judgements that take account of all aspects of a child's literacy and numeracy skills over the course of the full school year.”

(Education Scotland, 2016)

Teacher judgement is an informed data source, and it lies at the heart of the learning experiences that pupils engage with during their education. The teacher will plan for each individual child to work on what they need to, in order to take the next step in their understanding and their skills development. The teacher takes note of the pupil's response to their interventions, and this information is fed back into the planning in a dynamic 2-way process. Teacher records will reflect the key points of this planning, but the nature of the

process is that decisions are often made in the moment as a response to interactive feedback between teacher and pupil. As such, teacher judgement is capable of capturing a holistic view and a level of fine detail that more objective data sources cannot match. However, it should also be remembered that teacher judgement, whilst arguably being the primary source of data available for the effective planning of learning and teaching, remains a largely subjective source of data.

Certain acts of teacher judgement are requested for the purpose of recording and planning in a more formal way. This is the case for CfE levels, which are regularly recorded on a class-by-class and school-by-school basis. But it should not be forgotten that these levels are a subjective measure generated by the teacher as a 'best fit' for what they see in their day-to-day interaction with the pupil. Staged Intervention level is another measure based on subjective judgement by school staff. Moderation is required within a school to ensure that there is shared understanding between teachers of what constitutes intervention at a given level.

Ongoing moderation is also required at Local Authority level in order to establish and maintain consistency on subjective measures such as CfE levels and the many subjective judgements that are made which feed into these (for example, judgements on the quality of pupils' extended writing).

Other assessment methods such as questionnaires and checklists are also subjective measures, based on the judgement of the person completing the form – be this a professional, a parent, or the pupil themselves. This is easy to forget if the form then generates a rating or other numeric measure. Any seemingly quantifiable data generated in this way should be treated with caution, and it should be remembered that it is most useful when repeated measures are used to track **change** over time rather than being regarded as if they were scores generated by objective tests. Such data cannot meaningfully be used in isolation for comparing one setting with another.

“All schools are unique, so to understand how well a school is doing it is important to look at a range of different data sources, together with information about the individual school and the characteristics of the children and young people in that school.”

(Education Scotland, 2016)

5.1.2. Objective data

Objective data from standardised testing is currently gathered in Orkney, in relation to certain aspects of literacy¹³ and numeracy. Standardised data is an important strand of information that can complement teacher judgement, and help with the tracking of pupils' progress in core skills. These more objective measures are particularly important for measuring progress where a pupil is receiving focused intervention for the development of these core skills.

As well as National Qualifications grades, children in Orkney complete standardised tests from Durham University's Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM). The PIPs tests are administered at start and end of P1, then in P3, P5 and P7; and the MidYIS test is administered on entry to S1. The PIPs/InCAS tests produce standardised scores in literacy and numeracy as well as an indication of progress in relation to prior performance. The MidYIS test sets out to capture a baseline picture of capacity which is 'linked to later academic outcomes' – in essence, a tool for predicting the academic performance of pupils as they move through secondary school.

The Scottish National Standardised Assessments will run alongside the CEM assessments in Orkney during 2018/19, and it is then envisaged that they will supersede the existing commercially produced assessments currently funded by the local authority. These assessments will be administered in P1, P4, P7, and S3. It is unclear whether the analysis provided in the assessment reports will include any measure of pupil progress from one test to the next – in essence a comparison of current with past test performance, and an analysis of how well the current performance reflects what would have been predicted from previous results. This is an aspect of the CEM assessments which is appreciated by teachers when assessing the overall efficacy of focused interventions on literacy and numeracy.

However, the 'broad-brush' pictures provided by the above forms of standardised assessment only tell part of the story teachers often require more in-depth (pupils specific) data gathering as they review the efficacy of their interventions. This was particularly referred to by Support for Learning Teachers in the area of literacy, where individual schools research available assessment resources and use their budgets to purchase these resources. This has resulted in a range of assessment materials being used in Orkney.

Additional assessments for Numeracy currently used in Orkney's schools include:

- End-of-Unit check-ups for maths schemes being used in school (e.g. Scottish Heinemann Maths; Primary Maths in Action).
- Highland Numeracy – identifies deficits in knowledge and application skills in order to place pupils at a stage and identify next steps.
- New Zealand Maths – identifies deficits in knowledge and application skills in order to place pupils at a stage and identify next steps.

Additional assessments for Literacy currently used in Orkney's schools include:

- End-of-Stage check-ups for reading and spelling schemes being used in school (e.g. Oxford Reading Tree; Literacy World; Wolf Hill; Nelson Spelling).
- New Group Reading Test (used annually).
- GL Dyslexia Screener (one-off test).
- Scholastic Reading Test (for comprehension).

One Support for Learning Teacher recommended other resources for assessing literacy, which she had experience using, and would be willing to explain to those likely to carry out standardised literacy assessments in Orkney's schools:

- WIAT (Weschler Individual Achievement Test).

- DASH (Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting).
- TOMAL-2 (Test of Memory and Learning, giving a measure of working memory).

Many schools have requested a more Orkney-wide approach to the authority-level need for good quality assessment materials, with a bank of key assessment resources held centrally and available to schools for individualised, focused, objective, and standardised assessment of progress in response to intervention. An Orkney-wide agreement on what key assessment resources are required would be very useful for developing shared understanding across our schools, and consistent descriptions of progress between schools. This would be of great value for describing needs and planning next steps, not least at points of transition.¹³

Some schools also mentioned the use of specific tools which they use to measure social and emotional aspects of learning, and progress of specific pupils in this area. The assessments mentioned most frequently in this regard were the Boxall Profile and the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire, both of which are probably most usefully employed for a test-retest measure of progress.

5.2. Identifying the optimum level of support

Orkney is committed to ensuring children 'get the right help, at the right time, in the right way in order to ensure that they can 'be all they can be' (OIC Schools Service Plan 2014-16).

5.2.1. Increasing and reducing support

Identifying the optimum support required to enable a child to progress in their learning is not a straightforward task. Three topics arising from this research serve to illustrate this point.

1. Staged Intervention Levels

In Orkney, there are 5 Levels of Staged Intervention, ranging from Stage 1 (Class-Level support) to Stage 5 (Multi-Agency Support recorded in a Coordinated Support Plan). These are summarised in the following table:

Table 1: Orkney's Staged Intervention Framework and its relationship to national and Getting it Right Levels.

Getting it Right Level	Orkney staged intervention stage and key features	Supported by	ASL Act Planning
Level 1 Universal.	Stage 1 'In class' approaches.	Internal support. Single agency plan.	PLP in place; Child's Plan may be needed.
	Stage 2 'Class plus' approaches.	Support/planning put in place from within school resources.	
Level 2 Single agency plan.	Stage 3 'School' approaches – Informal advice may be sought from other agencies.	External support from within education. Single agency plan.	Child's Plan in place.
	Stage 4 'School plus' approaches – Assistance is formally requested from outside agencies.	Support/planning put in place using educational resources from outwith the school , e.g. support from visiting teacher, educational psychologist, etc.	
Level 3 Multi-agency plan.	Stage 5 'Multi-agency approaches' – where more than one agency/service external to the school are involved and the needs are significant and enduring.	External multi-agency support. Multi-agency plan. Support/planning put in place using support from health, social work services, voluntary agencies, etc. as required.	CSP may be required.

For this report, schools were asked to submit a log of their pupils on Staged Intervention Levels 2 to 5 over the past 5 years. It was hoped that this data would reveal how schools are using the Staged Intervention Framework to take stock of the changing additional support needs of all the pupils at their school.

An analysis of shifts in level of intervention for pupils once they were on Stage 3 (i.e. support where resources at whole-school level are brought into play, but not yet direct involvement from external agencies) was carried out. The number of pupils logged as having been on Staged Intervention over the period was 127. Sixty-three of these pupils were identified as having, at some point, received support at Level 3 or higher on the Framework.

On analysis of the shifts up and down the Staged Intervention Framework from the time a pupil was identified as requiring intervention at Stage 3, it was revealed that there were 15 instances of shift up the framework, and 15 instances of shift down the framework. This pattern is encouraging, as it suggests that schools are using Staged Intervention in a way

that is genuinely responsive to children's shifting needs, taking into account their response to planned interventions, and reducing support when it is no longer necessary.

However, 30 of the 'level-3-or-higher' pupils had 'stuck' at that level of Staged Intervention over the time period submitted. This was consistent with a number of situations/contexts where the school was known to be working with a pupil who has an ongoing need for additional support.

The pattern suggests that for some pupils with additional support needs, a level of support higher than is required by the majority is identified as 'optimal'. Usually, this support is at the 'school level', whilst in a minority of cases, ongoing multi-agency work is required in order that the child maintains progress in their development.

2. Allocation of SfLA Time

It is often assumed that providing additional support for a pupil in the form of dedicated time from a Support for Learning Assistant (SfLA) - or Teaching Assistant (TA) in England – will automatically lead to improved progress. This assumption underlies a year-on-year increase in Orkney of SfLA hours. Indeed, the total number of SfLA hours has almost doubled over the last ten years, rising from 1,101 hours in 2006/7 to 2,014 hours in 2016/17.

This pattern has been noted across the UK, and a recent report by the Department for Education on TA deployment showed that the workforce of these staff trebled in England between 2000 and 2013 (Sharples et al, 2015).

Unfortunately, increasing provision of SfLA time does not automatically improve outcomes for children. An extensive research project called Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS), conducted between 2003 and 2008 in UK schools, showed that 'the typical deployment and use of TAs, under everyday conditions, is not leading to improvements in academic outcomes' (Sharples et al, 2015). It is clear, then, that simply increasing non-teaching staff time allocation to schools is ineffective as well as being economically unsustainable. Research has shown that, where non-teaching staff are trained in promoting learners' independence and metacognitive skills, their impact on pupil progress is optimised (Sharples et al, 2015)¹⁴.

3. Exit Strategy

In the current 'Request for Involvement' form for pupil support, there is a section for requesters to state their envisaged 'exit strategy', which is designed to promote thinking on this matter, even as additional support is requested. However, this concept is not widely understood by requesters, and the box is not often completed meaningfully¹⁵.

5.2.2. Tracking progress and reviewing intervention

Education Scotland's Framework for Improvement proposes the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model. This is an action research approach to supporting children's learning. It emphasises the importance of monitoring the effects of interventions, to guide review of learning and inform planning.

Schools use the Child's Plan (as laid out in the Orkney Getting it Right Guidance and subsequent updates to the Child's Plan and Review Template documents). The overarching Child's Plan is often supplemented by various more detailed sub-plans, as one way of monitoring the effectiveness of planned individualised intervention. An important part of any child's plan is to clarify how long an intervention will run before it is reviewed. This is achieved by identifying and recording the review date at the point when actions are agreed.

In order to map the above planning process on to a log of children's progress across a range of parameters, it is important for schools and other learning centres to develop systems for recording and viewing regularly gathered group data, and whole-establishment data. Grids and summaries are useful in this regard, and some schools find that colour-coding to indicate satisfactory progress over a given time period is particularly useful for monitoring children and flagging any new concerns.

As part of the research for this report, schools were requested to submit an account of how they track pupil progress and use it to meet identified needs. Several schools responded to this request, and one response in particular provided a detailed, illustrated description of this process as it works in a school. It constitutes a practical example which may be considered of value by other schools in Orkney. The account has been reproduced with the permission of the Head Teacher, and can be viewed in full in [appendix 2](#).

5.3. Areas for Development

13	<p>Consideration should be given to recommending a range of selected standardised testing materials for use by schools for the purpose of monitoring individuals' progress in reading, comprehension, and writing.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.4</p>
14	<p>In order to optimise their impact, SfLAs (Support for Learning Assistants) need to be trained in promoting learner independence and metacognitive skills (e.g. through 'MITA' (Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants) training).</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.3</p>
15	<p>Authority-level training is required for schools, in how to progress a 'Request for Involvement' for services from the Pupil Support team.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.2</p>

6. Views from Children, Parents and Carers

6.1. Parent / Carer Views

As part of the Support for Learning Review, it was decided to seek feedback from parents and pupils to gauge their satisfaction with the Support for Learning being provided. The most effective and efficient way of seeking this information was judged to be by means of a questionnaire.

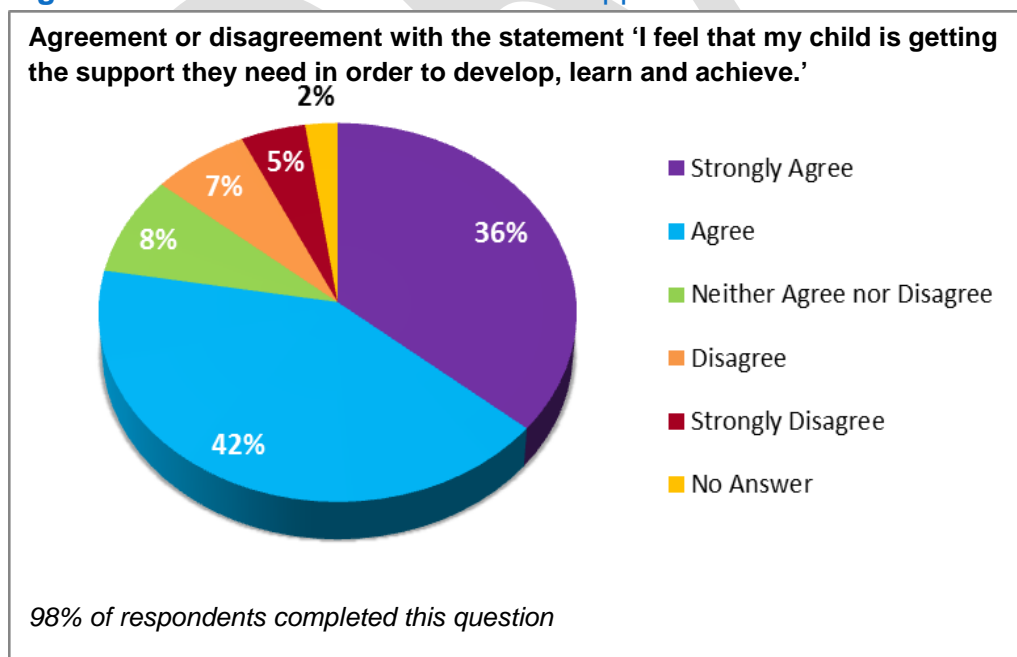
In March 2017, a targeted invitation was sent out by schools to parents of all children receiving intervention anywhere from Stage 1 to 5 on the Staged Intervention Framework. Parents were invited to complete a brief, anonymous questionnaire either by SurveyMonkey online, or on paper. The questionnaire consisted of 4 simple questions designed to:

- Gauge general satisfaction.
- Identify the type of support being provided.
- Find out what impact the support was having.
- Identify any further support that the parent felt their child needed.

A total of 132 responses were received. 84% of the returns were completed by just the parent or carer, and 15% by the parent/carer in collaboration with the child/young person. A full summary of responses can be found in [appendix 3](#).

In addition, the questionnaires included an invitation to volunteers willing to give a one-to-one interview regarding their experiences of effective support. Two parents and one pupil volunteered to be interviewed

Figure 1: General Satisfaction with Support



A large majority of respondents indicated satisfaction with the support that their child was receiving. In their ratings of the statement, 'I feel my child is getting the support they need in order to develop, learn and achieve', 78% of respondents indicated their agreement or strong agreement. 12% indicated disagreement or strong disagreement with this statement. A further 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 2% did not complete this question.

Respondents were asked what type of support their child received, and were given 3 categories to choose from. From the results, it appeared that the most common type of support is 'teaching approaches tailored to the child's needs' (73% of respondents said their child received this type of support). 53% of respondents said their children received 'support from particular people', and 37% said their children were provided with 'special resources, materials, or equipment'.

The greatest degree of satisfaction was correlated with children accessing a combination of support rather than one type of support only. However, a combination of support types per se did not guarantee satisfaction with the support, with 33% of those expressing dissatisfaction also receiving a combination of support.

The responses showed that parents and children most valued the type of support that helped their child to grow in confidence. Improvement in progress and achievement also featured frequently in the comments of satisfied respondents, though not as frequently as growth in confidence.

It is important to bear in mind the very high level of parental satisfaction with support for learning in Orkney as we turn our attention towards the feedback from less satisfied parents, for indications of how parents believe pupil support could be improved.

It is common for pupils who are having difficulty with their learning to also display difficult-to-manage behaviours. However, where a pupil's behaviour is unproblematic, there is a risk that they may not receive the support they require. The in-depth interview with a S5 pupil with literacy difficulties highlighted the position of pupils who 'get by' in Secondary School, and who do not have the confidence or insight to ask for the support that would enable them to meet their potential fully.

Many of the comments and interviews mentioned aspects of effective assessment and intervention. The importance of building a strong relationship with the child or young person, where class teachers and support staff really make the effort to get to know them well, was emphasised. Such a relationship is often the key to the child developing better confidence, and resilience in the face of adversity. Inconsistency in staffing has a negative impact on progress. At secondary school especially, where the pupil typically moves between several class teachers every day, there is a risk that the pupil will encounter variation in staff's level of knowledge regarding their needs, or ability to differentiate their teaching in order to accommodate their needs. On the topic of multi-agency working and specialist interventions, it seems that allocation of support may be more dependent on availability than on goodness of fit to the profile of needs. For maximum impact, it is important to assess needs effectively in order to identify what interventions should be tried, and what external assistance, if any, will be most appropriate.^{16, 17}

Learners who struggle with aspects of literacy were the subject of the largest number of additional comments from respondents. This suggests that literacy difficulties and support in this area are a particularly high priority for Orkney's parents and pupils. Two individual case studies give a more detailed account of the type of support that has been of value to young people experiencing literacy difficulties (see [appendix 4](#)). It is important to note that literacy is the area which received the largest number of satisfied comments on the one hand, but also the largest number of dissatisfied comments. Given the small total number of dissatisfied responses (6 altogether, of which 3 were on the topic of literacy), it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions on this point. However, it is suggested that greater consistency in support for literacy difficulties may be an important goal for Orkney to work towards. Responses indicate a lack of clarity about the assessment pathway for dyslexia, with parents reporting difficulty getting assessment progressed for their child.^{18, 19}

As children and young people progress through Secondary School and start to prepare for National Assessments, they may require Alternative Assessment Arrangements to enable them to demonstrate their learning effectively. Responses to questionnaires and the in-depth interviews about pupils who had completed their secondary school education emphasised that Alternative Assessment Arrangements need to be thoroughly prepared and practised with the pupil.

Another area of concern raised through the questionnaires related to carers' need for support. Questions as to whether there is sufficient support for carers of children and young people who are looked after or in care – including kinship care – were raised. This is an area which should be considered as part of the Child's Planning process.²⁰

There have been changes in the support arrangements schools since the views of parents and carers were gathered. Consideration should be given to repeating the survey once these have impacted on schools.

6.2. Supporting Academic Excellence

Every three years since the year 2000, a randomly-selected sample of 15 year-olds from all 35 member countries of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) has been tested in thinking skills and reasoning. This testing programme is known as PISA (the Programme for International Student Assessment).

The PISA tests are in 3 areas – maths, science, and reading. Performance is graded into 6 levels, with students attaining Levels 5 and 6 considered 'Top Performers'. These students are able to tease out core ideas, think creatively, tackle tricky questions, apply existing knowledge and skills in new contexts, etc., in the given domain.

In 2015, England returned an average, or slightly above average, percentage of 'top performers' in all 3 domains. As well as performing worse than England's students across the board in PISA that year, Scotland's percentage of 'top performers' was worse than England's in all 3 domains, and below average for the entire OECD group:

- 6% of Scottish 15 year-olds were 'Top Performers' in Reading, compared to 8% OECD average.
- 9% of Scottish 15 year-olds were 'Top Performers' in Maths, compared to 11% OECD average.
- 8% of Scottish 15 year-olds were 'Top Performers' in Science, compared to 11% OECD average.

This could be interpreted as indicating that Scotland's education system is currently failing its young people with the potential to attain the highest levels of academic excellence.

It was decided, as part of this report into Orkney's Support for Learning, to consult with senior pupils in Orkney's two Mainland Secondary Schools on the question: 'How does your school promote Academic Excellence?'

Guidance Teachers issued a general invitation to pupils from S5 and S6 at Stromness Academy and Kirkwall Grammar School, to participate in a 45-minute focus group session with the purpose of gathering their views on the topic: 'How does your school promote Academic Excellence?' Two focus group sessions were run, one in Stromness Academy and the other at Kirkwall Grammar School. Take-up was by S6 students only, with numbers as follows:

- Stromness Academy (23/03/17): 5 students.
- Kirkwall Grammar School (30/03/17): 5 students.

A brief presentation was delivered to introduce the topic ([appendix 5](#)), and the Focus Group then considered the issues that affected them and their school in the form of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). For reasons of confidentiality, the raw data has not been included in this report, but there follows a summary of the strengths and weaknesses that emerged.

6.2.1. Strengths

Students were asked to discuss the things that their school does to nurture and promote Academic Excellence.

The following were aspects that one or other, or both groups identified as being effective in promoting Academic Excellence in their school as a whole, or in particularly well-taught subjects.

Where **classroom teaching** was considered positive its strengths included enthusiasm, approachability, creativity and attention to effectiveness of lesson delivery, as well as detailed and considerate feedback.

Students felt supported by many teaching and guidance staff with study, with application processes, and any additional support needs. They felt a sense of empowerment through good relationships with senior management, and through a sense of being listened to through senior phase.

Students also appreciated smaller **class sizes** and opportunities to join with other schools and with Orkney College for subjects and activities.

6.2.2. Weaknesses

Students were asked to discuss the issues in their school that act as a barrier to Academic Excellence.

The following were aspects that one or other, or both, groups identified as presenting a barrier to Academic Excellence in their school as a whole, or in particularly poorly-taught subjects:

Where **classroom teaching** was considered weak, teacher shortages (and the varieties of disruptions to learning that this causes) were a major concern. Students reported also low teacher enthusiasm, low teacher confidence, 'lecture style' teaching, and inter-teacher conversations during lessons, all as weaknesses.

Students also expressed a **lack of pupil-centeredness** as a characteristic of weak classroom teaching: poor communication between subjects and departments and different staff (subject teachers/guidance/senior management); study programmes not taking account of and offsetting assignment due dates; and a lack of guidance staff availability for struggling students.²¹

Weaknesses were expressed in dealing with **Mental Health** issues – anxiety, depression – effectively. There was a feeling that mental health is not dealt with in sufficient depth in PSE and a concern that young people aren't enabled to help themselves or each other sufficiently.²²

Finally, there were felt to be weaknesses in schools' preparing students for **life beyond school** through restricted subject choices, PSHE curricula with insufficient attention to real-life issues (e.g. around personal health, finances), poorly managed work-experience programmes, and careers guidance that was felt not to coach/challenge enough.²³

6.3. Good Practice Examples

Direct observation is an important strand for this review of Support for Learning as it plays out in real settings throughout Orkney. In line with Orkney's solution-oriented approach to support for learning, a range of good practice examples has been gathered through a number of channels. It is hoped that these and the reflective analysis in this section, will offer valuable insights capable of informing practice in the future and prioritising which of our scarce resources should be retained above others.

Requests for interview volunteers with positive stories to tell were sent out to all the parents and pupils who had completed the online questionnaire regarding their experience of learning support (see [appendix 9](#)). There were two volunteers:

1. The parent of Pupil S, a primary school aged pupil with mild autism.
2. Pupil H, a secondary school aged pupil with dyslexia.

The parent of another pupil contributed an account of her child's literacy difficulties through his time at school:

3. The parent of Pupil C, a secondary school aged pupil with dyslexia.

Two 'success stories' were identified, by Educational Psychology and the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) team ([appendix 6](#)), which they respectively believed to be representative of best practice in supporting children with a high level of additional support need within Orkney. These cases were:

4. Pupil J, a primary school aged pupil with moderate to severe autism.
5. Pupil E, a secondary school aged pupil experiencing difficulties with social and emotional aspects of learning.

The Educational Psychology team contributed a summary of best practice as identified by the Complex Autism Strategy Group:

6. Summary of Orkney's best practice in Provision for Complex Autism ([appendix 7](#)).

Finally, the Educational Psychology team contributed a further set of reflections ([appendix 8](#)) on best practice that she had observed in the following areas:

7. Successful Inclusive Practice.
8. Building Emotional Literacy and Resilience.
9. The Role of the Support for Learning Teacher.

Overarching themes were drawn from these pieces of direct feedback and observation. These themes are summarised below.

6.3.1. Ethos of Approach

The first aspect that stood out in many of the examples was a firm belief in, and commitment to, the principles of inclusion. Inclusion was found in various shapes and forms, but in these good practice examples teams had worked hard, with energy, imagination, and conviction, to accommodate a child or young person's additional support needs within one or more settings. There are examples of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who were eased into a mainstream primary classroom, facilitated by careful and detailed transition planning. Modifications to the physical environment are often necessary (examples mentioned included alternative coat-hanging arrangements, a desk in the corner of the class or even in the corridor, a big box for the pupil to retreat into within the classroom whilst still taking part in question-and-answer sessions). Where one idea is not working, inclusive practice prompts flexibility of approach and the courage to try something different, as in the example of the S4 school refuser who took the opportunity to attend SEAL ('Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' Team, based at Papdale House) and gradually built her confidence enough to go back to the mainstream setting for S5. The judicious deployment of Support for Learning Assistants can enable a child or Young Person to develop a trusting relationship and from that a sense of belonging, until they have developed confidence in their

setting. The case of Pupil S, the child with mild autism making the transition to Primary 1 in a new school, illustrates the benefit of careful consultation and planning for early intervention, resulting in a clear example of 'spend-to-save', where the high level of additional resources allocated to addressing this child's needs in a timely fashion were no longer required by the time he reached Primary 4. Literacy difficulties represent another area of need where early intervention is clearly beneficial. The two accounts of subtle literacy difficulties in Secondary School²⁴ serves as a reminder to Secondary staff to act promptly, giving these pupils time to learn and practise dyslexia-friendly approaches for revision and alternative recording methods. These accounts also act as a reminder that medical conditions such as glue ear can impact very negatively on literacy and language development if not identified and treated as early as possible. Looking back at the earlier literacy history of secondary-aged pupils can give valuable clues as to who may need subtle but targeted support at Secondary school. Where prompt action is taken in response to the early signs of need, this can have a significant impact on the pupil's future destination, as illustrated by the dyslexia case studies. From an inclusion point of view it will also be important to consider the real-life value of what the pupil is learning in consideration of what is hoped for their life beyond school. Important life skills can be learned, such as the ability to work independently on tasks set by another person, as is illustrated in the case of the TEACCH approach being employed with Pupil J.²⁵

Overall Points for Consideration – Literacy Difficulties²⁶

The points below should be read in conjunction with the literacy difficulties case studies and in the context of Educational Psychology direct involvement with literacy support in Orkney's schools.

- Early Years teachers should be confident in how to teach children to read and write.
- Literacy difficulties should be identified early, in most cases during the course of Primary 1. Appropriate early intervention should be put in place to enable children having difficulties to gain essential literacy skills.
- Orkney's Education Authority should create a transparent process for the identification of dyslexia at primary and at secondary school. This requires criteria to be formally agreed at Authority Level, and understood in all schools. All Orkney's schools should be confident to respond to requests for dyslexia assessment appropriately, and to identify dyslexia where appropriate without the need for families to engage private practitioners.
- Pupils with literacy difficulties, including those who have not been identified with dyslexia, but who are slow readers or who have other difficulties associated with reading or writing, should have their needs identified and support provided to ensure this does not become a barrier to their progress. This support should be ongoing, and should not be withdrawn if it is required beyond their transition to Secondary School. These pupils should be taught study and revision strategies that may be better suited to their profile of needs.
- Literacy levels should continue to be monitored, and basic literacy skills should be re-taught if necessary, throughout Primary and Secondary School. It is never too late to learn these skills.

- Additional Assessment Arrangements should be actively proposed and put in place in good time by secondary schools for pupils with ongoing literacy difficulties.

6.3.2. Relationships

Probably the most significant element running through every SfL success story is a real investment in relationships. Time and care are well spent building a robust, trusting, 3-way relationship between parent, pupil, and education practitioners. At the core of such relationships, professionals have resisted taking an 'expert stance'. Instead, they make it their priority to listen and attend carefully to the views, experiences, and concerns of the pupil and their family. Through this listening approach, mutual trust and a sense of safety is promoted between the child and those most closely involved with meeting their needs. This mutual trust is also central to good teamwork, and to the Getting it Right for Every Child agenda, with its unwavering focus on placing the child at the centre of constructive multi-agency assessment of needs and planning to meet those needs. Every one of the 'success stories' above is characterised by these powerful, mutually supportive relationships. It is also worth noting the important role that social aspects of learning, especially peer connections, play in strengthening pupil engagement in learning.²⁷

6.3.3. Skills and Qualities

Effective team working is crucial to the successful support of pupils with additional support needs. It is a skilled role to promote and facilitate effective team working. In their role as Named Person, Head Teachers at Primary School and Guidance Teachers at Secondary School have an important strategic and operational part to play. Where these key players have a clear understanding of their role in promoting good teamwork, this supports individual team members to:

- Develop confidence in themselves and each other's skills and knowledge.
- Have confidence in the planning process and its power to support the child to make progress.
- Feel that wellbeing is taken seriously, and that the resilience of staff, pupils, and parents to cope with stress and the demands placed on them is being prioritised and developed.

Appendix 10 includes some features of the crucial role that an effective **Support for Learning Teacher**²⁸ plays where best practice is observed. Working in close partnership with the Named Person, the Support for Learning Teacher is often well placed to support the planning process, ensure that invitations are sent out in good time, prepare team members to understand their roles and to participate fully, and ensure that a good quality record of the plan is made and distributed promptly. The effective Support for Learning Teacher's understanding of the child or young person's educational context and their day-to-day experience enables them to be a key partner for the Named Person, and point of contact for the team members. The Support for Learning Teacher is often centrally involved in developing effective tracking systems to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and the rate of pupil progress. The Support for Learning Teacher may also take a key role in ensuring the training needs of team members from within the educational setting are

recognised and that there is a plan to meet their training needs. A good example of this last point was seen in the good practice case of Pupil J, where the Support for Learning Teacher at the school had received training in the TEACCH approach, and was able to train the staff working with Pupil J to use this approach with confidence. An effective Support for Learning Teacher may be required not only to cascade training and contribute to practitioner confidence-building within their own educational establishment, but to participate in delivery of training at Authority level.

6.3.4. Resources

The good practice examples show that, where they are imaginatively used in response to identified pupil needs, resources are key to the success of a child's plan. Many 'success stories' pay testament to the crucial role played by Support for Learning Assistants²⁹ providing one-to-one support for a pupil with specific needs, especially when an identified need is to build a trusting relationship with a key individual or individuals. The case studies of Pupil J and Pupil S are good illustrations of where this role is indispensable to delivery of inclusive practice within an educational setting. In the case of Pupil S, this provision has been progressively withdrawn as the pupil's support needs became less as a **result of his support needs being accurately assessed and effectively met.**

The Pupil Support Team provided support to many of the pupils featured in the good practice examples – including the Specialist ASD Teaching Service, and the SEAL Team. Another aspect of resourcing that has been highlighted as key to successful interventions is the flexibility to create and adapt physical spaces to meet the needs of children requiring focused support. Sometimes this may take the shape of a small withdrawal space within the classroom. Sometimes the need for space is more substantial, for example where pupils' needs indicate that a space should be identified and adapted to act as a hub for developing Nurturing practice within a school. Sometimes, as was the case for the pupil who accessed SEAL provision within a location external to her school, it was the external location of this provision that enabled her to re-engage with education and start preparing a partial return to her mainstream setting the following year.

6.4. Areas for Development

16	There have been changes in the support arrangements schools since the views of parents and carers were gathered. Consideration should be given to repeating the survey once these have impacted on schools.
16	There should be an explicit matching of intervention to the child's identified needs, as assessed through the multi-disciplinary Child's Planning process. See Section 10, Recommendation 1.1 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).
17	Child's Plan targets need to be outcomes-focused rather than focusing on referrals or requests for input. See Section 10, Recommendation 1.1 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).

18	<p>Orkney should strive towards greater consistency across the Authority in the support available for literacy difficulties.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.4 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
19	<p>There needs to be clarity about the assessment pathway for dyslexia and other areas of difficulty.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.4 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
20	<p>Orkney should consider how it supports carers of vulnerable children, including kinship carers, and consider increasing the support available, in response to feedback from these families.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 2.1 and 2.2. (Area 2 – Leadership).</p>
21	<p>Consideration should be given to embedding positive relationships and supportive teaching and delivery practices.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 1.3 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance) and 2.1 (Area 2 – Learning).</p>
22	<p>To consider modes of delivery and support of Mental Health in and across the curriculum.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 1.3 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>
23	<p>Secondary Schools to consider delivery of H&W both within PSE and cross-curricular with GIRFEC responsibilities of all.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 1.3 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>
24	<p>An opportunity should be created for Secondary Schools to consider how they can better support pupils with low-level literacy difficulties should be created.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 2.4 (Area 2 – Leadership).</p>
25	<p>A session to refresh the core values and principles of inclusive practice should be prepared for discussion with Head Teachers and other Senior Managers within schools.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 1.2 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>
26	<p>An opportunity should be identified for the Authority’s Literacy Steering Group to consider how to address the points raised in this section as part of Orkney’s overarching Literacy Action Plan.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 2.4 (Area 2 – Leadership).</p>
27	<p>Orkney should drive forward on the prioritisation of Relationship-Based Approaches to addressing pupil needs. This will take in current areas of development as seemingly diverse as MITA (Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants) and the Nurturing School approach.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 2.1 (Area 2 – Leadership).</p>
28	<p>The key role of the Support for Learning Teacher in schools needs to be better recognised and protected. Support for Learning Teachers should be a focus for</p>

	<p>development in Orkney, playing a key role in leading training and development in their own establishments and also at an Authority level.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.1 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
29	<p>Ways of maximising the impact of Support for Learning Assistants needs to be explored..</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 3.3 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>

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7. Getting it Right for Every Child and the Child's Plan

The Educational Psychology Service took on a critical role for developing the local getting it right for every child guidance and documentation, incorporating the emerging requirements of the Child's Plan. Partnership working and collaboration with other professionals enabled an agreed, shared set of documentation and procedures to be produced for creating a Child's Plan in line with the new Children and Young People Act, as well as incorporating local getting it right principles. The EP files show evidence of these documents (e.g. Summary Assessment and Action Plan, Review of Child's Plan) being widely used by various partners including schools and NHS Orkney.

A number of consultation exercises have been carried out to examine the efficacy of local processes and procedures and their impact, including gathering stakeholder views for [The Validated Self Evaluation of The Educational Psychology Service](#) (2016). This was done through Appreciative Inquiries, focus groups with professionals and interviews with parents, children and young people. Through these activities a wealth of information was gathered which identified clear strengths in local processes and also specific areas for ongoing development. ³⁰⁻³⁶

7.1. Key Strengths from Feedback

7.1.1. Parents Feedback

- The process is transparent and facilitates their participation. Flexibility around venues and meeting times is appreciated and supports the process.
- The planning process allows their views and ideas to be incorporated into the Plan.
- The partnership with parents created by the process leads to a fuller understanding of the child through a reflective approach which breaks down barriers.
- Planning documentation (Summary Assessment and Action Plan, Review of Child's Plan) is helpful and clearly delineates who is involved and what will happen. A key strength is the inclusion of the young person's views.

7.1.2. Young Persons Feedback

- They feel listened to through the process and that they can contribute their ideas to their own Plans.
- They like seeing how the Plan is constructed and how it relates to their needs.

Parents and young people reported that the processes were helpful to them and led to them feeling that their concerns were being acted upon.

7.1.3. Partner Professionals' Feedback

- The Child's Plan paperwork is valuable and is easy to use.
- The collaborative integrated summary and planning section in the Plan is particularly useful.

7.2. Areas for Development

30	<p>Continuing to promote a positive understanding of the process and its collaborative nature is crucial so that it is not perceived by parents or young people as a method of control by any particular agency.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 1.1 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>
31	<p>Continuing to foster a child and family-friendly approach to organising and running meetings remains important.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 1.1 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>
32	<p>Replacing unilateral report writing with integrated assessment and co-construction of plans remains an important area for development to ensure that holistic, in-depth identification of needs informs multi-agency planning.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 1.1 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>
33	<p>It remains important to promote the child’s planning process as the key process through which all vulnerable children’s needs are collaboratively assessed, identified and addressed.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 1.1 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance) and 3.5 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
34	<p>It remains important to consult with professionals on amendments which could enhance the usefulness of the planning and reviewing documents and publicise these amendments.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 2.4 (Area 2 – Leadership) and 3.5 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
35	<p>Continued training on Getting it Right processes including roles and responsibilities, e.g. Lead Professional and the language of wellbeing remains essential as new staff come into post.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendation 1.2 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>
36	<p>Quality assuring Child’s Plans and their impact on outcomes for children and young people should be planned for along with examination of ‘universal provision’ and what constitutes ‘targeted intervention’.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 1.1, 1.4 and 1.5 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance).</p>

8. Specific Services and Staff Groups

8.1. Additional Support for Learning

8.1.1. Support for Learning Staff

Solution focussed questionnaires were distributed to Support for Learning staff. Of the 9 that were returned from **Support for Learning Teachers** there was unanimity about our capacity to identify needs, to work well with families, and to communicate and collaborate around supporting young people. Concern was raised around consistency of understanding across schools about the role of the Support for Learning Teacher³⁷. A desire for more training and support specifically around SEBD, and around nurture approaches.³⁸

The 20 responses from **Support for Learning Assistants** echoed the responses from SfL Teachers, and added the feeling among SfL assistants that they have insufficient voice in planning and review processes.³⁹

8.1.2. Resourced School Provision

- An appreciative inquiry was conducted with staff from both of Orkney's SfL resourced schools (1 Primary, 1 Secondary), and the following themes arose:
 - a) It is clear that staff have a strong commitment to an inclusive ethos and to planning with the child at the centre. They'd like to see this ethos mirrored better in the wider mainstream settings with mainstream staff being enabled to work in more inclusive manner.⁴⁰
 - b) Resourced school staff would like to see the Support for Learning Network programme be more responsive to emerging priorities,⁴¹ but also see regular training made available to all staff but in a manner that is equally accessible to part-time staff.⁴² The emotional intensity of the SfL role could be eased through prioritising liaison time for planning and supervision time to support staff resilience.
 - c) Staff also expressed concern over the capacity of some pupils, perhaps particularly some pupils with ASD, to cope with the demands of busy school environments. They expressed the need to look into developing 'alongside' accommodation (e.g. Peedie Sea Centre).⁴³

We also conducted a number of appreciative inquires with specific services and partners.

8.1.3. Pupil Support Team

The **Pupil Support Team** - who provide a number of specialist services (Hearing Support, Vision Support, Language Support, ASD support, support with Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) – perceived their strengths as being, partly, in their capacity to work in a more focused manner around and with young people, their family, and their school, in more flexible and nurturing contexts. They also emphasised their strength, as partners, of being able to add impetus to the getting it right processes of collaborative working to achieve genuine outcomes for young people.

The team are acutely aware of the need for skilled staff in support roles in schools and feel that they could become better integrated with programmes tailored to that need. Part of that process has already been initiated through staff development around the rationale and mode of engagement for specialist pupil support services.⁴⁴ More needs to be done, however, on development of rolling training programmes to meet identified priorities.^{45, 46}

Finally, staff with a SEAL focus, expressed the need for a more fit-for-purpose space with increased staff-capacity in order to maximise chances for young people with social and emotional barriers to learning to develop capacities to maintain their inclusion in mainstream.⁴⁷

8.1.4. Educational Psychology Service

The **Educational Psychology Service** sees its strength as lying in facilitating and enabling educational staff and other allied professionals by guiding through Solution Orientated processes. It is also very important to the service that it is part of Pupil Support, sharing an ethos and belief system regarding how to best support young people. There is a strong feeling, then, that the service must move towards a clear Consultation Model of working, so as to empower and capacity build, rather than dilute its main strengths through getting caught up too much with individual case work. Further, it is felt that there is a need for Management teams within and without Education to understand Educational Psychology's role in realising local and national priorities, and a need to feed positive psychology and evidence-based approaches into strategic developments.⁴⁸

8.1.5. Studio III

Studio III is a professional service specialising in autism and low arousal approaches. Orkney Islands Council uses Studio III to support individual families on a case-by-case basis.

Studio III has promoted low arousal as an overarching philosophy which helps people to look at themselves in interaction with others, and its input has credibility which has allowed recommendations to have added impact at an individual, group and whole school level.

Practitioners recognise that their work is most effective when it is driven through the significant others in a young person's life, and see their future work with OIC to be more fruitfully focused on staff development at a strategic level, and to be broader in scope – i.e. to maintain focus on autism but to go beyond also.⁴⁹

8.1.6. Language and Communication Service

Finally, as part of a review of support for young people with **language and communication** difficulties, a group of specialists from pupil support and partners from health has formed. This group engaged in an appreciative inquiry around the project, and recognised that multi-agency working and a shared holistic approach to supporting language/communication is well established in Orkney. They also agreed, however, that there is a need for language/communication support to reach a greater number and range of young people across Orkney. Subsequently, there is a need to understand the full range and numbers of needs,⁵⁰ to develop services that are sufficiently designed and coordinated to maximise

support for all,⁵¹ and to develop a rolling programme of language/communication training for all partners which is tailored according to range of needs.⁵²

8.2. Meeting the Demand for Support

Models that see behaviour as rooted in the child and which intervene at that level have been found wanting in terms of their ethics, efficacy, cost and sustainability. These may be compounded by the intervention of expert professionals unfamiliar with the child, their family or the school. Moreover, it is also likely that such an expert may not sufficiently understand the local political landscape, language, environmental or cultural context – or will be constrained by time pressures. This model also risks disempowering staff at the local level with a long-term negative impact on local capacity and expertise.

(AT-Autism website, Synergy page)

In order to meet pupils' needs effectively, and avoid an inexorable rise in demand for SfLA hours, it will be important to conceptualise 'meeting additional support needs' differently. Investment in training for existing staff so that their work is more effective, and they are developing the confidence to support learners with increasing skill, is shown to be the most effective approach, as well as representing the most efficient use of finite resources (Sharples et al, 2015). Approaches such as UCL Institute of Education's MITA (Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants) Programme, ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants), AT-Autism's Synergy Programme, and the I CAN 'A Chance to Talk' model for supporting language and communication needs in Primary Schools all recommend increasing the skills base of existing staff in schools to carry out and support focused interventions in close collaboration with specialist practitioners.⁵³ These programmes and approaches are supported by a compelling evidence base (e.g. Hills (2017), Blatchford et al (2012), Hartshorne, (2009)).

8.3. Areas for Development

37	Consultation/training around the role of the SfLT. See Section 10, Recommendations 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership), 3.1 and 3.2 (Area 3 – Learning).
38	Training around SEBD and Nurture. See Section 10, Recommendations 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership), 3.1 and 3.2 (Area 3 – Learning).
39	Training must include SfL assistants and must recognise and value their role in monitoring and planning for children and young people. See Section 10, Recommendations 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership), 3.1 and 3.3 (Area 3 – Learning).

40	Training to address integration of inclusive ethos with mainstream practice. See Section 10, Recommendation 2.4 (Area 2 – Leadership).
41	Rolling programme of training on specific SfL priorities. See Section 10, Recommendations 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership) and 3.1 (Area 3 – Learning).
42	Structured SfL Network programme. See Section 10, Recommendations 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership), 3.2 and 3.5 (Area 3 – Learning).
43	To explore need for and source alternative accommodation. See Section 10, Recommendation 2.4 (Area 2 – Leadership).
44	Pupil Support team to continue to develop systems and processes to a maximise integration with SfL and guidance practice in schools. See Section 10, Recommendation 3.2 (Area 3 – Learning).
45	Pupil Support Team to be integral in development of SfL training programmes. See Section 10, Recommendation 3.2 (Area 3 – Learning).
46	SfL priorities and training needs should be identified. See Section 10, Recommendation 3.1 (Area 3 – Learning).
47	Need for premises which provide nurturing context for staff to work with young people, families, and school staff, in a more flexible and individualised manner. See Section 10, Recommendation 2.4 (Area 2 – Leadership).
48	Educational Psychology Service to engage and meet with strategic teams within and without education to communicate and collaborate on a consultative mode of working. See Section 10, Recommendations 2.3 (Area 2 – Leadership).
49	To explore strategic staff development with Studio III around supporting Autism and SEBD. See Section 10, Recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership).
50	To develop an understanding of the range of speech/language needs. See Section 10, Recommendations 1.4, 1.5 (Area 1 – Quality Assurance) and 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership).
51	To develop a Language/Communication Outreach Service with collaborative assessment and planning systems jointly agreed with partners. See Section 10, Recommendation 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership).
52	To incorporate language/communication training within overall SfL training programme. See Section 10, Recommendations 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership) and 3.2 (Area 3 – Learning).

53	<p>For Orkney to explore ways of increasing the capacity of the existing Support for Learning Assistants to have an increased impact through training, and direct work with specialist practitioners.</p> <p>See Section 10, Recommendations 2.2 (Area 2 – Leadership), 3.2 and 3.3 (Area 3 – Learning).</p>
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9. High Level Themes

Both quantitative and qualitative evidence collated through this evaluation project indicates that across Orkney learning needs are generally well assessed, addressed and monitored.

Particular themes have emerged through the analysis of the data gathered which highlight key elements of effective support for learning. These key elements are:

- The importance of relationships to promoting wellbeing and learning.
 - Mutually respectful relationships between parent, pupil and practitioners creates a trust which leads to meaningful joint reflection and truly collaborative planning.
- The central role of the child's planning process in holistic and accurate assessment, identification and addressing of need and ongoing collaborative monitoring of how needs are being met in an ongoing way.
 - Robust child's plans drive forward and support partnership working around children's needs.
 - Promote ownership of and participation in learning for children and families.
 - Ensure chains of positive impact are noticed and built upon so that resources are allocated to have maximum outcomes for children and families.
- The importance of commitment to inclusion promoted by strong leadership.
 - The ethos in schools promotes a flexible approach to learning which places wellbeing as the foundation to learning.
 - A management led emphasis of training and development has built confidence and capacity in staff to share and support each other's skills working together to solve problems rather than seek an 'expert model'.
- The pivotal role of well managed positively valued support staff in identifying and assessing learning needs of all learners including the most vulnerable.
 - The 5 roles of the Support for Learning Teacher where protected by good leadership promote all aspects of the child's planning process, fostering relationships, team reflection and developing confidence and capacity in others.

10. Recommendations

- The High Level themes extracted lead to 18 key recommendations which are related to 3 core areas:
 - Area 1 – Quality Assurance.
 - Area 2 – Leadership.
 - Area 3 – Learning.

10.1. Area 1 – Quality Assurance

10.1.1. Getting it Right Processes and Procedures

Recommendation 1.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance of Child's Plans and their impact on outcomes for children and young people should be planned for to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child's Plan targets are outcomes focused rather than focusing on request for input or referrals. ○ There is an explicit matching of intervention to child's identified needs, as assessed through the multi-disciplinary integrated assessment process. ○ The voice of the child or young person has been fully captured.
Recommendation 1.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on Getting it Right should be revisited and re-launched to ensure processes, roles and responsibilities are understood by all and amended Child's Plan documents are promoted. The training should re-emphasise the child's planning process as the key process through which all vulnerable children's needs are collaboratively assessed, identified and addressed. It should also enable exploration of ways of maximising participation of children and families.
Recommendation 1.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good health and wellbeing as the foundation for good learning should be at the heart of Orkney's strategic vision for all children and young people and this vision promoted through the Getting it Right principles and practice by all staff embedding the language of wellbeing across the curriculum (also relates to area 2).

10.1.2. Gathering, Monitoring and Disseminating Information

Recommendation 1.4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Authority should prioritise supporting schools to gather the same data in the same format. This will make it easier to develop consistency of approach to identifying and monitoring needs across Orkney, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of interventions. (Also relates to area 3).
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Recommendation 1.5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be an authority focus on staged intervention to achieve coherence in use across schools in order that levels of need are recorded and monitored consistently. (Also relates to area 2).
Recommendation 1.6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEEMIS Health and Wellbeing application should be adopted in Orkney. Transitional consultation, planning, and training will be required to ensure a smooth journey from existing storage systems to SEEMIS.
Recommendation 1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to key legislation and policy documents should be readily accessible to all practitioners via a regularly updated electronic Orkney Support Manual.

10.2. Area 2 – Leadership

10.2.1. Relationships

Recommendation 2.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to embed, both at a strategic and operational level, positive relationships as fundamental to learning and wellbeing. • At a strategic authority level through to a classroom practice and family work level, Orkney should drive forward relationship-based approaches to addressing pupil and family needs across communities, including MITA (Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants), nurture approaches and the Synergy model.
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10.2.2. Capacity Building

Recommendation 2.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high quality training strategy should drive forward how capacity is built within and across schools, teams and communities in order that knowledge, skills and confidence is built upon and made maximum use of. • The training strategy should draw from consultation processes within school as well as local and national priorities. It should promote apprenticeship and mentoring models, e.g. Synergy, as well as rolling programmes. • An area for immediate prioritisation of capacity building is increasing teachers and support staff confidence and skills in meeting the needs of children with language and communication difficulties through the development of collaborative models of working with support specialists who will prioritise mentoring, support and development roles.
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Recommendation 2.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Psychology is most effective when systems allow capacity building through consultation and development work. • Strategic systems should be explored within education and partner agencies to promote a consultative model of service delivery.
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10.2.3. Inclusion

Recommendation 2.4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic vision on inclusion should be created at local authority level which is known by all and informs policy, planning and priorities across all schools and establishments. • Training should be developed to build inclusive ethos and practice within schools. • Authority and school leadership should embrace and develop flexible curricular based on effective learning pathways which have coherence and meaning over time. These pathways will often involve creative collaboration with other agencies to deliver non-classroom based learning (also relates to areas 1 and 3). • Mechanisms should be in place to ensure alternative learning environments are properly resourced and equipped.
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10.3. Area 3 – Learning

10.3.1. Support Staff

Recommendation 3.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 5 roles of the Support for Learning Teacher are key to effective identification and meeting of need and sustaining good learning and teaching for all. • Support for Learning Teachers should take a lead role in leading training and development across schools and at an authority level. (Also relates to area 2).
Recommendation 3.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further capacity can be built within and across establishments when Pupil Support team staff work in partnership with Support for Learning staff within schools. • Pupil Support team should continue to develop practices to synchronise and integrate with Support for Learning and Guidance, including helping to collaboratively identify and meet training needs.
Recommendation 3.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising the impact of support staff should be a priority.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes such as MITA should be promoted at school management and through an authority strategic level. • Mentoring/apprenticeship models should be explored, e.g. Synergy partnering with in-school staff, the Language and Communication Service, Autism Service, etc. (also relates to area 2).
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10.3.2. Barriers to Learning

<p>Recommendation 3.4.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orkney should strive towards greater consistency across the Authority in how literacy difficulties are identified and addressed. In particular, secondary schools should be given opportunity to explore best practice in supporting literacy issues including low level difficulties. • The Authority's Literacy Steering Group should consider how to address the points raised in the report entitled 'Literacy Difficulties' as part of Orkney's overarching literacy plan.
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10.3.3. Inclusion

<p>Recommendation 3.5.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to meet the learning and social and emotional needs of the most vulnerable children mechanisms should be developed for strong partnership working and shared approaches and resources across settings. • Consideration of forums to look at support for and resourcing of challenging needs. Such forums would allow equitable timely response to level of need through a transparent process of allocation of scarce resources, e.g. Pupil Support input. (Also relates to areas 1 and 2).
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12. Appendices

- Appendix 1: How Good id our Support for Learning?
- Appendix 2: Assessment Tracking.
- Appendix 3: Summary of Parent/Carer Responses.
- Appendix 4: Literacy Difficulties.
- Appendix 5: Focus Group Presentation.
- Appendix 6: A SEAL Vignette.
- Appendix 7: Best Practice in Provision for Complex Autism.
- Appendix 8: Reflections from a Practitioner Educational Psychologist.
- Appendix 9: Support for Learning Review – Parents Survey.
- Appendix 10: The 5 Roles of the Support for Learning Teacher.

Appendix 1: How Good is our Support for Learning?

Interviews with school staff (autumn 2016) and HT Sharing Event (17.03.17)

In October and November 2016, semi-structured interviews were carried out with key members of staff from 14 schools in Orkney. These comprised 12 Primary Schools, 1 Junior High School, and one Secondary School. The interviews, conducted for the most part with Head Teacher (and/or Depute Head) and PT Support for Learning, were designed to capture reflection at school level about the approaches to identifying additional support needs, planning to meet needs, and monitoring the effectiveness of interventions. The raw interview data was analysed and organised into themes.

On 17.03.17, a Sharing Event was held in Kirkwall to which all Head Teachers in Orkney were invited. This event presented an opportunity for Head Teachers to consider the main points that had been raised in the semi-structured interviews. The Head Teachers were then invited to participate in an Appreciative Inquiry entitled 'How Good is our Support for Learning?'. Appreciative Inquiry is a collaborative approach to developing intentional change within a given system. It acknowledges the existing strengths within the system, and then looks to the future where the strengths are acknowledged and the collective aspirations of the participants are developed into a plan of action. A Person-Centred Organisational Planning Tool (PATH) was shared at the end of the session with all participants, and a date was identified to reconvene and consider what first steps had been made within individual schools. The key messages are discussed below, followed by a number of points for further consideration.

General Themes Arising from Semi-Structured Interviews with Staff

The interviews demonstrated that schools in Orkney are working hard to meet the needs of their pupils. The majority of interviews mentioned the systems that schools have in place for monitoring pupils' needs, for tracking progress, for logging targets and actions, and for ongoing review of impact. There was good awareness within schools of the importance of using Staged Intervention to ensure consistency and proportionality of approach to identifying and addressing additional support needs. A high level of commitment to consultation and information sharing was clear, as was the desire to engage pupils directly in planning and reviewing interventions to address individual needs.

However, a narrative also emerged from these interviews which identified areas for improvement.

It was acknowledged that certain staff members had a key role for ensuring effective response to additional support needs. In particular, the Support for Learning Teacher was mentioned as having a key role in communication regarding individual pupils, ensuring that important information is logged and shared. The sharing of important information at school level was also supported by structures and systems ensuring clear recording and regular review of needs across the school. Whilst Class Teachers were widely acknowledged to have primary responsibility for planning to meet additional needs within their class, and indeed for monitoring the progress of all their pupils, it was clear that this could only be done

effectively within a context where liaison time with colleagues, as well as with the pupils themselves, is prioritised. Another key role for Support for Learning Teachers was identified as supporting colleagues to try new approaches and unfamiliar interventions. Training opportunities for Support for Learning Teachers were identified as important in this regard, both in response to issues being faced within their specific context, and in connection with priorities identified at Authority level.

Pupil involvement was widely acknowledged as key to meeting additional support needs. An aspiration to involve pupils more directly in planning was a clear message coming from many schools. It was acknowledged that, for this to happen, schools would have to develop systems for maximising the impact of the pupil voice within planning meetings, as well as ensuring that pupils had a genuine sense of ownership of their own plan and their targets within it. More than one school had this as a priority within its existing School Improvement Plan. This priority is closely linked to the goal of promoting pupil independence, mentioned by the largest Secondary School in the sample. It was less clear from the interviews that schools had the same commitment to promoting the role of parents as equal partners. There was little discussion of the support that parents may need in order to contribute their views effectively and feel ownership of their child's plan.

Related to the issue of pupil voice and promotion of independence, it became clear that additional Support for Learning Assistant time allocated to a particular pupil's needs may be perceived as helpful for meeting their need, but this is not always the case. Rather, it is important to describe in detail what experiences the pupil to have, and the Head Teacher or Senior Management Team needs to work out how to reallocate resources within the school to address the range of pupils' needs.

Many schools expressed a wish for clearer Authority-Level guidance, in order to ensure greater consistency of approach through an enhanced focus on moderation. This was mentioned in relation, particularly, to assessment of need, Staged Intervention and allocation of resources. Where additional resources were being requested from a finite source in relation to identified needs, several Head Teachers advocated the establishment of resourcing panels with transparent bidding processes to improve consistency and equity. There was an awareness that, while the majority of schools had worked hard to develop internal consistency in their application of Staged Intervention principles, they were much less confident that consistency exists between Orkney's schools. Where between-school consistency does exist, this is often because particular links between schools have grown by chance, for example where schools share a Head Teacher or Support for Learning Teacher, or because a key member of staff (e.g. Head Teacher or Support for Learning Teacher) has moved from one school to another within the Authority. External Agencies, specialist teachers (e.g. Specialist Autism Teacher, Teacher for Children with Hearing Impairments, SEAL Teacher), and Authority Level staff (e.g. Service Improvement Officers, and Educational Psychologists) were acknowledged to have a valuable role in promoting consistency of approach throughout the Authority. Further related to the issue of ensuring greater consistency, it was acknowledged that Secondary Schools face considerable within-school complexity as a result of there being multiple subject teachers with shared responsibility for direct work with individual pupils.

The Head Teachers' Sharing Event on 17/03/17 prompted debate around video conferencing and its uses and limitations in supporting children, especially where specialist input is required in Isles settings. It was agreed that video-conferencing facilities and equipment needed to be upgraded in order to ensure reliability and ease of usage, which currently presents a significant barrier to holding successful multi-location meetings. At the same time, it was emphasised that remote conferencing should not become the default method for specialists to contribute, and that face-to-face meetings and input from specialists should continue to be available to support children in remote locations.

Key Existing Strengths

Monitoring Support Needs

- Staged Intervention is familiar as a concept, and is referred to in schools throughout Orkney.
- Monitoring need is acknowledged as a collaborative process, and a range of meeting schedules and formats are evident in schools to enable effective monitoring
- The key role of the Support for Learning Teacher in enabling pupil needs to be effectively monitored is widely acknowledged
- Head Teachers mentioned the useful input from Authority services and external agencies in monitoring children's support needs.
- Parental involvement in monitoring children's needs was mentioned as a strength by one Head Teacher on 17/03/17.

Planning Interventions

- The Child's Plan format is widely and effectively used for planning interventions. In Orkney, the Child's Plan process is explicitly based on Solution-Oriented principles and encourages the use of SMART targets.
- The contribution of multiple players to the child's plan was emphasised in the interviews: child, parents, Class Teacher and Support for Learning Teacher, and external agencies. The key role of SfL staff in planning interventions was further emphasised on 17.03.17.
- Schools acknowledged the importance, when planning interventions, of liaising within school, and between schools - particularly at transition.
- It was widely acknowledged that a strong positive relationship between the child and their supporters is more important than the particular intervention method.
- It was acknowledged by one school that 'giving something a try' was a valuable approach
- One interview emphasised the responsibility of each school to identify specific training needs for staff to feel confident delivering interventions.
- It was generally acknowledged at the Head Teacher meeting that effective interventions are often devised in response to patterns of need – e.g. setting up a nurture space in response to Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN); setting up a 'Fresh Start' literacy intervention for pupils who enter Secondary School with poor literacy skills; adopting a Team Teaching approach to ensure maximum flexibility to address high-level needs of a particular pupil within a small school.

Monitoring Effectiveness of Interventions

- Child's Planning process in Orkney supports tracking of impact. Regular review with parents is a feature of this process, and helps to monitor effectiveness and keep a focus on the positive.
- Solution Oriented approach is embedded within Orkney's Child's Plan process, and provides a focus on noticing and doing more of what works
- Plan-do-review approach and formative assessment are embedded in Orkney's schools, and supported by HGIOS 4.
- Children's understanding of their own progress is promoted through methods such as 'I-Can books', and learning discussions between CT, pupils, and parents.
- One Head Teacher mentioned the value of the Primary School continuing to track progress of their pupils at Secondary School, in order to inform future interventions.
- Several Head Teachers mentioned tracking methods that they have found effective, e.g. PIPS; Nessie Spelling; Behaviour recording logs.

Priority Areas for Development Identified Through the Project

Moderation and Consistency

- **Staged Intervention** – Needs more time for discussion, across schools (e.g. SfLTs getting together).
- Generally, there is a need to **protect liaison time** for those who support children, enabling discussion, assessment, and joint problem-solving.
- Opportunities for **SfLTs to get together**, share ideas, and clarify their role.
- **'Needs-led' resource allocation** – requests made for a transparent process for bidding for resources.
- Common suite of **online resources and documentation** was requested – including access to a regularly updated **Orkney Support Manual**.

Voice of the Child and Parent Participation

- There is a need for reflection and guidance on **how to enable the child and the parents to contribute strongly** in all parts of the support process (monitoring needs; planning intervention; evaluating effectiveness of intervention).

Relational Approaches to addressing SEBN

- There is a desire to **develop capacity for Relational Approaches** in Orkney. These include Nurture-based approaches, Video Interaction Guidance, Low Arousal Approaches, and Better Relationships Better Learning Better Behaviour.
- Authority-wide guidance on **'Positive Relations Policy'** (to replace piecemeal development of school behaviour policies).
- Promoting **Health and Wellbeing in Families**.

Focus on Language, Communication, and Literacy

- There was a desire for the Authority to **prioritise development in this area**, especially enabling teachers and support staff to grow in confidence to support language, communication, and literacy learning.
- Outreach and capacity-building from **Speech and Language Therapy Service** would be welcomed.

Training/Capacity Building

- **Rolling programme of training** for relevant staff (specifically SfLTs) to upskill and increase confidence – programme should be decided through consultation process with schools to identify whole-Authority priorities (SALT approaches for use in classroom to support pupils; Theory base and practical training for setting up Nurture spaces; Low Arousal techniques; Dyslexia).
- **Training for SfLAs** – need to increase their skills to deal with the more challenging aspects of the work – Social, Emotional and Behavioural issues; skilled support for literacy and numeracy. Existing training programme for SfLAs delivered by Orkney College needs a review.
- **Training with follow-through** rather than one-offs – Apprenticeship models, mentoring, etc.

Efficient Use of Specialist Services using ICT

- **Digital Technology** – improving the reliability and use of remote working by VC; but not imagining that it can replace face-to-face.

Promoting Independence

- This should be **a priority for those supporting children and young people**, but requires flexibility and confidence of support, as well as ongoing review process within the Staged Intervention Framework.

Points for Consideration

1. The Local Authority should prioritise supporting schools to gather the same data in the same format. This will make it easier to develop consistency of approach to identifying and monitoring needs across Orkney, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of interventions.
2. SEEMIS Health and Wellbeing application should be adopted in Orkney. A full consultation process will be required to ensure that fields are available to record which pupils are at which stage of Staged Intervention within this application.
3. Support for Learning Teachers should access a rolling programme of training which is organised by the Authority. In addition, Support for Learning Teachers should access training opportunities identified by their schools, in order to grow their skills in areas that are particularly pertinent to their context. They can be engaged to share their learning beyond their own school at Orkney-Wide In-Service training, etc.

4. Involvement of the child in constructing and reviewing their own interventions should be promoted and facilitated. The Authority should develop materials for all schools supporting staff to prepare pupils for meetings, and also to debrief/summarise the main points and targets after meetings.
5. Awareness of the potential of parental involvement should be raised among those who work with children. Involvement of parents should be sought with greater flexibility in appreciation of the difficulty that some parents experience in contributing their ideas. Plans should be made to actively prepare parents for meetings, and to debrief them meaningfully so that they can fully support their child.
6. Liaison time should be prioritised between key players in schools, so that they can carry out frequent monitoring of progress and identification of next steps.
7. Scarce resources should be formally recognised, and consideration given to setting up resourcing panels with transparent bidding processes so that these resources can be allocated more equitably in response to level of need. Any such system would also need to consider what was in place to meet the needs of children whose bids were turned down, as well as how to step back support within Staged Intervention framework. Quality outreach and capacity-building services are required to meet these needs.
8. An audit of ICT, especially Videoconferencing facilities, should be undertaken to identify how remote conferencing can be properly supported between Mainland facilities and Isles schools. Advice from Orkney College/UHI could be sought, to take advantage of their experience in Videoconferencing infrastructure and support.
9. At a time of considerable change at Authority Level, the Authority should take the opportunity to make reflective space to talk about aspirations for how we approach support for learning, and to collaboratively identify our own priorities for growth and change in the ways we work together.

Appendix 2: Assessment Tracking

Maths

Year	Term	SHM	PMIA	CfE	PIPs SS attainment
P1	August				
	October				
	March				
	May				
P2	August				
	October				
	March				
	May				
P3	August			1D	
	October				
	March				54
	May	B5		1C	
P4	October				
	December			1S	
	March				
	May	C2		1S	
P5	October				
	December				
	March				64
	May	C9		2D	
P6	October	C10			
	December				
	March	D3			
	May	D4		2C	
P7	October				
	December	D6			62
	March				
	May	D8			

In Maths we track children in the above spreadsheet. The first column is SHM (Scottish Heinnemann Maths) units. We know that the average child takes 7 weeks to complete each unit. Sometimes children move to PMIA (Primary Maths in Action) so we then track this in the same way. The CfE level is filled in by the teacher at the end of the session when reporting using moderation judgement. We also place in the PIPs scores when these are done. The colour coding is orange for expected progress, green for better than expected progress and red for less than expected progress. We can also use the data to see how children are doing with attainment overall – for example between 40 – 60 is average attainment in PIPs so all our P7s are attaining this or better in Maths.

Reading

Year	Term	Book Band	NGRT	CfE	PIPs SS attainment
P1	August	0		EC	56
	October	1		EC	
	March	3		ES	
	May	3		ES	63
P2	August	4		ES	
	October	5	115	ES	
	December	6		FD	
	March	6			
	May	7		FC	
P3	August	7			
	October	8	107		
	March	8		FC	58
	May				
P4	August				
	October				
	March				
	May				
P5	August				
	October				
	March				
	May				

We track reading in a similar way to the Maths, with this time the columns being the book band they are on (see below), the New Group Reading Test (we test the children each Autumn from P2 upwards and the score put down is their standardised score), the CfE level from teacher judgement and their PIPs score. The colour coding is as for Maths.

Shapinsay School Reading Levels – Conversion Chart

Book Band	Book Band Colour	Oxford Reading Tree Stage	Reading Age (includes comprehension)	“Average” Primary level at end of session	CfE Stage
0	Lilac	1	4 yrs	Nursery - P1	Early
1	Pink	1+	5 yrs		
2	Red	2			
3	Yellow	3	6 yrs	P2	First
4	Light Blue	4			
5	Green	5	7 yrs		
6	Orange	6			
7	Turquoise	7	8 yrs		
8	Purple	8			
9	Gold	9	9 yrs	P4	
10	White	10			
11	Lime	11	10 – 11 yrs	P5	Second
12	Grey	12			
13	Dark Blue	13-18	12 yrs +	P6 – P7	
14	Dark Red	17-20			
15	Black			P7 +	Third

This is our reading level system which we created as a staff a few years ago. We use it to track the reading levels the children are on, and can use this to help us assess where the children are.

Tracking whole school data in Reading and Maths

Each year we do an analysis of the whole school data.

Attainment Analysis 2015-2016		READING		
Year Group	Below expected stage	At expected stage	Above expected stage	
P1	0	1	0	
P2	0	4	0	
P3	1	3	1	
P4	0	0	2	
P5	0	0	1	
P6	0	0	3	
P7	0	2	2	
	5%	50%	45%	

Attainment Analysis 2015-2016		MATHS		
Year Group	Below expected stage	At expected stage	Above expected stage	
P1	0	1	0	
P2	0	4	0	
P3	0	5	0	
P4	0	1	1	
P5	0	1	0	
P6	0	3	0	
P7	0	1	3	
	0%	80%	20%	

We have been able to track raising attainment and link it to the School Improvement Plan.

Writing

We moderate work regularly as staff and use the Orkney writing guidelines to level this. We use the Jolly Grammar scheme for spelling and punctuation, and if a child isn't making expected progress we use the Direct Phonics scheme as an add-on. We do have some children working with lower or higher year groups on the Jolly Grammar scheme as needed, as we have found that some children (especially those who move to the school in the upper stages) are not ready to work at the level expected.

Other Curricular Areas

We don't have a formal tracking system, but we do moderate work in other subjects such as science.

What we do with the data

We use the data (both formal and informal) to help us form the School Improvement Plan. If an individual child isn't making progress then we put in interventions – sometimes just a bit of extra help and other times an Individual Education Plan. We can then track targets given as well through this. We've found our tracking system means we identify children not making expected progress (even if they are still attaining well) and then can put interventions in at an earlier stage.

Appendix 3: Summary of Parent/Carer Responses

Introduction

As part of the Support for Learning Review, it was decided to seek feedback from parents and pupils to gauge their satisfaction with the Support for Learning being provided. The most effective and efficient way of seeking this information was judged to be by means of a questionnaire.

Method

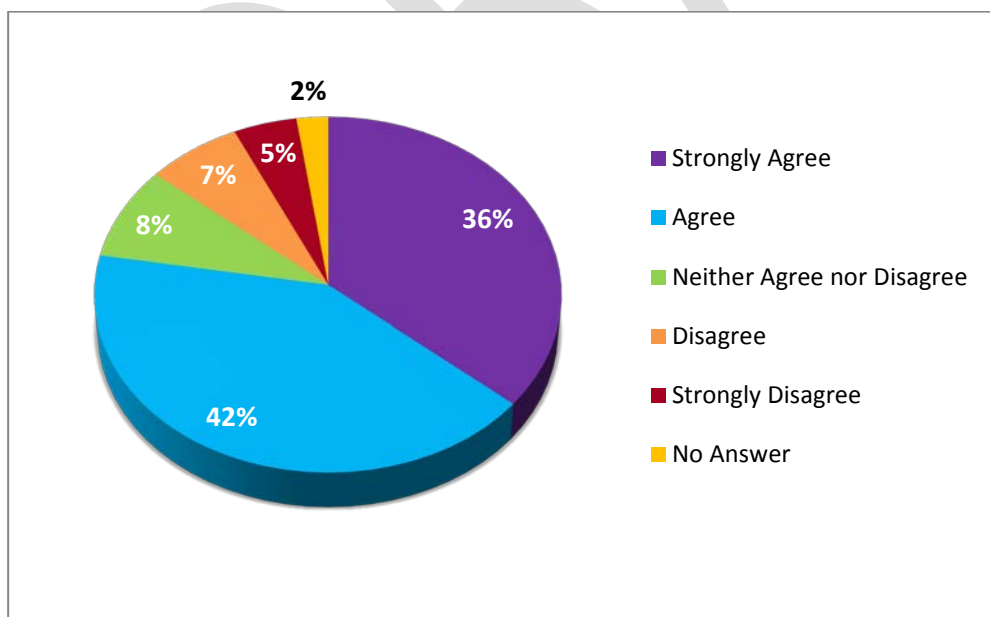
In March 2017, a targeted invitation was sent out by schools to parents of all children receiving intervention anywhere from Stage 1 to 5 on the Staged Intervention Framework. Parents were invited to complete a brief anonymous questionnaire either by SurveyMonkey online, or on paper. The questionnaire consisted of 4 simple questions designed to

- gauge general satisfaction,
- identify the type of support being provided,
- find out what impact the support was having, and
- identify any further support that the parent felt their child needed.

Results

A total of 132 responses was received. 84% of the returns were completed by just the parent or carer, and 15% by the parent/carer in collaboration with the child/young person.

Figure 1: I feel that my child is getting the support they need in order to develop, learn and achieve.



Completed the question: 98%

A large majority of respondents indicated satisfaction with the support that their child was receiving. In their ratings of the statement, 'I feel my child is getting the support they need in order to develop, learn and achieve', 78% of respondents indicated their agreement or strong agreement. 12% indicated disagreement or strong disagreement with this statement. A further 8% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 2% did not complete this question.

Respondents were asked what type of support their child received, and were given 3 categories to choose from. From the results, it appeared that the most common type of support is 'teaching approaches tailored to the child's needs' (73% of respondents said their child received this type of support). 53% of respondents said their children received 'support from particular people', and 37% said their children were provided with 'special resources, materials, or equipment'.

Additional comments indicated that the greatest degree of satisfaction was correlated with children accessing a combination of support rather than one type of support only. However, a combination of support types per se did not guarantee satisfaction with the support, with 33% of those expressing dissatisfaction also receiving a combination of support.

It was hoped that a clear relationship would be noted between the type of difficulty a pupil experienced and the level of satisfaction expressed by their parent. This might have led to conclusions such as, 'Generally speaking, Orkney seems to meet the needs of children with **difficulty x** to the satisfaction of parents'. This type of statement is not possible. The example of literacy difficulties is a good illustration. 8 comments (out of a total 37 comments) were received by satisfied parents of pupils with literacy difficulties. This was the largest number of statements reporting satisfaction with support received. However, the largest number of statements reporting dissatisfaction with support received was also related to literacy difficulties (3 out of a total 6 comments). Of a total 37 comments from satisfied parents

- 8 related to pupils with **literacy difficulties**.
- 4 related to pupils with **language and communication difficulties**.
- 4 related to pupils with **Autism Spectrum Disorder**.
- 4 related to pupils in **Supported Class (Glaitness or KGS)**.
- 2 related to pupils receiving **additional time for tests**.
- 2 related to pupils with **difficulties with coordination/motor skills**.
- 2 related to pupils with **visual support needs**.
- 2 related to pupils with **social, emotional, and behavioural needs**.
- 1 related to a pupil **requiring additional extension/challenge (gifted/talented)**.
- 1 related to a pupil with **hearing loss**.
- 1 related to a pupil with **numeracy difficulties**.
- 1 related to a pupil **requiring support with study skills/strategies**.
- 1 related to a pupil with **sensory needs**.
- 1 related to a pupil receiving **online support, with teacher input**.
- 1 related to a pupil receiving **consistent support from particular person**.

Where the support was reported to be helping, the reported positive effects are summarised thus:

- Increased **confidence** (19 comments).
- Improved **progress/achievement** (12 comments).
- Improved **understanding** (7 comments).
- Improvements in **reading and spelling** (6 comments).
- Improved **speech and communication** (5 comments).
- Pupil is **more settled/stable** (5 comments).
- **Enhanced relationships** between pupil and support staff (5 comments).
- Pupil being supported to **proceed at their own pace** (3 comments).
- Increased **independence** (3 comments).
- Improved **numeracy** (3 comments).
- Improved **focus** (1 comment).
- Improved **motor skills** (1 comment).
- Improved **ability to evidence learning** (1 comment).
- Improved **behaviour** (1 comment).

Reflections

It is important that we acknowledge and take strength from the very high level of parental satisfaction with the support that their children are currently receiving with their learning in Orkney.

The good number of returns for this survey demonstrates the level of parent motivation in Orkney to be involved and shape support for learning in our schools, for the benefit of our pupils.

For parents, it is clear that the literacy development of their children is a huge concern. In an environment where strategic spending is necessary, it should be noted that increasing the capacity of SfL staff to support literacy development is likely to have a disproportionately high impact on parent satisfaction.

We should study in detail the 15 returns that indicated dissatisfaction with the support being received by the respondent's child. Broadly, the themes running through these returns are the following:

- Lack of attention paid to difficulties with learning that are not accompanied by behavioural difficulties. This leads to children who are 'quietly' struggling with their learning slipping under the radar. The in-depth interview with a S5 pupil with literacy difficulties highlighted the potential plight of pupils who 'get by' in Secondary School, and who don't have the confidence or insight to ask for the support that would enable them to meet their potential fully. This has the potential to seriously affect young people's life choices as they prepare to sit exams and leave school. Children without highly educated/assertive parents are at a disadvantage in seeking help.

- Inconsistency amongst staff at secondary school knowing the learning needs of the pupils. Some staff read and absorb the information about pupils' needs more carefully than others. Or perhaps they require more skills in responding to pupils in their classes who have specific support needs.
- Lack of clarity about assessment pathways for dyslexia and other areas of difficulty. Assessment process is slow to start, and parents have to fight to get assessments undertaken.
- Importance for children with additional support needs developing a strong relationship with support staff. This relationship is often the key to developing better confidence, and resilience in the face of adversity for the pupils. Inconsistency in staffing has a negative impact on progress.
- Alternative Assessment Arrangements need to be thoroughly prepared, and practised with the pupil. It must not be left till near the exams to put these in place, otherwise pupils with additional support needs will fail to demonstrate their learning effectively.
- Support for carers of children in care – including kinship care – needs to be available. Carers as well as staff need training in supporting children with complex needs.
- There should be a clear, multi-agency process for assessing needs, especially complex needs, and matching the best fit of therapeutic intervention to assessed need. At the moment the allocation of therapies seems more dependent on availability than goodness of fit.

Appendix 4: Literacy Difficulties

8.1. Case Study – Pupil H

Pupil H is in S5. He has **dyslexia**.

For Pupil H, this manifests in a marked discrepancy between his oral skills and his ability to engage with the written word.

He describes himself as strong in the oral medium, and an analytical thinker.

However, reading has always been ‘a chore’ for him, from an early age. Although text in the auditory mode (e.g. audio books) presents no problems, reading text presents processing difficulties for Pupil H at the word and the sentence level. His tendency to misread individual words can create further comprehension difficulties.

Pupil H also has difficulties translating his thoughts into the written mode, and he tends to miss words and even whole sentences when trying to get his ideas down on paper.

Pupil H agreed to discuss his experience of support for learning in a brief interview on 30/03/17. There follows a summary of our discussion.

Pupil H explained that he had first been recognised as having literacy difficulties in Primary 3. He remembered being given extra reading tasks, and having a dyslexia test administered by a staff member at his school. He was then formally identified with dyslexia.

In Primary 6 and 7, Pupil H received support from Support for Learning Teacher (SfLT). He remembers doing Toe by Toe for 15 minutes per day with the SfLT, which he enjoyed because it was very structured. This enabled him to learn to read new words, and to use the whole of his already extensive oral vocabulary when reading and writing.

For the first 3 years of Secondary School, Pupil H received no individualised support and looking back it seemed he had ‘fallen off the map’ with his dyslexia. However, the work was not very challenging in S1 to S3, and Pupil H had no problems with understanding of the material, so he did not experience this as a concern. It was only at the beginning of S3 that he started to realise revision techniques involving writing were not working for him. In addition, where a task involved a lot of reading this presented a barrier to his comprehension. By the end of S3 he realised that he would need support if he was to have a chance of doing well in his exams.

Towards the end of S3, Pupil H decided, with the support and encouragement of his mother, to seek support. He spoke to his Guidance Teacher in the first instance. The Guidance Teacher got him an appointment to speak with a member of the Curriculum Support staff. A period of assessment followed this. Pupil H worked once per week for 5 weeks in S3, with Curriculum Support Staff. His handwriting was assessed, and he got the chance to discuss his dyslexia and how it was affecting him. He undertook further dyslexia testing. This established a dialogue between Pupil H and Support Staff. When he had to sit Unit Assessments, he was encouraged to use these to practise working with a reader and scribe in exam conditions. He was given the chance to debrief and reflect with Curriculum Support

staff on what had been the best support, and what would help him to express himself effectively in exams. He found this ongoing 2-way communication very helpful.

Pupil H was helped to develop revision techniques which were not based on writing. He also got regular opportunities to review his learning with a supporter. This often consists of checking that Pupil H has actually understood what he has read, in recognition of his tendency to misinterpret in the written medium. His Additional Assessment Arrangements were finalised and put in place in plenty of time.

Summary

Pupil H reported that school staff had done an excellent job of supporting him, and that SfL support through his exams had been 'great'. He had been able to achieve in a way that reflected his ability, without barriers to his understanding or his ability to express himself. He added the following comments:

- Pupil H believes that it is very helpful to identify pupils with dyslexia from a young age, and to establish an ongoing dialogue with them about how their literacy issues affect them and what can be done to overcome any barriers.
- Pupils need to understand that you shouldn't be embarrassed to seek help.
- Confidence is important. This applies to pupils and staff.
- Many pupils may be too unconfident to seek the help they need. Pupil H had a confident parent who was able to encourage him to request assessment and support, but many pupils may not have this.
- Staff need to be confident to offer effective support for literacy difficulties. Training for staff may be helpful to assist with this.
- Pupil H expressed the belief that he would 'always have to work harder than everyone else', but that this had helped him to develop a good work ethic.

8.2. Case Study – Pupil C

There follows a case study of a pupil who is currently studying at University.

At Primary School, Pupil C struggled with literacy. In Primary 1, just before the Easter holidays, his parents were invited to meet with his Class Teacher, who explained that he was learning slowly. She told them that Pupil C could only say the sounds for about 3 letters. His teacher expressed concern that Pupil C was not learning, and wanted to check that his parents were getting him to do his homework. His parents came away with the impression that it was their fault that Pupil C was making poor progress, but without solutions or a jointly agreed action plan.

At the end of Primary 1, it was discovered that Pupil C had glue ear, which was impairing his hearing. He had grommets put in at the start of Primary 2.

After the start of Primary 2, Pupil C got extra help at school. The school arranged for Pupil C to follow a different reading scheme from his peers, and he also got to do extra reading in small-group sessions.

Pupil C's parents also approached an outside specialist, who assessed various aspects of Pupil C's literacy. She identified that Pupil C's reading was unusual. Most particularly, he read slowly and effortfully, and expended an equal amount of effort decoding real words and non-words. She wrote up her report, recommending that Pupil C be recognised as having 'dyslexia'. Pupil C's parents felt the school did not welcome the report.

Pupil C's parents do not think his literacy difficulties were noted at transition to Secondary School. The difficulties continued at a subtle level throughout Secondary School. Although he understood concepts easily, he struggled to read complex text, and to compose essays and extended written responses. He often ran out of time in tests involving extended reading or writing. He also had difficulty organising his work on the page, and keeping his letter formation tidy. In S3, several of Pupil C's subject teachers commented on his illegible writing, and indicated that this could be a problem for him in exams. Pupil C's mother contacted the SfL Teacher at school, who did an assessment and arranged for him to get extra time for his exams. This was the only additional assessment arrangement (AAA) made for Pupil C. However, before Pupil C left school, the Support for Learning Teacher recommended that he make an appointment with the Support for Learning team at University to request literacy assessment and support.

When Pupil C started at University, he approached the Learning Support Team for an assessment of his literacy needs. He was identified as dyslexic, and given access to helpful resources and study aids. He received advice about study methods that focused more on using auditory techniques to memorise material. He was granted extra time for exams.

Summary

Pupil C's parents feel that his difficulties were not recognised or acted upon adequately throughout his time at school. Although Pupil C had achieved reasonable qualifications, his parents believe that his literacy difficulties created barriers to him achieving to his full potential. They believe that, because Pupil C was quiet and well-behaved, he received little additional support and little focused monitoring once he was perceived to have 'caught up' with his basic literacy.

Appendix 5: Focus Group Presentation

**Academic Excellence
'Closing the International Gap'**

S5/S6 Pupil Focus Group
Stromness Academy
23/03/17

OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)

- Started in 1960, with 18 European Countries plus United States and Canada
- Purpose to promote Economic Development
- Now 35 member countries, including some poorer countries such as Mexico, Chile and Turkey.

PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)

- Started in 2000
- Every 3 years, a sample of randomly-selected 15 year-olds is tested in maths, science, and reading across all OECD countries
- Not tested on memorized facts, but thinking skills and reasoning
- Students are not given a score, but the data is used to calculate a national average
- UK has been around average compared to other OECD countries, with Scotland holding its own within UK.
- In 2012, Scotland was still a little stronger than England in Maths and Reading, a little weaker in Science
- Last year (based on testing in March 2015), Scottish 15 year-olds were rated 'average' on all 3 measures (a decline in all 3 areas)
- Now weaker than England in all 3 measures

This is Scotland's worst ever performance in PISA since 2000

Top Performers

- There are 6 performance levels in each of the areas (maths, science, and reading)
- Levels 5 and 6 are considered 'Top Performers' (i.e. able to tease out the core ideas, think creatively, tackle tricky questions, apply existing knowledge and skills in new contexts, etc – in each of the 3 domains)
- In 2015 England had average, or slightly above average, percentage of 'top performers' in all 3 domains.
- Scotland produced below the average percentage of 'top performers' in all domains
 - 6% compared to 8% OECD average in Reading
 - 9% compared to 11% OECD average in Maths
 - 8% compared to 11% OECD average in Science



**Stromness Academy:
Promoter of Academic Excellence?**

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

WHAT NEXT?

- I will **feed back to the Head Teacher and Deputes** (anonymized feedback)
- I will gather together feedback from both Mainland Secondary Schools, and include it in **Review of Support for Learning** (due to be completed by end of summer)
- Anything else?
 - (e.g. request to be considered in next year's School Improvement Plan)

Appendix 6: A SEAL Vignette

Pupil E had missed a lot of school and suffered from anxiety issues. An unsuccessful intervention to compel her to attend by another service had resulted in her refusing to come to school at all. This was the subject of a Children's Panel hearing. The grounds for this were challenged by Pupil E's mother and it was sent to court for proof. The relationship with school and support services was extremely damaged and fragile.

SEAL was asked to become involved at the start of her 4th year. An initial meeting with Pupil E and her mother allowed them to share their pain at the process so far and to understand that the pressure to attend school could be alleviated by attendance at SEAL. In addition, the Children's Reporter dropped the case before going to court as it was seen that Pupil E was engaging in SEAL. The relief as these weighting issues were taken away was very marked.

Working with Pupil E we discovered her to be a highly capable young person. We focussed her plans for the year and limited the number of subjects to English, Maths, History, and Music. By a slow process of supported time in class and working outwith the school on academic and social and emotional issues she has flourished through the year. In music she learned to play bass guitar and drum kit (from scratch) with SEAL and was able to return to class for the listening work. She was able to return to all History and English classes. Pupil E's construction of herself as being bad a Maths was pervasive but not borne out in her work. She did not manage back to class for this.

She had a strong friendship in school and we were able to target her into classes where that friend would also attend and be able to support her. She was supported at break time to spend time with her peer group or to go elsewhere if this was too much.

Pupil E managed to sit N5 Music (playing for the practical exam and achieving a B grade), English (achieving a B grade), and History (not achieving N5 but getting the N4 award) and to complete the internal assessments for N3 and N4 Numeracy. She is now completing 5th year in school with minimal support from SEAL. She has a vibrant social circle of friendships.

Appendix 7: Best Practice in Provision for Complex Autism

Provision for Complex Autism

In March 2013 a strategy group was set up by Catherine Lyner Principal Educational Psychologist to evaluate how Orkney meets the needs of children and young people in Orkney with Complex Autism. The needs of family members were also taken account of as the evaluation looked at how well needs are met through the life pathway from pre-school into adulthood and also considered how services support the needs of family networks around children with complex needs as they grow and develop.

Background and Purpose of the Complex Autism Strategy Group

- There have been a number of occasions in the last five years where individual education and care packages have required to be set up around children whose unmet needs and resulting challenging responses necessitated a creative interdisciplinary input.
- There is as yet no strategic approach to how alternative education and care packages may be created and so each situation has had to be responded to in an ad hoc way which has required rapid, often unplanned resourcing.
- There was recognition by Education, Leisure and Housing and Orkney Health and Care that important to look at the key aspects of what made the positive difference in those alternative approaches which worked well in order that a strategic approach to building on strengths and increasing the capacity of services can be developed.

The Composition of the Complex Autism Strategy Group

- Catherine Lyner (Principal Educational Psychologist).
- Tom McGuire (Service Manager, Learning Disabilities and Mental Health).
- Joe Horrocks (Senior Social Worker Practitioner).
- Peter Diamond (Head of Schools).
- Steve Bunning (Support Teacher, Autistic Spectrum).
- Michael McCreadie (Consultant Clinical Director, Studio III).
- Morag Miller (Head Teacher, Glaitness School).
- Sheila Dick (Head Teacher, Kirkwall Grammar School).
- Alastair Tait (Principal Teacher, Pupil Support).

There was an agreement between group members that representation from other partner agencies should be sought as the strategy develops e.g. V.A.O., Scottish Autism and Enable.

Tasks Undertaken by the Complex Autism Strategy Group

- To define Complex Autism
- To describe alternative approaches paying attention to the concepts of lifespan and continuum.
- To align with and feed into other strategies and initiatives e.g. All Age Autism Strategy and Getting it Right For Every Child
- To identify crucial aspects of appropriate physical environments and of necessary skills and qualities of successful teams and approaches.
- To begin to scope future demands on and for services to inform financial planning

Outcomes and Recommendations So Far From Tasks

Defining Complex Autism

- Autism is in itself a lifelong and complex developmental difference. Complexity is increased sometimes enormously by any, or any combination of communication difficulties.
 - The level and nature of the social communication difficulty, this may be masked in youngsters who appear to be high functioning, this increases their emotional vulnerability
 - The types of behavioural responses the young person displays when anxious e.g. some behavioural responses may be found to be distasteful or threatening by others and lead to the young person having restricted opportunities
 - Family circumstances e.g. family crisis, health issues in the family, family relationship issues, attachment problems etc.
 - Health issues(may be masked as features of Autism)
 - Other comorbid learning and/or physical disabilities.
 - The Education or Care systems surrounding the child;
 - Transitions within and between settings and services e.g. pupils entering and leaving education, or arriving in or departing Orkney.
 - Inflexible delivery of the curriculum or out of schools support services
 - Inflexible approaches to social pressures of school and community contexts.
 - Lack of training to develop awareness, skills and confidence in staff teams.

Examining what makes Autism complex highlights the broad range of factors which contribute to complexity and emphasises the need for a joined up interdisciplinary approach in which services from Orkney Health and Care and Education can work together strategically and operationally to allow services to develop a continuum of provision to meet needs as they are able to be predicted across the lifespan whilst retaining flexibility to adapt to the unpredictable.

Describing Successful Alternative Provisions

There have been 6 children and young people in Orkney who have Complex Autism who needed alternatives to the existing support system within school or whose families needed interdisciplinary support packages to be created to provide input beyond the school day. This was because wrap around care was required to alleviate family pressure.

Identifying What Creates a Successful Package

In order to achieve this goal the Support for Learning Network Development Day was used to collate information from discussion sessions where mostly staff from Education but also Orkney Health and Care was also represented. Discussion was facilitated and the information collated by C. Lyner and T. McGuire.

Ethos of Approach

A person centred approach was identified as crucial to making a positive difference. Being person centred involves;

- Being attuned to the child or young person as an individual personality and understanding how autism impacts on their ability to cope with the world around them
- Focusing on preparing the child for demands of life rather than teaching a standard curriculum
- Using settings for learning flexibly with the acknowledgement that some children find school based contexts e.g. classrooms, school corridors etc. present social demands or sensory pressures too many for them to cope with. Alternative spaces within schools or contexts out with school are therefore required to be used as is appropriate
- Being tuned in to the needs of families and developing flexible interdisciplinary approaches to their needs.

Skills and Qualities of People Involved

Effective team working was identified as crucial to success. The creation of effective teams was seen to be facilitated by the following;

- Supportive strategic and operational management which allowed team members to:
 - Develop confidence in themselves and each other's skills and knowledge.
 - Have confidence in the approaches being used through on-going planning and debriefing sessions.
 - Feel their well-being was being maintained and their resilience to cope with stress and demands placed on them was being developed.

Recommendations/Areas for Development

- An ASD training strategy should be developed which develops a rolling programme to meet the on-going needs of services providing to children with ASD and their families.
- Funding is required to be to be planned for to develop dedicated resources. This should include the creation of a continuum of learning, e.g. quiet spaces in schools, contexts for learning in the community.
- The experience of the use of Skarva taing evidences that some children require a low arousal environment which is based away from a town centre that allows access to outside spaces and a consistently quiet atmosphere.
- Links with specialist services/agencies should be strengthened to develop local knowledge and skills and foster partnerships. Potential partners include Scottish Autism and Studio III.

Appendix 8: Reflections from a Practitioner Educational Psychologist

The following is a set of reflections on what I perceive to be good practice as I visit schools in Orkney.

Successful Inclusive Practice

As an Educational Psychologist in the privileged position of visiting a large number of Orkney's schools on a regular basis, I am persuaded that my own reflections are of value when it comes to recognising effective inclusive practice. In my opinion, the success of courageous inclusive practice in schools is underpinned by the following factors:

- Commitment of the Head Teacher to the Principles of Inclusion.
- Support for Learning staff who are also committed to inclusion.
- Parents who are able to support the school rather than undermine its efforts.
- Class Teacher who embraces the challenge, and wants the child to succeed in the mainstream class.
- Flexibility, and sufficient staff to enable 'Plan B' to be swiftly enacted.
- Good understanding of the needs of the child, and constant willingness to learn more.
- Commitment to building close personal relationships with the child, and also with the family.
- TEACCH approach where relevant, and clear guidance for staff.

Building Emotional Literacy and Resilience

Often interventions can look good on paper, but they actually don't have much effect. The most rewarding and effective project that I have been involved with in the area of Emotional Literacy and Resilience has been characterised by:

- Commitment of the Head Teacher to nurturing the growth of resilience in the school's pupils.
- Clear support of the Head Teacher, shown by attendance at training sessions throughout the year, and willingness to commit the whole school (including SfLAs and auxiliary staff/janitor) for a given period to developing this specific set of skills and priorities.
- Impassioned advocacy of the need for this work by the Head Teacher when motivation was flagging.
- Close working with the Educational Psychologist – joint planning and delivery of a programme developed for the school and by the school.

The Role of the Support for Learning Teacher

This person has the potential to make a huge difference for children with additional support needs across the entire Authority. I believe that SfLT hours should be protected as far as possible, because of their impact on the Authority's ability to meet additional support needs. Good practice I have observed includes the following aspects:

Good organisational skills

The SfLT is personally well-organised, and is willing to develop systems in conjunction with the Head Teacher to ensure that Support for Learning is well planned throughout the school. Many SfLTs are directly involved in designing tracking systems to monitor pupil progress and ensure consistency of application of the Staged Intervention framework, within their school and perhaps between schools.

Good communication skills

The SfLT often takes a large part of the responsibility for communicating with people – ensuring that the right people meet in the right place at the right time; talking with other staff members about issues that they are experiencing, and coming up with joint solutions to try;

Good knowledge of how to support children

The SfLT is knowledgeable about supporting children who are 'stuck' in a number of ways. Literacy and Numeracy support skills are very familiar to them, and as well as being confident at doing direct work with individuals and small groups, an effective SfLT is able to advise Class Teachers and SfLAs on what helps. Effective SfLTs are also keen to help children with the widest range of issues. They are key to developing effective ways of working with children who are experiencing issues with mental health and wellbeing. Two of my schools have relied on their SfLT to lead on setting up and building Nurture Approaches in the school. My Secondary school's SfLT is keenly aware of the pupils who start at Secondary with poor literacy and numeracy, and has developed interventions in both these core areas so that these pupils are able to access intensive small-group support which accelerates their progress and often leads quite quickly to their being able to cope with the literacy and numeracy demands of the various subject classes they attend, without additional in-class support being required.

Engagement with training

The best SfLTs I work with are keen to develop expertise in areas that are particularly pertinent to the needs within their school. They are keen to share this expertise across their school staff, and also more widely at Authority level. They participate in working groups and contribute to In-Service training. They are aware of their value to the Authority, and volunteer for Train-the-Trainer events.

Flexibility and availability

The SfLT, in conjunction with the Head Teacher, is able to identify when their time will be best spent in liaison time rather than direct contact time. The school is able to adjust the timetable to enable the SfLT to attend meetings.

Enough time

SfLTs tend to be most effective when they work within one or two schools. This can work well when combined with a Shared Headship.

Appendix 9: Support for Learning Review – Parents Survey

Orkney Islands Council is currently carrying out a review on the effectiveness of support for learning provision in Orkney. As part of this review, it is important to gather feedback from parents/carers on their experiences in relation to the support that their children receive.

We would be grateful if you could complete this short survey to enable us to review and plan for future support for learning provision. The information you provide is completely anonymous.

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer.
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer and Pupil.

I feel that my child is getting the support they need in order to develop, learn and achieve.	Strongly Agree.	Agree.	Neither Agree nor Disagree.	Disagree.	Strongly Disagree.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Tick all that apply and add a brief description if you can).

<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching approaches tailored to the child's needs.
<input type="checkbox"/> Special resources, materials or equipment.
<input type="checkbox"/> Support from particular people.

Description of support (optional):

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- Yes.
- No.
- Not sure.

If yes, please describe the support:

Your responses will contribute to the current review of support for learning in Orkney.

If you feel that your child is being exceptionally well supported and you would be happy to be interviewed as a more detailed case study, or you would like to discuss any other matters raised by this survey, please get in touch.

Appendix 10: The 5 Roles of the Support for Learning Teacher

Tutoring and Class Teaching

- The support for learning teacher (SfLT) can take classes to free the class or subject teacher to work with individuals or groups.
- The SfLT can also take individuals or groups to work with.

Providing Consultancy Support

- The SfLT can offer advice to the management team and colleagues on ways of improving the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching throughout the school and on particular areas or subjects in the curriculum.

Teaching Co-operatively

- The SfLT can support the work of the class and subject teachers by targeting assistance in a planned way to pupils experiencing difficulties in learning but also by enriching the overall quality of learning and teaching.
- He/she can also give advice and guidance on the learning needs and programmes of individual pupils.
- Support and advice on differentiation.

Providing Specialist Services

- The SfLT can provide exceptional services to individual pupils such as supporting those with difficulties adjusting to the life of class or school and also provide short term assistance to help pupils catch up on work or provide study support.
- Additional literacy sessions may also be appropriate for pupils experiencing extreme difficulties with reading/writing and spelling.

Contributing to Staff Development

- The SfLT is able to contribute to the enhancement of their colleagues' professional development through seminars and in-service courses, information sheets and the exercise of the above roles.

Action Plan

The High-Level themes extracted lead to 18 key recommendations which are related to 3 core areas:

- Area 1 – Quality Assurance.
- Area 2 – Leadership.
- Area 3 – Learning.

Area 1 – Quality Assurance

1.1. Getting it Right Processes and Procedures

Recommendation	Priority	Action (SMART)	Timescale*	Monitoring and/or Impact Statement
1.1.	<p>Quality assurance of Child's Plans and their impact on outcomes for children and young people should be planned for to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's Plan targets are outcomes focused rather than focusing on request for input or referrals. • There is an explicit matching of intervention to child's identified needs, as assessed through the multi-disciplinary integrated assessment process. • The voice of the child or young person has been fully captured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Reviews will encompass sampling schools' use and quality of Child's Plans (linking to HGIOS4 – 2.4 Personalised Support) • Sampling to cross reference with schools not involved in live review 	<p>Matched to schedule of school reviews</p> <p>Summative reporting annually in June</p>	

* Timescale: Please note that dates beyond June 2019 will be subject to change following an annual review of progress, this will also allow new and emerging themes and issues to be accommodated within the plan.

Recommendation	Priority	Action (SMART)	Timescale	Monitoring and/or Impact Statement
1.2.	Training on Getting it Right should be revisited and re-launched to ensure processes, roles and responsibilities are understood by all and amended Child's Plan documents are promoted. The training should re-emphasise the child's planning process as the key process through which all vulnerable children's needs are collaboratively assessed, identified and addressed. It should also enable exploration of ways of maximising participation of children and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting it Right training to include training on contents of Child's Plan (Feb In-service) – Roles, Responsibilities (e.g. Named Person, Child's Planning process, chronology writing, managing meetings) • Moderation sessions/opportunities with key stakeholders • School reviews as above (Recommendation 1.1) 	<p>Feb 2019</p> <p>After February in-service training</p> <p>Next round of school reviews</p>	
1.3.	Good health and wellbeing as the foundation for good learning should be at the heart of Orkney's strategic vision for all children and young people and this vision promoted through the Getting it Right principles and practice by all staff embedding the language of wellbeing across the curriculum (also relates to area 2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting it Right event (Feb In-service) – to include promotion of the Getting it Right Self-evaluation tool • Health and Wellbeing Strategy to be developed (see NIF appendix 7) 	Feb 2019	

1.2. Gathering, Monitoring and Disseminating Information

Recommendation	Priority	Action (SMART)	Timescale	Monitoring and/or Impact Statement
1.4	The Local Authority should prioritise supporting schools to gather the same data in the same format. This will make it easier to develop consistency of approach to identifying and monitoring needs across Orkney, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of interventions. (Also relates to area 3).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training sessions on Wellbeing Application in SEEMIS • Explore the principles and activities of “Virtual School” approach. 	<p>June 2019</p> <p>August 2019</p>	
1.5.	Authority focus on staged intervention to achieve coherence in use across schools in order that levels of need are recorded and monitored consistently. (Also relates to area 2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review with Head Teachers the benefits/drawbacks of 5 and 3 stages • Provide detailed training (on Staged Intervention) for SfLTs 	<p>October 2018</p> <p>August 2019</p>	
1.6.	SEEMIS Health and Wellbeing application should be adopted in Orkney. Transitional consultation, planning, and training will be required to ensure a smooth journey from existing storage systems to SEEMIS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training sessions on Wellbeing Application in SEEMIS 	December 2019	
1.7	Access to key legislation and policy documents should be readily accessible to all practitioners via a regularly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Group to support the updating and relaunching of Orkney’s Support Manual 	August 2019	

	updated electronic Orkney Support Manual.			
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Area 2 – Leadership

2.1. Relationships

Recommendation	Priority	Action (SMART)	Timescale	Monitoring and/or Impact Statement
2.1.	Embed, both at a strategic and operational level, positive relationships as fundamental to learning and wellbeing. At a strategic authority level through to a classroom practice and family work level, Orkney should drive forward relationship-based approaches to addressing pupil and family needs across communities, including MITA (Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants), nurture approaches and the Synergy model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship-Based Approaches Steering Group in place. 2 levels of work being developed (Level 1 intensive development in KGS and Papdale; Level 2 Orkney-wide Universal practices) Implementation of 'The Connected, Compassionate Community' (nurture-based classroom materials) in 2 local schools <p>SYNERGY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors in school and external mentors from Orkney Pupil Support Team; Presentations delivered to education service managers Initial presentation for Head Teacher Meeting – to explain role of in-school mentor Planned presentations to be jointly delivered in schools 	<p>August 2018</p> <p>August 2018 (pilot)</p> <p>June 19 (phase 1)</p> <p>Ongoing training with AT Autism until March 2020</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned training for staff in Education, Leisure and Housing. • Exploring ongoing networks of support at all levels 		
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2.2. Capacity Building

Recommendation	Priority	Action (SMART)	Timescale	Monitoring and/or Impact Statement
2.2.	<p>A high quality training strategy should drive forward how capacity is built within and across schools, teams and communities in order that knowledge, skills and confidence is built upon and made maximum use of.</p> <p>The training strategy should draw from consultation processes within school as well as local and national priorities. It should promote apprenticeship and mentoring models, e.g. Synergy, as well as rolling programmes.</p> <p>An area for immediate prioritisation of capacity building is increasing teachers and support staff confidence and skills in meeting the needs of children with language and communication difficulties through the development of collaborative models of working with support specialists who will prioritise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs analysis for Support for Learning capacity-building at October In-Service • Planning a programme of activities to meet the identified needs, including but not only provided by the Support for Learning Network • Transitional meetings with outgoing Teacher of Language and Communication, and detailed learning notes being drafted • Development of a Service Level Agreement with Speech and Language Therapy Service • Reinstate a permanent Steering Group for supporting the development children's 	<p>October 2018</p> <p>Following above</p> <p>September 2018</p> <p>September 2018.</p> <p>June 2019</p>	

	mentoring, support and development roles.	Language, Communication, and Literacy		
2.3.	<p>Educational Psychology is most effective when systems allow capacity building through consultation and development work.</p> <p>Strategic systems should be explored within education and partner agencies to promote a consultative model of service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation Model of Working being explicitly prioritised within KGS and Early Years Managers • Planned input to SfLTs on use of Consultation Model during SfL Network sessions • Planned input to Head Teachers during HT meetings on use of Consultation Model 	<p>September 2018</p> <p>October 2018</p> <p>May 2019</p>	

2.3. Inclusion

Recommendation	Priority	Action (SMART)	Timescale	Impact
2.4.	<p>The strategic vision on inclusion should reviewed.</p> <p>This should then inform policy, planning and priorities across all schools and establishments. Training should be developed to build inclusive ethos and practice within schools. Authority and school leadership should embrace and develop flexible curricular based on effective learning pathways which have coherence and meaning over time. These pathways will often involve creative collaboration with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated SIO role for Individualised Support • Create a revised inclusion statement/vision articulating the way that Orkney will work together for better outcomes for children and young people, in order to provide appropriate opportunities for life in school and beyond. • Link statement/vision to training strategy as outlined at 2.2 above 	<p>August 2018</p> <p>August 2019</p>	

	<p>other agencies to deliver non-classroom-based learning (also relates to areas 1 and 3).</p> <p>Mechanisms should be in place to ensure alternative learning environments are properly resources and equipped.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link to 1.1 and the Child's Plan process		
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10.3. Area 3 – Learning

3.1. Support Staff

Recommendation	Priority	Action (SMART)	Timescale	Monitoring and/or Impact Statement
3.1.	<p>All 5 roles of the Support for Learning Teacher are key to effective identification and meeting of need and sustaining good learning and teaching for all.</p> <p>Support for Learning Teachers should take a lead role in leading training and development across schools and at an authority level. (Also relates to area 2).</p>	Ongoing training programme for Support for Learning Staff to be developed and articulated.	October 2019, October 2020 and October 2021; annual evaluation and review.	
3.2.	<p>Further capacity can be built within and across establishments when Pupil Support team staff work in partnership with Support for Learning staff within schools.</p> <p>Pupil Support team should continue to develop practices to synchronise and integrate with Support for Learning and Guidance, including helping to collaboratively identify and meet training needs.</p>	See above – Needs Analysis at SfL Network (Recommendation 2.2)		

<p>3.3.</p>	<p>Maximising the impact of support staff should be a priority. Programmes such as MITA should be promoted at school management and through an authority strategic level. Mentoring/apprenticeship models should be explored, e.g. Synergy partnering with in-school staff, the Language and Communication Service, Autism Service, etc. (also relates to area 2).</p>	<p>See above – notes about actions for Synergy Implementation (Recommendation 2.1)</p>	<p>See timescale re 2.1</p> <p>See timescale re 2.1</p>	
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10.3.2. Barriers to Learning

Recommendation	Priority	Action (SMART)	Timescale	Impact
<p>3.4.</p>	<p>Orkney should strive towards greater consistency across the Authority in how literacy difficulties are identified and addressed. In particular, secondary schools should be given opportunity to explore best practice in supporting literacy issues including low level difficulties. The Authority's Literacy Steering Group should consider how to address the points raised in the report entitled 'Literacy Difficulties'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information about effective ways of supporting children and young people with literacy difficulties • Prioritize training as appropriate and work to incorporate relevant learning and skills in Orkney's literacy strategy and resourcing • Training in Sound Reading System and piloting the method with targeted pupils 	<p>November 2020</p> <p>November 2020</p>	

	as part of Orkney's overarching literacy plan.			
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10.3.3. Inclusion

Recommendation	Priority	Action (SMART)	Timescale	Impact
3.5.	<p>In order to meet the learning and social and emotional needs of the most vulnerable children mechanisms should be developed for strong partnership working and shared approaches and resources across settings.</p> <p>Consideration of forums to look at support for and resourcing of challenging needs. Such forums would allow equitable timely response to level of need through a transparent process of allocation of scarce resources, e.g. Pupil Support input. (Also relates to areas 1 and 2).</p>	Link to the Partnership Provision Work Stream within the Orkney Learning Landscape Change Programme.	January 2019	



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated, or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Support for Learning Provision
Service / service area responsible.	Education, Leisure and Housing
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Peter Diamond
Date of assessment.	1-11-18
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	Review of existing provisions, following a period of self-evaluation supported by appreciative enquiry, the recommendations within the review suggest a wide range of areas that would benefit from a focused period of continuous improvement.

2. Initial Screening	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	Improvement in outcomes for all learners
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	The Council has a statutory duty in relation to children and young people with additional support needs
State who is or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	Children, young people, parents and carers, staff
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	The review was led by staff teams working within the field of additional support for learning and the enquiry approach involved staff, pupils in parents in creating the evidence base on which the

	recommendations are based
<p>Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p>	<p>There is a wide range of research and information available in relation to additional support needs and additional support for learning.</p> <p>The Statutory Code of Practice (2017) provides a helpful summary of expectations and approaches https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland/</p>
<p>Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.</p>	<p>Additional support for learning provision assesses socioeconomic factors and their impact on learning and development through the integrated assessment framework https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland/pages/4/</p>
<p>Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?</p>	<p>(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).</p>
<p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.</p>	<p>Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where race was identified as a factor leading to additional support needs</p>
<p>2. Sex: a man or a woman.</p>	<p>Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where sex (M/F) was identified as a factor leading to additional support needs.</p> <p>There is a gender imbalance across the support for learning workforce. In addition many staff work part-time. Ensuring training is offered at a time and place that is accessible to the workforce would help to ensure benefits are maximised.</p>
<p>3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</p>	<p>Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where sexual orientation was identified as a factor leading to additional support needs</p>
<p>4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.</p>	<p>Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where gender reassignment was identified as a factor leading to additional support needs</p>

5. Pregnancy and maternity.	Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where pregnancy and maternity were identified as a factor leading to additional support needs
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6. Age: people of different ages.	Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where age was identified as a factor leading to additional support needs
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where religion was identified as a factor leading to additional support needs
8. Caring responsibilities.	Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners caring responsibilities was identified as a factor leading to additional support needs
9. Care experienced.	There are additional requirements of assessment (and entitlement) within the legislative framework for children and young people who are looked after, or care experienced
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where marriage and civil partnership (including family circumstances) was identified as a factor leading to additional support needs
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	Disability if one of 4 factors recognised specifically as having the potential to lead to a child or young person having additional support needs. Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where this was identified as a factor
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Additional support for learning practice and policy would benefit learners where socio-economic disadvantage was identified as a factor leading to additional support needs


3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	yes
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	
Do you have enough	yes

information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	
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4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	No
What action is to be taken?	
Who will undertake it?	
When will it be done?	
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	The difference the service is making will continue to be monitored and on an annual basis the related improvement plan update.

Signature: 

Date: 1-11-18

Name: Peter Diamond

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at hrrsupport@orkney.gov.uk