

Effective Practice case study: developing ordinarily available provision in Portsmouth

Summary

In 2017, the Portsmouth Education Partnership identified improving outcomes for pupils on SEN Support as a key priority. The partnership therefore set up a task and finish group to co-produce a set of clearer expectations about the support and provision that should be available for all children and young people on SEN Support in Portsmouth mainstream schools and settings, backed up with advice, guidance and resources for settings to enable them to deliver that support. Feedback from professionals, the local Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and external inspections suggests that the clearer expectations around Ordinarily Available Provision, coupled with renewed advice and guidance, has improved both the consistency and the quality of teaching and support offered to disabled children and children with SEN across Portsmouth.

The SEND Effective Practice Evidence Framework considers that the "strength of evidence" of this case study is **promising** – the work has been reviewed internally and externally, sustained and replicated. The "breadth of impact" of this case study is **promising** – there is evidence of impact in two of the four broad areas of impact considered by the framework.¹



¹ The SEND Effective Practice Evidence Framework uses two "signal strength" indicators to present the strength of evidence and the breadth of impact of a case study. Each indicator has four bars – emerging, promising, good and robust. The "strength of evidence" indicator is based on how the project has been evaluated and the length of time it has been sustained. The "breadth of impact" indicator is based on whether the case study can demonstrate impact in four broad areas – the more areas of impact, the higher the signal strength indicator.

Why was this work undertaken? What did the work aim to do?

Attainment and Progress of pupils on SEN Support were identified as a particular priority for schools in Portsmouth in 2017. Pupils on SEN Support tended to be further behind their peers nationally than pupils with an EHCP or with no identified SEN. Specifically:

- ✦ 12% of pupils with SEN Support in Portsmouth met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at KS2 in 2017/18, compared to 24% nationally.
- ✦ Pupils with SEN Support in Portsmouth had an average Attainment 8 score of 25 in 2017/18, compared to 32 nationally.
- ✦ Pupils with SEN Support in Portsmouth had an average Progress 8 score of -1.03 in 2017/18, compared to -0.43 nationally.

In response, the Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP), formed in October 2016, set up a Task and Finish group in May 2017 to develop an offer of support to schools. The brief included updating the previous suite of Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) documents that had been produced in 2015. These resources, which had been compiled by SENCOs with input from specialists in each of the areas of need, suggested support and interventions that a school might use across the four areas of need in the Code of Practice, referencing evidence-based resources and practices. However, the task and finish group identified four important shortcomings:

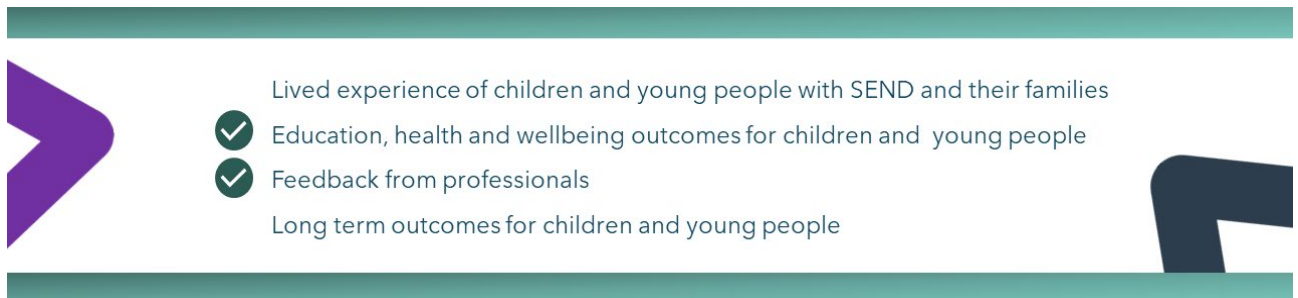
- ✦ The resources were difficult to navigate.
- ✦ While a summary example of what could be expected was published on the Local Offer website, the OAP document was not shared in its entirety with parents.
- ✦ There was no expectation that an individual setting would make the full range of support programmes available.
- ✦ Separate OAP documents had also been produced for Early Years and Post 16 settings, creating overlap and duplication in expectations for different settings.

The new Ordinarily Available Provision resources were designed to:

- 1. Clearly articulate the support and provision for disabled children and those with SEN that should be available in mainstream settings in Portsmouth from the early years to post-16:** reinforcing the narrative around universal expectations across the age range including expectations of early years settings and colleges as well as schools. The updated resources were aligned with the wider principle of Portsmouth being a "needs led city" in which provision or support is not dependent on any formal diagnosis.

- 2. Clarify expectations that the support, resources and interventions outlined would be provided consistently across all the city's schools and settings:** the navigation of the resources was improved so the first section of the redesigned resources brought together strategies that may have little or no cost but would be likely to have a significant impact if implemented well. It includes considerations about the sensory environment and transitions, as well as teaching and learning strategies. Expectations were made more universal: for example, specific programmes or products were no longer referenced unless there was an expectation that they would be used in all schools.
- 3. Improve the quality of teaching and interventions, thus improving outcomes for disabled children and young people and those with SEN:** by securing adoption across Portsmouth's schools, the work aimed to improve the quality of teaching and interventions for pupils on SEN Support in mainstream settings and thus improve their outcomes. The suite of resources and agreed expectations were also shared in an accessible way with parents so that they understood what schools and other settings should be delivering and could have renewed confidence in the support available.

What was the impact?



The project has been able to demonstrate impact in two of the four areas captured by the SEND Effective Practice Evidence Framework, through a range of qualitative data sources, including external public review.

1. Feedback from professionals

Internally gathered feedback from SENCOs and Portsmouth's PCF (Portsmouth Parent Voice / PPV) suggests the 2018 and 2022 OAP resources are widely used by schools in Portsmouth. The language of 'OAP' is referenced more regularly by SENCOs during Inclusion Support Panels.

Meanwhile external inspection suggests provision for disabled pupils and pupils with SEN is becoming more consistent in Portsmouth schools, as a result of the OAP work undertaken since 2018. As the 2019 [SEND Local Area Inspection](#) identified:

"Schools make effective use of the helpful Ordinarily Available Provision documentation that describes clearly what schools and settings should provide for all their children and young people with SEND. Many professionals explained how they use this material to plan support and hold each other to account. As a result, provision for children and young people with SEND is becoming more consistent."

Portsmouth Parent Voice reported using the OAP resources in their conversations with parents around the support available to their children:

"[The PCF] use the OAP to support families to understand the universal offer of support available to their children and young people within their education setting. This has been incredibly useful for our families whose young people would not meet the criteria for an EHCP but still need additional support."

SENCOs have reported the impact of the OAP resources on their conversations with parents about support pathways:

"Once parents see the right support in place in school and their child progressing, they are less inclined to push for an EHCP."

2. Improving outcomes

Data on educational outcomes in the period 2018-2023 tell a limited picture, given the disruption to education and changes to assessment practice during the pandemic. In addition, Portsmouth's approach to OAP was one of several factors that aimed to address outcomes for children on SEN support, so a robust causal link cannot be drawn.

Nonetheless, At KS2 and KS4, the attainment and progress of pupils on SEN Support² in Portsmouth has historically been below national average. Attainment data suggest that these gaps have closed marginally since 2017/18:

- ✦ The KS2 RWM gap closed from 12 percentage points (2017/18) to 8 percentage points (2021/22)
- ✦ The KS4 A8 gap closed from 7.7 (2017/18) to 7.5 (2022/23)
- ✦ The KS4 P8 gap closed from 0.6 (2017/18) to 0.52 (2022/23)

² % meeting expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2; Attainment 8 and Progress 8 scores at KS4

Attainment gaps between pupils with SEN Support and those without identified SEND within Portsmouth have also decreased slightly since 2017/18:

- ✦ The KS2 attainment gap reduced from 55 percentage points (2017/18) to 46 (2021/22)
- ✦ The KS4 attainment gap reduced from 21 points (2017/18) to 17 points (2022/23)
- ✦ The KS4 progress gap reduced from 0.87 (2017/18) to 0.7 (2022/23)

However, these trends sit within the context of slight declines in outcomes for pupils with no identified SEND, as well as modest gains in attainment for pupils with SEN Support.

What were the key actions and practices involved?

The work was led by a team of SENCOs – two primary and one secondary – with input from SENCOs across the city through the SENCO Network. Specialists were also involved from each of the areas of need including: the EP Team, Therapies Service, CAMHs, the outreach service, multi-agency behaviour support service, ethnic minority achievement service, multi-agency behaviour support services and vision and hearing specialist teacher advisers.

It was crucial to have input from SENCOs who would be using the resources to ensure that whilst the expectations might be challenging for some schools, they needed to be realistic. The SENCOs brought different experiences of what they did or could provide and were able to agree on the final draft.

Since the publication of its updated OAP resources in 2018 and 2022 Portsmouth has been approached by around 20 LAs, primarily in the South East region and has supported these authorities to formulate their own OAP guidance, adapted to their local context.

Key features of the work were:

- ✦ **Co-production:** rather than send the OAP resources to SENCOs for feedback, the decision was taken to work collaboratively on drafts with a small group of SENCOs, to ensure the style and tone of the resources was right for schools and that the expectations would be seen as challenging but reasonable for the majority. SENCOs were instrumental in the drafting process, making key decisions around the phrasing and terminology used in the resources based on what they saw as relevant and workable in their own settings.
- ✦ **Consistent language:** Ordinarily Available Provision proved to have currency as a well-understood and widely used term, alongside references to the 'needs led city': both terms were used consistently during the work and across the resources produced, which helped to build awareness and consensus behind their adoption.



- ★ **Attention to presentation:** although also available online, the printed OAP resources have helped the work to have physical, visible presence in schools. Most SENCOs have a hard copy of the resources and can request additional hard copies – for instance to use in INSET sessions. 1,000 copies of the OAP resources have been printed in total and distributed to the city's 63 schools: 500 copies of the 2018 resources (all of which were distributed) and 500 copies of the 2022 resources (400 of which have currently been distributed).

How has the work been sustained?

The work initially required funding of ~0.4 FTE in total to cover seconded primary and secondary SENCOs, and now requires around 10 days of capacity a year, including outreach SENCO time. The OAP work in Portsmouth has been sustained for 8 years to date and is now considered Business as Usual.



	<p>Resources required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Financial investment ✓ Human resources Physical space 	<p>Value for money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sustained £ needed ✓ Cost neutral Savings (+outcomes) 	
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Finding out more

Contact to find out more	Sarah Christopher, PEP and School Inclusion Manager sarah.christopher@portmsouthcc.gov.uk
Useful resources and links	Ordinarily Available Provision 2022 (Portsmouth Education Partnership)

