

Early Help & Preventative Services

A Holistic Approach to Improved Pupil Outcomes in Primary Schools

Update Report: **Programme Ideation**

Introduction

An initial review of data and performance indicators within the Education & Young People's Services directorate identified the potential for services to be developed to support schools and families in reducing the number of pupils in primary schools in Thanet being excluded. Further insight and analysis was completed to identify the scale of the problem.

This project (A Holistic Approach to Improved Pupil Outcomes in Primary Schools) has been established with the following aims;

- Gain a greater understanding of the reasons attributing to high levels of exclusion amongst some primary schools
- Gain a greater understanding of which initiatives, programmes and interventions have the greatest impact in reducing exclusions and improving outcomes for children.
- Design, test and implement programmes and strategies which have an impact in improving outcomes for pupils

The project will embed a Theory of Change approach within the methodology ensuring that any work has a causality focus.

Workshops have been delivered with multi-disciplinary groups which have; supported the interpretation of the insight and analysis; completed causality modelling activities; identified the programme structure; and agreed the principles of programme generation.

The below information is a summary of information gathered through analysis and workshop delivery.

The Problem

In recent years too many children have been either directly or indirectly excluded from primary schools in Thanet.

Exclusion from school often exacerbates other disadvantage experienced by a child. Whilst the experience of a single disadvantage can create difficulties for young people, multiple disadvantages can often interact and exacerbate one another, leading to more harmful and costly outcomes for both the young person and society as a whole.

The impact of exclusion has a substantial cost to an individual and society. The total lifetime cost of permanent exclusions from school in Kent totals approximately £117 million in the last 8 years (New Philanthropy Capital).

A survey conducted by HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Youth Justice Board of 15-18 year olds held in custody revealed that:

- 40 per cent of the young men and 53 per cent of the young women reported that they were aged 14 or under when they were last in school. This figure rose to 100 per cent in one of the female establishments

- 90 per cent of the young men and 75 per cent of the young women had been excluded from school

Exclusion from school is statistically linked to deprivation. The likelihood of a child being excluded from school is increased within communities where there are higher levels of deprivation. Some of the most deprived communities in Kent are located within Thanet.

The Vision for the Future

Every child and young person achieves their potential in life, whatever their background. Every child and young person will be safe; their education, social and emotional needs will be met and their outcomes will be good. They will be able to contribute positively to their communities and those around them, now and in the future, including active engagement in learning and employment.

The needs of the family will be identified as potential risks to a child and young person's positive engagement in school and community and exposure to risk will be reduced through strong family bonds.

The school is the driver to developing a strong, engaging and connected community where the most vulnerable have an identity. Services work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the family, the child, the school and the community.

The Outcomes

Through the successful delivery of a multi-family community led prevention programme based within the school the following outcomes are anticipated;

- Improved academic performance
- Improvement in the child's prosocial interactions and behaviours
- Reduced child aggression and inappropriate behaviour
- Improvement in parental pro-school attitudes
- Improvement in the connectedness of the community
- Improvement in positive family functioning
- Improvement in the efficacy of parents

The Theory of Change

Theory of Change is a process used to enable us to describe theories and assumptions, and the required evidence, supporting the rationale for change.

Through the delivery of a causality modelling workshop involving representative agencies of the Thanet Childrens Board an assumption has been made that family issues, which are often complex, are associated to the existence of risks to the child, family, community and school.

Through supporting and enabling parents to more effectively protect their families against risks by strengthening relationships with their child, their peers, their school and their community;

- the family will become stronger and reduce exposure to risk;
- children will develop better, be more supported to cope with issues of disadvantage and be able to self-regulate;
- the family will become more engaged in their child's school and education;
- children will be less likely to engage in anti-social and harmful behaviour;
- children will thrive in their school and community.

The Programme Structure

The Thanet Childrens Board agree to commit to the delivery of a programme of 2 to 3 years which can be effectively evaluated for impact in order to determine the benefits of a programme.

The programme will have three inter-connected domains of focus identified to achieve optimum impact; parental engagement, whole school support; and pupil activity. The programme will be delivered across 3 schools identified as having one or more of the following characteristics;

1. community has higher rates than average of deprivation
2. the school has higher than average rates of exclusion
3. the school has higher than average rates of absence
4. the school has a willingness to engage with the programme

Governance of the programme will be provided through Early Help & Preventative Services and the Thanet Childrens Board. Progress reports will be provided to each at an agreed frequency.

The programme will be evaluated to identify impact and to determine whether the programme could be scaled up and rolled out to other areas.

Programme design will be completed by a multi-disciplinary group emphasising the need to co-design and co-deliver activities. Wherever possible activities should be community led and consider the sustainability and fidelity of work.

Programme Concepts – Parental Engagement

Determined through delivery of workshop activities and research from national What Works Centres the following concepts should be considered within the Parental Engagement domain of programme activity.

Who is this programme aimed at?

Parents and carers of children identified as at risk and aged between 5 and 10, and who wish to support their child's development and engagement in their school and community.

Where could this programme be delivered?

Within schools engaged in the programme.

How could this programme work?

- Engagement in the programme is incentivised
- A fixed period programme is delivered to a group of parents and children within a school after school hours once a week (for 8-12 weeks)
- A fixed period programme focusses on developing communication skills; the ability to manage stress; parent and child play activities; budgeting; meal preparation and cooking; and the skills to organise and manage group activities
- The fixed period programme is co-delivered by school staff and community based practitioners with a degree of group led agenda setting.
- At the end of the fixed period programme parents pass/qualify based on engagement with the programme and an event is held.
- The group of parents who pass/qualify are provided with a resource/budget to maintain the delivery of the group for 2 years (with minimal support) with a focus on community led peer to peer development which can be delivered during the school day outside of the school. These parents can also be used to deliver a following wave of the programme.

Programme Concepts – Whole School Support

Determined through delivery of workshop activities and research from national What Works Centres the following concepts should be considered within the Whole School Support domain of programme activity;

Who is this programme aimed at?

School teaching and non-teaching staff.

Where could this programme be delivered?

Within the school and utilising training days/

How could this programme work?

- A training package will be delivered to provide tools and strategies to develop the early identification of neglect and the actions that should be taken including awareness of signs of escalation leading to neglect.
- The training package will include coping strategies for school staff who are exposed to signs of neglect within their pupils.

- It will also include tools and strategies to encourage appropriate information sharing from children. The package will include ideas and strategies on how to improve the school environment to allow space and time for staff to be mindful and implement coping strategies.

Programme Concepts – Pupil Activity

Determined through delivery of workshop activities and research from national What Works Centres the following concepts should be considered within the Pupil Activity domain of programme activity;

Who is this programme aimed at?

All primary school pupils

Where could this programme be delivered?

Within a primary school and classroom

How could this programme work?

- Activities are delivered that help children feel better about themselves
- Activities are built into the curriculum within the school
- Co-delivered by teachers and community based practitioners in group sessions for all pupils.
- Additional counselling support is available for children when more complex needs are identified.
- Programme principles are: doing good things makes you feel good about yourself, making good choices helps you create a cycle of positivity
- Pupils learn about nutrition, exercise and good hygiene and sleep habits.
- Pupils learn about treating other people in a manner in which you would like to be treated - Pupils learn about empathy and respect for others.
- Pupils learn about goal setting and persistence.
- Creative sessions are delivered to help pupils explore coping strategies.