Special Partnership Trust /ARB Pilot Project – June 2017 update

Who are the Special Partnership Trust?

The Special Partnership Trust (SPT) is an equitable partnership of four of the Special Schools in Cornwall: all are ambitious for excellence in learning and support and all have secured a good or outstanding rating during their last Ofsted inspections. The SPT has been a Multi-Academy Trust, or ‘MAT’ since September 2016 and is constantly seeking to improve its offer to young people and their families through collaboration, challenge and co-operation.

Rationale of SPT/ARB Pilot Project

The recent LA Specialist Provision review highlighted the need to develop and further support the existing Area Resource Base (ARB) provision across the county, specifically where there is geographical isolation and limited access to specialist staff and resources. Currently ARB provision has pupils registered on the mainstream school role, being staffed and resourced in a variety of organisational models. This can present challenges in terms of specialist skills needed to support an increasingly complex range of need. The provision needs to be staffed, resourced and supported appropriately so that there is consistency of quality in teaching, learning and care for the benefit of ARB pupils.

The Special Partnership Trust is working in conjunction with the local authority, and a number of ARBs, to explore a new model for ARB provision. ARBs will continue to be an integral part of the mainstream school, led and supported by the SPT, with the pupils named on roll with one of the Special Schools but educated in their existing ARB provision. There are potentially significant benefits to be achieved for pupils and staff in both communities, by accessing and enhancing the collective expertise of this ambitious SEN partnership. Pupils will benefit from a wider range of specialist resources and learning opportunities whilst staff are supported by an extensive training and research network.

Current stage of development

The project is now gaining in momentum, with partnership and full support from the Local Authority.

- The ARB Lead Practitioner is gathering information from a number of interested schools as the first steps of the joint working process, ensuring openness and transparency at each stage

- The Local Authority are working with the Special Partnership Trust and have determined a draft project plan, to include discussions regarding financial viabilities, legal arrangements, co-production with parents and the model of ARB agreements

- Project outline discussions have been held with mainstream school staff, to be followed in the Autumn term by a full parent and pupil consultation should schools decide they would like to proceed with the project.

How can schools express an interest?

Any primary or secondary schools with ARBs who wish to explore this further, including primary ARBs who want to find out more or become involved should contact:

Kat Rowe, ARB Lead Practitioner, Special Partnership Trust
krowe@specialpartnership.org 07720 299678

The next update regarding the project will be issued at the end of July