

## Nottingham City's Local Area Inspection

**How effective is the local area in identifying, assessing and meeting needs and improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) 0-25**

Children's Partnership Board  
Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022

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# SEND Local Area Inspection Framework

Joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection

The inspection took place between Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November and Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The team comprised: 2 Ofsted HMIs, 1 CQC inspector and 2 QA inspectors

The inspectors determined their schedule which included:

- meeting with children and young people
- meeting with parents and carers including Rainbow Parent & Carer Forum
- a focus group with a range of early years providers
- a meeting with the Designated Clinical Officer & Designated Medical Officer
- visits to seven nominated education settings - 2 Primary academies; 2 secondary academies; 2 special schools (1 academy / 1 local authority) and Nottingham College
- visits to a range of health providers
- 18 focus groups with officers from early years, education, health, social care, Futures, and community providers



# Inspection outcome

- The SEND local area inspection does not create a graded judgement.
- It leads to a published report letter that gives a narrative judgement about how well the local area has implemented the SEND Reforms for children and young people with SEND and their families. The report identifies strengths and areas for development.
- However if significant weaknesses are identified during an inspection a Written Statement of Action is issued. This is a formal requirement for improvement with Ofsted and CQC oversight.
- The inspection did not identify any significant weaknesses in Nottingham City's local area SEND provision that would require them to issue a Written Statement of Action.

# How does Nottingham compare?

- The poorest areas of England are “most likely” to have “significant weaknesses” in their special educational needs and disabilities provision (Ofsted).
- Following inspection, two thirds of areas in the “most deprived quintile” were required to produce and submit a written statement of action (WSoA), compared to half of areas in the “least deprived quintile”.
- 80% of local areas inspections during 2021 received a written statement of action.
- 50% of Nottingham’s statistical neighbours received a written statement of action.
- Of the 8 English core cities, 62% received a written statement of action.

# Strengths

“Area leaders were quick to respond to the SEND reforms. They undertook significant and timely actions when the reforms were introduced. Education, health and social care leaders and professionals share a common ambition for Nottingham to be a truly inclusive place to live.”

“Leaders demonstrate their commitment to inclusion through prioritising funding to meet children and young people’s needs at the earliest possible stage and in their own community.”

“Leaders understand the current strengths and areas to improve in Nottingham’s SEND arrangements. There is an appropriate strategy in place to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.”

“Professionals work together effectively across services to identify the needs of children and young people with SEND. This effective work continues during the pandemic.”

“Children and young people with complex needs benefit from early identification of their needs.”

“Ahead of guidance from the government, the Designated Clinical Officer team worked with Nottingham City’s and Nottinghamshire’s public health and education teams, to assess and agree interim steps to allow the safe reintroduction of children requiring aerosol generating procedure back to school during the pandemic.”

“Early years provision for children with SEND is strong. The ‘Small Steps, Big Changes’ team supports families and helps children with SEND to develop their communication skills and understand their emotions and behaviour.”

“Children and young people with SEND have access to a variety of health services, including the school nurse ‘Text Health’ text service for 11- to 19- year-olds.”



# Strengths

“The introduction of the ‘Routes to Inclusion’ initiative and the work of the Intensive Support Team is having a positive impact on supporting schools and colleges to reduce the use of exclusions.”

“Good partnership working with schools and early years.”

“The virtual school carefully oversees children and young people with SEND who are also in the care of the local authority.”

“Highly effective partnership working through ‘Futures’ supports young people to prepare for adulthood. ‘Futures’ provides a range of services for young people with SEND.”

“A well-planned personal budget process provides clear information to parents about what is available to them and how budgets can be spent.”

“There is wide-ranging support for children and young people’s social and emotional well-being and mental health needs, as well as for parents and professionals working with the family.”

“Settings, schools and colleges, in partnership with area leaders, support children and young people with SEND to make progress. Those with complex needs make strong progress.”

# Areas for development

“An external review has made recommendations to improve commissioning arrangements. Leaders have responded to these recommendations by establishing structures to strengthen joint commissioning arrangements. Appropriate plans are in place to develop a joint commissioning strategy in the near future. The current absence of an overall joint commissioning strategy limits the area’s ability to use commissioning as a tool for improvement.”

“Leaders have developed a coherent plan to support children and young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood. The plan identifies what should happen at each stage of a child or young person’s school life. The pandemic delayed implementation of this new consistent approach.”

“Educational outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Nottingham are improving but are still too low. Leaders are driving necessary improvements, including training for staff. Some actions have been delayed by the pandemic.”

## Areas for development

“Area leaders have not communicated their strategy for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND clearly enough. A large proportion of parents do not understand or appreciate the strategy. Many do not know where to find information and guidance to improve outcomes for their children.”

“The online local offer for children and young people with SEND is not well publicised. It does not capture all the services and activities. There is no effective oversight of the local offer website to ensure that it is well maintained and accessible to all parents and carers.”

“The neurodevelopmental pathway is not communicated well enough to parents. As a result, some parents have unrealistic expectations of what support their children will receive once diagnosis has been confirmed.”

“There are limited social and recreational opportunities in the community that children and young people with SEND can access.”

“The short-break offer does not currently meet the range of diverse needs and disabilities of children and young people and their families. Some parents find it difficult to access the short breaks and respite provision they want. Leaders are working to address the gaps in provision for short breaks.”

## Next steps

Align the findings of the inspection report in future SEND plans, the refresh of the joint strategic needs assessment SEND Chapter to update the current self-evaluation framework and action plan.

Review SEND governance and strategic oversight arrangement

Review and refresh the current SEND strategy & priorities via co-production with all stakeholders including children with SEND and their families

Develop a local area communication strategy to improve co-production and engagement and ensure children, young people with SEND and their families have access to clear, up to date and relevant information (consideration of EAL and digital poverty)

Develop a joint commissioning strategy and alignment of local area priorities (ICS)

Improve the data and analysis infrastructure and resources to measure the impact of interventions on outcomes for children; target resources in the areas of highest need and strategically plan for the longer term.

Implement a collaborative Quality Assurance process of EHC plans including quality of social care and health reports

Children and young people in education settings told the inspectors that they feel safe and well supported in schools and are proud of living in Nottingham.

They also told inspectors about their aspirations for the future. At the final feedback session the inspection team described our young people “as a credit to Nottingham City”.

Link to the Nottingham City Joint Ofsted & CQC SEND Local Area Inspection Report Letter

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/8053>

3

