

## Locality SEND Support in Mainstream Schools A Brief Guide for Parents and Carers.

In order to improve the quality and timing of support to Croydon resident children with special needs and disabilities (SEND) our school, in association with the Local Authority has embarked on an exciting initiative to provide early support and care. The project is called “Locality SEND Support” (LSS).



The aim of the project is to provide earlier and better targeted help and support to SEND youngsters by working with groups of schools who are all local to each other and better placed to understand the needs of their children. Each group has been given a sum of money to intervene early in order to directly support pupils in their local area. Each local area has been given the flexibility to spend this in the way that best helps children with emerging challenges to their learning and progress.

Two Area SEND Leads who are special needs professionals will directly support LSS schools, both to use their existing resources in the best interest of the young people and to help distribute additional funding where schools may have insufficient resource to meet an emergent need. The Area SEND Leads will work very closely with school SENDCos, parents and other SEND professionals, such as Educational Psychologists to provide and signpost support to SEND pupils. This local approach will enable us to better understand the needs of the children in our care and get help to them quickly so that they may catch-up with their learning and overcome their challenges.

SEND Locality Support is not aimed at children who already have an EHCP nor at youngsters in special schools or enhanced learning provisions. The project is focused on working with local schools to identify young people who are demonstrating a special need and who require early help to support this need.

Whilst we expect many students to benefit from this locally provided and targeted help, we understand that this may not work for some students who present or develop complex and exceptional needs. If this is the case each local area will ensure that applications for EHCP assessments are submitted promptly with all the relevant information including from outside professionals.

There is nothing in this initiative that will take away the right of a parent to request an Education Health Care needs assessment. The sincere hope, however, is that early intervention will ensure that the correct strategies, support, and therapies are offered in a timely manner. Hence, by the time statutory assessment is considered, funding will already be in place as will a dialogue between schools, children and parents which will help to build trust and a common agreement of what is required in the best interests of each child.