SEN REFORMS AT BROMLEY COLLEGE

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National Policy Context
The Case for Change – the current system is not working for families and children:

- Too many children with SEN have their needs picked up late
- Young people with SEN do less well than their peers at school and college and are more likely to be NEET at 18
- Schools and colleges can focus too much on the SEN label rather than meeting the child’s needs
- Too many families have to battle to find out what support is available

The Vision

- Children’s SEN are picked up early, support in place quickly
- Staff have the right knowledge, understanding and skills
- Parents know what to expect from their local school, college, LA and local services to provide
- Children and young people’s aspirations raised through more focus on life outcomes
- Integrated assessment and a single Education, Health and care plan from birth to 25
- Greater control for parents and young people over services
Bromley Context

- One of 20 national pathfinders
- Poor facilities for LDD students
- LDD provision for 800 students with mild to moderate needs, of whom approx. 80 are High Need students
- Specialist residential provider within the Borough
- Three special schools
- Political desire to improve local chance/cflier
- EFA Demographic Growth Bid
- Focus on transition to adulthood

Pathfinder

Bromley is a Pathfinder borough and we were invited to join them in partnership to explore what young people with SEN really wanted out of life - they want the same as any other young person, good life outcomes. These focus on four key pathways; Employment, independent Living, Friends, Relationships and Accessing the Community and Being Healthy. These four pathways are fundamental to the EHC Planning process.

We then worked with the local authority, parents and the special schools to run a transition programme in June/July 2013 to introduce the 10 young people who had been chosen to pilot the new proposals, including the EHC Plan.

These young people have now been with us for 1 year and are thriving on their new programmes.

This is our story...
The Nido Volans Centre

- The Nido Volans Centre opened its doors in September 2013. With the new facilities came the new curriculum. We decided that if we were going to embrace the changes under the young people and families act then we would have to adapt our curriculum to meet the needs of all young people including those with severe and complex. We enrolled 50 Young people onto the Personal Progression Pathway and in line with your EHC and their long term outcomes and aspirations created an individual timetable for each and every one of them.

- Students attend their programme for 4 days per week, and we provide support according to their needs thus ensuring they can fully access the curriculum. For some students that means having a 1:1 support, other require 1:3 support. The students have really enjoyed their timetables. Quotes from some of them include "I like my course, particularly cooking and art", I have learned lots of new things. "I have made new friends and I enjoy coming to college". Others said they enjoyed using computers and liked going out for walks as part of their sport and leisure lessons. One student said that they had enjoyed doing their work experience in the Chef's Table".
What Bromley College is doing to implement the reforms

1. Strong Partnership working with Bromley LA
   - Partnership working with Bromley LA to develop processes to support the changes. We have redeveloped robust assessment processes and review paperwork so they are in line with the new reforms.
   - Working with Bromley LA to develop a longer specialist transition for students and families that need more focussed support and find change particularly challenging. This will be a year-long transition and will give us the opportunity to assess the students while they are at College (Context: 2 or 3 learners had to be placed in specialist provision because they were so anxious and had this transition been available these students would probably have gone to Bromley).
   - Introduced a pilot (10 young people) from September 2013 with Bromley LA to test the EHC plans and our new review procedures and documentation.
   - Introduced more person centred reviews as per the SEN reform. Person centred reviews are being held at the College in partnership with Bromley LA aligning to the current code of practice.
What Bromley College is doing to implement the reforms

2. Developing Partnership working with other LAs and partners
   - We are now looking to implement what we have done with Bromley LA with other
     boroughs
   - Partnership with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust to understand how to
     embed/integrate speech and language into the core provision and to help the
     College support students with more complex communication needs
   - Further developed links with special schools
     - (existing) deliver special school link programme to aid transition
     - (new this year) special schools are doing their own transition programme
       within the College through weekly use of college facilities
     - (planned for next year) extending the above to include Marlborough special
       school (Bexley LA) as well the more focussed link programme with Bromley
       special schools

What Bromley College is doing to implement the reforms

3. College initiatives in response to the Code
   - Adapted existing facilities and we can now offer personal care and offer places to
     more complex learners
   - Redesigned Curriculum in line with the 4 life pathways under the pathfinder project
     which are: (1) a job (2) good health (3) independent living (4) accessing the
     community
   - Introduced individual timetables for all students on personal progression pathways
     in line with long term outcomes and aspirations as highlighted on the EHC plan
   - Participated in more external events e.g. Bromley parent voice and visited schools
     in addition to offering more individual visits to our facilities prior to application to
     discuss individual need
   - Lead College in the hub for "Finished at School" run by Ambitious for Autism to
     improve transition for students with Autism
   - Meeting with parents/schools to change perception of LDD provision at the College
Problems that Bromley College has had to overcome

- Perception of some parents that specialist residential is preferable but this perception is slowly improving. We are working closely with parents/schools to enable this perception to change.
- We know there are other elements that need to be in place to enable young people to remain in the borough and we are aware that Bromley LA is working through these issues to find solutions.
- We are being asked to take on more students with Behaviour that Challenges and working closely with Osteas and LA to deliver training and better understand how we can support these students.
- The transition arrangements from mainstream schools needs to improve in line with the good practice of the special schools. We are looking to introduce a transition officer to support this.
- Under the Code of Practice we will be expected to make offers by February which is a challenging timescale which parents also need to work to. We are adapting our business cycle.
- The increased time and resources to interview, assess and complete required new processes and paperwork is an issue and we are increasing training and working with Bromley LA to overcome this.

Making the Reforms work at Bromley College

- Partnerships, Partnerships, Partnerships! A lot of time and effort to make these work.
- A commitment to operational partnership working to discuss young people issues and needs on a regular basis (fortnightly)
- Staff training and development – under the new EHC, staff needed to be up-skilled to offer courses to learners with wider needs and this has included:
  - Makaton training
  - Manual handling using hoists to support young people with personal care (train the trainer annual training),
  - Speech and language therapy and training on how to support student with visual impairment and the use of PECs to support students with non-verbal communication
  - Person centred planning training to support student reviews
  - Dysphagia training for learning support assistants
- Regular contact and working with parents – regular coffee mornings
- Review the curriculum and focus on life outcomes
- Person centred reviews – training for all staff
The Positive Aspects For Students and College From The Reforms

- Meaningful curriculum tailored towards what young people want
- Changes implemented are improving parent perceptions
- The College reputation with partners
- Encouraging young people to stay local with existing networks and communities
- Positive partnerships with Local Authorities
- Influencing policy – the College has been part of the Pathfinder borough working with the DE to develop the Code of Practice

Robert Akers: Greengoose Performing Arts – Entry Level

This is Robert's first course with Bromley College. He joined us from Dorton College in September 2013 and from September 2014 he will be progressing to a 3-year Performing Arts Course at Kent College
Outstanding issues

- Tribunals – Bromley College has not yet been involved in tribunals but important that appropriate language is used on the assessments
- Need to have coherent procedures/processes for all LA Assessments, Review processes and documentation
- Education, health and care teams need to be joined up at LAs
- Lack of consistency with EHC plans - we will have different versions from each borough as no set format has been agreed
- Still uncertainty and nervousness in the level of involvement of FE Colleges in contributing specifically to the outcomes section of the EHC plan. EHC is a statutory plan and should there be an appeal the College will need to be involved