

# **Blackpool Enhanced Reception Offer**

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# **The Challenge:**

## **Not enough appropriate school placements for four-year-olds in reception**

# Why?

- ☐ Increasing number of 4-year-olds with plans
- ☐ Significantly more complexity of need
- ☐ Mainstream schools not confident at meeting the needs of Blackpool children with special needs (increase in refusals to consultations and placements breaking down)
- ☐ Mainstream school buildings not able to meet the needs of the changing cohort (increase in capital requests for sensory rooms, toilet changing and break out spaces)
- ☐ Lack of parental confidence in mainstream schools to meet needs (SEND inspection 2022)

# Where we started...

In December 2022 we reviewed all the EHCPs of that current reception cohort as well as the supporting information of children undergoing assessment. We were looking for recommendations for provision and whether we needed to commission additional special school placements or advisory teacher support.

What we found is that the majority of the children had a very similar description of their needs (regardless of whether they were in mainstream or a specialist setting)

- ☐ Not toilet trained
- ☐ Dysregulated behaviour
- ☐ Support required for speech
- ☐ Support required for sensory regulation
- ☐ Waiting for assessment from Blenheim (ASD)

**There were no obvious markers indicating whether a child needed specialist or mainstream provision**

# What we did to improve children's outcomes and experiences

# 1st Year – Pilot (2023-2024)

We worked with 3 primary schools to develop a specialist offer of provision that could be delivered within mainstream:

- Classes between 6 and 8 children
- Teacher led
- Commissioned support from a special school
- Therapeutic support
- Additional training support

Annual review gathered all views as to whether the child:

- Remained in mainstream
- Moved to a resource provision
- Moved to a specialist setting

# 1st Year – Pilot (2023-2024)

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children were able to go to school with their siblings</li><li>• Upskilled mainstream schools</li><li>• Improved inclusion within mainstream</li><li>• Raised expectations and confidence for parents</li><li>• A significant number of children at the end of the year did not need to move into specialist provisions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not enough time to embed support</li><li>• Some school changes in personnel</li><li>• Some environmental concerns limited progress</li><li>• Some placements broke down as we did not intervene early enough</li><li>• Parents felt we did not communicate enough</li></ul>

# 2nd Year (2024 – 2025)

We built on the learning from the previous year and opened 6 enhanced reception classes to meet the needs of 42 children who would have previously gone into special schools.

We also delivered:

- Half termly support from Advisory Teacher
- Termly review of progress with Advisory Teacher
- Half termly enhanced cluster meetings
- Curriculum development
- Assessment review
- Creation of a parental information booklet
- Termly meetings with SEND Officer to review placements
- Created application process for schools interested in creating their own class.



# Resources

- Teacher (top of MPS with 2 SEN) (incl. allowance for PPA)
- Support staff (TA2 Grade D, term-time only, 32.5 hrs p.w.)
- Lunchtime supervisors (Grade A, term-time only, 7.5 hrs p.w.)

Premises

Resources

Supervision

Therapies

Capital

# What is the impact?

- 80% of the children are continuing in the enhanced classroom for a second year
- 10% of the children are moving into mainstream classrooms at the end of this academic year
- 10% of the children are moving into specialist settings at the end of this academic year
- All settings are continuing with the provision for a second year
- 3 settings have requested to take an additional cohort next academic year

# Parental Feedback

"What I like is that no matter what, the staff always put the children first and make it their all to help them improve. My child has improved massively on everything all thanks to them. I have nothing bad to say about any of them. They don't just support my child they also support me, and it means everything when you are on your own."

"The Blossoms unit at school\* has enabled my daughter to attend mainstream school but also caters for her needs with the support of the staff allowing The Blossoms to be her 'safe space' should the classroom get too overwhelming for her. Since starting at school, my daughter has come on leaps and bounds developmentally and academically with the amazing support both she and I receive."

"I am really pleased with the progress my child has made. I feel the class has been excellent for her and she has made some really good progress. I'm pleased she has been able to access, and cope well, with some mainstream provision." [Parent of pupil who is moving into the mainstream Year 1 class after spending one year in the enhanced classroom.](#)

"I like this school a lot because my child is always happy when he is in school. He loves his teachers and he has learnt a lot since being here. He is progressing every day and always impressing us when he comes home from school."

# Next steps

- September 2025 we are opening 5 new classrooms totaling 73 spaces (for reception and year 1s)
- 2 settings will be converting into permanent SEND units
- All enhanced placements from September 2025 are for 2 years
- We are adapting the model for year 7s
- Evaluate EHCPs to identify markers that will inform future placement planning