Time Limited Mainstream Inclusion Grant Report

Overview

Southampton City Council had allocated funding in the High Needs block to support the implementation of the SEND Mainstream Funding Cluster Model proposal (webpage: SEND Mainstream Funding Cluster Model (southampton.gov.uk)).

Due to the changed timeframe of the SEND Mainstream Funding Cluster Model proposal to include further co-production on the proposal in the Autumn Term of the 2024-2025 Academic Year and a trial of the process without funding in the Spring Term of the 2024-2025 academic year, a percentage of that allocated funding remained available.

We wanted to ensure that this allocated funding is used to support children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in our mainstream school communities.

As a result, we introduced the Time Limited Mainstream Inclusion Grant for mainstream school settings to access this allocated funding to support the development of a project based around Inclusive and SEND education to support students with SEND within the timeframe that the funding is allocated to.

This was a one-time process for mainstream settings to access which has formed as a result of the changes in the proposed time frame of the SEND Mainstream Funding Cluster Model proposal.

Funding

To reflect the varying school sizes across the city, we distributed the funding in the form of a grant that matches the size of a school. Settings were able to access a grant allocation that matched the population size of their school. This was as followed:

Small sized school (0-350 pupils) - £2500
Mid-sized school (351 – 800 pupils) - £3500
Large sized school (801 + pupils) - £5000

Settings could access either individual allocations or group allocations

Panel Review

All allocations were reviewed by a panel to ensure that proposed projects met the guidance for spend for the High Needs Funding Block.

The panel consisted of members of staff from:

- School representatives, including those in Headteacher and SENCo role
- Southampton City Council SEND and Education Team
- Parent/Carer Forum

The Panel will also conduct a review of the impact of the projects that have been funded from the grants after a period of two terms.

Key Themes and Focus Areas from Allocation

All grant allocations were awarded to mainstream schools either through individual allocations or group allocations. Below are some key themes and focus areas from the allocation information provided:

Key Themes

Sensory Rooms and Spaces

Many schools are focusing on creating or enhancing sensory rooms to support students with sensory processing needs. These spaces are designed to help students regulate their emotions and behaviours.

Emotional and Social Support

Projects aimed at improving social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) through various interventions, including Zones of Regulation, nurture groups, and emotional literacy programs.

Communication and Interaction

Several projects focus on improving communication skills for students with autism and other communication needs using tools like PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and Widgit.

Inclusive Teaching and Adaptive Learning

Schools are investing in training for staff on adaptive teaching strategies and inclusive practices to better support students with diverse needs in the classroom.

Outdoor and Practical Learning

Some projects emphasize the benefits of outdoor learning and practical skills-based activities, such as Forest Schools, to engage students and support their holistic development.

Assessment and Intervention Tools

There is a focus on purchasing assessment tools and intervention programs to identify and support students' specific learning needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Most Common Focus Areas

1. **SEMH (Social, Emotional, and Mental Health)**

   Approximately 60% of the projects focus on social, emotional, and mental health support. This is the most common focus area, with many projects aiming to support students' emotional regulation, reduce anxiety, and improve social skills.

2. **COG (Cognition and Learning)**

   Around 25% of the projects aim to improve cognition and learning, particularly through targeted interventions. Projects targeting cognitive development, particularly through literacy and numeracy interventions, are also prevalent.
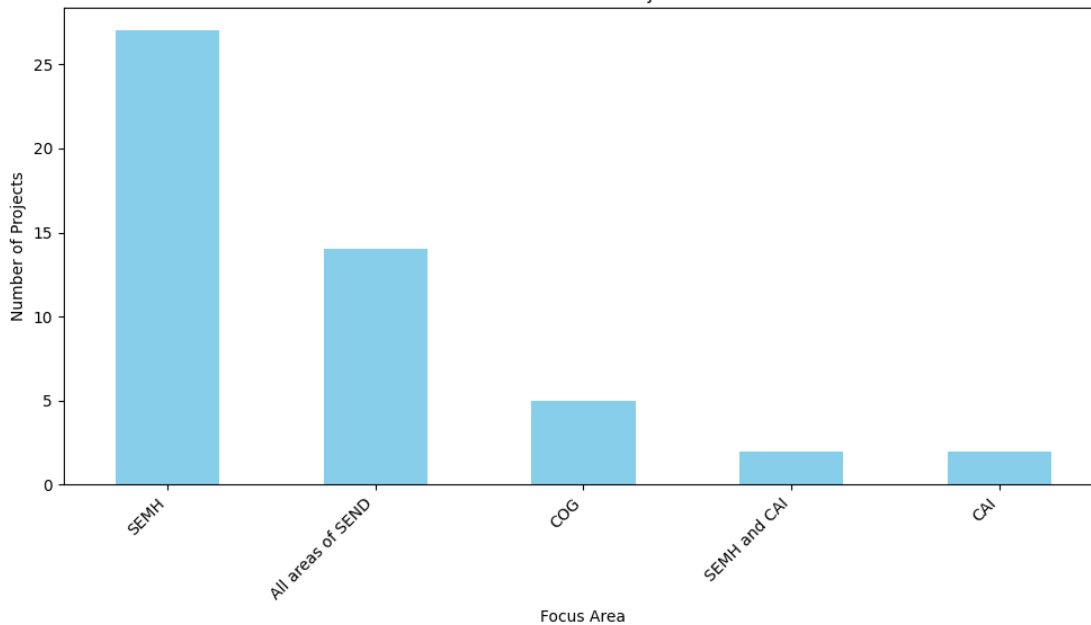
3. **CAI (Communication and Interaction)**

About 15% of the projects focus on communication and interaction improvements. Enhancing communication skills for students with autism and other communication needs is a significant focus.

Focus Areas of Projects
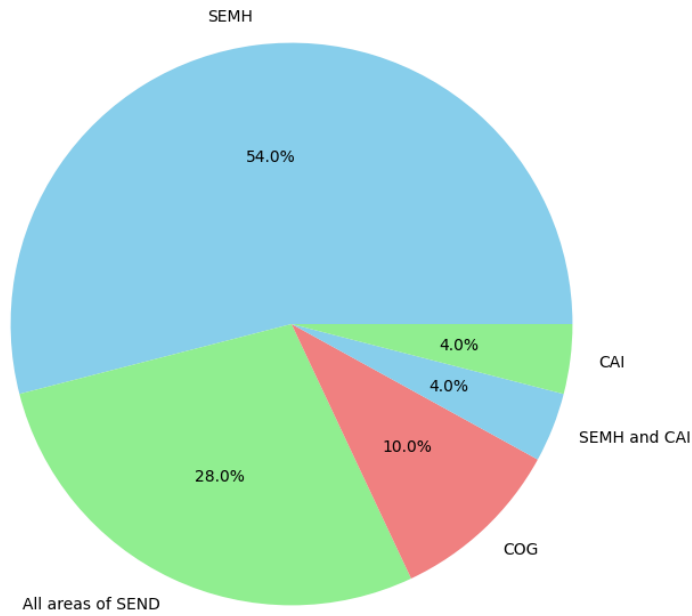
Focus Areas of Projects

Examples of Projects by Focus Area
- **SEMH:**
    - Project: Creating a sensory room to support emotional regulation.
    - Project: Implementing Zones of Regulation and Widget for inclusive teaching.
- **COG:**
    - Project: Using Dyslexia Gold and Widgits program to improve literacy skills.
    - Project: Implementing the White Rose Primary Intervention Programme for maths.
- **CAI:**
    - Project: Launching PECS to support communication for SEND pupils.
    - Project: Using Widgit to support communication and interaction needs.

Overall Insights

Emphasis on Mental Health and Emotional Support:

The strong focus on SEMH projects underscores the growing recognition of the importance of mental health in education. Schools are prioritising interventions that support emotional regulation, reduce anxiety, and improve social skills.

Holistic Approaches:

The combination of SEMH and CAI projects indicates that schools are adopting holistic approaches to support students with SEND. By addressing both emotional well-being and communication skills, these projects aim to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments.

Targeted Interventions:

The focus on cognition and learning projects highlights the need for targeted interventions to improve academic outcomes. Schools are investing in programs and resources that support literacy and numeracy development for students with learning difficulties.

Next Steps

- Share best practice for Mental Health and Emotional Support Initiatives:
    - Continue to prioritize funding and support for SEMH (Social, Emotional, and Mental Health) projects (such as the SEMH Graduated Approach and SEMH transition initiatives), as these are the most common and critical areas of need.
    - Share best practice on SEMH initiatives, particularly sensory room practice through various avenues (such as OAP guide, Inclusive Education Padlet, SEND/Inclusion Events, Cluster model pilot)
- Monitor and Evaluate Impact:

- o The Panel will conduct a review of the impact of the projects that have been funded from the grants after a period of two terms.
- Promote Collaboration and Sharing of Best Practices:
  - o Provide opportunities to share best practice from the projects, including presentation of success projects as events such as the SEND/Inclusion event 2025, SENCo Hub and at Cluster meetings as part of the pilot