

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 MARCH 2017

ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Report from: Councillor Potter – Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement

Summary

This report details the areas covered by the Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement and covers the period from September 2016 – March 2017. In the case of education services, it covers the results of the school year 2015-16 and activity during that year and the first half of the current school year.

1. Background

1.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and covered by the Portfolio Holder for Educational Attainment and Improvement, according to the Council's constitution are:

- Educational Improvement
- Further education
- Primary and Secondary Education
- Safeguarding
- School Organisation and Student Services
- School Services
- Schools Liaison

1.2 The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services – Lead Member is the designated lead member for children's services (LMCS) under the Children Act 2004. The Portfolio Holder is responsible for leadership, strategy and the effectiveness of education and children's social care.

2. Vision

2.1 All of our children and young people should have every opportunity to attend schools and move on to education, employment and training which will fulfil their potential. We want them to be resilient and prepared for adult life and that is why our vision is for an education sector rooted

in moral purpose; we believe that every child is a gift and all of our children and young people have the right to realise their talents in inclusive, aspirational school learning environments.

2.2 Our role as a local authority in education is also evolving. In the coming years, all Medway schools are likely to become academies and although we will not run the schools, we will still challenge the sector to continue the improvement in school standards. We will also provide strategic leadership in school organisation, and we will lead partnership working, including through our traded services offer to the sector. All children attending academies are still Medway children and we will fulfil our wider responsibility to ensure all our young people have every opportunity to realise their full potential.

3. Overview

3.1 Educational Improvement

Overview

- 3.1.1 Results for the school year 2015-16 showed improvement across all phases. The details are given at 2.3 below. The social profile of Medway means that we would expect our pupils to achieve at national average. In 2016-17, Medway was above national average at Early Years and Foundation Stage, Phonics, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 4 (5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths; GCSE English and Maths). Whilst still below national at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 5 (A levels), in both stages there was improvement and Medway's position in the national rankings has risen.
- 3.1.2 The School Challenge and Improvement Team works with maintained primary schools to influence improvement in school standards and OFSTED judgements. The assessment arrangements changed in Key Stage 1 and 2 from levels to expected progress, and this required significant work from the team to train school staff and apply a rigorous and comprehensive moderation programme. No school was found to have failed to comply with the national arrangements.
- 3.1.3 The Accelerated Learning Programme for 2015-16 comprised 3 strands: a Securing Outcomes Training course for Year 2 and 6 teachers of Phonics; National Leaders in Education (NLEs) from London supporting 15 Medway schools; as well as the Beanstalk volunteer reading scheme. Some schools, both maintained and academies, were funded to take part in the programme with resourcing from the Schools Forum.
- 3.1.4 In 2016-17, the Programme has 4 strands. The Securing Outcomes course has two elements – targeted and universal – for which schools pay; NLEs supporting 6 schools; Leadership development through internships; and a reading programme called Power of Reading. Nearly all the schools which used Beanstalk last year have purchased Beanstalk themselves this year, indicating the benefits of the programme.
- 3.1.5 The Governor Service has a comprehensive and popular training offer and provides a clerking service to 23 governing bodies. This is a vital

service to support school improvement as it intervenes to secure strong governance and to provide a network of support to Chairs who are often in isolated and challenging situations.

- 3.1.6 With the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director for Children and Adult Services, I co-signed a letter to all schools, confirming our support for academisation but also setting out our vision for our children and young people and the principle of moral purpose.

Achievements

- 3.1.7 As well as the pleasing results in 2015-16 and improved OFSTED judgements, set out below, the engagement of schools and the reputation of the Council-led teams have improved. Securing Outcomes has been well received this year and more schools are seeking to purchase services. We have been working with primary headteachers with regard to establishing a new model of Headteachers' Association, which is a major step towards establishing sector based strategic leadership. Through this model, Headteachers will be collectively challenged on how best to raise standards and support inclusiveness.
- 3.1.8 Since September 2016, three schools have become academies and six have an academy order. There is a close working relationship with the office of the Regional Schools Commissioner to ensure that decision making and transition are in the best interests of the children and young people concerned. There are 27 Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) operating in Medway and it is to our credit that relationships with individual schools in those Trusts have generally stayed positive and Headteachers have continued to engage with us.

Key Priorities

- 3.1.9 With the reduction in the Education Services Grant in 2016-17 and the expected withdrawal of the grant in 2018, it is necessary that we look at innovative ways of generating income to support our work with schools. A key priority this year will be promoting and supporting the model of systemic leadership in the primary sector so schools challenge and support each other and collaboratively purchase provision from Medway Council.
- 3.1.10 We have one maintained secondary school and we will continue to work this year with the Diocese and the Regional Schools Commissioner to seek a Trust which can support and develop that school.
- 3.1.11 Whilst performance has improved, we plan to engage with schools further in strategic discussions about how we can improve the life chances of all our children and young people and prepare them for education, employment and training on leaving school.

3.2 Further Education

Overview

- 3.2.1 Medway has one Further Education (FE) College, Mid Kent College. An area review of Kent and Medway FE Colleges is being undertaken by Department for Education, as part of a national programme. This review

started in December 2016 and is due to conclude at the end of March. Schools have also been involved through surveys looking at the availability of appropriate provision across the post 16 sector. During the year, the Principal of Mid Kent College has been active in discussing with secondary Headteachers, Council Officers, and Medway Youth Trust how all partners can prepare young people for the most appropriate course provision to meet their needs and aspirations.

Achievements

- 3.2.2 The 16-19 Strategy has been developed and Headteachers now work with the FE College to look at opportunities and barriers for young people post 16. The inclusion programme with Rivermead Special School has been very successful and praised by inspectors.

Key Priorities

- 3.2.3 All Medway secondary schools have post 16 A level provision and the FE College offers technical and vocation provision. As there is no requirement on them to work strategically, a key priority is to find ways of bringing partners together to plan strategically in support of a balanced post 16 offer in Medway.

3.3 Primary and Secondary Education

Overview

- 3.3.1 The results in 2016 for each phase and each school are set out in the Annual School Performance Report on this agenda. The Interim Assistant Director – School Effectiveness and Inclusion will answer detailed questions on school performance as part of that report.

- 3.3.2 The key headlines are:

i) Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- Medway is above national for:
 - The percentage achieving expected level across Early Years Goals by 4.1percentage points(PP)
 - The average point score by 0.8pp
 - The percentage achieving a Good Level of Development by 4pp

ii) Phonics

- Medway is above the national by 1pp

iii) Key Stage 1

- Medway is above the national expected standard for:
 - Reading by 1pp
 - Writing by 3pp
 - Maths by 5pp

iv) Key stage 2

- Medway is below the national expected standard for:
 - Reading, Writing and maths combined by 5pp
 - Reading by 4pp
 - Maths by 5pp

v) Key Stage 4

- Medway is above the national in:
 - The percentage achieving 5A*-C (including English and Maths) by 2.3pp
 - The percentage achieving an A*-C in English and Maths by 1.3pp
 - Progress 8 by 0.08 pp¹

vi) Key Stage 5

- Medway is below the national in:
 - The percentage achieving AAB grades in at least two facilitating subjects by 2.3pp
 - The average point score by 1.24pp

Achievements

3.3.3. Our EYFS results continue to be outstanding. In Phonics, the improvement has been dramatic. In 2012 Medway was bottom nationally, and this year Medway is 38th out of 150 authorities for Phonics. At Key Stage 1, results have improved across all three subjects and our national ranking has risen significantly in writing and Maths. At Key Stage 2, results are below national but have improved and Medway has risen up the rankings significantly across all subjects. In 2015, Medway was bottom nationally for Reading, writing and Maths and this year has risen by 25 places. The Accelerated Learning programme, referenced in section 2.1, contributed to this level of improvement. At secondary, the results at Key Stage 4 were well above and showed a much higher improvement rate than national.

3.3.4 The achievement gap between disadvantaged groups and non disadvantaged has reduced in all phases. At EYFS, for example, the attainment gap in 2015-16 between all children and the lowest 20% has reduced by 1.9pp from the previous year. In KS2 combined measure, the gap for both disadvantaged and Free School Meal individuals is smaller (21pp) than the gap nationally (22pp).

3.3.5 OFSTED judgements have also improved since last year. In 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's report named Medway as the bottom nationally in the percentage of children attending good or better primary schools. This year's report, published in November, shows that Medway has improved by 23 places. There have been no changes to inspection outcomes in the primary or secondary sector during this school year.

Key Priorities

3.3.6 Improvement at Key Stage 2 remains a priority, both for maintained schools and academies. The Securing Outcomes course is proving successful and schools are now sharing data and are looking into more effective commissioning and school to school support. However, national results are expected to increase significantly in 2017 as the new assessment arrangements embed, which will add to the challenge for Medway schools. At Key Stage 4, the change in the assessment arrangements to a focus on attainment/progress 8 are significant,

¹ Progress 8 is a progress comparison indicator of pupils' total results for GCSEs across English, Maths, 3 Highest Ebacc qualifying subjects and 3 other approved qualifications grades against the actual achievement of other pupils with the same prior attainment.

particularly for some non-selective schools, and we will challenge academy trusts and the RSC accordingly on meeting the expected standard

- 3.3.7 Whilst the focus is on raising standards and improved OFSTED judgements, schools are also expected to more inclusive. This means that exclusions should reduce and the performance of those with Education, Health and Care Plans should increase. The balance between raising standards and meeting the needs of all children is still a challenge for many schools in Medway.

3.4 Safeguarding

Overview

- 3.4.1 The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team consists of the IRO service, LADO; Quality Assurance and the MSCB Business Unit. The LADO and Quality Assurance services within the team are responsible for the coordination of safeguarding activities in schools which sits within the portfolio of Educational Attainment and Improvement.

Achievements

- 3.4.2 During 2016-17 the training programmes for the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) in schools has been updated. 106 DSLs in schools attended the training during the year which included 56 DSLs who were new to the role in Medway and 50 who completed the refresher training. This compares to 141 DSL's who were trained during 2015-16.
- 3.4.3 The model Child Protection Policy for schools has been updated during the year and will be launched in Quarter 1, 2017/18.
- 3.4.4 A report on the Education Safeguarding Audits completed by schools was presented to the MSCB in July 2016 which was the first year a summary analysis of the audits was undertaken and reported to the MSCB.

Key Priorities

- 3.4.5 The Education Safeguarding Officer was on maternity leave from May 2016, which was covered for part of this period by maternity cover. There is now a vacancy for the Education Safeguarding role and it is a priority for the service to appoint somebody to the role to continue to develop links with the safeguarding leads in schools, to undertake monitoring visits and to continue the training for DSL's
- 3.4.5 The MSCB has identified that engagement with schools is an area for further development for 2017-18 and will be developing further work in this area in partnership with the Education Safeguarding Officer.

3.5 School Organisation and Student Services

Overview

- 3.5.1 The main purpose of the School Organisation and Capital Projects Team is to ensure that sufficient good quality school places are available to meet demand. This must be achieved within a limited budget and strict timeframes.

Achievements

- 3.5.2 Sufficient primary school places are available to meet demand due to careful planning and by an ongoing programme of expansions and new schools. Between 2013 and 2018, in excess of 2800 additional primary school places will have been provided. Recent completed projects include Cuxton Schools, Brompton Westbrook, and a bulge class at St Thomas of Canterbury. Current projects include Saxon Way Primary, Bligh Infants and Juniors, Hundred of Hoo primary phase, and Cliffe Woods. Potential future expansions at Halling Primary and St Mary's Island Primary at currently at the consultation stage.
- 3.5.3 Demand has been met by additional provision planned and delivered in the right place at the right time. We are currently awaiting outcomes from the Wave 12 bidding round for free schools.
- 3.5.4 Two schools were successful in bids for the EFA initiative Priority Schools Building Programme. These were St John Fisher and The Howard School. As yet no progress has been made by the EFA on this matter.
- 3.5.5 Accurate forecasting processes are in place, ensuring future plans for additional places are proposed with confidence. A recent scorecard produced by the DFE, has highlighted that Medway's forecasts are very accurate and on all benchmarks fall within the nationally accepted 1% error margin. For forecasting one year ahead, Medway was ranked 14th most accurate out of 147 authorities for primary places, and 30th for secondary.
- 3.5.6 Ongoing academy conversions have been completed to schedule. So far 53 schools have converted in Medway out of 103, with another 6 due to convert by September 2017. These are:
- Riverside Primary
 - Thamesview Primary
 - St Margaret's Infants
 - Barnsole Primary
 - The Rowans (pupil referral unit)
 - Miers Court Primary

Table 1 - Breakdown of academy and maintained schools in Medway

Phase	Type	Number	Conversions	New schools	% of phase	% of overall
Primary	Academies	36	35	1	46%	36%
	Maintained	42			54%	42%
Secondary	Academies	16	15	1	94%	16%
	Maintained	1			6%	1%
All through	Academies	1	1		100%	1%
	Maintained	0			0%	0%

Special	Academies	4	3	1	80%	4%
	Maintained	1			20%	1%
PRU	Academies	0			0%	0%
	Maintained	2			100%	2%
Overall	Academies	57	54	3		56%
	Maintained	46				46%

3.5.7 The Schools' Condition Programme is managed within budget; ensuring school environments are warm, safe, dry and compliant for the children and staff. In excess of 30 individual projects have been undertaken across Medway's schools as part of the 2016-17 condition programme.

Key Priorities

3.5.8 Continued inward movement of families is adding to further demand for school places. As more needed housing is approved and built, a priority will remain to ensure supply of school places meets demand.

3.5.9 The provision of secondary school places will be a challenge over the next five years as the larger cohorts of primary school children transfer into secondary education. By 2021, forecasts indicate that an additional 6 FE will be required in non-selective schools and 4 FE in grammar schools. Table 2 shows the forecasted demand. This demand does not include children from new developments yet to be granted approval.

Table 2 – Current Year 7 and forecasts for one and five years ahead

	2016 /2017	2017 /2018	2021 /2022
Selective total	947	979	1057
Selective PAN	930	942	942
Surplus/deficit places	-17	-37	-115
Future non-Selective total	2228	2364	2553
Future non-selective PAN	2390	2510	2390
Surplus/deficit places	162	146	-163

3.5.10 Further primary school places are likely to be required beyond the current programme although levels of funding are uncertain at this time. Table 3 shows the forecast demand for Year R places.

Table 3 – Current Year R and forecasts for one and five years ahead

	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2021/ 2022
Year R	3563	3501	3509
PAN	3750	3765	3845
Surplus places	187	264	336
% surplus	5.0%	7.0%	8.7%

3.6 School Services

Overview

- 3.6.1 The School Services Team is responsible for school admissions, both main round admissions and in-year admissions, home to school transport and free school meal eligibility checking. It is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that the allocation of school places is fair, clear and objective. The team also leads on Dynamics – The Medway Music Education Hub.

Achievements

- 3.6.2 Dynamics, the Music Education Hub, continues to work successfully with partners and is one of the top performing hubs in the country as per Arts Council England benchmarks. Dynamics continues to offer a wide range of ensemble and performance opportunities and I have enjoyed attending recent concerts including the successful Christmas Carol Concerts at Rochester Cathedral, and performances by the Medway Youth Orchestra and Medway Youth Choir.
- 3.6.3 Following the significant backlog of in-year school place applications experienced by Student Services in September 2016, working practices have been streamlined. Slow responses from some schools have been addressed by much smarter follow up procedures. As a result of this, the team are now processing in-year applications within the expected timeframe. I receive weekly updates on the statistics in relation to the performance of the team.
- 3.6.4 There has been continued success with online applications for school places as part of the main round admission process. For September 2017 admissions, 96.7% of reception families of applied online, for junior 98.27%, and for secondary 97.24%. This represents an increase of 5.19%, 20.92% and 7.08% respectively.
- 3.6.5 Implementation of the Synergy system for admissions in September 2016 enables additional opportunities for digitisation. The system now has built in distancing and mapping which allows for a more seamless approach in determining which school can be offered.

Key Priorities

- 3.6.6 I have asked officers to review the processes for in-year admissions as this is a non-statutory function for the Council. Another priority will be to develop innovative approaches to trading with schools to support market provision of education services in the increasingly autonomous sector.
- 3.6.7 I am working closely with partners of Dynamics (The Music Education Hub) and the music education sector to develop and implement a strategy to develop and secure the future of the Hub.
- 3.6.8 The Medway Test quality assurance procedures have been reviewed and I am liaising with officers to look at ways to improve the cost effectiveness of the test.

3.7 Schools Liaison

Overview

- 3.7.1 I have enjoyed visiting schools and meeting with pupils, teachers, leaders and governors. I addressed the Annual Medway Governors Conference and asked for their support with my vision, a conference where the main speaker was organised to discuss the power of moral purpose. My main focus has been on strategic issues and I have discussed with Headteachers and the two Teaching Schools how I expect them to work collaboratively within the sector and with the local authority to improve the life chances of all children and young people in Medway schools and place moral purpose at the heart of all they do.

Appendices

None

Background Papers:

None