

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2018

ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Report from: Councillor Martin 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 March 2017-2018. In the case of education services, it covers school outcomes and activity during 2016-17 and the first half of the current school year.

1. Background

- 1.1 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 LMCS is responsible for leadership, strategy and the effectiveness of education and children's social care.
- 1.2 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:
 - Further Education
 - Primary and Secondary Educational Improvement
 - Safeguarding
 - School Organisation and Capital Projects
 - School Services (including Admissions and Medway Test)
 - Schools Liaison
- 1.3 This item was not finalised in time for despatch with the main agenda. The Chairman of the Committee is of the opinion that it should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency as permitted under section 100B of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable the Committee to consider this item at the same time as the Annual School Performance Report.

2. Further Education

- 2.1 The Council continues to have a legal responsibility to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-18 in Medway and the work of the newly-formed Skills Board includes a focus to improve opportunities for our 16-18 year old residents.
- 2.2 Medway's Further Education provider, Mid Kent College continues to play a significant role as an education partner. As we heard from the recent Task Group report on Employment Opportunities for 18-25 Year Olds, the college has worked with the Council to ensure appropriate courses and support for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (provision for SEND students sits within the remit of the LMCS). They have also worked in collaboration with a local special school, Rivermead, to create 40 places at the college as a year-long introduction to the mainstream college for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and associated anxieties and vulnerabilities. These places have proved to be successful and very popular.

3. Primary and Secondary Educational Improvement

- 3.1 The focus of the School Challenge and Improvement team continues to be monitoring, identifying and diagnosing under-performance, eliciting and negotiating the school response and helping schools and their governing bodies to find solutions to school improvement. The team also work in partnership with partner organisations to provide challenge and support in raising standards in Medway's education sector.
- 3.2 The key headlines of 2017 school performance:
 - (i) A strong performance in Phonics, outperforming schools nationally.
 - (ii) At Key Stage 1, Medway is now in the top 25% of authorities in England in all three measures.
 - (iii) Attainment continues to improve at Key Stage 2 and the gap is narrowing between Medway Schools and the national average.
 - (iv) Medway schools outperformed schools nationally at Key Stage 4 in the Progress 8 Measure and were below the national attainment level in 'The percentage achieving a 4 or above in English and Maths'.
 - (v) Medway schools outperformed schools nationally in the general Average Point Score measure at Key Stage 5, and overall has improved on last year.
 - (vi) 85% of pupils in Medway were attending a school judged good or outstanding by Ofsted.

- 3.3 We have supported the establishment of the Medway Education Leaders Association (MELA) formed of Medway's primary schools which has been a great milestone for our education sector. The association consists of a leadership board with four learning zones, which work alongside the new area structure in Children's Services. This formation of this organisation is key to avoiding fragmentation of the primary education sector and it will support the greater collaboration we seek between schools as we transition to a sector-led system.
- 3.4 The Medway Education Partnership formed of local education sector leaders, including representatives from MELA and the Secondary Heads Association, Teaching Schools, and Further and Higher Education was established in December. The partnership is chaired by myself and has the scope of providing joint strategic sector leadership with the remit of co-producing and developing the sector education strategy. The partnership forms one of the focus areas of the Children's Transformation board.
- 3.5 Key priorities for the next period are:
- (i) Continue to work with schools, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and strategic partners to raise standards and strengthen the capacity of our emerging sector-led system to deliver sustainable school improvement.
 - (ii) Co-produce an effective partnership education strategy between Medway Council and local education leaders who are directly accountable for pupil performance in schools and collectively in learning zones.
 - (iii) Aligning with education policy, continue to adapt the role of the Local Authority as a leading education partner in the Medway education sector as the academisation programme evolves and the direct responsibility for school standards transitions to academies, MATs and the RSC as the accountable body.

4. Safeguarding (Education)

- 4.1 The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) team and the Education Safeguarding Officer are responsible for the co-ordination and monitoring of safeguarding activity in schools which sits within this portfolio.
- 4.2 Achievements within this period are detailed below:
- (i) An Education Safeguarding Officer has been appointed, as of August 2017, and takes responsibility for overseeing safeguarding in schools, and offers and guidance regarding child protection issues. The officer facilitates training covering various safeguarding topics for school designated safeguarding leads and staff to ensure that they are appropriately supported and trained in child protection and child in need matters, as set by local and national requirements.

- (ii) During 2017, the training program for the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) has been updated, and 168 DSLs have attended the training, including 28 new DSLs and 140 who completed the refresher training. This compares to 106 attending DSLs from the previous year.

4.3 Key priorities for the next period are:

- (i) For the Education Safeguarding Officer to continue to undertake safeguarding audits in schools working closely with the School Challenge and Improvement team and Educational Psychologists.
- (ii) Continue to work closely with the LADO team when safeguarding concerns have been raised via parental complaints and Ofsted concerns.

5. School Organisation and Capital Projects

5.1 The School Organisation and Capital Services team ensure that sufficient good quality school places are available to meet demand when and where it is needed. This must be achieved within a limited budget and to a strict timeframe via the Capital Programme Board.

5.2 The team is also responsible for ensuring that maintained schools are quality learning environments but the condition of academy schools is the direct responsibility of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

5.3 Achievements within this period are detailed below:

- (i) Medway is the joint first national provider of good and outstanding school places.
- (ii) Sufficient primary school places have been made available to meet demand through a carefully planned programme of expansions and new schools, each one proposed following robust analysis of annual forecasts, which have been proven by the Department for Education (DfE) to be accurate on all benchmarks, falling well within the 1% error margin.
- (iii) Between 2013 and September 2018, 3075 additional places will have been provided.

Table 1 – Additional school places provided 2013-2018

School	Planning Area	Number of Additional places	Year Implemented
Wainscott Primary School	Strood	210	2013
Brompton Westbrook	Gillingham	105	2013
Napier Primary School	Gillingham	210	2013
Saxon Way Primary	Gillingham	210	2014
Cedar Primary School	Strood	105	2014
New Horizons Academy	Chatham	630	2014
Woodlands Primary	Gillingham	210	2014
Cuxton Infant and Junior	Cuxton	70	2014
Hundred of Hoo	Peninsula	210	2015
St Thomas of Canterbury	Gillingham	30 (Bulge Class)	2016
Delce Academy Infant Phase	Rochester	210	2016
Bligh Infant and Junior	Strood	210	2017
Cliffe Woods	Peninsula	105	2017
St Mary's Island Primary	Gillingham	210	2018
Riverside Primary	Rainham	210	2018
Halling Primary	Cuxton	140	2018
Total		3075	

(iv) Medway was successful in securing four new free schools through wave 12 of the central governments free school initiative. The new schools have been awarded in areas of need following a coordinated approach between the Council, the ESFA and preferred Academy Trusts. These will further ensure that sufficient places are available to meet demand from new housing schemes as well as in the secondary sector as the larger cohorts of pupils currently in the primary phase transition to secondary. The free schools awarded are;

- **The Maritime Academy:** a mainstream all-through (ages 3 to 19) school with places for 1940 pupils (including 250 sixth form pupils) in the Strood area. This will be operated by The Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT). A site is currently being sourced for this school.
- **Medway Academy:** a mainstream secondary school with places for 1150 pupils (age 11 to 19 including 250 sixth form pupils) in the Rainham area. This school will be operated by The Leigh Academies Trust. A site is currently being sourced for this school.
- **Rochester Riverside Church of England Primary School:** a mainstream Christian faith primary school with places for 420 pupils. There was strong competition for this school and the successful bidder is the Pilgrim Academy Trust. This school is expected to open in September 2021 when the development reaches a certain trigger of completed dwellings. The site for the school is agreed and the design is underway.

- **The Beeches:** an alternative provision primary school with places for 35 pupils with behavioural issues and excluded children. This will be managed by the Rowans Academy Trust and will be located adjacent to the current Rowans site in Walderslade.

(v) Schools have continued to convert to academy status and as at 1 March 2018 there are 70 academies out of 103 schools (68%).

Table 2 – Breakdown of academies and maintained schools in Medway

Phase	Type	Number	Conversions	New Schools	% of phase	% of overall
Primary	Academies	48	47	1	62	47
	Maintained	30			38	29
Secondary	Academies	16	15	1	94	16
	Maintained	1			6	1
All-Through	Academies	1	1	0	100	1
	Maintained	0			0	0
Special	Academies	4	3	1	80	4
	Maintained	1			20	1
PRU	Academies	1	1	0	50	1
	Maintained	1			50	1
Overall	Academies	70	67	3		68
	Maintained	33				32

(vi) The schools condition programme continues to be managed within budget ensuring school environments are warm, safe, dry and compliant for the children and staff. The Condition Programme covers maintained schools only; academies are funded directly from the ESFA for their maintenance and condition work.

5.4 Key priorities for the next period are:

- Ensure sufficient secondary school places are available to meet demand as larger pupil cohorts transition from the primary sector. The introduction of the Maritime and Medway Free Schools will help to ensure a sufficiency of places in the non-selective sector, but sites are required for these schools, and this is currently being investigated in partnership with the DfE. A programme of expansions is underway to ensure that additional grammar school places are available to meet increased demand. An additional 3 Form Entry (FE) is expected to be in place for September 2018, with further expansions adding places for 2019 and 2020.
- With the Council's Local Plan forecasting significant population growth, work continues to ensure that school places will be provided to meet the demand from the new housing schemes.

6. School Services (including Admissions and Medway Test)

6.1 The School Services team continues to be responsible for school admissions, home to school transport for mainstream children and the Medway Test, as well as leading on Dynamics, the Medway Music Education Hub.

6.2 Achievements within this period are detailed below:

- (i) Dynamics, the Medway Music Education Hub continues to go from strength to strength and is one of the top performing music education hubs in the country. The hub offers learning and development opportunities for children and young people across Medway with a range of opportunities for our young musicians to perform, particularly in ensemble arrangements. This is delivered in the form of in-school provision, tuition, music centres and music festivals.
- (ii) Following a task group led by myself and supported by music education partners, Dynamics has been established as a CIC (Community Interest Company) aligning with the local and national vision to encourage music hubs to expand and enhance music education provision and opportunities for children and young people.
- (iii) Since January 2018, Medway Council has created a more effective and efficient admission system for in-year (casual) admissions for own admission authority schools and academies. Families applying for these schools now do so directly with the school.
- (iv) Online applications continue to be very successful with over 98% of applications for school admissions being made online. The annual admissions composite prospectus also moved to a new digital information guide for both primary and secondary. This removed the need to print and distribute almost 12,000 papers copies of these booklets.

6.3 Key priorities for the next period are:

- (i) Continue to be an active partner supporting the further development of Dynamics Community Interest Company (CIC), the Medway Music Education Hub.
- (ii) Following the successful introduction of the new process for in-year (casual) admissions for own admission authority schools and academies, implement the de-delegated system for community and voluntary controlled schools as agreed at cabinet in February.
- (iii) Implement the recommendations of the Medway Test review audit.

7. School Liaison

- 7.1 Since being in post I have enjoyed visiting over half the schools and academies in Medway. I have an ongoing programme of visits to our schools underlining my commitment to continue to maintain strong relationships with our schools and academies.
- 7.2 I have scheduled meetings with the RSC and regularly meet with MELA, previously the Primary Heads Consortium, with the Director for Children and Adults' Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services. In addition to this, strategic leaders from across the sector have joined the Medway Education Partnership, which I chair, and the partnership includes leading MAT and Headteacher representatives.
- 7.3 I have contributed to the activities of the Medway Cultural Education Partnership (MCEP) including attending their conference and meeting with the lead officer for the region from the Royal Opera House Bridge (RohBridge). The Partnership brings together schools, further and higher education, music education hubs and wider partners to improve alignment of arts education for young people, including a focus on the health and wellbeing benefits of participation in the arts.
- 7.4 School Challenge and Improvement Leads (SCILs) have worked in partnership with the MCEP to secure additional grant funding from RohBridge in order to improve the transition of pupils from year six into year seven. A pilot project over 18 months will see two cohorts of pupils supported to enable more effective transition to occur and provide a model for integrated networking amongst other feeder primary schools and their secondary schools. The project supports the aim of increasing rates of inclusion in Medway and driving down exclusions so that all pupils can realise their potential.
- 7.5 As a member of the Skills Board, I will be working with colleagues to develop the Skills agenda for Medway. The remit of the board includes developing opportunities for the young people to better support education leavers in having the skills to access and progress in career pathways.
- 7.6 I am pleased to see the excellent Medway Youth Council has gone from strength to strength and its members are a great credit to the Medway Community. Last year I attended their Annual Conference on the topic of bullying and I look forward to supporting their efforts with this campaign and their future work.
- 7.7 I sit on the University Liaison Committee, hosted by the University of Kent, and I have had the pleasure of attending a number of events including the Kent Student Awards 2017 and perhaps most importantly I also attended the university graduation ceremonies in July and November. I am proud to be an advocate for our universities and I will continue to promote their aspirational outreach work.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None