

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**7 MARCH 2019**

### **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 for the period from March 2018-2019. In the case of education services, it covers the results of the school year 2017-18 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:

- Further Education
- Primary and Secondary Educational Improvement
- Safeguarding
- School Organisation and Capital Projects
- School Services (including Admissions and Medway Test)
- 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. Further Education**

2.1 Medway's Further Education provider, Mid Kent College continues to play a significant role in providing a wide range of courses and opportunities to 16-18 year old young people in Medway, including full-time courses and

apprenticeships. The college is a key Council partner and is contributing to the development of the Medway Education Partnership Strategy.

2.2 I am also a member of the Council's Skills Board, which is working on a Medway wide skills strategy. The strategy includes a focus on the transition between education and the workplace, and how career pathways can best be supported. The recommendations of the task group on Employment Opportunities for 18-25 Year Olds have been very helpful in guiding the work to date.

### 3. Primary and Secondary Educational Improvement

3.1 The *School Challenge and Improvement Team* (SCIT) is driven by leaders with substantial experience of school leadership. It works alongside leaders and in collaboration with the wider strategic education partnerships within Medway and across the South East region. Within the national landscape of change, the focus of this team is to bring strategic coherence and effectiveness to school improvement locally. SCIT fulfils the statutory duties of the Council, which are broadly contained within the 1996 Education Act 13a, *to promote high standards within education*, permeating all aspects of the Council's plans.

3.2 This educational excellence role is the responsibility of the *Director of People - Children and Adult Services* and the *Lead Member for Children's Services*, supported by the portfolio holder for educational attainment and improvement; operational effectiveness is distributed primarily through the *School Challenge and Improvement Team*. Council plan priority 3, is the driver for all strategic leadership of school improvement and it aims to "*Support Medway's people to realise their potential: All children achieving their potential in schools.*" SCIT works through the following seven streams to realise this ambition:

1. Headteacher Associations (*Medway Education Leaders Association – MELA, Medway Secondary Heads Association – MSHA*)
2. The four *Medway Learning Zones*
3. *Effective Leadership: Inclusion* programme (supported by RSC - SESL)
4. *SEND Improvement Board*
5. *Effective and Enlightening* Transition Pilot (supported by the Medway Cultural Education Partnership)
6. *Medway Education Partnership*
7. *Programme of School Level Support for Maintained Schools*

3.3 SCIT are committed to strengthening the operational and independent effectiveness of school system leaders, so that they can champion the child and realise the Council vision for all pupils. Furthermore, the relationship between LA school improvement officers and the Regional Schools Commissioner is well established, enabling regular dialogue and the sharing of intelligence for the benefit of all children and young people.

- 3.4 At a school level, the team works with leaders in maintained schools to develop their professional skills enabling them to make a positive impact on the goals they seek and aspire to achieve. SCIT's principle to support colleagues at all points of their career from Newly Qualified Teachers to executive leaders and into system leadership, is supported by the team's co-production based work streams.
- 3.5 Colleagues in education who demonstrate best practice, are drawn upon to support the delivery of our programmes. Work with the two teaching schools offers the potential to further expand local professional networks. Using this approach, the pace of school improvement is now a strength, overtaking the primary performance outcomes of a third of all local authorities within 3 years. In that time, SCIT have supported schools to improve the quality of the workforce, in both school leadership and in teaching and learning.
- 3.6 The results in 2018 for each phase and each school are set out in the Annual School Performance Report on this agenda.
- 3.7 The key headlines are:

**Phonics**

- Medway has sustained a strong performance in phonics, equal to national.

**Key Stage 1**

- Medway has outperformed the national percentage achieving the expected standard for Reading, Writing, and Mathematics but the improvement over national has slightly narrowed.

**Key Stage 2**

- Medway is below the national percentage achieving the expected standard in the combined measure (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) but Medway ranks among top areas for improvement with the gap to national significantly narrowing.

**Key Stage 4**

- Medway has outperformed the national level in progress (Progress 8).
- In attainment, Medway is marginally below the national level (Attainment 8) but the gap to national has narrowed.

**Key Stage 5**

- Medway is below the national attainment in the percentage achieving AAB but Medway has outperformed the national attainment in the Academic Average Point Score.

Key priorities for the next period are:

- Facilitate sector wide co-production through the development of the Medway Education Partnership Strategy.

- Work with MELA to strengthen system leadership across Learning Zones as we move towards effective sector led improvement.
- Work with teaching schools and local providers to develop a more integrated school improvement offer.

#### **4. Safeguarding**

4.1 The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service consists of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO), Child Protection Conference chairs, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO), Quality Assurance, Education Safeguarding Officer and the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) business unit.

4.2 The Education Safeguarding Officer is responsible for the co-ordination and monitoring of safeguarding activity in schools which sits within this portfolio.

4.3 Achievements within this period are detailed below:

- (i) An Education Safeguarding Officer was appointed in December 2018 filling the vacancy following the resignation of the previous post holder. The post has responsibility for overseeing safeguarding in schools, and offers guidance regarding child protection issues to school leaders. 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) The training program for the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) continues to be well attended. There were a total of 382 people attending training sessions delivered during the period which included new to role and refresher training.

4.4 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 Improvement team.
- (ii) The development of a closer working relationship with Education Skills Funding Authority (ESFA) and Academies.

#### **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 authority for providing only additional 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 the majority of benchmarks.
- (iii) Between 2013 and September 2019, 3075 additional primary school places will have been provided.

**Table 1 – Additional school places provided 2013-2019**

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*
<b>Total</b>		<b>3075</b>	

\* Projects still underway due to phasing but with sufficient places provided at the appropriate times

- (iv) Medway was successful in securing three new mainstream 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 help to ensure sufficient places are available to meet demand from new housing schemes. In the secondary sector the two new schools are predominantly required due to the larger cohorts of pupils currently in the primary phase transitioning to secondary. The mainstream free schools awarded are;

- **The Maritime Academy:** a secondary (ages 11 to 19) school with places for 1150 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, with an anticipated opening date of September 2021.

● **Leigh Academy Rainham:** 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 has been sourced for this project and is currently at the design and pre planning stage, with an anticipated opening date of September 2020.

● **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 and planning is underway.

- (v) Schools continue to convert to academy status, although the rate of conversion has slowed significantly, and as at 1 March 2019 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:

- (i) 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 Leigh Free Schools will help to ensure a sufficiency of places in the non-selective sector. 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) was in place for September 2018, with further expansions required in future years.

## **6. School Services (including Admissions, the Medway Test and mainstream school transport)**

6.1 The School Services team continues to be responsible for school admissions, the Medway Test and home to school transport for mainstream children. From 1 March 2019, the team will be renamed to the School Admissions and Transport Team to better reflect the services provided.

6.2 Achievements within this period are detailed below:

- (i) From 16 April 2018 all casual (in-year) admissions have been administered by schools directly. This system was implemented to avoid confusion for families applying for different school across Medway. School Services continues to retain a significant monitoring role to ensure that all families are treated fairly and that all schools are compliant with the requirements of the School Admissions Code.
- (ii) Online applications for the main admissions processes (entry to Reception year, transfer to junior school and transfer to secondary school) continue to be very successful with over 98% of applications for these school admissions consistently being made online. The annual admissions prospectus has been, yet again, published as a digital information guide for both primary and secondary schools. This has been very well received by families. The team have also implemented more efficient methods of notifying families of application outcomes to reduce the risk of any internal system issues.
- (iii) The Medway Test saw another increase in the numbers of children taking the Test. Despite this the Test was delivered without incident and the team undertook an exceptional amount of work, including implementing improvements following the audit. This led to a smooth process with all families receiving their results at the published time.
- (iv) Mainstream home to school transport processes continue to be delivered effectively and fairly for all eligible families.

6.3 Key priorities for the next period are:

- (i) To further develop all admissions processes to be as efficient and effective as possible.
- (ii) To continue to undertake effective and comprehensive monitoring of all schools and their administration of casual (in-year) admissions to ensure that all families receive a good, effective and consistent process that is fully compliant to all the requirements of the School Admissions Code.

## **7. School Liaison**

- 7.1 I have now enjoyed visits to over 70 of our 96 mainstream schools and I continue to have an ongoing programme of visits to maintain strong relationships with our school leaders.
- 7.2 I regularly meet the Medway Education Leaders Association with the Director of People – Children and Adults’ Services, and the Lead Member for Children’s Services. Further development of the Medway Education Partnership Group (MEP) has been a priority. The group consists of head teachers from both secondary and primary schools across the sector. Excellent progress has been made towards formally establishing MEP through the emerging Partnership Strategy: Achieving More Together.
- 7.3 Since March 2018, none of our schools have become academies and only 1, Halling Primary has an academy order. There continues to be a close working relationship between myself, the Lead Member for Children’s Services, supported by Council Officers and the Regional Schools Commissioner, and we can continue to lead on raising standards in schools and further developing a framework of co-production.
- 7.4 The Medway Test saw the highest numbers of young people sitting the test which is administered by the Council. This is a significant logistical and technical exercise with children taking the test in school, and over 1,000 young people visiting 6 designated testing centres across Medway. The staff, young people and Council Officers all deserve credit for their part in making this process run very smoothly.
- 7.5 I continue to be a Director on the Board of Dynamics (CIC) - Medway's Music Education Hub. The music hub has continued to grow and remains one of the top performing hubs in the country. In the past year the music hub have worked to improve music education provision for secondary school students with a new “Rock School” and a new music centre. I really enjoyed attending the concerts and festivals over the last year and I was so pleased we were able to arrange for two very talented Medway young musicians to perform at Annual Council last May.

### **Appendices**

None.

### **Background Papers**

None.