

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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ANNUAL REPORT ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2017-18

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Summary

The Annual Schools' Performance Report for the school year 2017-18 is attached at Appendix 1. This report provides the results at each Key Stage for maintained schools and academies. It also includes information on attendance and exclusions for 2016-17, the latest school year for which national data has been published and the provisional exclusions data for 2017-18.

This report is designed to give Members, Overview and Scrutiny, head teachers, parents and governors an overview of pupil performance in Medway schools and to show comparative performance with schools in other Local Authorities.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 This report falls within the Council Plan, in particular the priority "Supporting Medway's people to realise their potential". One of the outcomes under this priority is all children achieving their potential in schools.

2. Background

- 2.1 Elected members champion children and young people and have an important role in scrutinising overall attainment in all schools. The performance at each stage and the accompanying analysis in the report provide Members with both an overview and detailed information to support this role.
- 2.2 The Department for Education (DFE) publishes results at several points during the year. Final results have been published for attainment at all key stages for the school year 2017-18. The information on exclusions, attendance and Looked After Children is due to be published at the end of March so the Annual Report refers to the final published data of 2016-17. Information for Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and destinations is also published a year in arrears so the annual report refers to the final published data of 2016-17.

- 2.3 In maintained schools, the Local Authority is responsible for challenging school standards. In academies, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) is responsible for challenging standards and the Local Authority may alert the RSC of any concerns. The RSC has powers to challenge maintained schools if they are considered to be 'coasting'. Both the Local Authority and the RSC have mechanisms in certain circumstances to intervene where there are concerns about school performance, including leadership and governance. Such intervention may include formal warning notices, removal of governing bodies and, in the case of academies, re-brokerage to another Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The relationship with the RSC continues to develop and improve with regular formal and informal meetings being held. These discuss a wide range of issues including the performance of all schools within Medway.
- 2.4 When OFSTED inspects schools, it expects governors to know their own data and what it is telling them about current performance, and whether the current performance is good or better in comparison to other like schools. In the same way, OFSTED expects Members to understand performance of all Medway schools (maintained and academy) and how they compare to schools nationally. Taking account of Medway's population profile, Members should expect performance to be at or around national level. The Annual Performance report provides that information and highlights the main strengths and weaknesses of school performance.

3. Performance Summary and Highlights

3.1 The Annual Performance report shows the following strengths – what do we do well?

- **The pace of school improvement is a strength** because in three years Medway has improved, compared to other local authorities, by 54 places up the LA league table for KS2 combined achievement of reading, writing and maths and an increase of 12.5% in good and outstanding schools over the same period.
- **Phonics is a strength** because performance in Year One has maintained a stable position in line with national and sustained this performance through to the end of KS1 in Year Two matching national at 92%.
- **Key Stage One is a strength** because Medway has sustained its position amongst the top 25% of authorities in England in all three measures.
- **The rate of improvement in Key Stage Two is a strength** because it has seen a 9% improvement compared to the previous year in achieving the expected standard across all 3 subjects and although it is currently 2% behind national, the gap continues to close.
- **Key Stage Four is a strength** because, despite greater than national levels of deprivation, the Medway school system matches the national benchmark for a standard pass in English and Mathematics for all pupils. Furthermore, the rate of continued improvement is swift compared to other local authorities (previously ranked 111th now ranked 77th).
- **The rate at which pupils are achieving academic qualifications in Key Stage Five is a strength** because it is nearly double that of national, overtaking national.

- 3.2 An indicator of school improvement rates is the steady change in Medway's position within national LA rankings for children achieving the combined measure of reading, writing and maths:
- 2015 - 150/150
 - 2016 - 123/150
 - 2017 - 115/150
 - 2018 - 96/150
- 3.3 The pace of school improvement is a strength because in three years Medway has improved, compared to other local authorities, by 54 places and also increased by 12.5%, the number of good and outstanding schools over the same period. The impact of support and challenge over time can also be seen in the *Partnership Risk Ratings* that show a reduction in risk. From 2017/18 to 2018/19 there has been an increase in the number of A grade schools demonstrating more secure leadership, attainment and progress. Grade A schools have increased from 10% to 20%, B+A schools have increased from 67% to 73% and C+B+A schools have remained constant at 97%. There is now only one D risk school going forward in 2018/19.
- 3.4 There is a direct correlation between the impact of SCIT and the rate of school conversions to good or better. LA maintained schools, according to Ofsted Section 5 inspections, are 91% good and better, which is 6% more than the national comparison (85%) but this positive picture deteriorates, with the inclusion of academy inspections, to below national by 4%. We continue to liaise with colleagues in the academy sector and seek to work seamlessly through effective Zone working and true school-to-school support, in the pursuit of championing 'all Medway's pupils in all Medway's schools'.
- 3.5 All maintained schools are allocated a lead, school challenge and improvement officer. This is the conduit into the local authority services, ensuring that strategies are implemented effectively. Based upon an analysis of need, we engage individual leaders to form effective cohorts with the same learning needs to undertake our leadership programmes running throughout the year.
- 3.6 As we move forward, although there has been notable and continued improvement, we remain focused and committed to improving outcomes for children and young people. Working in partnership with education leaders in Medway, identified areas for improvements are centred on increasing the performance of:
- pupils by the end of their primary school (KS2) in reading, writing and maths
 - pupils by the end of KS2 and KS4 with an EHC plan and / or with SEND
 - pupils by the end of KS4 within the Attainment 8 measure
- Furthermore, we aim to support and challenge education leaders to enable:
- effective system leadership working between schools and across groups of schools within Zones so that consequently, standards in teaching and learning improve. The role of school challenge and improvement officers in this process will also be critical in reducing the variation between schools within each Zone
 - improved provision for pupils at risk of permanent and fixed term exclusion.
- 3.7 Whilst it is recognised that these key priorities for improvement are central to achieving the Council Plan, priority 3 'Supporting Medway's people to realise their

potential. All children achieving their potential in schools', there are both challenges and opportunities ahead as we strengthen and facilitate effective partnership and true system leadership.

What are the challenges?

- 3.8 The high number of MATs in Medway does present a challenge for a coherent school improvement offer across Medway. In partnership with the LA, the RSC encourages MATs to merge and form effective agents of change. An example of consolidation is with the merger of Williamson and Leigh trusts. But there remains too many small MATs, with limited resources, that are not yet able to offer robust school improvement or have the necessary expertise in either phase, pedagogy or leadership to drive the agenda.
- 3.9 Schools that meet formal definitions of *Coasting* or *Below Floor* are sent *Warning Notices*. Headteachers and chairs of governors are required to present their school improvement plans for scrutiny and LA evaluation, before deciding upon support and next steps. *Schools Causing Concern* guidance is followed and underpins discussion with the RSC regarding schools meeting the identified criteria. For example, Elaine Academy was re-brokered following our concerns regarding leadership ineffectiveness and underperformance over time.
- 3.10 In a time of close scrutiny on resources, the Council has been effective in achieving funds to support deliver statutory duties effectively and resource school improvements demonstrating how they value the relationship and support provided. The sources of these funds have come from *Medway Schools' Forum* and DfE national grants.
- 3.11 The Council's preference for academisation has effectively reduced the income from the *Dedicated Schools Grant* but *School's Forum* has continued to allocate funds for school improvement. This sustains the Council's four notional funding blocks.
- 3.12 The *School Improvement Team* is using additional grant funding to address one of our key priorities, inclusion. Finance from the *Strategic School Improvement Fund* (SSIF) is focused upon the 20 schools for inclusion practice who require the most support. Additional grant funding has been secured from *Royal Opera House Bridge* and match-funded by the Council to target two large secondary schools with high deprivation levels for their pupils in transition from KS2. The impact is positive with 20 *cause for concern* schools being driven down to 5 within 2 full terms. The impact so far for the transition pilot is positive too, with no exclusions in year seven, children making less use of pastoral support systems and a positive attitude towards the broader arts within the curriculum. The *Partnership Risk Rating* of schools continues to direct the allocation of support time and resources.
- 3.13 Since the White Paper, *Education Excellence Everywhere* (DfE 2016), within a Council preference for academisation, SCIT has enthusiastically promoted a commitment to unifying maintained and academy schools, through the mantra of '*all Medway pupils, all Medway schools*'.
- 3.14 Where fragmentation is perceived as a direct consequence of the early days of academisation, SCIT uses its informal relationship with schools to build trust and responsiveness to system leadership. Every attempt is made to avoid isolation by enveloping the school in collective responsibility through genuine collaboration and warm participation, thus actively discouraging unproductive competition. This is

more effective within primary schools but positive inroads have been made into secondary schools which have had a longer period of perceived academy autonomy, especially through the *Transition* pilot.

- 3.15 The LA continues to maintain a positive relationship with the RSC that enables swift action, whether it relates to Schools (Academies) Causing Concern, sharing of operational intelligence or to wide-scale re-brokering implications of an underperforming academy into a new MAT. The practice of sharing data with the RSC is now well established and welcomed by the LA.
- 3.16 Formal meetings, e.g. the Annual LA/RSC Performance meeting with lead members and DCS, structure the annual agendas and hold the RSC to account for the performance of academies.
- 3.17 Within the context of a preference for academisation, the plans are to develop an effective collaborative approach between the LA, leaders in education, governors and trustees, so that a more joined up approach to strategic leadership in Medway is developed to improve learning outcomes for all pupils. The Council evaluates in detail the performance of schools and shares this intelligence routinely with the RSC.
- 3.18 Systems have been established for primary and secondary schools so that true partnership and collaborative school improvement is possible. All schools are organised into zones, with a structure of representation at strategic council level. Initially, academisation and the autonomy that this offered, adversely impacted upon engagement with the LA, but as MATs have become more established, the engagement of school leaders with SCIT has developed. The *Effective Leadership: Inclusion* programme has been a particularly welcome driver to increase trust and confidence between the LA and those academies and MATs within the programme; a potentially challenging problem given the sensitivity of the inclusion aims.
- 3.19 Schools and academies wanted a coherent communication tool and the LA responded by reviewing existing channels and launching a comprehensive, regular information bulletin.

4. Risk management

- 4.1 Medway is ambitious for all of its children and young people to reach their potential. There is currently a risk that the high number of exclusions from our schools will limit their potential. Whilst any decision on exclusions is entirely the responsibility of schools, officers continue to challenge exclusions where appropriate and support schools to find alternative strategies to maintain pupils on roll. A revised set of procedures have been implemented working with head teachers to strengthen the support to schools and pupils to reduce exclusion levels going forward.

5. Implications for Looked After Children

- 5.1 The performance of Looked After Children (LAC) is reported to the Corporate Parenting Board. The results for 2017-18 have not yet been published. In the academic year 2016/17 Medway out-performed national in the percentage achieving at least the expected standard in writing by 24% however performed below national in reading by 17%, consequently the overall combined reading, writing and Mathematics was lower than national by 10%. There has been an increase in the number of fixed term exclusions; this is in the wider context of a high

rate of exclusions across the authority. No child looked after by Medway was permanently excluded.

6. Financial implications

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

- 6.1 The Local Authorities 2019/20 DSG allocation is calculated in four separate funding blocks (Schools, Early Years, High Needs and the Central Service Schools Block) using national funding formulas. The School Block has seen a net increase in funding of 2.7%, whilst the high needs (2.3%) and early years funding have seen a smaller increase more in line with changes in pupil numbers.
- 6.2 The DSG is calculated initially using the pupil numbers for all schools in Medway, including academies. Subsequently the Education Skills Funding Agency will reduce the Council's DSG allocation in respect of schools that have converted to academies.

Table 1: Schools Based Grant Funding (DSG)

	2018/19	2019/20
Schools Block – Pupil Numbers	39,787	40,558
Schools Block Funding	£174.775m	£179.530m
Early Years Block – Pupil Numbers (PTE)	4,482	4,482
Early Years Block Funding	£17.014m	£17.023m
High Needs Block Funding	£37.138m	£37.992m
Central Services Schools Block	£0.714m	£0.743m
Dedicated Schools Grant (gross)	£229.641m	£235.289m
Academy Deductions	(£145.975m)	(£152.114m)
Dedicated Schools Grant (Net)	£83.666	£83.175m
Pupil Premium	£3.993m	£3.993m
Sixth Form Funding	£0.482m	£0.482m
Net Schools Based Funding	£90.788	£87.650m

Pupil Premium Grant

- 6.3 Schools receive a separate grant to improve the attainment of pupils from deprived backgrounds based on pupils eligible for a free school meal, 'looked after children' (LAC), and children with a parent in the armed forces.
- 6.4 Per pupil rates for 2019/20 have again remained the same as 2018/19 rates:

	Primary	Secondary
Free School Meals	£1,320	£935
Looked After Children	£1,900	£1,900
Service Children	£300	£300

- 6.5 These rates will produce a total grant for Medway schools, excluding academies, of about £3.993 million in 2019/20.

7. Legal implications

7.1 The Education and Adoption Act 2016, which received the Royal Assent in March 2016, introduces new measures to improve school standards across the country. The measures in this Act are designed to speed up the process by which failing schools become sponsored academies. The Act also introduces measures to identify coasting and other underperforming schools.

7.2 Three groups of schools will be eligible for intervention:

- **Schools that have been judged inadequate by Ofsted** – an academy order will be issued for all such schools, requiring them to become sponsored academies;
- **Schools that are coasting** – schools which fall within the definition of coasting as defined by the Secretary of State. Where a coasting school does not have a sufficient plan and the necessary capacity to bring about improvement, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) will use the powers of the Secretary of State to intervene; and
- **Schools that have failed to comply with a warning notice** – local authorities and RSCs, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, have powers to give warning notices to schools where they have concerns.

8. Recommendation

8.1 The committee is asked to note the Annual Schools' Performance Report set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Education Performance and Indicative areas for development - at a glance overview

Appendix 2 – Annual Schools' Performance Report for 2017/18

Background papers

None