

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 MARCH 2020

ATTENDANCE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

Report from: Councillor Potter – Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools

Summary

This report details the areas covered by the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools for the period from March 2019-2020. In the case of education services, it covers the results of the school year 2018-19 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 Education and Schools, according to the Council's constitution are:
- Early Years
 - Education Safeguarding
 - Further Education and Higher Education Liaison
 - Mainstream School Transport
 - Newly Qualified Teachers
 - Primary and Secondary Educational Improvement
 - School Organisation and Capital Projects
 - School Services (including Admissions and Medway Test)
 - Schools Liaison
 - Youth Champion (including Medway Youth Council)
- 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 (Lead Member) is responsible for leadership, strategy and the effectiveness of education and children's social care.
- 1.3 This report has been circulated separately to the main agenda as it was necessary to undertake further work with the Portfolio Holder in finalising the report. Therefore, the Committee is asked to accept this report as urgent to enable the holding to account of the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools,

to take place alongside the Committee's consideration of the Annual Report on School Performance (item 5 on the same agenda).

2. Early Years

- 2.1 Local authorities are required by legislation to secure sufficient childcare, so far as reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). This means that parents are able to work because childcare places are available, accessible and affordable and are delivered flexibly at a range of high-quality settings.
- 2.2 It is integral that the Early Years Sufficiency Team, by engaging Medway families with Government funded childcare, support children in achieving good levels of development alongside their early learning goals and equip children in readiness for school and better educational attainment.
- 2.3 The Early Years Childcare Sufficiency team promote high quality early years provision for two, three and four year olds eligible for funded childcare places including children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 2.4 There are currently **253** registered childcare providers across Medway which equates to **118** Childminders, **43** School Nurseries and **92** Private, Voluntary and Independent settings. There are enough registered places to accept all of the potentially eligible 2, 3 and 4 year old children in Medway.
- 2.5 All childcare providers must register with and be inspected by Ofsted, who give them an overall grade for the quality of their provision. The table below, shows the percentage of 'Good' and 'Outstanding' grades achieved across providers.

Type of provision	Number of providers inspected	% achieving good or outstanding
Childminders	95	97%
Nursery classes in schools	43	86%
Maintained nursery schools	0	0%
Private and voluntary nurseries	86	94%

EYFS Key Performance Headlines

- **Good Level of Development** (GLD) achieved by Medway children is better than national.
- **Early Learning Goals** (ELG) met by Medway children is better than national.

3. Education Safeguarding

- 3.1 An Education Safeguarding Officer has been in post since December 2018. This role has responsibility for overseeing safeguarding in schools and offers guidance regarding education safeguarding enquiries to school leaders. In

March 2019 there was the additional recruitment of a locum part time Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Education Safeguarding Officer, both are a main point of contact for schools in regards to consultations and enquiries they may have e.g. safer recruitment, topical safeguarding advice, child in need queries etc.

- 3.2 Part of the Education Safeguarding Officer role is to make contact with schools to discuss Ofsted complaints that come via the Single Point of Access. The Officer works with schools to explore concerns and offer support and guidance to assist in addressing and resolving the issues raised within complaints. The Officer also facilitates training covering various safeguarding topics for school Designated Safeguarding Leads and wider education staff to ensure that they are appropriately supported and trained in safeguarding and child protection matters as led and set by local and national requirements; this is a training offer that sits alongside the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP).
- 3.3 The Education Safeguarding Officer has been fundamental in the roll out of Operation Encompass to Medway schools. The facilitation of schools' attendance and contribution to the weekly MARAC¹ cases has further developed and implemented a process which allows schools to be notified of a MASH outcome for the children that attend their provisions, therefore schools are better informed and equipped to comprehend children's lived experiences. The Officer attends the Medway Primary and Secondary Head Teacher forums (MELA and MSHA respectively) regularly to provide updates and information around safeguarding policy and procedures. The Officer sends regular updates and communications to all school leaders in Medway, Head Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads sharing information, resources and updates. The level of communication between the Education Safeguarding Officer and Medway Schools is working well to better safeguard the children of Medway. The adjectives used by Schools to describe the relationship between the Education Safeguarding Service and Medway Schools are that of trust and confidence.
- 3.4 The training programme for the Designated Safeguarding Leads continues to be well attended. The majority of schools have attended both the 'new to role' and 'refresher' training. A 'Model Whole School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy' is available and up to date on the MSCP website, this has been written and produced by the Education Safeguarding Officer in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 statutory guidance and is readily available to schools to use.
- 3.5 Since September 2019 the Education Safeguarding Service has progressed specific training, delivering two Whole School Safeguarding training sessions, two MASH Education Workshop's and brought in expertise to provide advice and support in 'Responding to online risks on social media and gaming for primary schools' at the request of Primary Head teachers in Medway.

¹ MARAC - A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a victim focused information sharing and risk management meeting attended by all key agencies, where high risk cases are discussed

- 3.6 In addition, colleagues in the Health directorate are developing a collective approach to integrating ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Awareness and Trauma Informed practice in Medway across the next two years. The initial meeting for this is the 25 March 2020.

4. Further Education and Higher Education Liaison

- 4.1 Medway's Further Education provider, Mid Kent College is now rated Good by Ofsted and the 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. I have arranged to hold termly meetings with the Principal of the college to ensure we continue to have strong relations and share dialogue. The college is also a member of the Medway Education Partnership as the FE representative.
- 4.2 I am a member of the Council's Skills Board, which has now published the Medway Skills and Employability Plan. I am pleased to say work has already been progressed in relation to provision for children and young people to learn more about different careers opportunities through a regional careers fair and also a programme of visits to primary schools.
- 4.3 Partnership working through the Medway Education Partnership strategy has created opportunities for the four universities in Medway to discuss their interconnectedness in relation to how they engage with schools and contribute to the wider education system in Medway. They are in the process of arranging suitable joint representation in relation to their contribution to the education partnership agenda.

5. Mainstream school transport

- 5.1 The council provides transport to enable pupils to get to school under a policy, which is revised. On any one day we transport 1,638 mainstream pupils to school. Those families meet the policy for school transport. The cost of transport has seen a significant increase over the past few years and the transport team undertook a revised procurement review last summer to ensure we remain cost effective and have sufficient providers to meet the need of those families who are eligible for school transport. As a consequence of that procurement exercise we have put in place a procurement framework which allows for increased flexibility when arranging transport. Overall, this has resulted in significant savings and has increased the number of providers.

6. Primary and Secondary Educational Improvement

- 6.1 The School Challenge and Improvement Team (SCIT) is driven by leaders with substantial experience of school leadership. It works alongside school 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.

6.2 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. This educational excellence role is the responsibility of the Director of Children and Adult Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services, supported by the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools; operational effectiveness is distributed primarily through the School Challenge and Improvement Team. The Council strategy priority 1, 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.*

6.3 School Challenge and Improvement Team Strategic Workstreams:

- Children & Adults Directorate – Education performance analysis, evaluation, gap analysis, key priority identification and reporting
- Medway Education Partnership Strategy Group
- Effective Leadership: SEND Support – targeted 18 month programme
- Effective Leadership: Inclusion, promoting effective inclusion through - Year 2 sustaining impact of Year 1
- Learning Zone working – challenge and support
- Head teacher associations (MELA & MSHA) – challenge and support
- Schools Quality Assurance – Targeted challenge and support to schools, and Communication and intelligence sharing with Ofsted & Regional Schools Commissioner
- School Support Group (SSG) - promoting effective inclusion through effective multi agency working
- AP Review - extending inclusion outreach to include Key Stage 2 & 3 through the Alternative Provision Beeches Free School
- SEND Improvement Board – strategic holding to account against the written Statement of Action for mainstream settings
- Transition Pilot - Medway Cultural Education Partnership (MCEP) – developing innovative and effective transition between KS2 & KS3
- Newly Qualified Teachers – Medway Appropriate Body
- Statutory Assessment, Report Arrangements and Test Administration Guidance
- Statutory Compliance (KS2 and Phonic Check)
- Statutory Moderation, consensus and standards (KS1 & KS2)
- Securing Outcomes Programme - Year Two & Year Six Assessment Framework Training
- Induction programme for NQTs and tutors
- Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) – advising on the provision of RE
- Direct school intervention (maintained)

6.4 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.

- 6.5 At a school level, the team works with leaders to develop their professional skills enabling them to make a positive impact on the goals they seek and aspire to achieve. SCIT's principle is to support colleagues at all points of their career from Newly Qualified Teachers to executive leaders and into system leadership.
- 6.6 Colleagues in the education sector 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 continues to be a strength, overtaking the primary performance outcomes of over a third of all local authorities within 4 years. In that time, SCIT have directly improved the quality of the workforce, in both school leadership and in classroom teaching, in the mission to fulfil the Council vision. The School Improvement Team are promoting and signposting school leaders towards Local Leaders in Education (LLE), whose time is brokered either directly or via the teaching schools.
- 6.7 The results in 2018-2019 for each phase and each school are set out in the Annual School Performance Report on this agenda. The key headlines are:
- **EYFS:** Medway's youngest pupil's continue to improve, achieving above the national expectation in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - **Phonics:** pupils in year one achieve the expected performance in phonics.
 - **Key Stage 1:** Pupils in KS1 continue to perform above national in reading, writing and maths, but because national is improving, Medway's lead is reducing.
 - **Key Stage 2 – Reading, Writing, Mathematics (RWM):** Medway's KS2 achievement is the highest on record and the progress gap continues to narrow but reading, writing and maths is still below national.
 - **Key Stage 4:** Medway has made improvements across all key measures. In the majority of the key measures Medway has overtaken national or is close to national.
 - **Key Stage 5 - A Level, Academic and General:** Medway's A Level and Academic Level average point score (APS) dipped in 2019 but the General Level APS gap is closing on national.
- 6.8 The great majority of schools continue to be judged good or outstanding. This reflects the hard work of teachers, leaders and other staff who work in them. The quality of Medway schools, defined by Ofsted inspections judged as good and outstanding schools in Medway is 85% (academic year 2018/19) compared to the same measure nationally of 86%. Furthermore the current figure of good and outstanding schools as at Feb 2020 is 92% against the national figure of 85%. Based on live judgement, secondary schools within Medway have all been judged as good and outstanding.

7. Newly Qualified Teachers

- 7.1 LAs must provide the Appropriate Body role for the induction of NQTs which includes a named contact. In the academic year 2018/19 181 NQTs were registered with Medway LA Appropriate Body. Of these, 150 successfully completed induction, 17 continued induction in 2019/20* and 14 resigned.
- 7.2 The school improvement team continues to provide support and guidance to Heads, tutors and NQTs through a bespoke, needs based model and training package for tutors and NQTs.
- 7.3 The key priority for the Appropriate Body is preparing for the transition to a two year induction programme which will be statutory from September 2021. This will also include implementing a revised statutory guidance and monitoring the implementation of the Early Career Framework.
- 7.4 *NQTs serve 195 days; induction continues to the next academic year for the following reasons:
- induction started during the Academic year rather than on the first day of the academic year
 - maternity leave
 - automatic extension due to absence of more than 29 days
 - extension approved when Teachers' Standards have not been satisfactorily met for specific reason
 - part-time teaching

8. School Organisation, Capital Projects and School Services (including Admissions and Medway Test)

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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).
- 8.3 Achievements within this period are detailed below:
- (i) 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.
 - (ii) Between 2013 and September 2019, 3075 additional primary school places 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
Total		3075	

(iii) 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 has been identified and agreed for the new school, and the design and pre planning discussions are currently underway with an anticipated opening date of September 2022.
- **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 it now has planning approved with an anticipated opening date of September 2021. The opening of this school

had previously been planned for September 2020, and as a result of the delay Full Council recently approved a capital allocation of £2.5m to fund the need for additional school places. We have secured a contribution of £1.9m from the ESFA to contribute to these schemes.

- **Rochester Riverside Church of England Primary School:** a mainstream Christian faith 1FE primary school, with the option to increase to a 2FE school which will provide places for up to 420 pupil. There was strong competition for this school and the successful bidder is the Pilgrim Academy Trust. This school is expected to open in September 2022 when the development reaches a certain trigger of completed dwellings. The site for the school is agreed and the design and planning is underway.

- 8.4 Schools continue to convert to academy status, although the rate of conversion has slowed significantly, and as at 1 March 2020 there are 72 academies out of 103 schools (70%).

Table 2 – Breakdown of academies and maintained schools in Medway

Phase	Type	Number	Conversions	New Schools	% of phase	% of overall
Primary	Academies	50	49	1	64	49
	Maintained	28			36	27
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	72	69	3		70
	Maintained	31				30

- 8.5 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.
- 8.6 The Medway Test saw another increase in the number of children taking the Test. I would like to thank officers, school staff, parents and the children for their work and support in relation to the process. Offices ensured a seamless distribution of results electronically following the procedures and processes established by the audit in 2018.
- 8.7 Mainstream home to school transport processes continue to be delivered effectively and fairly for all eligible families.

- 8.8 The team has taken on responsibility for SEND transport, and having stabilised the processes continues to look for ways to improve the service for users.
- 8.9 Further to discussions with the remaining grammar school (The Rochester Grammar School), which prioritised applications on Medway Test score rather than home to school distance, no Medway grammar school prioritises by Medway Test score as of September 2020 entry. As a result, Medway resident children have a much stronger opportunity to attend a Medway grammar school and will not be disadvantaged by out of area residents who achieved a higher score in the Medway Test.
- 8.10 An increasing number of secondary academies are consulting on changes to their admissions policies to give higher priority to children who attend a primary/junior school in their trust. As this results in children local to those secondary academies being at a disadvantage and because we are committed to helping Medway children attend their local secondary school, we have formally objected to any such changes in admissions policies of Medway academies. Unfortunately, we have not been supported by the Schools Adjudicator on these matters to date.

9. School Liaison and Youth Voice Champion (including Medway Youth Council)

- 9.1 I have continued to engage with schools and leaders through professional networks and direct meetings with headteachers, and multi academy trust CEOs and officers. These visits are targeted and prioritised and are informed by school performance and school organisation matters, guided by the advice and support of officers. It has also been a pleasure to meet so many talented and ambitious young people when visiting schools. It is always great to engage with young people and hear their views, and I've enjoyed receiving challenging questions from many a school council.
- 9.2 I am pleased to say the emerging Medway Education Partnership strategy is now at an advanced stage. This is important because it provides a sector wide forum for dialogue and coherence through the commitment of partners to co-production and to working collaboratively in the best interest of children and young people in Medway. A recent development stimulated by the partnership has been the establishment of relations with Medway's independent schools with the view of strengthening links with the state sector.
- 9.3 I continue to be a Director on the Board of Dynamics (CIC) - Medway's Music Education Hub. I am pleased to say Dynamics continues to be one of the best performing hubs in the country and the hub provides and facilitates music education to thousands of children in schools and at the music centres across Medway every week. It is always a pleasure to attend the hubs programme of concerts and festivals, in association with Medway Music Association, throughout the year, and I am always filled with pride when watching these talented young people perform so confidently and to such a high standard.
- 9.4 It is marvellous to see Medway Youth Council continue to go from strength to strength in their work representing the voice of young people in Medway. I

congratulate them on their success with the Make Your Mark ballot, and their work following this up at a regional and national level. I also commend them on the successful youth conference they held in Medway on the theme of climate change, this conference was the latest in a succession of annual conferences on topical issues. I have committed to termly meetings with members and I am keen to help promote MYC and, where possible, help to facilitate their work. Following a meeting with MYC members last term I have committed to sending a joint letter to all schools in support of promoting MYC and to hopefully further engagement efforts with schools. I have also committed to having regular dialogue with MYC through a termly meeting (x3 a year).

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.