

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 MARCH 2021

ANNUAL REPORT ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2019 TO 2020

Report from: Ian Sutherland, Director of People – Children and Adult Services

Author: Rebecca Smith, Head of Service: Education

Summary

The Medway Annual Schools' Performance Report for the school year 2019-20 is attached at Appendix 1. This report summarises activity in Medway's schools in raising achievement throughout the previous academic year. The annual report is usually rich in comparative data for the local and national picture, but due to the pandemic, many of the assessments that feed the data were cancelled nationally, or there has been national agreement to withhold publication because of a lack of standardisation and comparative ambiguity. Consequently, all raising achievement analysis for early years foundation stage, key stage one, two, four and five is not available to drive this report. Where data is available through census or local, internal, granular data then comparisons to national have been made if they are available.

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 performance and standards in all schools. The analysis in the report provides Members with both an overview and detailed information to support this role.
- 2.2. Education policy in Medway reflects the council's ambition that all schools should be good or outstanding in order that life chances for all children and young people are improved. This ambition is being secured by working in partnership with education leaders, governors, trusts, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted.

- 2.3. Due to the pandemic, nationally all key stage one, key stage two and GCSE, AS/A level exams were cancelled in 2019/20. Schools were not required to submit primary data to the department for education and/or local authority. Schools did submit GCSE and AS/A Level results. These are available publicly by region (not LA) and cannot be used to hold schools to account.
- 2.4. National data / 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 2018-19. 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 2018-19.
- 2.5. The AD for education and SEND shared a draft school effectiveness strategy with both head primary and secondary associations in the summer term 2020. The strategy places emphasis on school effectiveness, rather than school improvement. School improvement being a matter for the head teacher and governing bodies and / or trusts. School effectiveness is an expression of the local authority's legal duty under the Education Act, 1996 (as amended by the various subsequent acts). Section 13a of the 1996 act describes the duty (of local authorities responsible for education) to promote high standards and fulfilment of (pupils') potential.
- 2.6. 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 is strong and is maintained through regular formal and informal communications to share intelligence and discuss a wide range of issues including the performance of all schools within Medway.
- 2.7. 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. However during the pandemic normal school inspection visits undertaken by Ofsted were suspended. Urgent inspections where specific concerns did and continue to take place, prioritising the immediate safety of children where deemed necessary.

3. Performance summary and highlights

- 3.1. In 'building back better', this is the strong foundation we're building upon:
 - **The pace of school improvement continues to be a strength** because over four successive years, Medway has sustained an improvement trend.

Compared to other local authorities, Medway has moved 54 places up the LA league table for KS2 combined achievement of reading, writing and maths and is now ranked 95th/149.

- **The primary and secondary education provision is a strength** because 92% of pupils attend a good or outstanding school, compared with 84% nationally. (Feb 2020)
- **Phonics is a strength because performance throughout KS1** remains stable in line with national.
- **Key stage one is a strength** in all measures because Medway continues to perform above national.
- **The rate of improvement in key stage two** is a strength because performance has improved faster than the national rate and the achievement gap is now only 1pp.
- **Key stage four is a strength** because the young people secured a strong pass in English and mathematics compared to national.

3.2. In 'building back better' we need to:

- **Improve the achievement** of all pupils' **ability to read** throughout key stage two to the required standard, so that they can fully access the year group curriculum and be ready for the next phase of their education; with particular emphasis upon pupils who are disadvantaged and /or require with SEND support.
- **Improve** the achievement of pupils in **key stage two** in all subjects in order to close the gap to national in reading, maths & grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- **Improve** the **teaching** of pupils with an education healthcare plan, those eligible for free school meals and those pupils who require SEND support, so that their needs are met, make good progress and consequently are not excluded on a fixed term basis.
- **Improve** the performance of **Children Looked After (CLA)** so that their achievement matches their non-CLA peers.
- **Improve** the engagement of young people in **education, training and employment**.

4. Risk management

4.1. The LA shares with its schools the wish to provide an excellent education for all learners in the area. It is required to work effectively with its schools and academies to ensure that its actions promote this objective.

- 4.2. Decision making is based on a clear evidence base, drawing on both the performance data and shared understanding of each school in order to identify which are performing well, which are under-performing and which are vulnerable.
- 4.3. Categorisation must support improvement –all schools will be re-evaluated each term so that no school is left unsupported, with none categorised inappropriately and improvements acknowledged and celebrated. The school effectiveness strategy sets out this process; during the pandemic it was agreed with both headteacher associations to pause the outward facing implementation of the plan.
- 4.4. Priorities within the strategy are to ensure:
 - 4.4.1. all schools at risk of being eligible for intervention (see Annex 5 and the summary in Annex 6) under section 60 (2) of the Education and Inspections Act, 2006 are identified through quality assurance and monitoring protocols;
 - 4.4.2. informal notices are given to schools that LA officers believe are eligible for intervention (an informal warning notice being a written notification to the governing body of a maintained schools, but is not formalised through copying the letter to the RSC and HMCI);
 - 4.4.3. warning notices under section 60 (2) of the 2006 Act are issued in all instances where school effectiveness officers are satisfied that either conditions (a), (b) or (c) are met, and an informal notice has been served or deemed to be inappropriate in the particular circumstances of the school concerned;
 - 4.4.4. maintained schools judged to require improvement are supported to be good swiftly; and
 - 4.4.5. LA officers cooperate with the office of the RSC to ensure appropriate arrangements are made for any maintained school judged to be inadequate.
- 4.5. Medway Council's school effectiveness service classifies all schools using a four point categorisation scheme, as follows:
 - A** The school is delivering a high standard of education and securing excellent progress for pupils. Standards of attainment and / or progress for pupil outcomes are well above national expectations and / or judged by Ofsted as outstanding.
 - B** The school is continuing to offer a good provision for pupils and they achieve well. Standards of attainment and/or progress are in line with national data and school demonstrates good leadership and /or judged by Ofsted as a good school.
 - C** The school is taking the actions to improve standards of teaching and learning, leadership and management seriously to improve standards

which are currently not yet good enough. The school has an improving trend in pupil outcomes and capacity to improve and /or schools judged as requiring improvement (RI) with good leadership and management. Additionally this partnership rating is used for 'good' schools whose data shows a dip or if inspection is imminent.

- D** The school is a significant cause for concern and urgent improvements are necessary to improve standards in leadership and management and teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make good progress. There is a downward trend in performance and / or outcomes for pupils not improving. This partnership rating includes schools judged (RI) or those in an Ofsted category of concern.

5. Financial implications

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

- 5.1. The Local Authorities 2020/21 DSG allocation is calculated in four separate funding blocks (Schools, Early Years, High Needs and the Central Service Schools Block) using national funding formulas.
- 5.2. 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)

	2020/21	2019/20
Schools Block – Pupil Numbers	41,132	40,558
Schools Block Funding	£190.724m	£179.530m
Early Years Block – Pupil Numbers (PTE)	4,605	4,510
Early Years Block Funding	£18.017m	£17.224m
High Needs Block Funding	£41.105m	£38.220m
Central Services Schools Block	£0.768m	£0.743m
Dedicated Schools Grant (gross)	£250.614m	£235.717m
Academy Deductions	(£161.419m)	(£152.302m)
Dedicated Schools Grant (Net)	£89.195m	179.530
Pupil Premium	£3.265m	£3.261m
Sixth Form Funding	£0.552m	£0.482m
Net Schools Based Funding	£93.012m	£87.158m

Pupil Premium Grant

- 5.3. 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.

5.4. Per pupil rates for 2020/21 have again remained the same as 2019/20 rates:

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

5.5. These rates will produce a total grant for Medway schools, excluding academies, of about £3.265 million in 2020/21.

5.6. Medway also passported four other direct school (PE and sports, universal infant free school meals, teachers pay and teachers pension) grants with a total funding in excess of £6.8 million.

5.7. The High Needs DSG Budget remains under significant financial pressure when a further £4.9m overspend is expected to be added at the end of the 2020-21 financial year increase the cumulative DSG deficit overspend to £14.2m. A robust High Needs Budget Recovery Plan is in place to control and help reduce the overspend.

6. Legal implications

6.1. The Education and Adoption Act 2016, introduced 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 underperforming schools.

6.2. The Local Authority's role in school improvement has changed with the increase in the number of schools that are academies. Local authorities have formal powers of intervention for maintained schools, however they do not have the same powers for academies.

6.3. The Schools Causing Concern Statutory Guidance 2020 emphasises the different roles of local authorities, schools and the Regional Schools Commissioner. The guidance confirms the Government's intention to build a supportive schools culture in which local authorities and RSCs (Regional Schools Commissioners) work with school leaders to drive school improvement. Use of data should be seen as a starting point of a discussion during which local authorities and the RSCs will collect and consider a wide range of information in order to offer schools the support they need.

7. Recommendations

7.1. The Committee is asked to note the Annual Schools' Performance Report, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Lead officer contact

Rebecca Smith, Head of Service: Education

Tel: (01634) 334009

Email: rebecca.smith@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Medway Annual Schools' Performance Report – Academic Year 2019/20

Background papers

None.