

# EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

16 March 2021

**Commenced:** 3.30pm

**Terminated:** 4.10pm

**Present:** Councillors Feeley (Chair), Boyle, Cooper, Fairfoull, Patrick and M Smith, Paul Jacques, Elizabeth Turner, Andrea Radcliffe

<b>In Attendance:</b>	Richard Hancock	Director of Children's Services
	Tim Bowman	Assistant Director, Education
	Catherine Moseley	Head of Access Services
	Jane Sowerby	Lead Primary School Performance and Standards Officer
	Jacqueline Nurney	Early Education Funding and School Organisation Manager
	Tom Wilkinson	Assistant Director, Finance

**Apologies:** Councillors Cooper and Boyle

## 1 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Andrea Radcliffe, Headteacher of Hyde High School and Elizabeth Turner, Headteacher of Millbrook Primary and Nursery School for their attendance. Councillor Feeley, again, recognised the enormous pressures that schools and their staff were under at this time and asked both Headteachers to pass on continued thanks to all those involved in schools for their tremendous work during the current climate. These sentiments were echoed by the Members of the Board.

The Chair also sought feedback from the headteachers with regard to meeting remotely for Education Attainment Improvement Board. Both Elizabeth Turner and Andrea Radcliffe felt that meeting remotely had brought greater efficiencies in terms of their time and ability to be available in school.

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by Members of the Board.

## 3 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 14 January 2021.

### RESOLVED

**That that the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 14 January 2021 be approved as a correct record.**

## 4 REMOTE LEARNING UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Assistant Director of Education, which provided an overview of remote learning across Tameside schools and outlined how the Education team were continuing to support schools in order to ensure that the offer continued to be the best possible.

It was explained that this paper followed on from the reports in the October and January committees, which described the context, challenges and support for schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, in detail.

It was noted that, whilst schools had returned to full opening this week, the need for remote learning was still great. Members were made aware that the term 'remote education' was broad and encompassed all aspects of learning off-site, rather than referring solely to live lessons. It was expected that there would be an increase in the number of groups having to isolate from school in the coming weeks. With this in mind, the requirement for an effective, long-term strategy was highlighted.

Members were provided with a detailed chronology of dates relevant to remote learning, throughout the pandemic, and were made aware that the Government requirements for high quality remote learning were required to be in place by the end of September 2020 and became a legal duty in October 2020. It was emphasised that this remote offer should sit seamlessly alongside the offer provided to students on site and that all schools had responded well, with remote offers having significantly evolved since the start of the pandemic.

Since 12 February 2021, Members were advised that under The Education (Coronavirus, Remote Education Information) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, schools had been required to publish information about their remote education offer on their websites by law. It was stated that the Government recognised that younger children in Key Stage One or Reception often required high levels of parental involvement to support their engagement with remote education and members of the Board acknowledged that this presented significant challenge. Similarly, it was explained that Government also recognised that some pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may not be able to access remote education without adult support and so there was a clear expectation that schools work with families to support this.

Members were made aware that, in January, the Government specified that amount of time that should be spent on remote learning. It was stated that this should be a minimum of:

- Key Stage 1 - 3 hours per day on average across the cohort, fewer for younger children
- Key Stage 2 - 4 hours per day
- Key Stages 3 and 4 - 5 hours per day.

In addition, it was explained that schools were expected to have a system in place to check engagement on a daily basis and examples of feedback were shared with Members of the Board. It was acknowledged that remote learning was something, which previously, schools had not had the experience to develop in a significant way. It was also acknowledged that this had posed particular challenges during the Autumn term, especially, where there were lots of cases of partial isolation. However, schools had quickly learnt to navigate the new landscape with much more sophisticated remote offers available by the start of the Spring term.

Members of the Board acknowledged the hard work involved and tremendous progress throughout this period and were now keen for schools to begin to share best practice in terms of remote learning to ensure that all schools were best supported in continuing to develop in this area.

Members of the Board were advised that, throughout this period, Ofsted had suspended inspections. However, it was explained that monitoring visits of schools judged inadequate or requires improvement had still taken place. It was stated that full, graded Ofsted inspections would not resume until the Summer term for schools and academies.

Information collated from an Autumn terms survey, as part of a review of remote learning in Tameside and Oldham, was shared with Members of the Board. This highlighted that the top priorities identified by the majority of schools as being needed to support remote learning were; improving digital skills and having the technology to improve collaboration.

Responses from parent/carer surveys undertaken also indicated that 47% of pupils were having to share a device, which was broadly in line with national figures. With regard to device ownership, members were made aware that 92% of families owned at least one PC, laptop or tablet and only 3.2% of those who responded lived in a 'mobile phone only' household. However, it was also acknowledged that, at the time of writing this report, Tameside had received over 6,000 devices. With this in mind, it was likely that, if the survey were to be undertaken again, the results may look significantly different.

With regard to Government support with digital devices and remote learning, it was noted that, in total, Tameside schools had received 3,118 devices and academy trusts and colleges had received 3,280 devices (based on DfE data) and 506 4g wi-fi routers. In addition, the EdTech Demonstrator programme based at Oldham Sixth Form College was explained to Members. It was noted that this Demonstrator school, specialising in Google Classroom alongside Manchester College, offering support in Microsoft Teams had been of great use to primary and secondary colleagues.

With regard to Tameside's support for remote education, members were made aware that Russell Scott Primary School had been a great support for other primaries in order to get them up and running with online platforms, for example G-suite and Google Classroom. In addition, a school-led group to provide support for remote learning in Tameside and to share practice from school to school had been established.

It was stated that there were a variety of concerns beginning to arise, depending on the age sector and some were common across schools:

- Remote learning for younger children and children with SEND relies heavily on parental engagement and time to support children at home which many families don't have
- It is very challenging for special schools and primary schools, especially one-form-entry schools, to create the capacity to teach children in school and at home given that most have significant numbers of children on-site. This translates into a stronger offer for those in school
- For secondary schools the challenge is greater around the quality of the offer on-site
- All schools are concerned about the impact of restricted attendance on children's wellbeing and mental health
- Challenge for families is significant, relationships need to be strong, expectations need to be well communicated
- All schools are concerned about teacher workload.

It was explained that expertise was being commissioned from schools for a time-limited period, focused on practice sharing and development, and equality of access. The resource was organised by contexts and digital platforms so that schools can access support and ideas more easily and themes include younger children; Google Classroom; Zoom; Class Dojo, Tapestry and See-Saw; and secondary schools and MS Teams.

It was acknowledged that, although schools in the group were reporting good engagement and participation from most children (approximately between 80 and 97%) there was a significant minority who were not fully engaged in the learning. Additional themes therefore included disadvantaged and vulnerable learners; families where English was an additional language and; parental engagement.

It was explained that understanding the impact on parents was an important part of this programme and parental engagement specifically, including supporting families who, for a wide range of reasons including work, are unable to keep pace with school and/or Government expectations, was a key theme.

Elizabeth Radcliffe went on to discuss the recent experiences at her primary school and explained that attendance had been steady. However, there had recently been incidents of siblings that had tested positive for COVID-19 in local secondary schools so families were now having to isolate as

a result. Elizabeth explained that they now needed to focus on how they were going to ensure that these pupils were able to continue to seamlessly access the curriculum. Elizabeth went on to state that they had received a significant contribution to CPD, particularly in terms of the ICT support the school had been offered. She also made Members aware that the school had received around 40 laptops.

Elizabeth explained that there were around 50% of pupils who had access to technology to enable live lessons. However, she made Members aware that earlier years, were predominantly using pre-recorded sessions and paper packs. Within Key Stage 2, it was noted that there had been great use of Google Classroom, Zoom and Class Dojo.

Elizabeth explained, in detail, the challenges schools were facing, particularly when there had been around 15 children in the classroom and 15 children learning remotely. However, she stated that the support from the Education Team had been invaluable and acknowledged that knowing their individual context had enabled them to be offered and access appropriate support.

Andrea Radcliffe spoke to Members of the Board about the current situation in her secondary school. She explained that the school had worked hard to establish lateral flow testing and outlined the challenges this had initially presented. Andrea stated that the vast majority of students were happy to be back in school but expressed concern with regard to the unsettled period that Year 11 had experienced

Andrea explained that lots of time, development and experience had now been put into developing a quality remote offer for students. She stated that this had significantly evolved since the start of the pandemic and explained that there was a mix of live teaching with other online learning. She also noted that parents had been incredibly supportive. However, she expressed some concerns that engagement from students had been very variable, which had led to a significant impact and re-working of the school's catch-up strategy.

With regard to digital devices, Andrea made Members aware that they had received over 300 devices. She also acknowledged the great work of the pastoral team in finding out what resources were needed by each of the students. Whilst Andrea acknowledged that this had been a turbulent time for the school community, she felt that there was much that could be taken away from the experience, moving forwards for example, the use of remote learning for homework, etc. and the greater efficiencies this may be able to provide.

Andrea went on to echo Elizabeth's comments about the support school had received from the Local Authority, particularly with regard to risk assessments and the 'safe and sensible' approach, which she had found to be successful.

Whilst questions were raised with regard to a hybrid approach to learning, both headteachers were of the firm belief that nothing could substitute quality, face-to-face teaching and learning. However, it was acknowledged that there could be potential future advantages in terms of increasing parental engagement or use of remote learning for those children unable to physically attend school due to long term illness or broken limbs, etc.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the contents of the report be noted by the Board**

## **5 CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ANNUAL REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report from Assistant Director of Education outlining the outcome of the Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2020. Members were reminded that this was an annual report, which collected data from a broad range of providers, who deliver early education and childcare services for families in Tameside. The aim of this report was to provide an updated picture and reflect any changes.

Members were informed the data indicated that the childcare market in Tameside had remained stable. There had been a small reduction in the number of places at Private Day Nurseries, Pre-Schools/Playgroups and childminders. However, the number of places within School Nurseries and Out of School Clubs had increased. Overall, the number of childcare places available across the borough had increased which had impacted positively on parental choice.

It was explained that analysis of the sufficiency of two year places and the take up of the free entitlement for three and four year olds would remain under review. The DfE statistical release 2020 indicated that take up of 3 and 4 year olds was 95% in comparison to the total 3 and 4 year population. This was considered a high take up and was evident across the borough at maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers.

Changes were noted within the childcare market but, from the information available, no identified gaps in provision had been highlighted, other than two specific wards within the borough, where there appeared to be a small gap in provision for the two year age range. However, this could be served by neighbouring wards with vacancies.

Members were informed that the roll out of 30 hours free childcare was now in its fourth year and, at this point, there were no reported issues with parents experiencing insufficient provision. Approximately two thirds of the boroughs primary schools with a nursery had also offered 30 hours, which had provided much-needed additional places. At the time of data collection, which was during the busiest reported term, (summer) there were vacancies for 30 hours in all areas of the borough. It was stated that this would be continually monitored and reported upon annually.

It was clear that certain types of provision had been affected by the national pandemic, due to the restrictions identified within the national guidance e.g. Out of School Provision. In addition, whilst guidance facilitated the wider reopening some providers had opted, in consultation with their families to remain closed for the duration of the summer term. From the start of the autumn term 2020, all group providers and school nurseries had reopened for children. However, it was expected that there would continue to be an impact within the sector due to the pandemic e.g. further restrictions, temporary closures due to children and staff with symptoms or self-isolation, which may have a temporary effect on capacity.

Recommendations from the report included:

1. To continue to work with all our childcare providers to improve the quality and content of the data provided, to inform on the annual assessment of childcare available for all age ranges. In addition, to use this data to monitor the longer term impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and how this affects childcare sufficiency. This will be implemented by circulating the approved report to all providers and by updating them prior to the next data collection to underline the importance of submitting timely and accurate information to improve the sufficiency assessment and to ensure gaps are not identified incorrectly.
2. To continue to encourage providers to regularly report on their vacancies and ensure their information published online is current. To further promote the online childcare search function to enable parents to be able to make electronic enquiries for childcare using the information provided. Achieved by Families Information Service requesting providers to regularly update their information to ensure online information is up to date and relevant which will also ensure improved marketing of providers and to promote use of the Sufficiency Module to provide real time vacancy data.
3. Continue to monitor the number of 2-year places across the borough to address any identified gaps. To follow up on the actions identified which will inform any future place creation required. This will be achieved by data analysis, collecting termly data on 2-year eligibility, take up and monitoring progress and any trends.
4. Review place take up of 30 hours and analyse any trends or shifts in the market place and the sufficiency of the number of places available. Achieved by Data Analysis using termly headcount data, monitoring take up and any trends.

It was noted that the report had been collated using some data and information provided in 2019,

and data provided throughout 2020, which had been during the pandemic. It was, therefore, explained that Tameside Council was working closely with all schools and Early Years providers to support the wider opening of schools, colleges and childcare. During the collection of data to inform the report, account had been taken of the current situation and the impact on attendance, supply and demand, any loss in places and increase to vacancy levels. It would, therefore, be important to continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the long term landscape and sustainability of the childcare market and identify and gaps in provision brought about by changes to the childcare market.

## **RESOLVED**

**(i) That the Board endorse the recommendations set out in the report**

**(ii) That the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report 2020 be approved for publication on the Council website, as required by statute**

## **6 TAMESIDE AND STOCKPORT PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Consideration was given to a report from Executive Member for Lifelong Learning and Deputy Executive Leader, Children and Families. The report highlighted the possibilities of exploring opportunities to potentially accelerate and extend the partnership between Tameside and Stockport, with a shared ambition of ensuring excellent outcomes for the children and young people of each borough.

Members were informed that the ultimate aim was to improve outcomes for children and families by delivering the best possible services through challenging times and within diminishing resources, supported through an emphasis on collaboration and partnership.

It was acknowledged that Tameside and Stockport had different areas of strength and areas for improvement. With this in mind, it was suggested that there was a mutually beneficial opportunity to each learn from one another to deliver whole system improvements. Members were informed that there were opportunities to accelerate ambitious plans for transformation across both localities sitting within the Greater Manchester (GM) area, which in turn could positively influence and support the delivery of shared services more widely across the combined authority.

Opportunities to do things differently with less and share best practice across traditional boundaries were discussed, along with the strong track record of Tameside and Stockport working successfully together in Children's Services over the past three years, including through the DfEs Innovation Program and as Partners in Practice. It was, therefore, suggested that that this would be a good time to more fully explore the opportunities that exist to potentially extend and accelerate this partnership, particularly as a result of the impact of the current pandemic and the wider financial pressures that Local Authorities have found themselves in, not only in 2020/21, but for the foreseeable future.

It was proposed that the partnership could explore and scope the options available to deliver enhanced and sustainable services to improve the life chances for individuals 0-25 years. This would draw on the experience and learning already gained to develop a model, which aligned with the GM Framework for Integrated Public Service Reform, and the Greater Manchester Children and Young People's plan 2019-22.

It was explained that this initial scoping exercise, undertaken jointly across both councils' education and SEND departments, would enable the development of detailed options appraisals. Supported by a strong evidence base this would seek to identify ways to improve services and improve outcomes. This proposal would be subject to the due governance processes of each council with the aim of exploring options and presenting these over the next 12 months, with a view to establishing an agreed new joint operating model to encompass wider areas for collaboration

Members were informed that this partnership would:

- Build upon the strong foundations of partnership between Stockport and Tameside
- Support a proactive response to the porous borders between each local area and those children crossing the boundaries for settings/schools and care arrangements
- Secure significantly better outcomes for children and young people through sharing and rolling out of best practice and innovation and co-creating solutions to system issues.
- Identify potential economies of scale and savings.
- Establish the conditions for further innovation and reform.

It was noted that this work would be supported and lead by a joint Director of Education, working across both LAs, reporting to and supported by the Program Board, which would be initially envisaged for a period of circa two years. It was anticipated that this would cover the period of exploration, development and presentation of options, the establishment of any agreed model and its implementation.

Further to the proposal, it was anticipated that preliminary work would begin to scope out for Phase 2; exploring potential wider opportunities across Children’s Services. This was likely to include areas such as placement commissioning and sufficiency, quality assurance and independent review. - areas that deliver challenge, support and services to the core delivery teams within both local authorities.

Members were informed that these proposals would be presented to Executive Cabinet on 24 March 2021 for consideration.

Discussion ensued with regard to effective collaborations and already established relationships with other Local Authorities. It was highlighted that all opportunities for collaboration were positive and would continue to be developed moving forwards. In addition, there was some discussion surrounding cost savings and innovation. It was noted that the challenge was not to reduce the amount that was spent, but to ensure that we get the most with the limited resources available. It was acknowledged that as demand has increased, we need to respond in the best ways we can and that this model would provide valuable opportunities for both effective collaboration and increased efficiencies.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) **That EAIB note the content of this report and the potential opportunities that it presents.**
- (ii) **That EAIB note the proposed arrangements (for an initial period of 2 years) for a single Director of Education.**

**7 EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD FORWARD PLAN 2021-22**

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director of Education, which set out a proposal for a structured approach to the work of the Education Attainment Improvement Board, which addressed the strategic priorities for education and lifelong learning in Tameside.

The following long term plan was proposed:

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Lead</b>
22 June 2021	Schools Update	Jane Sowerby
	SEND Update	Charlotte Finch
19 October 2021	Schools Update	Jane Sowerby
	September 2021 Admissions Update	Catherine Moseley
	Schools Funding Update	Christine Mullins
18 January 2021	Virtual School Annual Report	Amanda Aylward
	School Admission Arrangements and School Place Planning	Catherine Moseley
	Schools Funding decisions	Christine Mullins

8 March 2022	Schools Update	Jane Sowerby
	Childcare Sufficiency	Catherine Moseley

In addition, it was suggested that a report be presented, which would focus on the excellent work of Tameside Music Service (date to be confirmed).

It was also discussed that there would remain the opportunity to make further amendments through the course of the year

**RESOLVED**

**That the contents of the report be noted and approved by the Board.**

**8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

**That the date of the next meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board be held on Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 3.30pm.**

**CHAIR**