

Report to:	EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Date:	22 June 2021
Reporting Officer:	Tim Bowman, Director, Education (Tameside and Stockport)
Subject:	SCHOOLS UPDATE
Report Summary:	The report provides an update of how schools are overcoming the challenges of lockdown easing and returning to business as usual. In addition, this report explores the priorities for recovery and the Council's role in this.
Recommendations:	It is recommended that the Board note the content of the report.
Corporate Plan:	The proposals contained in this report support most aspects of the corporate plan by ensuring that schools are able to provide a good education offer for all children, especially those most affected by the pandemic.
Policy Implications:	The report sets out the position in line with Council policies and the statutory framework.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>The majority of additional funding for the areas of recovery outlined in this report is provided directly to schools or must be applied for by schools, with the exception of the following:</p> <p>Moderation of Early Years is currently funded by earmarked grant, there have been no announcements to change the funding further to the change of work outlined in section 4.4, therefore there are no known financial implications.</p> <p>The change to a local Teaching Hub, has no direct financial implications for the Council, however Mossley Hollins will no longer receive a teaching school grant of £13,334, however the work relating to this funding will cease too.</p> <p>Summer School funding submissions closed at 28 May, there are no Tameside schools identified in the in allocations currently. Further announcements are expected during June 2021. Tameside Council has been awarded a Wellbeing recover Grant of £30,889.</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	This is a general update report and as such no decisions are being sought. There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report save for the Council's overarching statutory duties in relation to the provision of education, public health and safeguarding.
Risk Management:	The whole school risk assessments completed by schools alongside all guidance from the Department for Education should have been used to enable each school to assess the level of risk and how it can be mitigated in order to ensure schools can open and operate safely.
Access to Information:	NON-CONFIDENTIAL
	This report does not contain information, which warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.

Background Information: The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Tim Bowman, Director of Education



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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report follows on from previous reports presented to October, January, and March Committees, which described the context, challenges and support for schools during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a detailed review of remote learning. Since the last Committee schools have been fully operational since the beginning of the summer term as we continue the national journey of lockdown easing which started with lifting restrictions to attendance in all schools on 8 March 2021.
- 1.2 As always, headteachers, school leaders and school staff in Tameside continue to work tirelessly as they face the challenges of returning to 'business as usual'. They are still a long way off pre-COVID-19 practice which continues to have a significant impact on staff morale, workload, and wellbeing as well as on learning. The biggest challenges in the system currently are the GCSE Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) process for Year 11 and planning for effective recovery.
- 1.3 Support for schools and colleges will continue to be available to all schools, whatever type they may be and whatever phase or sector they are in, and we continue to maintain a borough-wide approach to identifying collective processes which support safe and sensible local decision-making.

2. REMAINING COVID RESTRICTIONS AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 Although the country is in the process of lockdown easing with a possible end to restrictions from 21 June 2021, there remain significant COVID-19-safe measures and requirements for schools. Schools continue to operate a system of controls very effectively. Pupils and staff continue to be required to isolate for 10 days if they are a positive case or a contact of a positive case. Additionally, contacts are now also asked to have a PCR test even though they do not have symptoms. Pupils isolating due to COVID-19 are still entitled to a good remote education offer and a free school meal if they normally access one.
- 2.2 At the beginning of June, the Directors of Public Health in Greater Manchester were given clearance by the Government to write to schools with secondary age children to advise them to continue use of face coverings in schools by pupils and staff until the end of the summer term. This is contrary to national guidance and reflects the greater risk of the Delta Variant in the region. Promoting the wearing of face coverings is only one part of a school's larger system of controls. Other measures, including social distancing, staff vaccination (for those eligible), handwashing, regular and symptomatic testing, contact tracing, self-isolation, good ventilation and enhanced cleaning remain essential.

3. UPDATES SINCE LAST REPORT

3.1 Digital Devices for Vulnerable Pupils

In total, to date (May 2021), Tameside schools have received 3,657 devices. Additionally academy trusts and colleges have received 4,135 devices (academy data is only available at trust-level and not at school level so this is a best estimate based on DfE data).

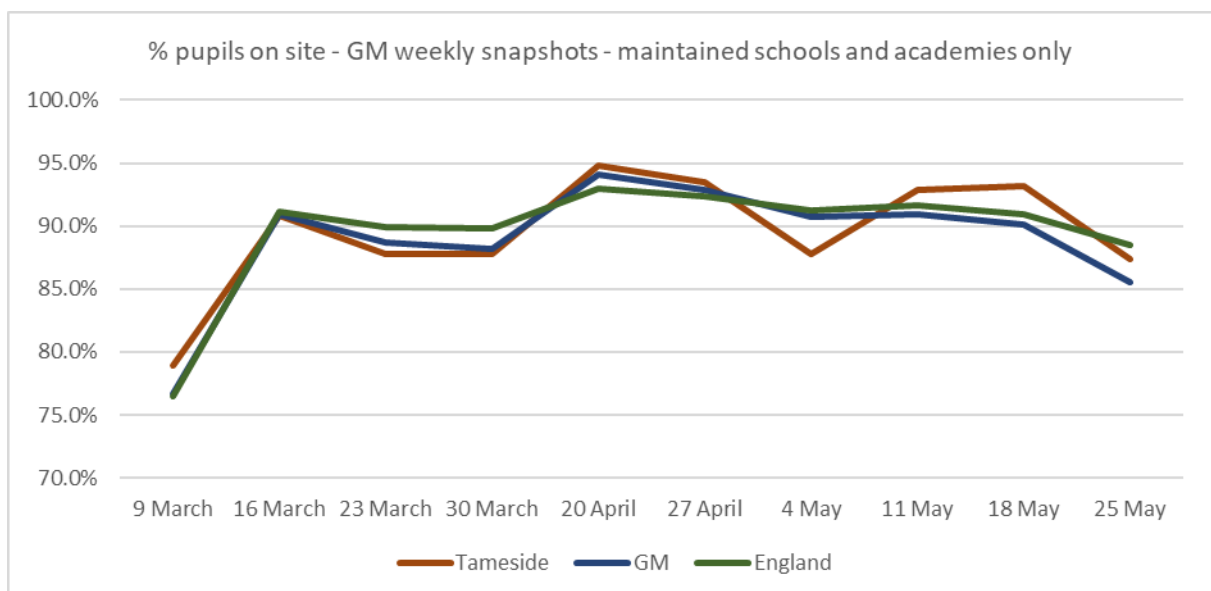
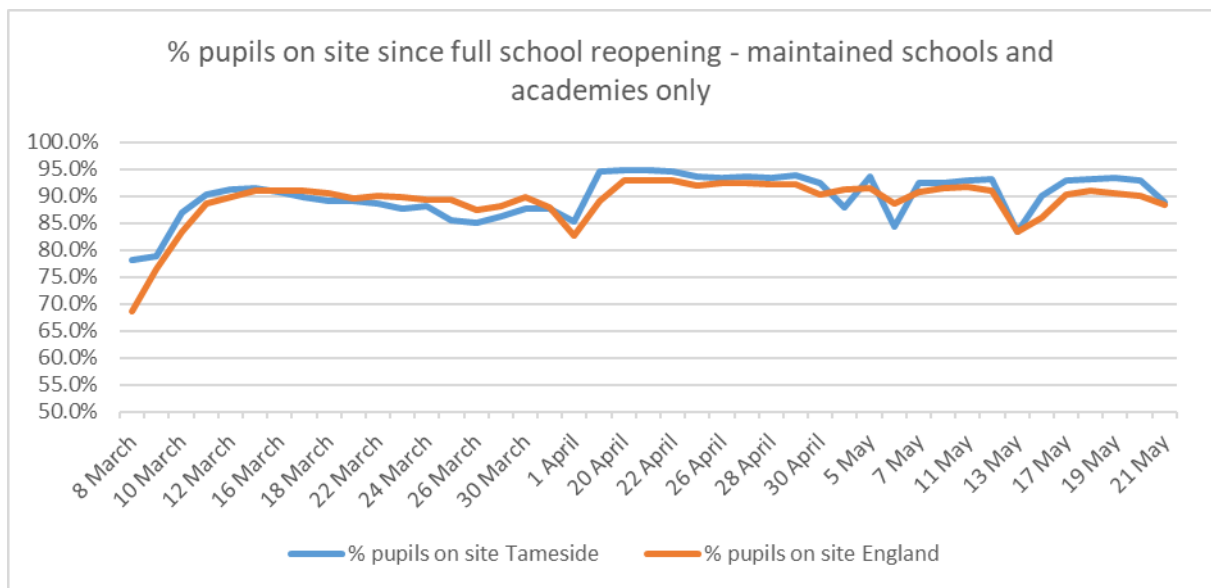
3.2 Ofsted

Since the meeting in March, Ofsted has revised its plans for full graded Ofsted inspections and these will now resume in the autumn term for maintained schools and academies. Because of the disruption to the 2020 and 2021 exam series, Ofsted will use published data from 2019 in future inspections, recognising all its limitations. Attendance between March 2020 and March 2021 will not form part of any judgement of a school.

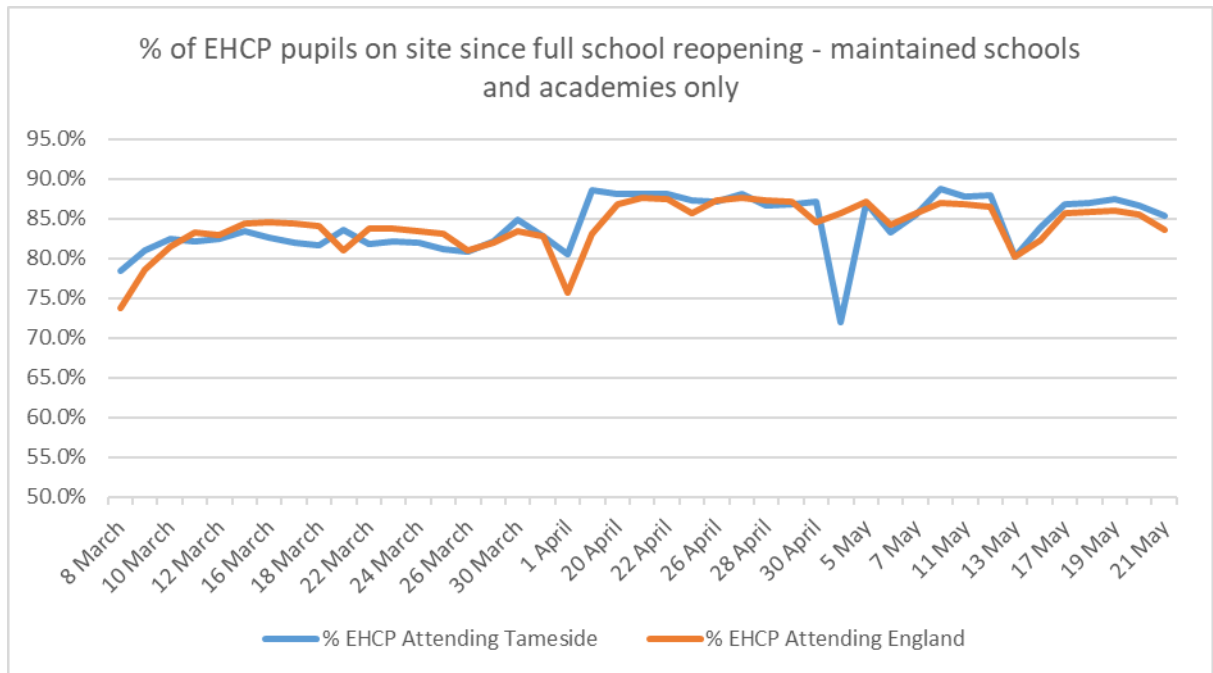
3.3 In the summer term, Ofsted will inspect schools ‘to provide reassurance about how well children and learners are catching up’. Monitoring inspections since 4 May are back to Ofsted’s regular framework and on-site visits but are not graded. As well as monitoring inadequate and RI schools, Ofsted will also inspect some ‘good’ schools that have not had an inspection within the statutory five-year window. We have had two inspections since the last meeting. Hyde High School and Samuel Laycock School.

3.4 **Attendance**

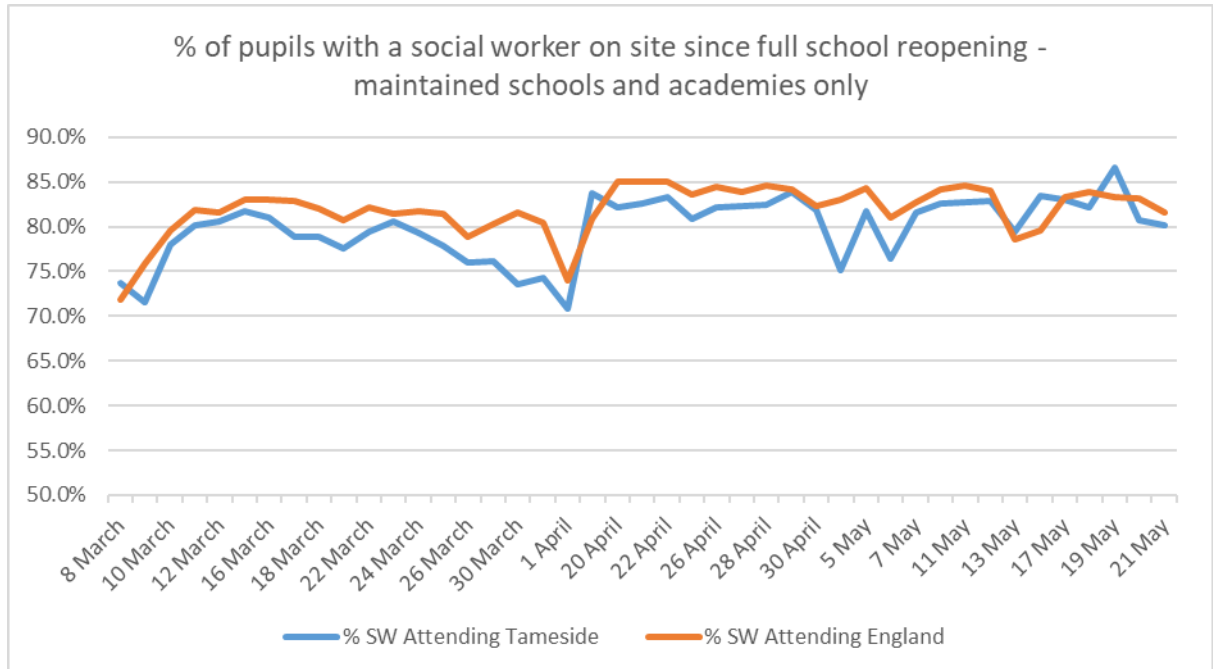
Since schools reopened fully on 8 March 2021, the percentage of pupils on site in Tameside’s maintained schools and academies has been consistently in line with the national average. Since the start of the summer term on 19 April 2021, Tameside has been consistently above the national average for the % of pupils on site, with the only exceptions due to inset days/elections/school closures. Tameside has also been, bar one exception (due to school closures), consistently at or above the GM average.



3.5 Looking more carefully at the vulnerable groups, the percentage of pupils with an EHCP on site since full school reopening has been broadly in line with the national average. Since the start of the summer term, it has been consistently in line or above the national average.



3.6 The percentage of pupils with a social worker on site since full school reopening is below the national average. One of the biggest factors around this has been the proportions of pupils with a social worker on site at the Pupil Referral Service, with a large number of pupils with a social worker attending alternative provision, and so are not marked as on site. The Head of the Virtual School is working with the Tameside Pupil Referral Service (TPRS) to ensure full awareness and support for this vulnerable group meeting weekly to discuss the needs and status of each student with a Social Worker on roll.



3.7 There has been a significant focus on pupils who have not returned to school since 8 March due to being abroad and being unable to return due to national travel restrictions. Several data sweeps have been undertaken with all schools to establish the number of children unable to return to the UK. Initially, the Council was aware of over 120 pupils but just before the Whit half-term, this had reduced to 68 children from 43 families. Colleagues continue to work with a group of headteachers and the Population Health Team to provide advice for all schools on this situation including on appropriate use of registration codes; contacting

families abroad; continuing to provide access to online learning and appropriate quarantine and self-isolation advice.

4. CURRENT EDUCATION CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

4.1 GCSEs

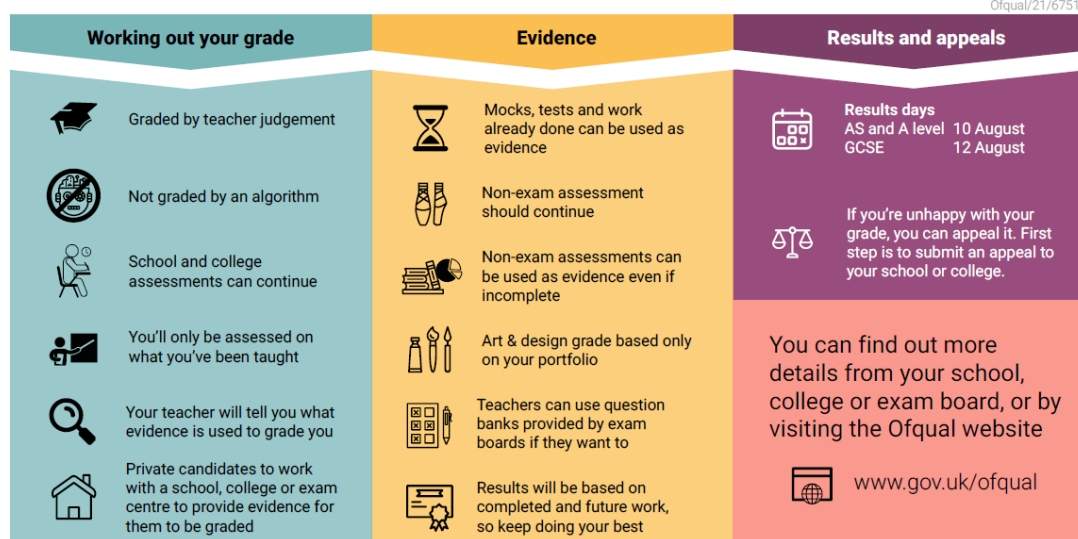
The coronavirus pandemic has led to another cancellation of national exams this summer, 2021. Following consultation conducted by Ofqual and the DfE, it was decided that GCSE students will receive teacher assessed grades (TAGs) on 12 August 2021. These will be recognised by colleges and higher education institutions and employers in the future. As in 2020, no school level data will be published by the DfE.

4.2 Teachers will award TAGs for their students based on evidence such as classwork, homework, results in assignments, mock exams, non-exam assessments or coursework, and a student's general progress. Students will only be assessed on what they've been taught. Unlike last year, there will be no national standardisation process i.e. grades awarded by algorithm. Schools and colleges will quality assure student grades, and students are able to appeal their grade should they be unhappy with the process.

How GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2021

ofqual

Ofqual/21/6751/2



4.3 The process of TAGs completes for schools on 18 June when all TAGs are submitted. This has put an enormous amount of work onto secondary school colleagues as well as a huge level of additional responsibility for individual teachers and headteachers.

4.4 Early Years Reforms

The reforms become statutory from September 2021 and include the implementation of the Reception Baseline. In Greater Manchester, schools were invited to be Early Adopters of the new framework and 18 Tameside schools took part in this pilot.

4.5 The Early Learning Goals have been made clearer and more specific about what a child is expected to demonstrate by the end of reception and ensuring alignment with the latest evidence on child development. There is a particular focus throughout on strengthening communication and language and building rich vocabulary.

4.6 From September, councils will no longer be required to externally moderate 25% of schools each year but will still be required to provide training on the assessment and the completion

of the profile to all providers who need it; and will still be responsible for the collection of Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) data in future years, quality assurance of the data and submitting this to DfE. Headteachers and Governors have had briefings and a training session for headteachers has been attended by 60% of primary school heads. Sessions for practitioners have been set for June and July with networks being hosted in the next academic year.

4.7 **Teaching School Hubs**

The teaching school hub programme will create a network of 87 centres of excellence for teacher training and development, focused on some of the best schools and multi-academy trusts in the country as identified by Government outcomes criteria. It replaces the previous network of around 750 teaching schools, which will end in August 2021.

4.8 Teaching school hubs aim to provide high-quality professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers. The hubs will deliver all government-approved CPD underpinning recruitment and retention of teachers; this will include: Initial Teacher Training; Early Career Framework (ECF); and the new National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) on Leading Teaching, Behaviour, Teacher Development, and Schools. The hubs will also have a role in signposting to and ensuring access to all other government-funded centres of CPD, e.g. Maths Hubs, English Hubs, Behaviour Hubs, Ed Tech Schools, Research Schools.

4.9 The DfE has paired together Tameside and Oldham authorities together and appointed the 'East Manchester Teaching Hub' led by Blue Coat School, and in partnership with Tameside and Oldham schools. A Teaching School Hub Director has been appointed and all Tameside schools have had the opportunity to meet with her and the key personnel at the Teaching School Hub. The people who are commissioned to deliver the CPD will come from across our schools and settings and will be badged and quality assured by the Hub. The Hub will be also responsive to local priorities and commissions.

4.10 A key part of the CPD that the hub is responsible for delivering, is the implementation of the **Early Career Framework**, which represents a significant change to the support received by new teachers. The new framework sets out all of the things that a newly qualified teacher (NQT) needs to master in their first two years of teaching, across eight standards. Early Career Professional Development is built on shared national criteria, and now includes a government-funded two-year entitlement to professional development rather than the original one year entitlement. The programme also includes new training for mentors. Greater Manchester has been a pilot area in 2020/21 and this is now statutory from September 2021. From September, new teachers will no longer be referred to as NQTs and will instead be ECTs, Early Career Teachers.

5. **RECOVERY**

5.1 **Summer Schools**

DfE research estimates that in the first half-term of autumn 2020, pupils in Years 3-9 were on average around 1.6 to 2 months behind on their reading and those in Years 3-7 were around 3.2 months behind on their maths. Pupils in high-FSM schools were on average further behind those in low-FSM schools. The Government aims to address this need through a short summer school offer led by secondary schools. 82% of eligible schools nationally have taken this opportunity to access summer school funding.

5.2 The aim of the programme is to deliver a blend of academic education and enrichment activities. DfE expects that most schools will want to focus on pupils making the transition into Year 7 for the summer school offer and to identify the pupils most in need, including vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, those who are just above the threshold for FSM, as well as those who are eligible for pupil premium. Some of the vulnerable children that schools should consider encouraging to attend include those with a social worker, those with an

Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), or those whom schools have identified as 'otherwise vulnerable'.

5.3 **National Recovery Support**

Support available nationally was revealed on 2 June 2021, although there may still be more funding to come in the future as the offer falls short of the recommendations made by the Recovery Commissioner. A total of £1.4 billion is being invested, including £1 billion to support up to six million, 15-hour tutoring courses for disadvantaged school children, targeting key subjects such as maths and English. Within this envelope, £153 million will support evidence-based professional development for early years practitioners, including new programmes focusing on key areas such as speech and language development.

5.4 In addition, every school with a Reception class can apply for training and resources through an early years catch-up programme, funded by the Government, to support communication skills. Recruitment has launched for the second wave of the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI), a programme proven to be effective in raising outcomes in Reception-age children's early language, communication and speech skills.

5.5 In Tameside this will be the third year that schools have been able to access the NELI programme and/or Tutoring programmes as the Education Team had already identified and invested in these areas prior to the pandemic. In order to further identify recovery approaches the Scenario Planning Group has created a sub-committee for the purpose of discussing recovery with all sectors represented. The group met for the first time on 14 June 2021.

5.6 As part of this strategic leadership from the Council, it is important that Tameside encourages schools to maximise the opportunities available nationally as well as to lead locally. The Recovery Commissioner's recommendation for longer school days to give time for broad, balanced, and engaging activities, has not been implemented by the Government but there are already schools nationally and locally that make this approach work. Exploring the research, the importance of play and social interaction cannot be under-stated. 'Play' approaches focus on resilience, problem-solving, engagement, and language all need to be at the heart of recovery strategy.

5.7 As part of recognising the mental health and wellbeing needs in education, the Education team, Public Health and the CCG have commissioned a Tameside school, through a competitive tendering process, to lead and co-ordinate Mental Health in Education practice, communications and training from June 2021 for at least two years. The successful school is Millbrook Primary School.

5.8 The national focus on early language, engagement, targeted offers and mental health all sit well with Tameside's existing education priorities of Reading, SEN, and Attendance and we will continue to champion these causes.

6. **CONCLUSION**

6.1 Significant prioritising will be needed to support schools with recovery and accessing the most effective approaches and evidence-based CPD targeted at the most vulnerable children. School improvement activity and funding will be focused on recovery.

6.2 Schools have a huge challenge ahead in identifying and implementing their strategies for recovery and will need support and strategic guidance from the Council to respond to this challenge. Schools have had to deliver so much in the last two academic years in an extremely challenging context and it has had a significant impact on workload and wellbeing of staff and senior leaders. The Council's recovery strategy needs to support and not get in the way of schools doing the right thing for children.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 As set out at the front of the report.