

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

8 March 2022

Commenced: 3.30pm

Terminated: 5.00pm

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

In Attendance:	Catherine Moseley	Head of Access Services
	Tim Bowman	Director, Education (Tameside and Stockport)
	Jayne Sowerby	Lead Primary School Performance and Standards Officer
	Charlotte Finch	Head of SEND
	Jacqueline Nurney	Early Education Funding and School Organisation Manager
	Maxine Carroll	Senior Education Welfare Officer
	Julie Waterhouse	Access Manager

Apologies: Councillors Welsh and Cooper

32 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced all parties.

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

34 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board, which was held on 18 January 2022.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 18 January 2022 be approved as a correct record.

35 SCHOOLS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Director, Education (Tameside and Stockport), which provided an update from schools since the last report was presented, in October 2021. The report included information about the likely future direction of the schools landscape with insight into what the new Schools White Paper would contain. It also provided updates on Ofsted, Phonics outcomes, exclusions, and changes to the support for Early Years providers.

Despite national restrictions being stepped down on 26 January 2022, it was noted that Tameside was still very much impacted by the spread of the Omicron variant, which had meant that headteachers, school leaders, early years' leaders and staff across Tameside were still dealing with significant challenges. It was explained that support for settings, schools and colleges continued to be available, and a borough wide approach to identifying collective processes, which supported safe and sensible, local decision-making continued.

In relation to Ofsted, Members were informed that, during this academic year, there had been two 'Good' secondary school inspections, three 'Good' primary school inspections, one primary school which Ofsted judged to 'Require Improvement' that was previously 'Good' and one secondary school that had moved out of 'Inadequate' and into 'Requires Improvement'. They were also informed that, in January, two primary school inspections were deferred due to the schools being in active outbreak.

An update was provided in relation to the Year One Phonics Check, which had been undertaken in the autumn term of Year 2, following cancellation from the summer, when it would have usually been undertaken. It was noted that the percentage of children in Tameside achieving this had remained the same as in 2021 (77.4%) with 79.7% achieving this nationally. The panel were informed that 67.4% of children eligible for Free School Meals achieved the standard, which was 1% above this figure nationally.

Members were made aware that end of key stage national assessments at KS1 and 2 would go ahead this summer, along with the new Year 4 multiplication check and the Year 1 phonics screen. GCSEs would also go ahead this summer and the Early Years Foundation Stage would be required to submit data in line with the new national framework.

An update was provided in relation to work being undertaken to reduce exclusions. Members were informed that, in summer 2020, Education Improvement and Partnerships worked with the Tameside PRU Management Committee to redesign the role of the leadership of the TPRS (Tameside Pupil Referral Service) and recruited to this post in November 2020.

The new role required an executive headteacher, sourced from a mainstream background, who also had responsibility for transforming the wider system around more inclusive practice. This additional responsibility was funded through School Improvement monies. A key priority for the new executive headteacher was to engage mainstream secondary headteachers in co-producing a strategy for achieving better outcomes for this vulnerable group of children and one of the central initiatives to achieve this had been a new TPRS Outreach Offer.

It was noted that the unpublished data for the autumn 2021 suggested an improved picture on 2019. However, it was acknowledged that there remained a significant distance still to travel. The valuable work, which had been undertaken towards reducing permanent exclusions across the borough was outlined for Members.

Members were made aware that Education Investment areas (EIAs) had recently been announced as part of the government's levelling up agenda. It was noted that there were 55 EIAs, including Tameside and they would focus on two main Government priorities:

- 90% of children to achieve the expected standard at the end of KS2 in Reading, Writing and Maths
- A measure to judge the progress made in secondary schools relating to accessing successfully high quality post-16 placements

It was also noted that, in these EIAs, schools, which Ofsted had judged to be 'Requires Improvement' or worse, in their last two inspections, could be moved into strong academy trusts

Members were informed that the Government's Schools White paper was due to be published and that this would likely focus on four main strategies:

- The quality of teacher training and CPD as a tool for recruiting and retaining teachers with a focus on literacy and numeracy
- Curriculum, behaviour and attendance
- Targeted support for those, who need it most
- A strengthened school system: stronger MATs; clarity about the roles of LAs, Ofsted, DfE, and funding.

It was noted that a detailed report on the implications for Council and schools would be provided,

once the paper was published; this was likely to be in summer 2022.

The reduction in the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage Grant was explained to Members and they were informed that Schools' Forum had agreed to de-delegate funding to cover the 50% shortfall during the next financial year. It was outlined that the Head of Service for Education Improvement and Partnerships would work alongside sector representatives to develop a strong and future proof model, which would continue to support all schools and academies.

It was acknowledged that the biggest change to the school system during the last decade had been the rise in academies and multi-academy trusts. The importance of embracing the academies agenda was emphasised alongside the need for effective partnership between all schools and the Local Authority and, critically, strong partnerships between schools.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board

36 CHILD CARE SUFFICIENCY ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Director, Education (Tameside and Stockport), which included an analysis of the supply and demand for childcare within the borough collated during 2021 and outlined changes from the previous year.

The report included a detailed analysis of places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and Out of School clubs, which included places available at the time of the snapshot, the take up of places and the number of vacancies available within each ward within the borough.

Members were reminded that a previous report had been presented in the January meeting, which provided detailed information relating to school place planning for the borough. This report concluded that birth rates in the borough had fallen significantly in the last two years and this would inevitably impact early provision before impacting schools. It was noted that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2022 would need to reflect the potential for the need to reduce places and impact on viability for some providers as the falling population numbers moved through the year groups.

It was acknowledged that the childcare market in Tameside had remained stable and, despite a small reduction of places in certain sectors, overall the number of childcare places available across the borough had increased since the previous assessment. This impacted positively on parental choice.

The report did not highlight any major gaps in provision within the borough, based on the data available during the snapshot period. However, it did provide brief recommendations for action, which included:

- To continue to work with childcare providers to improve the quality of the annual data provided, to inform on the 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 would be achieved by supporting providers to provide accurate and timely information as this forms the basis of the assessment and the ability to analyse the market place.
- 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 would inform any future place creation required. This would be achieved by data analysis, collecting termly data on 2 year eligibility, take up and monitoring progress and any trends. In addition to work collaboratively with Families Information Service to capture information to assist with the collation of the report.
- 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.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board and approved for publication on the Council's website

37 UPDATE ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Access Services, which provided an update on school attendance across the borough. The report also provided information on the work being undertaken to support families, children and schools and identified future priorities.

The report emphasised the strong link between attendance and attainment and set out the importance of this during the recovery phase. It was noted that children in Tameside had always attended well and that levels of absence in Tameside schools had been below average for several years.

Members were informed that initiatives to improve school attendance were made up of a number of factors, not just getting children into school but also ensuring the exclusions were kept to a minimum, that children missing education were tracked effectively, and that parents choosing to home educate their children were supported to offer suitable education.

It was noted that persistent absence was defined as missing more than 10% of school and that, although Tameside had been achieving better than national averages for persistent absence, work had continued with partner agencies to ensure best practice throughout the pandemic period and into the recovery phase.

Attendance data was provided for Members. It was stated that the percentage of pupils on site in schools had consistently been around 91% for the 2021-22 academic year, despite significant number of pupils missing school due to Covid-19. These figures were in line or above the Greater Manchester average, with those students with an Education Health Care Plan EHCP and social workers consistently above corresponding national averages.

It was noted that school census data for 2020-21 academic year had demonstrated an increase in overall attendance from the previous year. However, it was acknowledged that levels of persistent absence had increased. This had been particularly the case in special schools and was due to the high amounts of authorised absence amongst children with an EHCP during the 2021 spring term lockdown, in line with DfE requirements.

The impact of Covid-19 on lost learning was again highlighted, with Tameside primary school pupils having missed more than a quarter of school and secondary schools missing more than a third of school during the autumn and spring terms 2020-21.

A snapshot of some of the support available for families, children and schools, since September 2021 was provided to members. This included:

- Planning and Communication – all Education Welfare Officers had acted as link officers talking to schools. This had allowed for deeper understanding of individual school issues.
- Ensuring immediate referrals to Early Help Service where schools had identified concerns about vulnerable pupils not attending.
- Back to School – Tameside Loves School campaign. Two campaigns ran over pandemic period and a digital campaign was scheduled for spring term 2022. Reassurance posters were shared in public spaces; banners were placed in each town in the borough; local media campaign; compendium of age appropriate resources sent to schools.
- Guidance on good attendance practice for schools had been refreshed and reissued to all schools. Advice on supporting the education of pupils with medical conditions; children

missing education; elective home education; the use of penalty notices and register codes had all been refreshed.

- Networking events to promote good attendance practice ran for all schools and partner agencies with around half of schools attending. Webinars, in person training and prosecution drop-ins had been made available to all schools. Attendance networking events established for all cluster areas.
- Annual register audits continued to take place to support good attendance practice and identify children who are potentially missing education; for example, identifying those on part time timetables, absent through illness that haven't been referred through the medical policy; subject of unofficial exclusions and register coding compliance with coding legislation.
- Analysis of attendance data to better target support for schools and geographical clusters.
- Support for Youth Justice Service to support young people with school attendance issues by attending at education surgeries and the out of court panels.
- Children with medical conditions protocol updated and enhanced to better support schools and families. Four new case notifications received and supported.
- Focused work with headteachers on identifying and tracking children stuck abroad in second lockdown.
- Frequent advice to all schools on attendance codes through the weekly email.
- Wellbeing for education return project established and linked to emotionally based school avoidance project.
- Tameside implemented Emotionally Based School Avoidance strategy with several partner agencies including early help teams; educational psychology services and CAMHS. There had been training for identified schools and school staff as part of the programme to help address issues for pupils and reintegrate them back into learning.
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) attended to discuss high-level domestic abuse cases to put safety plans in place for the victim. The education rep liaised with schools to ensure the conference had up to date information regarding the children. 67 pupils have been discussed since September 2021.
- Attendance at twice weekly early help panels sharing education information on pupils being supported. This enabled good multi agency information sharing and ensured all agencies involved with the young person were aware of the plan.
- Attendance at monthly education surgery to support Youth Justice Service officers with cases where there were issues with education.
- Attendance at Out of Court Panels sharing education information on young people.
- Three families had arrived in Tameside from the Afghanistan re-settlement program and were being supported to secure school places. Once the pupils are allocated schools an Education Welfare Officer will work in school with the children and provide some family support. The support will continue for 12 months. Further families are expected to arrive in Spring term.

Members were also informed that, in line with advice from DfE, Tameside Council had reinstated the issuing of penalty notices. The procedures relating to this process were outlined.

Members were advised that communication with elective home-educated families had been maintained throughout the pandemic in a variety of ways. It was noted that the numbers of electively home educated pupils had increased significantly since 2015-16, with a peak in September 2021, where a total of 195 pupils were being home educated across the borough. However, it was explained that although there had been an increase, Tameside remained amongst the lowest in the North West (between 4.4 and 5.0 per 1,000).

It was stated that, in the second half of the autumn terms, the Children Missing in Education (CME) Officer had opened 55 new cases and closed 17 cases. It was noted that, as of the end of December 2021, there were 156 open cases where children were actively being sought. Members were informed that robust procedures were in place to ensure the whereabouts of all children were known and, where pupils were not attending regularly, schools were expected to follow their attendance procedures, including having regular contact with parents and carrying out home visits,

where appropriate.

In relation to children with medical conditions, which prevent them from attending school, Members were made aware that colleagues in the Education Welfare Service work alongside schools, health professionals and parents to provide an alternative provision which will meet a pupil's individual needs, including social and emotional needs to enable them to thrive and prosper in the education system. It was stated that the Council has a protocol for supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and that all schools should have their own medical protocol for supporting pupils with medical needs. It was noted that there had been 4 new referrals and details of the outcomes were provided for members.

It was noted that there was still much to do to support children, families and schools with good attendance practice. With this in mind, the following priorities had been identified:

- Further develop Tameside school attendance pathway and relaunch to ensure all schools are aware when developing individual school attendance policies
- Develop guidance on school attendance policies to be included in headteacher guidance with particular focus on attendance of vulnerable pupils
- Ensure all schools have robust and current attendance policies and ensure schools receive feedback through register audits
- Ensure all schools have an active relationship with their attendance link officer and are aware of their area attendance network
- Develop a robust attendance data dashboard for all schools. Use live attendance data to inform the setting of attendance targets and to include targets for vulnerable pupils and reducing persistent absence
- Continue to maintain a focus on improving attendance for vulnerable children and young people across Children's Services and partners
- Ensure on going social media campaign to promote school attendance to children and parents
- Respond to current national initiatives.

Members were advised that the government had recently published its response to the outcome of a consultation entitled 'Children Not in School'. It was explained that the proposals in the consultation had broadly been agreed and that new legislation was to be brought forward, which would aim to ensure that:

- Local authorities have a register of children who are being home educated (which will be subject of inspection)
- Parents have to register with a local authority if they intend to home educate
- Providers of support for home educators (illegal schools) have a duty to provide info on relevant children to local authorities
- Local authorities to have a duty to provide support to home educators if requested

It was also noted that a consultation on school attendance and consistency of support had been undertaken from 25 January 2022 to 28 February 2022. This was seeking views on proposals to build on existing work on attendance and improving the consistency of attendance support for families and focussed on 4 main proposals:

- Requiring schools to have an attendance policy, and have regard to statutory guidance on the expectations of schools, academy trusts and governing bodies of maintained schools on attendance management and improvement.
- Introducing guidance on the expectations of local authority attendance services.
- A clearer more consistent national framework for the use of attendance legal intervention, including a new regulatory framework for issuing fixed penalty notices for absence.
- Bringing the rules for granting leaves of absence in academies in line with other state funded schools.

Revised Behaviour in Schools Guidance was also discussed, with details of consultation on proposed changes to this guidance and the suspension of permanent exclusion guidance outlined

for Members.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board

38 SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Director, Education (Tameside and Stockport), which outlined the findings of the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, October 2021.

Members were made aware that the outcome of the inspection was that a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was required because of significant areas of weakness in the area's practice. HMCi had also determined that the Local Authority and the area's Clinical Commissioning Group(s) (CCG) were jointly responsible for submitting the written statement to Ofsted. It was noted that this Written Statement of Action (WSOA) must be submitted for approval no later than April 12 2022.

Members were informed that Inspectors had identified 10 areas that the WSOA must address. These were outlined as:

- The endemic weaknesses in the quality and, due to the pandemic, timeliness of EHC plans, which lead to poor outcomes for children and young people with SEND across education, health and care
- The high level of dissatisfaction among parents and carers with the area's provision
- The local offer not being well publicised and not providing parents with the information that they need
- The placement of some children and young people in unsuitable education provision
- The unreasonable waiting times, which lead to increased needs for children and young people and their families
- The lack of contribution from social care professionals to the EHC plan process
- The limited oversight of the quality of SEND provision for children and young people's education
- The inconsistent application of a graduated approach across different settings, leading to weaknesses in meeting needs across the area
- The poor transition arrangements across all stages of education
- The lack of strategic direction in the support for children and young people to prepare them effectively for adulthood.

Despite the weaknesses identified by inspectors, it was explained that they had also noted the following areas of strength:

- Since 2018, the new leadership team had started to make the changes needed to address historical weaknesses. However, these had been affected by the pandemic.
- Since 2018, leaders had established a clear and accurate view of the area's strengths and weaknesses. They had drawn up suitable plans to resolve endemic issues. Parents, carers and professionals recognised some improvements, but believed there was still a long way to go.
- Leaders had set a clear vision for the future. Leaders had developed SEND strategies to prioritise planned improvements and joint commissioning. This was starting to bring services together to work more collaboratively. However, these strategies had been hampered by the pandemic and so they had not been fully implemented.
- Parents were quick to cite the positive difference made by the excellent front-line staff who worked with them and their children.

Following the inspection, a number of actions had been undertaken, a summary of which was provided for Members, including:

- Sharing the content with all interested parties. The report had been added to the Local Offer.

- Arranged and conducting, in partnership with parent carer forum, two parent engagement sessions.
- Presenting to Children and Families Scrutiny Committee on Thursday 13 January.
- Refreshing the membership of the SEND Improvement Group (SENDIG) to ensure it is inclusive of all necessary partners. SENDIG had been established since the SEND Strategy was agreed. The group brings together senior leaders in education, health and care and includes parent representative.
- SENDIG have been identified to be the key forum, which will drive the drafting and implementation of WSOA. To do this the SENDIG are now meeting every two weeks.
- Via the SEND Improvement Group, a process has been agreed and a strategy developed to design the Written Statement of Action.
- Increased Designated Medical Officer (DMO) oversight by agreeing to appoint a new Designated Clinical Officer in addition to the DMO.
- Established a working relationship with the Transformation Team who are offering support with the production of the WSOA.
- Reviewed a number of WSOA plans completed by other LAs. Agreed an initial draft template for our WSOA.
- Health Colleagues have completed two task and finish meetings to agree actions in response to their areas of the WSOA. Their conclusions will be shared with LA colleagues to be incorporated into the final WSOA.
- A focus meeting has taken place with school leaders from Tameside Specialist Schools and School Resource Bases. Contributions were recorded and where appropriate added to the WSOA.
- A task and finish meetings with school leaders from all sectors in Tameside was convened on 17 February. Contributions were recorded and where appropriate added to the WSOA.
- SEND Conference has been scheduled for 3 March. This will allow parents and representatives from multiple agencies to feed into the drafting of the WSOA and ensure this is a genuinely co-constructed piece of work.

With regard to investment, Members noted that further options to expand capacity within the SEND service were being considered and work had been undertaken, alongside the Finance Business Partner, to identify the initial investment required to achieve this. It was noted that £98.2k of permanent budget had been identified from re-profiled budget savings and that 3 additional posts had been proposed within the team. It was anticipated that this would provide additional capacity to help address ongoing issues relating to the timeliness of initial plans and annual reviews.

In conclusion, it was acknowledged that there would be many challenges ahead and the areas for development, which had been outlined were accepted. With this in mind, there was a commitment expressed in relation to responding swiftly and positively to the inspection findings. It was acknowledged that the production of a WSOA would be an important opportunity to redefine improvement plans and ensure that these would be sufficient to meet the challenges.

RESOLVED

(i) That the contents of the report be noted

(ii) That the requirement of the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group(s) (CCG) to submit a written statement of action by 12 April 2022 be noted

(iii) That an additional investment of £98.2k for staffing within SEND team be noted

39 EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD FORWARD PLAN 2022-23

Consideration was given to a report from the Director, Education (Tameside and Stockport), which outlined proposals for a structured approach to the work of Education Attainment Improvement Board and addressed the strategic priorities for education and lifelong learning in Tameside.

Members were asked to consider the proposed forward plan and it was acknowledged that opportunities would remain for any appropriate amendments throughout the course of the year.

Date	Item	Lead
8 th March 2022	Written Statement of Action (WSoA) Update Schools Update Childcare Sufficiency Forward Plan 2022-23	Charlotte Finch Jane Sowerby Catherine Moseley Tim Bowman
June 2022	Written Statement of Action (WSoA) Update Early Years Update School Adjudicator Annual Report	Charlotte Finch Jane Sowerby Catherine Moseley
October 2022	Written Statement of Action (WSoA) Update End of Key Stage Performance and Schools Update School Allocations and Admissions Update Tameside Music and Library Service Annual Report	Charlotte Finch Jane Sowerby Catherine Moseley Catherine Moseley
January 2023	Written Statement of Action (WSoA) Update Admission Arrangements 2024 Virtual School and College Annual Report	Charlotte Finch Catherine Moseley Amanda Aylward
March 2023	Written Statement of Action (WSoA) Update Schools Update Childcare sufficiency	Charlotte Finch Jane Sowerby Catherine Moseley

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board

40 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date of the next meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board be provisionally held on Tuesday 21 June 2022 (subject to confirmation).

CHAIR