

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

21 June 2022

Commenced: 3.30pm

Terminated: 4.25pm

Present: Councillors Feeley (Chair), Fairfoull, Jackson and Colbourne
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 |
| Ali Stathers-Tracey | Director, Children's Services |
| Sandra Stewart | Chief Executive |
| Caroline Barlow | Assistant Director, Finance |

Apologies: Councillor Cooper

40 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced all parties. The chair expressed sincere thanks to Councillors Welsh and Smith, who had been previous Members of the Board and made valuable contributions to the meetings. Councillors Colbourne and Jackson were welcomed as new Members of the Board.

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

42 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board, which was held on 8 March 2022.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 8 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

43 EARLY YEARS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Director, Education (Tameside and Stockport), which outlined the changes already made to the early years education teams to ensure a clear focus on leadership and support for schools and settings. In addition, the report detailed the proposed, additional strategic and leadership capacity from the enhanced partnership with Stockport. The plan outlined the priority areas and activity over the last two years and going forward.

Members were informed that, in the last set of national data (2019) Tameside was four percentage points below children nationally, in terms of national expectations for five year olds, and it was clear that the impact of the pandemic on Tameside's five-year olds would be disproportionately greater than in other parts of the country.

It was stated that education outcomes for five year olds were already a pre-pandemic priority. This had been addressed through support to schools and settings, which included speech and language interventions and approaches, such as WellComm and Nuffield Early Language Intervention.

Clarity was provided for members in relation to Tameside's Early Years Education Strategy, which aimed to maximise the impact of support on education outcomes. Members were made aware that the Early Years Quality Team had been moved to Education Improvement and Partnerships. The aim of this was to support the Council to have a greater impact on school outcomes in the early years by working more closely with schools and education colleagues and by exploring opportunities to achieve this; working in close partnership with Stockport, with a single Director of Education.

It was noted that the team had already established new practices in the early years education space. These included: multi-agency working with the Early Years Educational psychologist; a new process for SEND; Inclusion Funding for children in settings and school nursery classes; new processes around tracking vulnerable children; and developing early years transition between schools and settings. It was also highlighted that one of the key priorities was increased involvement and developing communication with the early years sector. With this in mind, an Early Years Working Group had been established, which made recommendations to Schools' Forum and co-produced procedures and protocols.

Members were made aware that the next step for the early years would be to articulate a clear Early Years Education Strategy, which would be focussed on supporting settings and schools with SEND and addressing the communication and language needs of all early years' children. It was further noted that a report would be presented during the autumn, which would detail this strategy.

It was explained that a main priority would be embedding the use of WellCom, a speech and language toolkit for screening and intervention in the early years, across schools and settings. Elizabeth Turner explained how this had been utilised in Millbrook Primary School to identify areas for development and provide clear and focussed intervention. She stated that significant improvements had been seen through the use of this programme. Members were advised that this would be rolled out fully to all primary schools, making clear the strategy for how schools and settings, health, and the local authority could use this data and practice to ensure high quality language provision, early identification of difficulties and early action.

It was explained that, in addition to WellComm, Tameside had also previously supported schools to train staff and implement the evidence-based Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI). As part of the government's recovery support in 2021 all schools had been offered free training for NELI for implementation in Reception. In cohort one, 30 Tameside schools applied, and in cohort two, there were 18 schools. Members were advised that this was on top of the 10 schools trained in 2019 by the local authority. It was outlined that the Early Years Quality Team would work with these schools to support them to implement this effective programme and to provide additional training should the government scheme no longer be available.

An update was provided in relation to the Making it REAL programme, which had continued to be a priority programme within the early years, and was focussed on 3 to 4 year olds. It was noted that it had been difficult to keep the programme going during the restrictions imposed throughout the pandemic. This was due to the programme being relational and relying on families, children and practitioners being able to come together in groups and the home to model language and play skills. Despite these challenges, it was celebrated that Tameside had managed to keep supporting schools and settings in order to engage in and embed Making it REAL. It was also made clear that this support would continue throughout the next academic year. Members were advised that, at present, there had been eight settings trained and there was a current recruitment drive for a further eight settings and five to eight schools.

Members were made aware that a key part of the Early Years Education Strategy would be to influence strategy and practice around the teaching of phonics for PVI, childminders, and schools. In addition to the interventions outlined, there would also be a focus on improving the skills of the early years' workforce by promoting and supporting the new Early Years National Professional Qualification. It was noted that the early years training offer would also be updated and improved to ensure that this would meet the needs of all practitioners.

In relation to SEND, members were informed that the SEND Inclusion Fund (SENDIF) had recently been reviewed by a multidisciplinary team and full consultation with the sector had been undertaken. It was explained that access to the fund was focused on getting the right support to children at the right time. With this in mind, funding was now more easily accessed and the process more transparent. It was highlighted that this process was centred around cycles of plan-do-review, in order to encourage best practice and use of the Early Years Matching Provision to Need document, which supported a graduated response, but with provision for exceptional circumstances included.

Members were advised that the SENDIF was now allocated at a half-termly multi-agency meeting, which included the educational psychologist. It was further stated that children in receipt of funding were carefully monitored and transition was supported by the Early Years Quality Team. All schools were now aware of the funding available for nursery classes and children with SEND Inclusion Funding would now keep their funding should they transition to a school nursery. In addition, it was stated that more Early Years Officer time was allocated to SEND-focused activity and support.

Discussion ensued in relation to shared arrangements with Stockport Council and value for money. It was noted that working collaboratively in early years could not only bring greater opportunities for collaboration, but also shared leadership opportunities in the form of 3 additional posts. It was suggested that this would also help to maximise outcomes in the early years.

A query was raised with regard to data collection relating to the use of WellComm and Making it REAL. It was noted that information relating to what the baselines for these programme were able to tell us would be extremely useful going forwards, particularly in terms of being able to measure and track impact. In response, Members were advised that WellComm Wizard, a data collecting tool, was currently being used and that data was being collected across the borough. Members were also advised the amount of speech and language therapy support, which could be offered was being maximised.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board

44 SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Director, Education (Tameside and Stockport), and Executive Member for Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage, which outlined the actions that had been taken to draft the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and that were being taken to update it. It also outlined the additional investment, which had been agreed by the Executive Cabinet.

Members were reminded that, following the joint inspection from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), in October 2021, a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) had been required to be produced. This had been submitted to Ofsted on 12 April 2022, a copy of which was provided for Members. However, it was noted that the initial Written Statement of Action was not accepted by Ofsted.

Since this time, it was explained that officers had worked closely with Ofsted in order to address the issues raised. These were primarily in relation to clear specifications and measurability of the

proposed actions. Members were advised that it was anticipated that the updated statement would now be accepted and that it remained critical for those actions to be undertaken to ensure the necessary improvements in services be made for the benefit of the children and young people of Tameside.

Members were informed that, during the period since the inspection, a number of actions had been undertaken. These included:

- Shared the content with all interested parties and report added to Local Offer
- Presented to Children and Families Scrutiny Committee on 13 January
- Presented to Executive Cabinet on 9 February
- Presented to Strategic Executive Group on 16 February
- Refreshed the membership our SEND Improvement Group (SENDIG) to ensure it was inclusive of all necessary partners. SENDIG is now meeting every 2 weeks and was the key forum which would drive the drafting and implementation of WSoA
- Leads identified for each priority action and they are taking responsibility for drafting each section
- Charlotte Finch Head of SEND coordinated the response working closely with CCG and NHS Provider colleagues
- Held two parent engagement events organised in partnership with the Parent Carer Forum (OKE)
- Held a workshop organised via PEN and with the parent carer forum (OKE)
- Priority leads organised stakeholder discussions to support their drafting, including engagement with Headteachers and Clinicians
- Increased Designated Medical Officer time by agreeing to appoint a new Designated Clinical Officer under the direction of the CCG Director of Nursing, Quality & Safeguarding in addition to the DMO (action already completed)
- Further increased capacity in the SEND team (3x posts) to ensure the Head of SEND can lead work on the WSoA. Recruitment underway
- Development of a CCG business case to significantly increase capacity in NHS services for SEND
- Agreed that ongoing oversight from Elected Members will be provided by the Education Attainment Improvement Board Working with other LAs to learn how they are managing capacity and parental expectations
- Advanced the integrated arrangements surrounding funding panels supporting the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice

In relation to investment to deliver the plan, members were made aware that the following funding was already place:

- £750k in CAMHS.
- £250k for additional staffing in the SEND assessment team (2 year commitment).

It was further stated that, at the February meeting of Executive Cabinet, it had been agreed to make additional investment of £98.2km in order to immediately address capacity issues within the team. At the March meeting, further investment had also been agreed, which included:

- Recognising that the SEND team was under resourced (bench marked across GM) and that the 2 year investment in staffing in the SEND assessment team (£250k over two years) was made permanent.
- Agreeing that a Designated Social Care Officer post would be established.
- Enabling additional project management capacity (two year fixed) to be sought. This post would be aligned to the new AD Early Help and Partnerships and co-ordinated with any additional health resources.

Members were made aware that, in total, this investment was £373,900. This comprised £98,200 of repurposed existing budget along with £275,700 additional budgets as outlined above. In addition to this, it was stated that the CCG had worked with T&GICFT for some time to develop a business case to increase capacity within NHS service for SEND. It was anticipated that an

additional investment of £820k was required to provide adequate therapy provision and address waiting times for services including physiotherapy, occupational health and speech and language.

RESOLVED

(i) That the outcome of the Ofsted and CQC joint inspection of SEND services in Tameside be noted.

(ii) That the request for amended and updated WSoA by Ofsted by 17 June 2022 be noted

(iii) That regular highlight reports on the implementation of this plan to Education Attainment Improvement Board be agreed.

(vi) That, the requirement for a further report to Strategic Commissioning Board outlining what, if any, further resource commitment is required to deliver the plan be noted.

45 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date of the next meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board be held on 17 January 2023 at 3.30pm.

CHAIR