

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

14 March 2023

Commenced: 3.30pm

Terminated: 4.50pm

Present: Councillors Feeley (Chair), Fairfoull, Boyle and Colbourne
Elizabeth Turner

In Attendance:

Catherine Moseley	Head of Access Services
Jane Sowerby	Assistant Director, Education
Caroline Barlow	Assistant Director, Finance
Jacqueline Nurney	Early Education Funding and School Organisation Manager
Ali Stathers-Tracey	Director, Children's Services
Sandra Stewart	Chief Executive

Apologies: Councillor Cooper
Andrea Radcliffe
Paul Jacques

62 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair provided a warm welcome to Jane Sowerby, who had recently been appointed as Assistant Director, Education, and wished her well in her new role.

63 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

64 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board, which was held on 17 January 2023.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 17 January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

65 EDUCATION UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Director, Education, which provided updates from schools since the last report in October. It included information on changes to leadership, Ofsted updates, a Priority Education Investment Area update and KS4 outcomes, which were now validated and published.

It was noted that this was the first non-pandemic year from 3 years, although the impact was still very much felt across schools. particularly in Early Years, with regard to language and social skills and the secondary sector, with regard to mental health, behaviour and attendance.

In relation to current challenges and opportunities, Members were informed that recruitment was underway to fill the Head of Education Improvement and Partnerships post. Other key changes in

leadership were also outlined, alongside opportunities to rethink services around the structure and needs of children, families and partners. It was noted that a new project manager would be leading on the Written Statement of Action (WSOA), whilst an SEND Programme Lead would review and oversee improvement across the service.

Members were reminded of the ongoing priorities, with Reading, SEND, and Attendance remaining at the centre of commissioning, support and challenge. There was specific focus on early reading and language, SEND support and Persistent Absence. It was also noted that the Priority Area Delivery Plan, which was due to be signed off by ministers in the coming days or weeks, provided an excellent opportunity to invest in early outcomes in communication and language and strong passes at the end of KS4.

Members were made aware that, since September, there had been 19 inspections (14 Primary and 5 Secondary). It was noted that all but one school had either improved their Ofsted grade or maintained a Good rating, with the vast majority achieving the latter. 95% of all Tameside children in primary schools were currently in Good or better Ofsted graded schools, which was significantly above the national average.

The priorities for the Education Investment Areas were outlined as:

Priority One: Early/Primary Literacy outcomes

- Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in Phonics at the end of year 1.
- Percentage of pupils reaching expected standard in KS2 RWM, Reading and Writing.

Priority Two: Significant improvement in KS4 English and Maths outcomes

- Percentage of pupils achieving 9-4 in GCSE English and Maths.
- Percentage of pupils achieving 9-5 in GCSE English and Maths

It was noted that the funding behind the delivery plan was, broadly, £2.5m over the next two-and-a-half years and that this would be evenly split across the two priorities. It was suggested that this was likely to be commissioned directly by DfE rather than coming into the Council and details were still to be laid out. Alongside this delivery plan the intention to move to a fully trust-led system across English education was outlined. It was expected that this plan would offer significant support to our schools and help to support improved outcomes in Tameside.

Current GCSE data comparisons were provided against 2018-19 data. It was explained that this was due to 2018-19 being the last year that summer exams were sat. It was noted that, whilst outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 were disappointing, this had been identified as an area, where there was entrenched challenge for some of our schools. With this in mind, the Priority Plan would aim to address overall performance in Tameside, through targeted support for the schools with the most entrenched challenges. It was also explained that these schools supported large numbers of Tameside's most disadvantaged children. With this in mind, it was vital that rapid improvement was secured. It was suggested that the structural approach to school improvement, working with the DfE and strong MATs as part of a fully trust-led system (as described in the Schools Strategy) would support improvement.

Discussion ensued and the Chair expressed thanks to all school leaders and staff for their hard work and dedication through very challenging circumstances. Elizabeth Turner provided some reflections on the challenges and opportunities, which had been felt at her school and the particular challenges that were currently present across Early Years.

Members suggested that they would like to see greater urgency from the DfE in having the Priority Investment Area plans confirmed in order to ensure that Tameside be able to plan to get the best value out of the spend. Therefore, it was suggested that these concerns could be relayed back to DfE.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted by the Board

66 CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Consideration was given to a report from the Assistant Director, Education, which outlined the outcome of the Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2022. The report included an analysis of the supply and demand for childcare within the borough, collated during 2022, and outlined changes from the previous year. The report also set out how the childcare market is assessed and where there was a need for additional places, detailed the actions recommended or taken for this to be achieved

Members were made aware that the Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2021 was approved at Education and Attainment Board during March 2022 and were presented with a report, which provided an updated position on the assessment of childcare sufficiency during 2022.

It was explained that the data indicated that the childcare market in Tameside since the last report had remained relatively stable and that, despite a reduction of places in certain sectors, overall the number of childcare places available across the borough had increased since the previous assessment. It was noted that this impacted positively on parental choice.

The report provided a number of recommendations based on the data provided during the assessment, which for some providers was voluntary. With this in mind, members were advised that not all providers within Tameside who offered childcare services contributed to the audit and, therefore, a full assessment of all childcare available was not possible.

Members were informed that all previous recommendations/actions detailed in the 2021 report had been acted on. It was confirmed that improving the data quality was now embedded within the data collection and data verification process and formed part of the overall data process. It was also explained that the childcare market and the monitoring of places for 2 year olds and take up of 30 hours was an ongoing and a continuous termly process. The 2022 report, which was presented, provided a further update and suggested actions for both areas.

Members were made aware that the 2022 report did not highlight any major gaps in provision within the borough, which would require action at this time. However, it did provide brief recommendations for action, which included:

- To monitor the birth rate and inform childcare providers of the lower birth levels, to enable them to plan ahead for the eventualities of a potential reduced need for formal childcare
- To continue to monitor the number of 2-year places across the borough in order to address any required action for any identified gaps and follow up on the actions identified, which would inform any future place creation required
- To 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

Members were asked for approval of the attached Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report 2022 to be published on the Councils website <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/childcare>

Members undertook some discussion following the presentation of the report. It was noted that it was pleasing to see an increase in 2 year old take up. However, it was noted that feedback from this sector expressed particular concerns around recruitment and retention. As a result, work was currently being undertaken to investigate what could be done to improve this.

It was noted that this increase in take up of places provided a valuable opportunity to maximise connectivity with vulnerable children. It was emphasised that work needed to be undertaken to maximise this and look at what this may mean for schools in terms of offering provision for 2 year olds. It was also noted that the right children need to be accessing the right provision in the right

settings as early as possible and that this needed to start much earlier than primary schools. However, the logistical challenges around schools being able to offer 2 year old provision were also highlighted and it was explained that this was currently being provided solely by the PVI sector.

RESOLVED

i. That the contents of the report be noted

ii. That the recommendations set out in the conclusion be endorsed

iii. That publication of the report on the Council's website, as required by statute, be approved

67 SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION (WSOA) UPDATE

Consideration was given to a verbal update provided by the Assistant Director, Education, which provided information on the progress of the SEND Written Statement of Action.

Members were made aware that DfE monitoring had taken place at the beginning of March and that the relationship with DfE had been very supportive. A main focus of these discussions had been in relation to unlocking additional support and DfE had provided positive feedback in terms of the pace of progress, which had been made.

It was noted that all rounds of parent, carer and young people's surveys had now been completed and that the outcomes had been very helpful. Members were also made aware that recruitment was currently underway, following the departure of Charlotte Finch, Head of SEND. The recruitment, which had taken place in relation to project management roles had been successful and it was noted that a positive impact was already becoming evident.

Members were made aware that there had been a significant improvement in the timeliness of Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) and that this was now in line with national figures. It was suggested that this was very much a result of the supportive work, which had been undertaken alongside the Transformation team and ensuring that any individual performance or organisational issues around SEND assessment had been dealt with swiftly.

It was explained that there had been varied opportunities for training, including the Child Disability Council and DfE training, which had also been accessed by health teams and schools in order to maximise stakeholder involvement. It was planned that this would continue.

Members were informed that the new project manager was to take a lead on the SEND Sufficiency Strategy and it was emphasised that the focus of this would not be solely around special school places, but also about effective provision within mainstream settings and the Delivering Better Partnership

Positive feedback from health colleagues was highlighted, following the Health Navigator Service having been developed. It was noted that 3300 contacts had made between July and December 2022 as a result of this.

WSOA rag ratings were presented in order to provide a comparison between November 2022 and February 2023. It was noted that this reflected many positive improvements.

Discussion ensued and a question was raised around the current SEND partnership and the new SEND framework. It was noted that this would present new challenges and suggested that there would need to be a balance between delivering the current WSOA and preparing for the new framework. As a result, it was agreed that there would be a future report tabled in relation to preparation for the new SEND framework and broadening SEND partnership arrangements.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted by the Board

68 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date of the next meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board be held on 20 June 2023 at 3.30pm.

CHAIR