

# EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

20 June 2023

**Commenced:** 3.30pm

**Terminated:** 4.55pm

**Present:** Councillors Feeley (Chair), Boyle, Roderick, Newton and Colbourne  
Elizabeth Turner, Paul Jacques

**In Attendance:**

Catherine Moseley	Head of Access Services
Jane Sowerby	Assistant Director, Education
Ali Stathers-Tracey	Director, Children's Services
Sandra Stewart	Chief Executive
Dave Leadbetter	Project Manager, Children's Services

**Apologies:** Councillor Fairfoull

## 1 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

Councillor Hugh Roderick and Councillor George Newton were introduced and welcomed as new Members of Education Attainment Improvement Board. The Chair also made Members aware that Andrea Radcliffe was retiring from her post of Headteacher at Hyde High School and, therefore, would no longer be a Member. Councillor Feeley expressed her sincere thanks for Andrea's valued contributions and wished her well in her retirement. This was echoed by all Members of the Board and it was noted that a new secondary representative would be appointed in advance of the next meeting.

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

## MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board, which was held on 14 March 2023.

A query was raised in relation to Priority Education Investment Areas. It was expressed that schools were still awaiting more detailed information. It was noted that a further meeting with DfE was scheduled to take place over the coming days and that this concern would be relayed, with a view to providing greater clarity for schools over the coming weeks.

## RESOLVED

**That the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 14 March 2023 be approved as a correct record.**

## 4 WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Access Services, which provided an update of the work, which was being done to implement the new 'Working Together to Improve Attendance' guidance for September 2023. The report presented the latest version of the self-assessment and the draft Tameside Attendance Strategy was shared.

Members were advised that this guidance remained non-statutory and that very good progress had been made. It was noted that Diane McConnell, DfE Attendance Advisor, had been very complimentary with regard to the Self Evaluation Framework and the multi-agency, collaborative approach, which had been undertaken.

The latest version of the Self Evaluation Framework was provided for Members, along with the Draft Attendance Strategy, which provided information relating to:

- The importance of regular attendance (in learning, including early years and post 16)
- The key attendance issues in Tameside
- The impact of Covid on attendance in the area
- Why children don't attend learning opportunities
- The importance of multi agency working to support attendance in learning
- The aims of the strategy
- The proposed actions

Members were also advised that there was an Attendance Conference being held on 21 June 2023, where they would be more than welcome to attend and, which would provide valuable opportunities to consult with a range of providers and agencies on the strategy. It was noted that the conference would cover the following areas:

- An introduction to the conference from Cllr Feeley and Ali Stathers-Tracey
- An overview from the DfE perspective on the guidance i.e. intentions and expectations and an acknowledgement of the challenges that implementation brings
- An update on the progress of the guidance becoming statutory and a view on where Tameside is up to from Diane McConnell DfE Attendance Advisor
- Consultation on the draft strategy
- The importance of attendance from a school perspective
- The impact of poor attendance on vulnerable pupils and the important of early intervention
- Tameside Pupil Referral Service work to support attendance
- An update on emotionally based school avoidance and mental health in young people and the impact on attendance
- An opportunity for organisations to sign up to Tameside's attendance pledge.

It was acknowledged that Attendance in Learning remained a clear priority and, with this in mind, much work had been undertaken to ensure that the new attendance guidance was implemented for September and that there was a cohesive approach across the borough and agencies. It was noted that the Attendance Steering Group was formulating a communication plan to ensure consistent messages across agencies. Members were also advised that this group would continue to meet after the September implementation deadline in order to continue to develop and evaluate further initiatives to promote attendance in learning.

Discussion ensued and a query was raised in relation to SWIS (Social Worker in Schools). It was explained that this had been a DfE programme, which had been funded for a period of 2 years. It was noted that, although this programme had concluded, some of this capacity and expertise had been retained and that the aim was to continue to provide this support going forwards but in a range of different ways.

It was celebrated that attendance continued to be a success. However, it was also acknowledged that, whilst this was the case, schools and officers were not content with this progress and were continuously striving for improvement. With this in mind, it was explained that it was important that this work was now further developed in order to have a much wider reach, particularly in relation to early years and post 16 attendance in learning.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

## **5 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.

An outline of the SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was provided for the new Members of the Board. Following this, a verbal update in relation to progress on the SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was shared.

Members were informed that, since the last meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board, there had been a formal monitoring visit from DfE and a number of updates were provided for Members.

### **Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)**

Figures were still very positive and performing above the national average. This year, to date, 52% of EHCPs had been completed within statutory timescales. It was also expected that there would be a further positive increase in the months to come and it was noted that this improvement represented a 32% increase from the previous calendar year.

Members were made aware that, in relation to statutory reviews of EHCPs, transition point reviews had been prioritised and performance had vastly improved. It was acknowledged that more work needed to be undertaken in relation to annual reviews and any Members were assured that any current backlogs were being prioritised.

### **Recruitment**

A Designated Social Care Officer had been recruited and was due to take up the post imminently. A new Head of SEND, who had previously undergone the delivering Better value process in their previous role/area had also been appointed and was due to take up this post in September 2023.

### **Delivering Better Value**

It was noted that it had been made clear, which initiatives were also being picked up through the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme and Members were advised that more detailed information would be provided within the next report.

### **Health Partners**

Whilst there were some positive updates around timeliness data, it was also acknowledged that there were still work to be undertaken in relation to waiting times, in particular those relating to ADHD and ASC pathways. It was suggested that reducing the amount of observations that were required and increasing the deployment of existing capacity to schools and parents may help to alleviate these issues. It was also highlighted that, if families were to be able to access support without needing diagnosis, this would potentially help to alleviate some of these significant waiting times.

### **Six into Seven**

Members were made aware that the Year 6 into 7 initiative was showing some positive and significant benefits for SEND cohorts, which was pleasing as this had been a particular focus of the programme.

Members were pleased to hear of the progress, which had been made since the last update and were keen to ensure that a written report would be included as a standing item on each Education Attainment Improvement Board agenda going forwards. This was agreed and a more comprehensive written report would be presented at the October meeting. It was also suggested that, moving forwards, it may be beneficial for health colleagues and officers leading on each of the identified actions to attend Education Attainment Improvement Board in order to provide updates.

## **6 SEND SUFFICIENCY AND DELIVERING BETTER VALUE IN SEND PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Member for Education, Achievement and Equalities and Assistant Director of Education, which provided an update on two significant Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) improvement areas; SEND Sufficiency and Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND.

Members were informed that the Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV) sat alongside and complimented existing and ongoing work across Tameside to manage the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs deficit. It was explained that one of the main mitigations was to improve the sufficiency of SEND provision across Tameside in order to manage resources more efficiently and provide high quality and local SEND provision.

It was emphasised that having the right school with the right support at the right time was essential and DBV and sufficiency both supported this. Members were reminded that, over the last 3 years, there had been a significant focus on SEND sufficiency and, as a result, there had been an increase in places throughout this period (48%). However, it was acknowledged that there was still much work to undertake.

Members were made aware that, in September 2023, Tameside would increase SEND sufficiency further, through the following actions:

- Increase places at Oakdale Special School by 16
- Establish a new 10 place Resource Provision at Dane Bank Primary School
- Establish a new 10 place Resource Provision at St.James CE Primary School

Furthermore, Members were informed that, in January 2024, a new 15 place Resource Provision was planned to open, in a staged manner, at Longdendale Secondary School. This would provide a pathway for those children, who required continuation of their primary resource provision setting through to secondary school. The increase of 80 special school places, following the future re-location of Hawthorns Special School was also discussed.

It was explained that these increases in specialist provision across the borough would help to reduce the pressure on maintained, special school provision and reduce the need to utilise out of borough, high cost independent and non-maintained, special school provision. It was noted that, when young people have to travel out of borough, they often don't have the same opportunities to build connections in their community so the importance of ensuring this sufficiency was emphasised.

The Delivering Better Value programme was described to the Board as a DfE intervention, which would help to support 55 local authorities and their local systems to identify the highest impact changes that could be made in order to better support local children with SEND and make plans to implement those changes. The programme was described as placing children and young people with SEND at the centre of the approach and decision-making.

Members were made aware that there had been lots of engagement across the SEND system and work alongside parent/carers in relation to their experiences over the last 5 years; with a clear focus on areas for improvement. Following a range of deep dives, case reviews and surveys, two priority areas for improvement had been identified; inclusion and transition.

It was revealed that there were spikes at age 4 and then again at Year 6 going into Year 7. With this in mind, the following actions had been undertaken:

- A quality inclusion and outreach team had been established with the aim to get the most out of their experience and take this out to mainstream schools, focussing on a graduated, early response. It was suggested that schools should be looking at and utilising all of the THRIVE information. It was also explained that a Workforce Development Programme was being investigated and that this would be implemented in partnership with parents and carers.

- A new Early Years Assessment Centre with co-located health services in order to focus on transition were to be set up. This would, hopefully, provide a high quality offer and support transition into mainstream sessions.
- The introduction of 2 terms of additional funding for Year 6 into Year 7 would be investigated. This would enable these students to settle better in their new secondary schools. In addition, summer inclusion camps, which could be held in secondary schools would be introduced.

Following presentation of the report, discussion ensued in relation to the focus transition points and it was acknowledged that, whilst age 4 and Year 6 into 7 had been identified as presenting challenges and had potential gains in terms of the overall SEND sufficiency strategy, focus would also be provided for post 16 provision. Indeed, much work was already being undertaken alongside colleges and supporting families into adult day services or joined packages with adult educational support.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

## **7 EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD FORWARD PLAN 2023/24**

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

The proposed forward plan for 2023-24 was presented to Members and it was noted that this may be developed and amended throughout the year in response to any issues arising.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Lead</b>
20 June 2023	EAIB Forward Plan SEND Update Working Together to Improve School Attendance	Jane Sowerby Jane Sowerby Jo Pearson
17 October 2023	SEND Update PEIA Update School Allocations and School Admissions Update Music Service Annual Report Schools Update	Jane Sowerby Jo Pearson Catherine Moseley Catherine Moseley Jane Sowerby
16 January 2024	SEND Update Virtual School Annual Report School Admissions Arrangements	Jane Sowerby Rachael Weeden Catherine Moseley
12 March 2024	SEND Update Schools Update Childcare Sufficiency	Jane Sowerby Jo Pearson Catherine Moseley

## **RESOLVED**

**That the forward plan for 2023-24 be approved with a standing agenda item of SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA) update to be included for each meeting.**

## **8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

## **RESOLVED**

**That the date of the next meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board be held on**

17 October 2023 at 3.30pm.

CHAIR