

# EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

14 January 2020

**Commenced:** 3.35 pm

**Terminated:** 5.10 pm

**Present:** Councillors M Smith (In the Chair), L Boyle, Fairfoull and Patrick Paul Jacques, Andrea Radcliffe and Elizabeth Turner

**In Attendance:**

Sandra Stewart	Director of Governance and Pensions
Richard Hancock	Director of Children's Services
Catherine Moseley	Head of Access and Inclusion
Jane Sowerby	Lead Primary School Performance and Standards Officer
Tony Shepherd	Head of Improvement and Partnerships
Christine Mullins	Finance Business Partner
David Berry	Head of Employment and Skills

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Feeley and Cooper

## 17 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

### RESOLVED

**In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Feeley, that Councillor Michael Smith be appointed as Chair for this meeting.**

## 18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

## 19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 22 October 2019 were approved as a correct record.

## 20 ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Head of Employment and Skills submitted a report providing details of the Tameside Council Adult Community Education (ACE) Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for the academic year 2018/2019. The SAR provided a comprehensive assessment of performance and areas for development.

Members were informed about the key strengths of the service with particular attention paid to the effective curriculum offer aimed at widening participation, addressing barriers and improving confidence, employability skills and life opportunities. Further strengths included the good information, advice and guidance offered to learners and the partnerships with a range of organisations to recruit harder to reach learners. It was also advised that there was a strong performance among learners progressing to higher level courses and moving up through the levels to employment.

Areas for improvement were also discussed, with Members informed that further improvement needed to be made in the retention of learners. Issues around the retention of learners was linked to the higher turnover of staff which had led to some courses being discontinued though a casual bank of tutors was available to try and ensure courses were not left understaffed. Despite some of the issues surrounding staff retention, most lessons were judged to be good with outstanding features.

A discussion ensued around the retention of learners and the possible causes of those deciding to leave their courses. Members were advised that there were a variety of reasons often connected with welfare/caring duties.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the report be noted and the continual improvement of the Adult Community Education service be supported.**

### **21 POST 16 SKILLS AND PARTICIPATION**

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Employment and Skills setting out an overview of Level 3 post 16 performance in Tameside.

It was reported that the overall picture of Level 3 performance (equivalent to A-Level) had improved in Tameside with high quality institutions and an increased number of residents engaged. Whilst the percentage of Tameside residents with qualifications was below the England average at all skill levels, the picture had improved with the percentage with no qualifications down from 10.9% to 10.1% in 2019. There had also been an increase in the population with level 2 and level 3 qualifications, up by 1.2% and 1.4% respectively.

The report highlighted the improved facilities for education in the Borough, notably the opening of the Tameside One campus that included an Advanced Skills Centre alongside Clarendon College. It was also hoped that the level 4 (degree equivalent) offer within the Borough could be improved through the Vision Tameside Campus.

Members enquired as to the availability of next steps guidance outside of the colleges. The Head of Employment and Skills advised that the service worked with specific cohorts in years 9 to 11 at secondary schools as well as looked after children, care leavers, teenage parents and youth offenders. Those with special educational needs up to the age of 25 and those wards with higher levels of need were also targeted. Members were keen that such advice was also available over the summer months in case young people changed their minds about further education and wanted to be ready for courses commencing in September.

Discussion ensued with regard to Tameside's performance in comparison to the England average and the Borough's position in relation to neighbouring Greater Manchester authorities. Members further highlighted that a high proportion of students at Tameside College travelled from other boroughs to take advantage of the excellent facilities. Due to the level of popularity they were keen to ensure that young people from within the Borough were still selected for apprenticeships.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the report be noted and the continued good performance and participation post 16 be supported.**

### **22 PUPIL PLACE PLANNING ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Assistant Director, Learning, submitted a report outlining the process for school place planning in Tameside.

It was explained that all local authorities had a statutory duty to ensure that there were sufficient school places to meet demand in the area. These may be school places available at provision maintained by the local authority, academies, or other non-maintained schools.

Planning for fluctuations in demand for school places was an important function which needed to be carried out a local level and would differ depending on the phase of learning, for example, pupils would travel further to secondary schools than primary schools. The compact geography of Tameside and the mix of types of school, e.g. single sex, meant that place planning happened at a level higher than wards or towns.

It was further explained that school place planning was a complex process that accounted for a range of factors including the birth rate, in year movement, housing developments and parental preference. Members were informed that primary school numbers would reduce over the next few years following a peak in 2014/15 as there was predicted to be a decline in the birth rate. However, the position at secondary level was very different with more children coming into secondary schools. The rising number of pupils in primary school had necessitated additional places to be made available in the secondary sector for four years from September 2021 to September 2024. It was reported that officers from the Council had been talking to headteachers at all schools in Tameside, but particularly from voluntary aided schools and academies, for a number of years to encourage them to put forward proposals to increase their admission numbers. It was explained that as Tameside Council was the admission authority for four community schools in the Borough it could propose increases in published admission numbers at its own schools.

Members enquired as to the percentage of parents who secured their first choice preference at primary and secondary level. It was explained that the percentage of those parents achieving their first preference at primary level had increased from 96.5% in 2015 to a high of 98.1% in 2018. However, in line with the increased demand at secondary level, the percentage of parents obtaining their first choice preference at this level had decreased from a high of 87.6% in 2016 to 83.9% in 2019. It was also highlighted that there was a pressing need to develop specialist education provision within Tameside.

## **RESOLVED**

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

## **23 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS – POLICY UPDATE**

A report was submitted by the Assistant Director, Education, which outlined a strategy of developing a school to school model of improvement.

It was reported that the prime responsibility for school improvement was that of headteachers and governing boards but the local authority had an aspiration for all children in the Borough to attend a good school. Consequently, the Council was there to guarantee oversight and a collaborative approach for ensuring improvement. In order to achieve this aspiration, the local authority would champion education excellence by:

- Understanding the performance of schools
- Ensuring a relentless commitment to raising standards
- Supporting and encouraging collaboration between schools within and beyond the Borough boundaries
- Working in constructive partnerships
- Taking swift and appropriate action
- Building trust with and within the system

Members were advised that the Council used a categorisation process that ensured, in partnership with schools, limited resources were targeted at improving the school system to raise standards and performance. Schools judged to be inadequate and those not making sufficiently rapid

progress were classified as 'schools causing concern' and the use of intervention powers were considered.

It was highlighted that 21 of Tameside's schools were categorised as category 3 or 4 (vulnerable or significantly struggling) but as a result of the targeted approach this had been reduced to 14 this year.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the report be noted and the approach endorsed.**

### **24 END OF KEY STAGE DATA**

The Assistant Director, Education, submitted a report detailing the validated key stage 2 results and the unvalidated key stage 4 results of schools in the 2018/19 academic year. The report also detailed the Borough's position in the context of Greater Manchester and the North West.

It was reported that key stage 2 results for Tameside were broadly in line with neighbours in Greater Manchester and the North West. In reading, writing and maths combined, 63% of pupils achieved the expected standard, marginally lower than the figure of 64% for 2018 and just below the averages for the North West and Greater Manchester at 65% and 64% respectively.

Tameside had made significant improvements in key stage 2 reading progress having climbed from seventeenth to seventh out of 23 North West local authorities between 2017 and 2019 and from seventh to fourth out of 10 Greater Manchester local authorities over the same period.

Members were informed that the publication of validated GCSE results had been delayed by the Department for Education because of the General Election in December 2019. As a consequence, only unvalidated results were available for schools at the end of key stage 4 and these results were subject to change. Revised figures were due to be published in January 2020.

Key stage 4 attainment was strong and stable in comparison with Greater Manchester and statistical neighbours, but below the national average. Concerns were raised about the percentage of girls achieving a strong pass in English and Maths which had declined 4% from 44% to 40%. In 2019 girls within the Borough were 6% below the national average for girls whilst boys in the Borough were in line with the national average at 40%. Members queried why the percentage of both boys and girls achieving strong passes was so low. It was explained that it could depend on the cohort of pupils but it was agreed that more stringent standards were needed for all progression routes. It was emphasised that progress rather than attainment was also a measure of success.

Discussion ensued with regard to the impact of resources and the effect this had upon attainment. Whilst Tameside was generally compared to neighbours in Greater Manchester and across the North West, it was highlighted that young people in the Borough were not just competing locally or regionally but nationally and that it was important to strive for the highest standards.

#### **RESOLVED**

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

### **25 URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**