

**Report to:**

## **RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Relevant Officer:**

Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services

**Date of Meeting:**

15 November 2018

### **EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY**

1.1 To inform Scrutiny Committee of the educational outcomes and improvement strategy in Blackpool.

#### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 To review the information provided, identifying any areas for questioning, further scrutiny review or improvement.

#### **3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

3.1 To ensure that the strategy put in place for improvement is robust demonstrating and impact.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options considered:

None.

#### **4.0 Council Priority:**

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

#### **5.0 Background Information**

##### **School Improvement Systems**

Blackpool has an established school improvement board that has been working

collaboratively on the town-wide improvement strategy for two academic years. It was previously known as Blackpool Challenge Board. It has formal Governance through the main Blackpool School Improvement Board meetings, which are held once a half-term, and strategic oversight through a separate “strategy” group that meets once a half-term. Information flows into and out of the Board through the Joint Consultative Group, which includes Headteacher and local authority representatives, and from the Primary and Secondary Headteacher groups. Equally, information flows from the “School Family Groups” which are cross-phase collaborations between Primary and Secondary Headteachers, discussing ways to improve transition across Blackpool.

5.2 The “Research school” based at St Mary’s Catholic Academy provides support for the Blackpool School Community, looking at sharing evidence to improve teaching practice, in association with the Education Endowment Foundation. A number of events have been held that have been well attended by Blackpool school leaders and teachers.

5.3 All the activity and information that comes out of the Blackpool school-led system feeds into the Blackburn, Blackpool and Lancashire (BBL) network, where good practice is shared further and strategic work on bids to funding streams such as the Strategic School Improvement Fund and the Opportunity Area fund is discussed, ie:

Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) Maths project.

Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) Leadership project.

Opportunity Area (OA) KS3 literacy project.

Opportunity Area (OA) KS4 English GCSE project.

Essential Life Skills programme, through the Department for Education (DFE), funding extra-curricular activities in Blackpool, focusing on offering children greater access to the same opportunities as are available to those attending the highest achieving schools.

5.4 Transitions – A Primary to Secondary transition week has been held for the second time, with a good level of success. All the Primary and Secondary schools in Blackpool were involved and the feedback has been fed into the Blackpool School Improvement Board to improve the process even further.

5.5 Attainment and Progress from Early Years to Key Stage 5

In the Early Years Foundation Stage the percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development increased from 66% to 68% against a national average of 72%.

- 5.6 Standards at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been largely static, showing a slight decline, albeit against a national increase in the numbers of children achieving the expected standard. There has been a very small decline in outcomes in every area, except for reading. In Maths, Blackpool schools, cumulatively, achieved the national average, despite a decline in performance from 2017. The decline in performance was around 1% to 2%.
- 5.7 In every indicator, performance (attainment) improved at Higher / Greater depth, although remained stubbornly distant from the national average figures. Progress from KS1 to KS2 remained high in the majority of schools. Performance at expected levels and above is likely to still represent above average progress based on KS1 performance for the cohort, especially in Maths and in the composite Reading, Writing and Maths measures.
- 5.8 Performance at higher levels remains weaker and is likely to be in line or slightly beneath average progress in Reading and Writing and slightly better than that in Maths. Maths remains clearly the strongest subject. Reading remains the key main area for improvement. Most Primary Schools continue to perform well – two thirds are doing well or very well.
- 5.9 At expected levels, schools that are struggling perform noticeably more weakly in Maths and the weakness in Maths is a good marker for overall weakness. At higher levels, schools that are not strong struggle across all three core subjects, although, again weakness in Maths is a strong marker for weak overall performance.

In addition, there is a softness in Reading performance at higher levels across most schools:

- Only a third (at most) have better than average progress.
- A significant number of the stronger schools look to have underachieved this year at Reading (around 10).
- There is also considerable volatility in performance in Reading at higher levels year on year, even at some strong schools.

Maths is much stronger overall – with around half of schools clearly making better than expected progress & consistently so.

- 5.10 At GCSE level, performance in every indicator, except % English 4+ improved. However, the gap to national average in these indicators remained stubbornly wide.

Average attainment 8 scores improved in:

Four out of seven secondary academies.

Maths 4+ improved in 3 out of 7 secondary academies.

English 4+ improved in 5 out of 7 academies.  
Maths 5+ improved in 4 out of 7 academies.  
English 5+ improved in 5 out of 7 academies.  
Two of five Academies improved the level of EBacc pass rate.

In some cases these improvements were from low starting points, but green shoots of improvement are evident. There is much to do to ensure all our children and young people receive the quality of education they deserve.

5.11 At Key Stage 5 it is very pleasing to note that there was a 99% pass rate at A-Level and BTEC.

5.12 Inspection judgements – current position and trends

Blackpool schools have maintained the previous level of performance as rated by Ofsted.

All three of the local Special Schools are either Outstanding or Good.

- 2 Special Schools are Outstanding.
- 1 Special School is Good.

In regards to the 31 Primary schools, including 13 maintained Primary Schools -

- 3 Primary Academies are Requires Improvement.
- 15 Primary Academies are Good.
- 11 Maintained Primary Schools are Good.
- 2 Maintained Primary Schools are Outstanding.
  
- 1 Secondary Academy is Good.
- 1 All-Through Academy is Good.
- 4 Secondary Academies are Requires Improvement.
- 2 Secondary Academies are yet to be inspected.

5.13 **Performance of specific/vulnerable groups:**

#### Our Children

Blackpool children looked after attainment at KS2 has improved in every measure except for reading and reading, writing and maths combined. At Key Stage 4 every child achieved at least two qualifications from entry level upwards.

#### Special educational needs pupils

One hundred percent of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan go on to a positive destination, eg; Project Search or Further Education.

Special School placements and high needs out of borough placements are still placing the High Needs Block of the designated schools grant under significant financial pressure. Park and Highfurlong special schools are approaching capacity. Sufficiency is under review to include the opportunity to open our free SEMH school sooner than anticipated.

A new special educational needs strategy is to be written this year including an Early Years and Early Years intervention strategy. Also included will be a new “quality first” teaching strategy for the town, in relation to pupils who have special educational needs.

#### 5.14 Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion

The last reported attendance data for Spring 2018 shows –

##### National Absence

Primary was 3.9%  
Secondary was 5%  
Combined 4.3%

##### Blackpool Absence

Primary was 3.7%  
Secondary was 6.2%  
Combined was 4.7%

##### National Persistent Absence

Primary was 10.1%  
Secondary was 13.3%  
Combined was 11.5%

##### Blackpool Persistent Absence

Primary was 9.6%  
Secondary was 17.6%  
Combined was 12.8%

Blackpool data for all schools from 2012/2013 – 2016/2017 academic years has reduced from 6.3% to 4.9% in terms of total absence compared to 4.7% nationally.

For persistent absence it has reduced from 19.5% to 12.2% whereas national average reduces slightly from 13.6% to 10.8%.

#### 5.15 Inclusion

The pupil referral numbers are down from a high of 313 in June 2017 to a high of 306 in June 2018. The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) began the 2018/2019 academic year with 208 pupils. In 2016, this was 244 pupils. In 2017, this was 238 pupils. The pupil referral unit cohort has changed as it is now recognised as an SEMH hospital school cohort, SEND cohort and PRU cohort. There has been a reduction in full-time pupils and an increase in dual registration. This places shared responsibility between both establishments for outcomes.

#### 5.16 Fixed term exclusions

In 2016/2017 there were had 1,293 fixed term exclusions this reduced in 2017/2018 to 1,274

#### 5.17 Permanent exclusions

In 2016/2017 there were 42 permanent exclusions, rising to 44 in 2017/2018.

#### 5.18 Elective Home Education

Elective Home Education numbers are rising, as is the case across the country, increased scrutiny has been put in place.

September 2016/2017 - 121

September 2017/2018 - 162

September 2018/2019 - 187

#### 5.19 Short-term goals

To reduce the levels of fixed term and permanent exclusions and to reduce the numbers of young people educated at Educational Diversity on a single registration, whilst accepting that the pupil referral education is right for some children and young people.

To reduce the numbers of 'our children' in the Pupil Referral Unit.

Progress towards these aims is being seen and work will continue to move forwards with this goal. Early indicators in 2018/2019 academic year have shown a significant decrease in fixed term and permanent exclusions and a reduction in numbers in the

Pupil Referral Unit.

5.20 Long-term goals

To improve the levels of attainment and progress for the young people of Blackpool at all stages within their education and to improve and enhance the educational provision within Blackpool.

This includes widening the variety of educational options for Blackpool children and young people to incorporate more examples of quality Alternative Provision and a quality vocational pathway.

6.0 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**7.0 List of Appendices:**

None

**8.0 Legal considerations:**

8.1 There are no legal issues to consider

**9.0 Human Resources considerations:**

9.1 There are no human resource issues to consider

**10.0 Equalities considerations:**

10.1 Planning for every child is at an individual level and based on analysis of risk and need.

**11.0 Financial considerations:**

11.1 There is a financial pressure on childrens services budget which is predominantly linked to external care placements and designated schools grant.

**12.0 Risk management considerations:**

12.1 Planning around demand management brings with it a level of risk relating to predictions. It is not possible to take into consideration every eventuality.

**13.0 Ethical considerations:**

13.1 This update does not contravene any of the council's values, morals or beliefs.

**14.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

14.1 The school led improvement system facilitates consultation in respect of strategy and finance.

**15.0 Background papers:**

15.1 None.