

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
Date of Meeting	10 October 2019

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND EDUCATION RESULTS UPDATE

1.1 To receive an overview of Special Educational Needs and Disability and schools' results data.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1
- To note the contents of the report and to ensure that current work continues to meet statutory obligations, is delivering change in Children's Services and that work to prepare for external inspections continues.
 - To continue to meet statutory monitoring, challenge and support obligations.
 - To identify any further information and actions required.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 For Members of the Scrutiny Committee to be fully informed as to the day to day work of the Children's Services Directorate and have assurance that Blackpool is continuing to meet its statutory obligations for future inspection requirements.

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:

Services are subject to national and statutory frameworks.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 School-Age Performance in 2019 and Post-16 Engagement in Education, Employment and Training

Provisional data released by the Department for Education shows that Blackpool's primary schools have had their strongest ever year – performing two per cent above the national average in the main accountability measure: the percentage of children performing at or above expected levels in Reading, Writing and Maths. This wider strength is underpinned by very strong performance by groups of children that typically struggle academically – disadvantaged learners and those with low performance at the end of the previous key stage. In Blackpool, these groups outperform their national peers by as much as 10 per cent.

The achievement of children with identified Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) is also particularly strong at the end of Primary school (10 per cent above the national SEND cohort in the main Reading, Writing and Maths at expected levels). It is also important to note that the performance of primary schools is not an isolated exception. Blackpool's primary schools have performed relatively strongly at the end of Key Stage 2 since 2017. Provisional School Level GCSE data will be published on 17 October. Early indications of secondary school performance at GCSE shows continued weakness in aggregate performance, with improvements at some schools being offset by falls at others.

National data released concerning Post-16 engagement with education, employment and training showed substantial improvement in Blackpool – up nine per cent on the figure in March 2018; and standing at 90.2 per cent of all 16 and 17 year olds, still one per cent beneath the average for the North West and two per cent beneath the national average, but now above the figure for Lancashire.

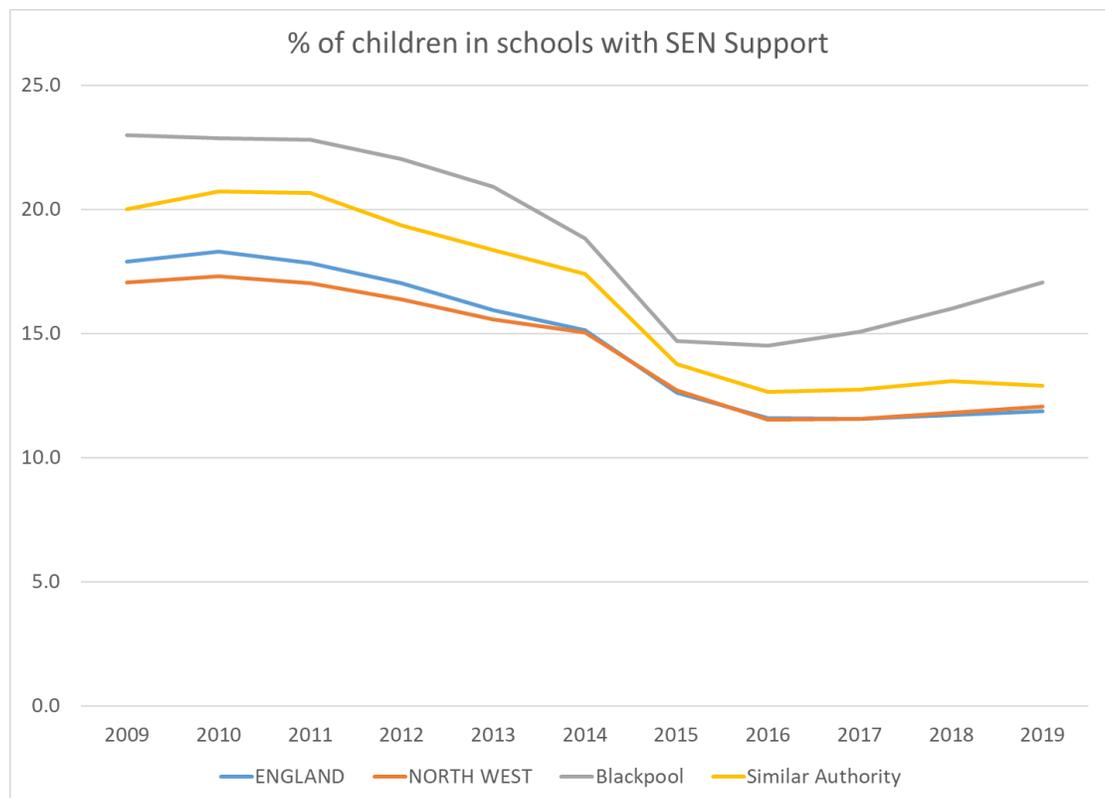
The year on year change builds on a substantial reduction in the number of young people where their status was previously unknown. Within this performance, the use of apprenticeships remains relatively low (three per cent beneath region, two per cent beneath national averages and five per cent beneath Lancashire). It is also the engagement at 16 years of age that remains stubbornly lower than national or regional average, rather than that of the older age band.

Special Educational Need and Disability

Recently released data confirms the relatively high proportion of children for whom Blackpool holds an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) that have their needs met within a special school. In Blackpool, two-thirds of children and young people with EHCPs go to special schools (53 per cent in maintained special schools and 11 per cent in independent special schools – the most expensive type of provision). This

compares with a national and regional pattern of around 40 per cent of those with EHCPs attending special school. While the pattern for new plans sees a lower proportion in special schools (40 per cent), this is still high compared to national or regional averages (20-25 per cent); and is the fifth highest in the country behind Liverpool and Wirral on Merseyside and Bristol and North Somerset, reflecting very particular patterns of provision in those cities.

Data also showed continued high and rising levels of identified special need in schools, but without an EHCP – now up to 17 per cent of all those in primary or secondary. Again, this figure is higher than national or regional averages, or the average for similar areas. It is also increasingly diverging from the pattern in similar areas – see chart below:



In terms of the type of need within schools, relative to the national average, speech and language needs are most pronounced in primary schools, followed by moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and mental health needs. The latter two areas of need are prevalent in secondary schools as well. Autism has a markedly lower prevalence across both primary and secondary schools.

On a positive note, the timely completion of EHCPs, which had been a major issue in 2018 has improved greatly during 2019. 79 per cent of new plans have been completed within the 20 week timescale in the last three months (20 per cent above

the national average rate).

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

7.0 List of Appendices:

None.

8.0 Legal considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Human Resources considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Equalities considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Financial considerations:

11.1 Dedicated Schools Grant Funded Services

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is the funding stream that supports the Schools Budget, which includes amounts that are devolved through the Individual School Budget (ISB), together with centrally retained pupil-related services as listed in the revenue summary. Any under or overspends against services funded by the DSG will be carried forward to 2020/2021 and, in the case of overspends, become the first call on the grant in that year. The forecast DSG deficit now stands at £2.459m by 31 March 2020.

Education

The overspend in the Education division (£577,000) relates primarily to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport Service and is partly due to demand pressures and partly due to the savings target of £320,000 that was applied in 2017/2018 but not achieved.

12.0 Risk management considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Ethical considerations:

13.1 None.

14.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

14.1 None.

15.0 Background papers:

15.1 None.