

		AGENDA ITEM
		PAF/10/16
Committee:	People and Families Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	10 November 2016	
<u>Outstanding Items</u>		
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Purpose of the Paper: To update members on progress on actions further to the work of the Task and Finish group

Progress update on Task and Finish group report – Educational Attainment in Essex

1. Purpose of the Paper

This report sets out progress made further to the series of actions and recommendations presented to the People and Families Scrutiny Committee in July 2015 and the update report that was presented in March 2016.

2. Progress update

There follows an update to each recommendation and action as set out in the published report:

2.1 Working with schools to address Recruitment and Retention requirements

RECOMMENDATION: *Where staff shortages exist, schools be encouraged to pool their resources and employ subject specialists to work for a cluster of schools.*

Through the School-led Improvement Strategy that is being implemented across Essex, schools are forming clusters to address a range of issues including recruitment and retention. Schools are actively encouraged to work more collaboratively to address this matter.

ECC works with the teaching school alliances (TSAs) in Essex, who have a key priority to support schools in recruiting high quality specialist staff, which can be shared across the cluster, where appropriate. Two teaching school alliances have successfully bid for funding to develop “Centres of Excellence” for recruitment and retention. They will be invited to work in partnership with the task and finish group.

Strategies for retaining teachers have been produced in collaboration with headteachers and made available to all schools.

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ACTION: *More work is needed to understand the nature, level, and location of teacher recruitment and retention issues throughout Essex.*

ECC is working with EES for Schools, and with the headteacher professional associations in Essex, to develop a more long term strategic approach to teacher recruitment and retention in the county. This work has been taken forward by a task and finish group.

A headteacher survey was carried out during the summer term of 2016. Although the number of responses was limited it confirmed that the shortage of teachers is widespread across the county, with particular areas of pressure close to the M25 and in coastal areas. Over 70 primary schools reported still having class teacher vacancies in June. Secondary schools particularly struggle to find mathematics, science and English teachers. The "Teach in Essex" campaign resulted in there being a significant number of "hits" on the Essex jobs website but it is difficult to ascertain how many of these translated into firm applications. The project group attempted to recruit from overseas but came up against fierce competition from recruitment agencies. Options to work in partnership with a preferred agency are currently being explored. If successful this would alleviate both the in-year supply pressures but also provide some teachers on contracts of up to three years duration. Initiatives to provide employment and training opportunities prior to formal teacher training have been more successful and this will continue into 2017. Headteachers have identified the provision of subsidised accommodation as a significant incentive for teachers considering moving to Essex.

A housing for teachers concept has been put forward, this has been expanded by the Investment Board into a Key Worker Strategy for Essex with a sub strategy looking at housing.

2.2 Early Years

RECOMMENDATION: *The County Council should consider how best to link Early Years provision with Infant/Primary Schools in order to create a seamless transition from pre-school; and to prevent the discrepancies that have been reported to the Group with regard to the attainment levels of some EYFS children entering school. The Task and Finish Group heard conclusive evidence that linking provision would have a decisive impact on the literacy and numeracy skills of children. This would have a particular impact upon children from deprived backgrounds.*

The Good Level of Development (GLD) measure, extracted from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results from July 2016, evidenced the improving trend for outcomes for ALL children in Essex. Essex at 71.9% outperforms the National confirmed figure of 69.3% GLD. The Statistical First Release published on the 19th October shows that Essex is now in the top quartile for GLD ranking with an upward movement from 52nd to 35th.

School readiness projects in Essex within targeted districts and localities continue to be a focus in supporting effective transitions and to increase the Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes for all children.

Established school readiness projects, for example in Basildon have continued to develop and a Transition passport was launched and used in July 2016. An intensive training programme to support settings in completing the passport and securing accurate assessments took place prior to the launch. 85% of schools who responded to a survey found the passports a valuable source of information at transition into school. A Basildon 'speed dating' transition Learning Community meeting took place in July enabling settings to share their passports with schools. This work has also been supplemented by a Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) project in Vange ward Basildon, involving

school nurseries, settings, children centres and schools. This is an award-winning programme that works with practitioners to support children's early literacy and development. The programme helps practitioners to build parents' knowledge and confidence so that they can help their children with reading and writing and create an early home learning environment

There has been significant input into the Braintree District, which had the lowest GLD outcomes in 2015, including pre-moderation visits to targeted schools, training on using social media to better engage with partners, training on the home learning environment and building relationships with parents, resource bags provided to schools and settings in target areas to support parental engagement and facilitation of transition events such as the 'transition speed dating' session that took place in Halstead involving settings and schools. The impact of the additional school readiness work in the Braintree District has been demonstrated through the increase in the GLD by 7.2% points between 2015 and 2016 (compared to a county wide average increase of 4% points). The GLD of the individual schools who were involved in the above interventions increased by between 13 – 37 % points

A number of school readiness projects have moved towards parental engagement delivering training to early years settings around supporting the home learning environment & engaging parents in their child's learning. In the North East Essex, in addition to delivering the National Children's Bureau Making it REAL, there have been literacy events for parents as well as home visits supporting early literacy at home. Phonological awareness training to settings has been delivered in response to feedback from schools regarding school readiness. Partnership working with Children's Centres to develop playful learning at home has also been promoted and parents have been able to borrow bags to take home to facilitate playful learning & school readiness.

2.3 Support for Governors

RECOMMENDATION: *The County Council should consider ways to encourage employers to enable governors to be released from their employment to increase their contribution and commitment to schools.*

The pilot for e-governors in partnership with SGOSS (School Governors' One Stop Shop) and The Key (Support for School Governors) resulted in five e-governors with finance and business skills being appointed in Essex schools. The governors, based in London, contribute to meetings by conference call communication; we are now evaluating the impact of the pilot.

Governor Services continues to work with SGOSS and Inspiring Governance to recruit governors with the specialist and business skills needed to drive effective governance.

RECOMMENDATION: *There should be encouragement and incentives for school governing bodies to work collaboratively with other governing bodies to ensure best-practice is shared throughout the county.*

Governor Services has continued to encourage collaborative governor development and sharing best practice through the formal school-led improvement partnerships. This has included training governors across local clusters and promoting local governor networks through communications such as Gateways. As a result, local governor networks have now been established across several partnerships.

Peer review and challenge is seen as one of a number of strategies to support the sharing of local best practice and learning. Governor Services is currently working in partnership with

National Leaders of Governance to pilot peer-to-peer review for governors. Four triads across Essex have been identified for the pilot with training taking place in December.

2.4 Data and Standards

RECOMMENDATION: *The County Council should commit to interim and ultimate targets to move to the express aim of being in the top quartile of educational achievement in the county at all Key Stages. It should also set the ambition that the improvements already seen in Essex in the secondary sector are matched in the primary sector.*

There are three priorities that drive ECC's work with schools. These underpin a relentless focus on key outcomes to ensure that by 2018:

- Every school in Essex to be a good or outstanding school;
- Outcomes at all key stages are in the top quartile nationally; and
- Reduce the gap in achievement between children and young people from deprived backgrounds and their peers, in line with the highest performing 25% of local authorities nationally.

The Annual report on attainment and progress for the 15/16 academic year will be taken to the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee in March 2017. Provisional data for 2016 indicates that Essex's performance has improved to the following quartiles. It should be noted that the Key Stage 2 assessment framework changed considerably in 2016 (see Annex 1):

Key Stage 2

Measures Used:	2013-15	% L4+ RWM
	2016	% at least expected standard RWM

NB. Measures not directly comparable in terms of actual performance but rankings and quartiles across all Local Authorities are deemed comparable given all Local Authorities affected in the same way.

Year	Ranking	Quartile	% points short of top quartile
2013	90	C	5
2014	71	C	3
2015	63	C	3
2016	42	B	1

Projection

Essex **on track** for top quartile performance in 2018. Currently around **160** more pupils needed to be working at the expected standard or higher to achieve this.

Key Stage 4

Measures Used:	2013-15	% 5+ A*-C including English & Maths
	2016	% A*-C in English & Maths

NB. Measures not directly comparable in terms of actual performance but rankings and quartiles across all Local Authorities are deemed comparable given all Local Authorities affected in the same way.

Year	Ranking	Quartile	% points short of top quartile
2013	81	C	3.4
2014	85	C	3.6
2015	56	B	2.2
2016	59	B	2.1

Projection

Based on current rates of improvement Essex is **unlikely** to reach a top quartile position by 2018 – a solid 2nd quartile position appears more likely. Currently **just over 300** more pupils needed to achieve A*-C in English & Maths to achieve this.

ACTION: *The Task and Finish Group would wish future Educational Attainment in Essex Annual Reports to provide detailed information to afford more clarity where improvements have been made.*

The Annual report and detailed annex on attainment and progress in the 2015/16 academic year will be taken to the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee in March 2017. The recommendations will be fully implemented in this report.

RECOMMENDATION: *The County Council should encourage all schools under Local Authority control to proactively and creatively make full use of the Pupil Premium to develop ways of improving the attainment of children from more deprived backgrounds.*

Following the commissioned work with the National Education Trust a toolkit for all schools was published in May 2016 and launched at the second annual conference in 'raising the attainment of disadvantaged groups'. This work is overseen by a steering group. Actions for 2016.17 include:

Project 1 - Maximising the use of the Essex toolkit – to promote the use of the toolkit to support school's developing their own approaches to self-evaluation of their pupil premium strategy.

This will be aimed Pupil Premium champions and school governors – included breakfast meetings, additional support from SECs, support to meeting new requirements in relation to publication of pupil premium information on school websites.

Project 2 – Ongoing support for a pupil premium strategy – to provide additional support for identified schools who may be Ofsted good, but gaps are stubborn and therefore differences in achievement are not diminishing.

Aimed at schools leaders, to include identification of schools where gaps are stubborn, discussion of school self-evaluation, mini pupil premium reviews.

It was stressed that school's own understanding and self-evaluation of the impact of chosen strategies is absolutely critical – plenty of schools implement a range of strategies, but are not so good at evaluating the impact and effectiveness of those strategies.

Project 3 – Disseminating knowledge from research findings to improve life chances for disadvantaged pupils.

Half day conference aimed at school representatives and school governors, which will include a focus on metacognition.

ACTION: *The Task and Finish Group would wish the Cabinet Member to report if, and how, the County Council is working with the public sector to work with hard-to-reach groups to raise educational engagement and attainment.*

A range of services within the Education and Learning service work with a broad range of other stakeholders, including external agencies and other specialist providers, in order to secure the best support for disadvantaged and hard to reach groups.

As part of the work being carried out by the National Education Trust, outlined in the section above, schools were surveyed on their work to raise educational engagement and attainment, in order that good practice can be shared. This is included as part of the Toolkit.

Fifteen Teaching School Alliances have been commissioned to develop Centres of Excellence in a number of areas to significantly improve areas across the county where educational improvement is still required. This work will develop over the course of this academic year.

2.5 School Organisation and Planning

ACTION: *The Task and Finish Group invites a response from the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning with regard to the influx of migrant children into Essex and the subsequent impact this has on class sizes in the county.*

One of the challenges in exploring any links between migrant number increases into Essex and the consequent impact on class sizes is that 'in-year' migration is only one of a number of factors affecting class size. The other main factors that need to be considered are the natural increase in the population of Essex i.e. the birth rate of the population residing within the county, out migration, and the number of school places available.

The county has a legal duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in Essex for every resident child of statutory school age whose parents apply for a school place. As part of future planning for school organisation, additional places can be added by the expansion of existing schools or the opening of new schools.

For the Autumn term pupil census 2016, there have been new requirements for schools to assess pupils' proficiency in English where they have English as an additional language; collect information about all their pupils' nationality (distinct from ethnicity); and also collect country of birth information about all of their pupils. In the revised [Census Guidance for Schools](#) issued in September, it says,

'There is currently a dearth of information held to understand how effective the education sector is for foreign nationals and to effectively measure the impact of foreign nationals on the education sector. This new information, along with the data collected on nationality and proficiency in English, will help bridge that data gap and provide the Department with valuable statistical information on the characteristics of these groups of children and along with their attainment and destinations, will allow the Department to measure whether the individual pupils, or the schools they attend, face additional educational challenges.'

Essex will be carrying out its own analysis of local data and this analysis will be available in early 2017.

Annex 1: Assessment framework changes

New performance measures:

Key Stage 2		Key Stage 4	
Attainment	Progress	Attainment	Progress
% pupils at expected national standard	New value added model to measure progress from KS1 to KS2	Attainment 8	Progress 8
% pupils achieving a 'high score'		% achieving grade C+ in English and Maths	
Average score (scaled score)		% achieving the EBacc	
		% pupils entered for EBacc	

Assessment and accountability changes:

Year	Introduction of changes
2015	New reception baseline
2016	New KS1 tests and teacher assessment New KS2 tests and teacher assessment New KS2 accountability indicators KS4 1-8 scale used for Attainment 8/ Progress 8 EBac continues, EM C+ (Basics) introduced New KS2 assessments into Year 7
2017	Updated KS1 and KS2 teacher assessment criteria First reformed GCSEs taken (English and maths) KS4 1-9 Scale used for performance tables 'Basics' becomes EM 5+
2018	First cohort to finish KS1 with reception baseline (progress) More reformed GCSEs
2019	More reformed GCSEs
2020	First KS2 cohort to finish full 6 years in the new curriculum and new KS1 prior attainment
2021	Pupils with KS2 assessment (from 2016) are now Y11
2022	First cohort to finish KS2 with reception baseline (progress measured using reception or KS1 baseline)
2023	Reception baseline used to measure progress of all pupils finishing KS2