

# People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Dorset County Council**



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| Date of Meeting    | 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2018  |
| Officer            | <p>Cabinet Member(s)<br/>                 Andrew Parry – Cabinet Member for Economy, Education, Learning and Skills<br/>                 Lead Director(s)<br/>                 Nick Jarman – Director for Children’s Services<br/>                 Andrew Reid – Assistant Director Schools and Learning</p>   |
| Subject of Report  | <p><b>Update on working with schools, school improvement within Weymouth and Portland and EHCP performance.</b></p>  |
| Executive Summary  | <p>This report gives an update on the future relationship between the local authority and schools. Looking at how other local authorities manage school improvement, the consultation that took place between the local authority and headteachers, and how the local authority is working with Weymouth and Purbeck schools and impact that work is having.</p> <p>The report also gives on update on the progress made on Educational Health Care Plans Performance.</p> |
| Impact Assessment: | <p>Equalities Impact Assessment:<br/>                 Not Applicable</p>   |
|                    | <p>Use of Evidence:<br/> <i>ENABLING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</i><br/> <i>Research into the role of local authorities in supporting local school improvement systems</i> January 2018<br/>                 Research undertaken by: Isos Partnership<br/>                 (Ben Bryant, Simon Day, Simon Rea, Kate Wilson)<br/>                 Research commissioned by: Local Government Association</p>   |
|                    | <p>Budget: N/A</p>   |

## Schools and Learning Services Update

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|                                  | <p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:</p> <p>Current Risk: MEDIUM<br/>Residual Risk: LOW</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <p>To improve the outcomes of children and young people across Dorset.</p> <p>Other Implications:</p> <p>Failure to issue Education Health Care Plans on time can lead to children and young people being without appropriate educational provision or without appropriate support to transfer to adult care placements.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation</p>            | <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the work that has taken place around the consultation on the future relationship with schools</li> <li>2. Note the significant progress that has been made in improving the service provided to children and young people and their carers with SEND post the Ofsted inspection.</li> <li>3. Support the continued drive to raise standards in Dorset schools</li> </ol>   |
| <p>Reason for Recommendation</p> | <p>To continue to focus on raising standards across all Dorset schools and especially in the Weymouth and Portland area.</p> <p>To build on the improvements that have been achieved in improving the Special Educational Needs and Disability Service for children and young people in Dorset.</p>  |
| <p>Appendices</p>                | <p>N/A</p>   |
| <p>Background Papers</p>         | <p>N/A</p>   |
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## 1. How other authorities manage school performance.

- 1.1 The 2010 White Paper *The Importance of Teaching*, stated that “the primary responsibility for improvement rests with schools themselves” and set out an ambition for the “school system to become more effectively self-improving” (DfE, 2010). Therefore, the role of the LA in education began evolving to focus on three key areas of responsibility: as a convenor of partnerships; as a champion of children, families and communities; and as a maker and shaper of effective commissioning.
- 1.2 Since 2014, there have been proposals for further reform of the role of LAs in education. In 2016, the White Paper *Educational Excellence Everywhere* (DfE, 2016) proposed that the role of authorities should be focussed on ensuring every child had a school place, ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils were met, and acting as champions for all parents and families. These changes to the way LAs work has resulted in different approaches and systems across different authorities.
- 1.3 Dorset LA in recent years, and in response to the greater emphasis on the development of a school-led system, have reduced the scale and scope of its advisory service and set out to support the developing capacity of the school-led system. This has included a School Evaluation Partnership programme, which is funded for targeted schools causing concern and traded to other schools, a shift in the role of the LA towards quality assurance and commissioning and away from direct delivery of school improvement services and an increased capacity from teaching schools to deliver direct support to schools causing concern. Presently Dorset LA has 85% of schools rated good or better, this is 4% below the national average.
- 1.4 In Hampshire the LA and school leaders have worked in partnership to develop a strong and sustainable model for supporting school improvement. The Hampshire Inspection & Advisory Service (HIAS) was established as a traded service, ensuring that it would be shaped by Hampshire’s school leaders. At a strategic level, school leaders are engaged in several standing committees, working in partnership with LA leaders to shape local practice on themes such as the curriculum, assessment, and resourcing. The work of HIAS has enabled Hampshire to sustain strong performance, with the proportion of schools judged good or better rising from 84% in 2015 to 90% by the end of 2016.
- HIAS is largely funded by schools. The LA funds a core offer, including an annual leadership and learning visit, for all maintained schools. There is then a wide range of bespoke support that is available for schools to buy in through HIAS.
  - HIAS operates a “blended-model” of support. This brings together the expertise of staff employed directly by HIAS, teaching schools and other school-to-school support. Each of the nine districts across the county has a school improvement manager, whose role is to ensure the rigour and coherence of support, and who helps to facilitate schools coming together to work on shared priorities.

## Schools and Learning Services Update

- An emphasis on proactive support. HIAS has sought to shift the emphasis from monitoring and reacting to failure towards providing support that schools value and is geared to helping them sustain high-quality leadership, teaching, and learning.
- 1.5 Liverpool LA have formed two important bodies to sustain and support the schools in their area;
- School Improvement Liverpool (SIL) – Developed over the last six years, and launched two years ago, SIL is an LA-owned traded company established to maintain a highly regarded school improvement service. SIL is commissioned by Liverpool City Council to carry out its statutory school improvement functions and offers a wide range of support and professional development to over 700 schools across Merseyside, Greater Manchester, and beyond. Liverpool school leaders value the level of support, the rigour of challenge, and the in-depth knowledge of their schools and the city that SIL officers bring. Over the last 18 months, the proportion of primary schools judged good or better has increased from 83% (August 2016) to 92% (December 2016), and the number judged to require improvement has dropped from 27 to 7. Overall 84% of the schools in Liverpool has a rating of good or outstanding.
  - The Liverpool Learning Partnership (LLP) – Formed in September 2016, LLP is a schools-led strategic partnership, ‘committed to the idea that we work best if we work together’, according to its leaders. Its aim is to enable schools to work together on priorities related to supporting learning and learners, including those who need additional support, and providing an education perspective in shaping city-wide initiatives. The city’s primary schools have de-delegated £300,000 to provide a school-to-school support fund to support vulnerable schools. All but one school in the city are members, with representation and leadership across all phases from early years through to further education.
- 1.6 In the London Borough of Tower Hamlets the schools, LA and other key players have established the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP). THEP arose out of a desire among Tower Hamlets schools to avoid fragmentation and retain the “family of schools”; maintain the school improvement support from the LA; and recognise that previous education success across the borough had been achieved through cohesion and community. In Tower Hamlets 82% of secondary and 97% of primary schools were rated as good or outstanding by December 2017.

The key elements of the approach are:

- THEP is a ‘school company’ (a company limited by guarantee with charitable status), which 90% of schools and academies in the borough have joined as members;
- Schools and academies pay £5 per pupil as an annual membership fee – the LA has provided £300,000 of seed-funding over the first three years;
- The approach has been based on the existing strong relationships between schools and the authority;
- The membership fee will entitle schools and academies to a core package of support from THEP, with the options to purchase additional services or additional time from advisers;
- THEP will commission support and challenge for primary schools from the existing LA primary advisory team, utilising the expertise and capacity of primary LA advisers; and

## Schools and Learning Services Update

- THEP will have two main approaches: for most schools an offer of CPD, networks, peer review, and coaching; and for vulnerable schools, more targeted support.
- 1.7 Somerset LA is a large, rural and diverse educational environment. Their schools and the LA work in partnership through a variety of structures, operating at county level, local level and in relation to each phase of education. In recent years, the LA scaled back its school improvement services, but since 2015 it has seen a renewed focus on educational effectiveness, evident in the appointment of a Director of Education, the development of a new strategy and the formation of the Somerset Education Partnership Board (SEPB). In Somerset LA 83% of the schools are rated good or better.
- 1.8 At county level, the SEPB brings together representatives of the LA, schools, teaching schools, phase associations, and employers to share responsibility for driving the delivery of the Education Plan. The SEPB has an increasingly strong connection with the Schools Funding Forum, informing decisions about the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), budget-setting, and managing the processes of commissioning and accountability.
- 1.9 At the local level, schools are members of Collaborative Learning Partnerships (CLPs). The CLPs were established by the County over ten years ago, and since then they have been organised and funded by schools. Through the CLPs, schools identify local improvement priorities, co-construct school-led strategies for improvement, and co-ordinate the planning and delivery of a range of support for schools. The scale and impact of these CLPs is variable. The Team Around the School model of integrated early help is a major initiative involving partnership working across services.

## 2. The outcome from the consultation workshop held on 9 July 2018

- 2.1 A workshop was held on 09 July 2018 to look at how the Local Authority can take forward its relationship with schools. The workshop was facilitated by The Staff College (the professional development arm of the Association of Directors of Children's Services) and was attended by those head teachers who had expressed an interest at an earlier meeting held on 29 January 2018. This was the first consultation of this type to be attended by the new Assistant Director for Schools and Learning – Andy Reid.
- 2.2 The discussion was largely based around the ideas put forward in the seminal paper by David Hargreaves (2010): *Creating a Self-Improving Schools System*. This paper advocates a self-managing, self-improving schools system based around a series of 'family clusters'. These are groups of schools that work within a partnership that is officially recognised by the Local Authority. In Dorset such partnerships would almost certainly be based on geographical lines and would always include a teaching school. The key difference between this and existing partnerships is that they would be registered with the Local Authority who would then work to ensure that the partnership is effective. Such partnerships would be based on the need for school improvement and would be driven by the schools themselves with Local Authority support. Some partnerships might want to go further in terms of finance and governance – working in the same way as a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The head teachers attending the conference agreed to work with the Local Authority to develop an effective family cluster model for Dorset.
- 2.3 Beyond these family clusters of schools, the Local Authority is now working with schools in order to bring together a new School Improvement Board (SIB). This will

be a school-led strategic partnership which will co-ordinate and identify area-wide priorities for school improvement, develop a shared vision, involve key players, promote effective communication, develop system leader capacity, link to other key priorities, and promote sustainability. The draft Terms of Reference for this new body will be presented at the inaugural meeting of the SIB on 20 October 2018.

### **3. The school improvement team's involvement with Schools in Weymouth and Portland**

- 3.1 There is continuing support for the CAT 3 schools in Weymouth and Portland. The school improvement team is continuing to broker and commission high quality support from LA advisors and external partners. All the secondary schools in the area showed improved results in the Summer GCSE exams. The maintained schools, All Saint's School and Budmouth College, will continue to receive LA support and challenge visits, every 4-6 weeks, to review their action plans and monitor impact.
- 3.2 As well as this support for the CAT 3 schools the school improvement team is also supporting the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS), Post 16 and SEND education in the Weymouth and Portland area.
- 3.3 EYFS:
- Dorset LA will receive funding from the newly announced national Professional Development Fund. This will enable training and professional development for Early Years practitioners and will drive up standards in pre-school years. This will be focused on Weymouth and Portland.
  - LA Lead Advisor for EYFS leads termly EYFS moderation events in Weymouth and Portland to drive the quality of provision and outcomes across early years provision in schools. EYFS Leaders forums are provided each term which has improved leadership through effective self-evaluation and robust action planning.
- 3.4 Post 16:
- LA Post 16 officers are meeting school leaders at Budmouth College to agree support plan to secure improvement in relation to Ofsted area for improvement.
  - Post 16 advisors support Weymouth College, most recently providing support for Weymouth College's application to the Transaction Unit to remove their debt to the Treasury therefore allowing additional growth and investment in the local commitment.
  - The Careers and Enterprise Company have offered 10k to support activities in Weymouth and Portland area. The CEC is planning to meet secondary headteachers and FE leaders on 22/11 to discuss this investment and support.
  - The LA has successfully secured 75k funding from the SUN (Southern Universities Network) Project because of a bid submission. The projects include: Careers Leader training, Young Enterprise employability and entrepreneurship courses, targeted family support for those at risk of not progressing on the HE and FE and support for KS4 English & Maths starting this September for Budmouth, All Saints and Wey Valley. The LA has commissioned the Jurassic Teaching School Alliance to deliver this project.
  - Our Senior Advisor for Post 16 is currently working with SUN to secure additional resources for Weymouth and Portland to generate more employer engagement in schools.

- The LA has been offered support from charity Education and Employers for launching Primary Futures later this academic year to primary schools in Weymouth and Portland. This will encourage links to employers, building the children's social capital to overcome disadvantage and have a positive impact on KS2 achievement.

3.5 SEND:

- Our LA SEND Advisor has recently played a key role in securing funding from DFE Strategic School Improvement Fund. The SSIF bid is called 'Linwood and Sigma Securing Inclusive Education: Every teacher a teacher of SEND.' This bid will secure improved attainment for learners with SEND in schools through delivering a variety of projects across Dorset, including Weymouth and Portland. There will be several projects with aims which include improving the quality of teaching so that it meets the needs of every pupil, enabling schools to implement cost-effective interventions, embedding preparation for adulthood at the earliest opportunity and improving the quality of the leadership of SEND in mainstream schools.

**4. Performance of Statutory Education, Health and Care Assessment, Planning and Review**

- 4.1 The SEN statutory assessment team focussed on completing the transfer of all the old statements of Special Educational Needs to new Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in the months leading up to March 2018. As a result, all statements were successfully converted by the deadline at the end of March 2018. However, this focus affected the response to new requests coming in and the subsequent 6, 16 and 20 week timescale deadlines for new requests for statutory assessment were delayed, adding to the existing backlog. The team then spent May – July 2018 processing those assessments that were already out of timeline and those in the 'backlog'. This backlog is now cleared.
- 4.2 The team are now focusing on meeting their performance targets for all new requests for statutory assessment coming into the system. A range of strategies are currently in place, including weekly monitoring of timescales for individual staff, weekly panel meetings, virtual panel meetings with the Educational Psychology Service, ring fenced writing days for our SEN planning co-ordinators each week, and weekly team leadership meetings to monitor progress and performance.
- 4.3 The team are now back to meeting our 6 and 16 week targets and the 20 week timescale performance is on an upwards trajectory. 20 week timescale performance for new EHCPs currently sits at 59%. We expect to see significant improvement on the performance regarding the 20 week marker from September onwards. Our prediction is that by end November 2018 and due to the measures taken above, we will be at 90% plus in terms of completion within timescale.
- 4.4 It is vital that the quality of EHCPs is assured and that the review process for EHCPs is robust. In recent times, team members were not attending ECHP review meetings due to the significant increase in workload and demand. This term, SEN Planning Co-ordinators will be attending an increasing number of annual reviews to support and challenge settings regarding the delivery and review of the EHCP. The team have recently recruited a Quality Assurance and Review Manager for one year, whose role is to ensure quality across EHCP assessment, planning and review processes.

## Schools and Learning Services Update