

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING	Early Years, Youth and Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING DATE:	23 March 2015	
TITLE:	Achieving Excellence within Schools	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 Terms of Reference for the Education Excellence Board Appendix 2 Terms of Reference for the Strategic Forum of the Education Excellence Board		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The education landscape is changing radically and schools have greater autonomy and responsibility for their own self-improvement. Education provision is more diverse, with an increase in the number of Multi Academy Trusts, free schools and cooperative Trusts. Consequently, the role and expectations of the Local Authority in school improvement is more sharply focused on the strategic responsibilities as set out in legislation. This report provides a summary of the Local Authority's statutory duties and its approach to securing the rights of every child and young person in Bath and North East Somerset to educational excellence.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel are asked to agree that:

- 2.1 The vast majority of children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset are currently attending a school that is at least good or outstanding; the performance of children and young people overall are amongst the best in the country. There is a determination and commitment by all the key partners to achieve education excellence for all children and young people irrespective of their starting points or social circumstances.
- 2.2 The draft School Improvement and Achievement Policy is brought to the next panel meeting as part of the consultation process on the Local Authority's approach to school improvement.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of this report

4 THE REPORT

4.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to promote high standards and fulfilment of potential in schools and other education and training providers so that all children and young people benefit from at least good education. The Education Act 2012 sets out the strategic role of the Local Authorities as: Champion for Parents and Families; Champion for Education Excellence and Support for Vulnerable Children. The Local Authority also retains specific duties related to school improvement under the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspection Act 2006. In order to carry out these duties the Local Authority retains the powers to identify and intervene in school causing concern.

4.2 The Local Authority has the responsibility to ensure that every pupil is provided with the education and opportunities they deserve. It does this by:

- Promoting early action to tackle underperformance so it does not become entrenched and lead to formal school failure;
- Ensuring that effective support and challenge is provided immediately when an unacceptable standard of education is identified so that improvements can be made quickly; and
- Securing decisive action if a school in special measure fails to make sufficient improvements so that the education and life chances of pupils are safeguarded.

4.3 Local Authorities do not have any powers to intervention in relation to academy schools. However, the Local Authority does retain a legal responsibility for performance across Bath and North East Somerset. The Local Authority is expected to act within the confines of its responsibilities if it has concerns about the performance of any academy.

4.4 The Local Authority recognises its duty to secure the right of every child to attend a good school and that poverty or other features of a child's background should not be a barrier to this opportunity. The Local Authority believes that the best way to achieve this is to work in partnership to ensure all schools have the capacity to improve. This provides the rationale for targeting the limited resources at those schools that are most vulnerable or give cause for concern. The Local Authority wants all schools to be autonomous and self-improving, as it believes schools are best placed to make decisions about how to improve outcomes for the children and young people in their care. The Local Authority has stated its ambition that all schools should be at least good so that they can be in charge of their own destiny. This view underpins the Local Authority's approach to school improvement and achievement as set out in its School Improvement and Achievement Policy.

4.5 There is strong evidence that successful and sustainable approaches to school improvement focus on open and robust school self-evaluation, strengthening school leadership, improving teaching and learning and working collaboratively with other schools. There is a commitment to working with all schools in Bath and North East Somerset whatever their status and this governs the Local Authority's approach to working with schools.

- 4.6 The responsibility for school improvement in Bath and North East Somerset lies with the School Improvement and Achievement Service. This service fulfils its responsibilities through providing a strategic framework for school improvement and quality assurance across all maintain primary and secondary schools; commissioning of school improvement support; supporting governance; identifying, challenging and supporting schools causing concern; promoting and supporting school-to-school improvement; collecting and reporting statutory statistics and performance data. This includes working with schools to find local solutions where schools are in difficulty.
- 4.7 The Senior School Improvement and Achievement Advisers are at the heart of the Local Authority's strategy for school improvement. The Senior School Improvement and Achievement Advisers provide professional support and challenge by acting as a critical professional friend to the school, helping its leadership to evaluate their performance, identify priorities for improvement and plan effective change. The role aims to help build leadership capacity to improve achievement of all pupils and to contribute to effective school improvement. Each year the Senior School Improvement and Achievement Advisers will agree the school category and level of support in consultation with the headteacher and chair of governors. This enables the Local Authority to challenge school leaders on actions taken to narrow the achievement gap, raise expectations for the most able pupils and secure the best possible outcomes for all children and young people.
- 4.8 A key aspect of the drive for education excellence in Bath and North East Somerset is the establishment of the Education Excellence Board (EEB). All primary schools including academies are members of the Education Excellence Board (Appendix 1). The Strategic Forum of the EEB is a representative group of all of the key partners, including Headteachers from each cluster, the diocese of Clifton, the diocese Wells and Somerset, The Teaching School, National and Local Leaders of Education and the Local Authority. The work of the Strategic Forum has a clear focus on achieving education excellence for all children as set out in the Terms of Reference (Appendix 2). In addition The Primary Collaborative Data & Commissioning Group, EEB monitor the performance data of primary school to identify patterns and trends in performance. This enables early identification of schools at risk so that Senior School Improvement and Achievement Advisers can intervene to bring about rapid improvements.
- 4.9 Ofsted inspects the effectiveness of the Local Authority in carrying out its statutory duties for school improvement. The Ofsted Inspection framework for the inspection of school improvement services was revised in January 2015 and the current School Improvement and Achievement Policy is being revised in light of the changes to ensure its fitness for purpose. Consultation with headteachers and other key partners on the revised policy is currently underway. It is appropriate that the Early Years, Youth and Policy Scrutiny Panel should also be consulted on the policy.

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Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the Education Excellence Board

Educational Excellence Board Terms of Reference

Membership

The headteachers of all primary schools in Bath and North East Somerset (including Academies) together with key strategic partners (LA, Teaching School, Dioceses)

Purpose

- To agree the vision for achieving educational excellence for all children in Bath and North East Somerset;
- To oversee the delivery of that vision, by:-
 - Promoting the culture of collaboration and a self-improving education system amongst all primary schools, the Local Authority, Teaching School, Dioceses and other relevant partners;
 - Holding to account the Educational Excellence Strategic Forum (terms of reference attached);
 - Adopting a collective responsibility for improving outcomes for all children in Bath and North East Somerset

In particular the Educational Excellence Board will:-

- Review and agree the collective vision for achieving educational excellence;
- Periodically review and agree key objectives for the delivery of that vision;
- Receive progress reports and recommendations from the Strategic Forum on delivery of those objectives;
- Work collectively and individually to achieve formal agreement to the mechanisms that might be required to underpin the delivery of this vision – e.g. information sharing protocols, participation in cluster working arrangements, developing a local measure of educational excellence;
- Adopt a culture of constructive self- and peer-challenge.

Frequency of meetings

The Educational Excellence Board will meet 3 times a year, adjacent to the Strategic Director's briefings

LA will provide administrative support; coordinate and circulate the agenda and minutes of the meeting

Chairing

To be agreed

Appendix 2: Terms of reference for the Strategic Forum of the Education Excellence Board

Education Excellence Board Strategic Forum

Terms of Reference

Membership

4 headteachers representing each of the primary clusters

Members of the Strategic Partners: - The Partnership Teaching School

Diocese of Bath & Wells

Clifton Diocese

Local Authority

1 NLEs* and 1 LLEs*

(*National Leader in Education, NLE / Local Leader in Education, LLE)

Purpose

- To agree the B&NES School Improvement Strategy and ensure that all children have access to good and outstanding education learning and achievement
- Ensure there is a rigorous focus on high standards and successful outcomes for all children through the promotion of excellence
- Review performance across schools
- Ensure all schools are receiving the support they need to achieve excellence for all children.

In particular the Strategic Forum will: -

1. Develop a local measure of educational excellence informed by, but not limited to Ofsted grading
2. Ensure the local arrangements for school-to-school support are effective in enabling all schools and academies, irrespective of their structure to secure excellent outcomes for all their pupils
3. Ensure that there is sufficient and effective use of the resources available to challenge and support schools
4. Establish a mechanism for the appropriate sharing of information, including performance data across schools, clusters and our strategic partners
5. Oversee joint commissioning and impact of external support in improving outcomes
6. Continue to encourage school-to-school support ethos across the LA.

In the absence of the Primary Council the Strategic Forum will also pick up the business aspects of any actions likely to impact on a significant number of primary schools.

Frequency of meetings

The Strategic Forum will meet 6 times a year

Administrative arrangements

The meetings will be chaired by a primary headteacher nominated by headteacher members of the Forum.

LA will provide administrative support; coordinate and circulate the agenda and minutes of the meeting.