

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children, Health & Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	Tuesday 3rd November 2020	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Education Updates – School Performance, Narrowing the Gap, Virtual School, Early Years and SACRE	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This report provides the development and scrutiny panel with a wide range of requested education updates, these are listed below:

- School performance
- Narrowing the Gap
- SACRE
- Virtual School
- Early Years

1.2 The development and scrutiny panel is advised that a full set of academic results for all children in our schools in B&NES is not available this year. This is due to primary academic test's not being carried out and the individual nature of how secondary children's academic results were decided. Alongside this, the DFE' formally decided not to collect academic performance data in any format this year.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the development and scrutiny panel is assured that whilst education results are not available this year to be analysed, that the Local Authority remains proactive and is working strategically to improve the educational outcomes of its most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents.

2.2 That the development and scrutiny panel is advised of the good progress the Virtual School for Children in Care continues to make and that it has been awarded

additional funding, alongside only two other LA's in the country, to expand its offer to more children with a social worker.

- 2.3 That during lockdown the LA worked proactively alongside all schools to ensure that education provision was available for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children.

3 THE REPORT

Primary School performance

- 3.1 Due to the CV19 pandemic and the lockdown, no formal tests were sat within primary schools and as a result neither the DFE nor the LA requested data from any primary setting. During lockdown all primary schools in B&NES were asked to facilitate home learning for all pupils. This was often delivered via information sent directly from class teachers and tutors to family homes, or in some cases via on-line lessons. To ensure that all families were able to access education, schools prepared and delivered home learning packs.
- 3.2 All primary schools in B&NES remained open during lockdown to provide face to face educational support to children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. The local authority monitored the school offer to these children and offered additional support to vulnerable families to ensure that children were able to access education. The attendance rates of vulnerable children in B&NES schools was good and in line with the south-west average and above the national average.
- 3.3 This school term all primary schools in B&NES are assessing children to see if the lockdown has impacted upon the educational progress that children could have been expected to make. This information will be used as a baseline and justification for any curriculum adaptations and planned expenditure of the Covid Catch-Up money provided to all schools via the DFE. Though there is no data available to judge the closure of the Pupil Premium / Non-Pupil Premium Gap in BANES, the general school of thought is that lockdown had a more significant detrimental impact on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, therefore use of the National Tutoring Programme (This is additional to the Universal Catch Up Fund and specifically for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups) will be vital for all schools.

Secondary School Performance

- 3.4 Formal examinations for Key stage 4 and 5 were cancelled during the lockdown. Instead, secondary schools were asked to allocate grades at KS4 and KS5. The methodology for doing this was a challenging process with changes to the system used. These challenges were widely reported in the national media and did cause disruption. However, all children, due to finish their education in KS4 & KS5, were allocated school assessed grades to enable them to go on to the next stages of their education, training or employment.
- 3.5 In the spring of 2020, the DFE formally announced that it would not be collecting any educational performance data from schools and has stated that it does not expect any school to be judged or compared in any way by this year's formal examination results. Schools were advised that if they wished to publish their results, they could do, but that this was a decision for each school.

3.6 The LA did ask for some basic results information from each school; in particular, the LA was keen to understand any implications for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. However, the information we received was limited and not submitted by all schools. In line with the DFE request, we have not pursued this any further. In BANES outcomes for pupils were amongst the best in the region in 2019 and there is no reason to believe that this would not continue to be the case in 2020.

Virtual School

3.7 The virtual school operated very effectively during lockdown to support carers and young people. Where advisable, the virtual school supported eligible children in care to take up place in a school environment. Where a return to school during lockdown was not felt to be in the best interests of a child, the virtual school offered additional support to families, which included setting timetables and offering 1-1 virtual tuition. However, during the final term of the last academic year, the Virtual School supported 69% of B&NES children in care return to their educational placements, one of the highest return rates in the South West

3.8 Whilst we have not requested across the board educational data, we have followed up the outcomes for our children in care in KS4 and are pleased to report that in the key subjects areas of Maths and English, our children have performed better than expected. Whilst this year's data cannot be compared fairly to previous years; it does look as though our children have performed well. One student has also applied and will be joining their preferred university course this year.

3.9 During the lockdown, the Virtual School expanded to offer additional support to children in need and children on a child protection plans. This expansion proved a successful way of providing additional educational support to these children and supported the role of the social worker during a difficult time. On the back of this, the virtual school bid for additional funding from the DFE's What Works Foundation to continue this expansion into the new academic year. The school was successful in this bid and has been awarded £130,000 to continue this work as a DFE Pilot area. This is fantastic news and work is currently underway to deliver this expansion to 70 additional children in need and children on child protection plans. These children will benefit from extra planning for their education, and additional resources to support their educational needs, tutoring etc.

Narrowing the Gap

3.10 Whilst the LA does not have data this year that is valid or reliable to judge any change in the performance of disadvantaged pupils, it is aware that the lockdown can only have had a detrimental effect on the education of these children. Narrowing the Gap for disadvantage pupils was a priority for the LA and the local education landscape before the Covid 19 pandemic and will be more so during the forthcoming academic year. The updates below describe the activity underway to collectively improve this position.

Schools Standard Board (SSB)

3.11 Improving the performance of disadvantaged pupils is a priority for our local SSB. The Board met this September and alongside a presentation on equalities in schools, the Board again re-iterated its commitment to improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners. Members of the Board reported that schools were in the process of carrying out indicative assessments to understand if the educational

progress for this cohort of children had been affected by lockdown. The SSB has tasked a subgroup of education leaders, with representation from the RSC office, to oversee the collection of this information and to enquire how board members will be deploying strategies and resources across schools to support the most disadvantaged.

St Johns Foundation & Inclusion Expert

3.12 During the lockdown, the LA worked with the St Johns Foundation to start to develop ideas and strategies to tackle the disadvantage gap in B&NES. These discussions have resulted in the St Johns Foundation developing a pilot programme that will work with seven primary schools in B&NES with the highest levels of disadvantage. These schools are in all regions of B&NES and are both maintained and academy schools, these are listed below:

- Twerton Infants
- St Michaels
- Roundhill
- St Martins Garden
- Castle
- St Keyna
- St Marys, Writhlington

3.13 The St Johns Foundation will look to target support into five key areas in each school. These areas are; mental health, nurture, family support, speech & language and literacy and numeracy. This pilot has been named the Primary Empowerment programme and was presented to the Schools Standards Board in September 2020. The support it delivers to schools will be commissioned by the St Johns Foundation and its outcomes tracked and evaluated by an external organisation. This programme is in early development, however, it is hoped that the pilot should be up and running by the start of the 2021 academic year. The St Johns Foundation has indicated that this will be a long-term commitment with wider support to follow once the pilot is underway.

3.14 The focused work being proposed by the St Johns Foundation represents a significant opportunity for these schools and their communities. Whilst turnaround in the disadvantage gap will not be achieved overnight, it has to be remembered that the disadvantage gap is not present in all schools in B&NES. If the educational outcomes in these schools can improve over time, then the overall picture for the disadvantaged gap in B&NES would be much more positive.

3.15 Additionally, in 2019, the local authority commissioned additional educational support for several schools from an organisation called Inclusion Expert. This organisation has been providing additional strategies for schools to improve the educational attainment of disadvantaged children. This work continued throughout 2019/20. The CV19 pandemic has delayed the completion of this work and a decision was taken to extend the time period for this work to be completed. Schools involved in the project will be contacted after the October half term to discuss how final parts of the offer can be put to best use and evaluated.

SACRE

- 3.16 Local Authorities are legally obliged to maintain a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) whose function is to meet on a regular basis to discuss relevant matters and to produce an agreed local syllabus. This syllabus should be updated every 5 years.
- 3.17 B&NES employs Dave Francis, as an Associate Advisor, (through a system called Bloom) to clerk the meetings, manage communications, monitor RE provision, provide some support to schools, produce the syllabus and any associated resources and write an annual report that has to be published and sent to the DfE. The information below provides an update on the work of SACRE locally.
- 3.18 The significant additional piece of work this year is the five yearly review of the RE Curriculum. The Associate Adviser is leading SACRE members and a small team of teachers in this process, which will fill any gaps in the existing schemes of learning and provide additional materials on religious and moral perspectives on current issues. This is being funded by B&NES Council and is supported by an Award from the Westhill Foundation and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE). Training for teachers on the revised curriculum is being planned for the Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022 Terms.
- 3.19 An agreed Management Development Plan is in place. Linked to the plan, three members attended the South West SACREs Conference and others are part of a regional Learn, Teach Lead project which will make a significant contribution to the RE Syllabus Review
- 3.20 SACRE members have reviewed about 25% of school websites to check for inclusion of statutory information about RE and collective worship. This has given rise to a few issues that will need to be followed up with three identified schools.
- 3.21 The Annual Report on SACRE's work for the school year 2019-20 has been drafted and will be made available to Panel members and all schools by the end of December 2020. This includes analysis of provision and standards in RE and collective worship in Bath & North East Somerset schools and work undertaken to improve achievement, including through the Diocese of Bath & Wells.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Authority has a broad set of statutory responsibilities to ensure that it is able to deliver education support in a number of areas for all schools around vulnerable young people (SEND, Children Missing Education etc.), supporting maintained schools (School Improvement services etc.) and business functions that support all schools (Admissions and Transport etc.)

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 This report is not requesting any resources or advising of any resourcing changes

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An EIA has not been completed for this report as this is an information providing paper. However, the reporting Director needs to consider equalities issues within the contents of these reports and how an EIA could add additional value to the content and recommendations

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 As this is an information only report and no decisions are being made over any changes in service delivery, it is considered that the recommendations in this paper will not adversely impact on climate change or the councils position of being pro-active on matters that affect climate change.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 No additional consultation has outside of the Service area has been completed for this information report.

Contact person	Chris Wilford – Director Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding
Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	