

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM NO. 6
18 JULY 2016	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of the Corporate Director of People and Communities		
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SCHOOL ATTENDANCE INCLUDING BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE PANELS AND PRESSURE ON SCHOOL PLACES

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This paper summarises the current context and position regarding attendance rates at schools and the current context and position regarding the planning of school places and admissions to schools.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The committee is asked to:

- Consider the context and position regarding attendance rates at schools, school place planning and admissions to schools;
- Scrutinise People and Communities actions to promote good school attendance, ensure the efficient and effective supply of school places and an efficient admissions system;
- Support People and Communities leaders in supporting, challenging and intervening in schools where necessary if provision is less than good.

3. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Improve educational attainment and skills

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Attendance Service

The purpose of the Attendance Service is to fulfil the obligation of the city council to promote good school attendance and monitor the quality of provision for children whose parents/carers elect to educate them otherwise than at school. Until 2013 the service was a standalone section of the Education and Resources division of Children’s Services, and suffered from some ineffective leadership and lack of focus.

4.1.1 In September 2013, the service was incorporated into the School Improvement Team within the Education, Resources and Property division of the People and Communities directorate, under the leadership of the Head of School Improvement. The team was reconstituted to include 2 Senior Attendance Officers, reporting to the Head of School Improvement, and 2 Attendance Officers, reporting to the seniors. In addition there was the appointment of a 0.6fte Elective Home Education (EHE) monitoring officer and two posts involved in the tracking and monitoring of Children Missing Education (CME). During June 2016 these 2 CME posts were moved out of the Attendance Service, enabling the service to focus fully upon school attendance and elective home education. The links between attendance at school and behaviour at school are

achieved through co-operative working between the School Improvement Team (Attendance) and the behaviour monitoring panels which are led and managed through the Pupil Referral Service (PRS). The Head of School Improvement reports to the Service Director (Education).

4.2 **School Place Planning and Admissions**

This element of work is undertaken by two teams working within the Schools Infrastructure team within the Education division of the People and Communities directorate, led by the Head of Schools Infrastructure. The Admissions team is led by a Head of Admissions and consists of admissions officers and administrative support officers. The school place planning element is overseen by a school place planning team, co-located with the admissions team and sitting within the Schools Infrastructure team. The Head of Schools Infrastructure reports to the Service Director (Education).

5. **KEY ISSUES**

5.1 **School Attendance**

The guidance document “Promoting Good School Attendance” states that:

“Peterborough City Council (PCC) (The Local Authority/LA) considers that school attendance, and the improvement of it, is an integral part of our raising achievement agenda. We are committed to working in partnership with all schools to achieve improved rates of attendance and to reduce rates of persistent absence across the city.

5.2 We believe that in order to bring about significant educational improvement good habits need to be formed at an early age. It is vital that robust arrangements are in place to support pupils at all stages. Parents and carers whose own experience of school may have been less than positive must be encouraged to see the value of educational opportunities for their children.

5.3 The LA will contribute to improving attendance by:

- a) Providing high-quality advice, support, analysis of data and casework services to schools and other settings in order to ensure the prompt identification of children whose attendance is a cause for concern;
- b) Deploying resources in a targeted fashion to address areas of greatest need, and having particular reference to our local priorities and objectives;
- c) Ensuring that there is a clear rationale and explanation for the trading of this service with schools;
- d) Working with other local and external agencies as appropriate;
- e) Issuing Penalty Notices and pursuing Non School Attendance Prosecutions as appropriate, including for Y11 students until the end of the first half term in the summer term.”

5.4 In order to achieve our aims, we work in a targeted fashion in order to deploy resource to areas of greatest need, whilst being available to provide support where necessary when it is requested.

5.5 The Attendance Officers are linked to specific schools, and each school receives a proportionate amount of support related to its outcomes – the greater the need to improve, the greater the degree of support and guidance offered. All schools which are maintained by the LA receive a core service without further charge.

5.6 A number of schools in Peterborough (27%) are academy schools and many of these schools employ their own attendance staff. The PCC Attendance Officers offer support and guidance to

these schools as well, but on a traded basis.

- 5.7 There are two measures used to judge attendance rates at school. These are:
- 5.7.1 Overall Absence (OA) rates (the number of sessions missed by pupils in the school during the school year expressed as a percentage)
- 5.7.2 Persistent Absence (PA) rates (the proportion of pupils within a school whose attendance rates are below 90%).
- 5.7.3 The aim of the School Improvement Team, as stated in the guidance document, is that
“... both OA and PA should be at least in line with top 20% when compared to Statistical Neighbours by 2016 and also at least in line with the national average by 2017.”
- 5.7.4 Outcomes in relation to these two measures, and the performance trend, are included as Appendix 1.
- 5.7.5 Between 2012 and 2015, overall attendance at Peterborough state-funded schools improved by 0.8%, from 94.5% to 95.3%.
- 5.7.6 The gap to the national average has closed by 0.3% from 0.4% to 0.1%.
- 5.7.7 Attendance rates at Peterborough schools are now 0.2% better than the average of the LA Statistical Neighbours, and Peterborough is ranked 2nd of 10 in this regard.
- 5.7.8 The gap to the national average is consistent at 0.1% below in each phase of education, and for secondary and special schools in particular has improved markedly from 2013.
- 5.7.9 The proportion of pupils in Peterborough state-funded schools judged to be persistent absentees (PA) has reduced by 1.7% since 2012 and the gap to the national average has narrowed.
- 5.7.10 Outcomes in comparison to the LA Statistical Neighbours have been maintained and extended in terms of a positive gap and Peterborough is ranked 1st for overall PA outcomes and for primary school outcomes.
- 5.7.11 The situation in secondary schools is less positive and the gap to the national average is widening. This is a focus of work for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, wherever the LA is able to have a direct impact (9 of 12 secondary schools are academy schools and the LA has no right of intervention).
- 5.7.12 The original aims as stated above (5.8) have been achieved, and these will now be reconsidered. Given the ongoing improvement to outcomes, Peterborough should now be aiming to be better than the national average for both overall attendance and persistent absence. The LA will retain a statutory duty to promote good school attendance beyond 2016-17.
- 5.7.13 To give an indication of the type of work which is undertaken with schools, case studies are included as Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5. Discussion and questions regarding any and all of this work (not just in relation to the case studies) would be welcomed.

6.0 BEHAVIOUR:

6.1 IMPROVING THE BEHAVIOUR OF PRIMARY-AGED CHILDREN

Lead: Claire George, Executive Headteacher / Head of Service - Pupil Referral Service

6.2 **Aims:**

- Access and achievement for all;
- The right support in the right place at the right time; and
- Working together holistically, with the child's needs at the heart of the process, to reduce permanent and fixed term exclusions for primary age children.

6.3 **Priorities:**

Achieving meaningful partnerships with all stakeholders to develop, and implement, a strategy for supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural needs, which offers an integrated, responsive continuum of support.

6.4 Establishing transparent and consistent protocols and processes to ensure purposeful assessment and interventions.

6.5 Implementing robust systems for the review and evaluation of interventions, processes and Outcomes.

6.6 **Delivering a Difference:**

The Primary Behaviour Strategy is built on a belief that children presenting with emotional, social and behavioural needs and their families require a holistic, multi-agency response together with the right support in the right place at the right time. The delivery model for this is the Primary Behaviour Panel.

6.7 **Primary Behaviour Panel**

The Behaviour Panel started in November 2014 and considers cases referred by mainstream primary schools for any child on their roll whose presenting emotional, social and behavioural needs are putting them at risk of permanent exclusion.

6.8 It meets every 2 weeks during term time. Chaired by the Head of the Pupil Referral Service it includes active representation from:

- Police;
- Early Help;
- Educational Psychology;
- CAMH (since November 15);
- Primary Headteachers;
- Primary Learning Centre; and
- Service Intervention Team.

6.9 In addition the Panel has established rapid response referral routes from the Panel to:

- Fire Service;
- Anti-social Behaviour team;
- NSPCC;
- Drink and Drug Sense;
- School Nursing; and
- Cross Keys Housing.

6.10 ALL referrals to the Panel must have an open Early Help Assessment as well as a completed Panel Referral Form. These are submitted a week before the Panel meeting so that all partners can complete their relevant checks prior to the meeting.

6.11 A robust inter-agency Information Sharing Agreement is in place and the referral form requires written consent from the parent / carer for this to occur. Safeguarding children, young people,

vulnerable adults and professional workers is always the focus of information sharing. All case recording is done on E-cins which is a secure web based system already used by the Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

6.12

This means that contacts and actions conducted by a multi-professional team can be effectively and securely located in a central place and all updates are available in a timely and flexible way.

6.13

At the Panel meeting a list of initial actions is agreed and partners then implement these. The first action for the Service Intervention Team is a joint home visit, the focus of which is to gain a greater insight into home circumstances as well as fully capture the voice of the parent and pupil.

6.14

Visit outcomes, together with the information already available, create a holistic picture of the needs and presenting issues for the child and family and form the start of the Targeted Intervention Plan. This is then extended through a classroom observation in the relevant school and the allocation of a Family Support Worker, where appropriate.

6.15

Since November 2015 the Panel has benefitted from the addition of a Child & Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) worker. Where a Panel Referral identifies a potential neuro-developmental need in a child then the CAMH worker is tasked with undertaking an observation. Their findings provide additional guidance for the school and where this indicates further assessment is required the CAMH worker then triggers an internal referral. This process is working well, however there is still then a considerable waiting list for the actual assessments.

6.16

Family issues identified:

The breadth of issues found within the families of children referred to the Panel clearly evidence the need for a holistic, multi-agency response, rather than interventions targeted at individual children.

6.17

Issues identified through the initial referral and subsequent home visits include:

- Poor parenting;
- Poverty;
- Family finance issues – including benefit caps and changes;
- Housing - inadequate / eviction / rent arrears;
- Bereavement – children and adults;
- Drug and alcohol use – young people and adults;
- Undiagnosed neuro-developmental conditions;
- Additional learning needs – children and adults;
- Isolation / lack of social support networks;
- Mental health issues – children and adults;
- Self-harm – children and adults;
- Criminal activity – young people and adults;
- Impact of parent / partner in prison;
- Victims of crime;
- Domestic abuse and violence;
- Abuse - Historical and current – children and adults;
- Emotional trauma – past and present – children and adults;
- Community issues – anti-social behaviour / calls for service to police and fire;
- Exploitation - of children and adults; and
- Honour based violence.

6.18

The Primary Panel has been so well received that Secondary Headteachers requested their own Panel. The Secondary Panel started in November 2015 using a similar model but is also incorporating in-year transfers, Fair Access admissions and Managed Moves.

7.0 School Place Planning and Admissions to Schools

7.1 Primary

Since 2014, building works to expand schools have created some 1515 new primary school places. This means that the published admission number (PAN) for reception-age children (age 4 – 5 years) into school for September 2016 is 3172.

7.2 We have 278 current vacancies in Reception for September 2016. These vacancies are concentrated in a small number of schools (eg Gladstone, Ormiston Meadows, Beeches, Paston Ridings).

7.3 To illustrate the growth there are 531 more children in the present reception year than the present Year 6.

7.4 At present, we have no new building projects. Southfields opened in April 2016, expanded by 1 form of entry (FE). St Michaels expands from 1 FE to 2 FE from September 2016. We are monitoring very closely the growth taking place on the Cardea estate.

7.5 Paston Reserve and Norwood developments will both have a primary school (dates to be agreed and presently being considered);

7.6 Two primary schools are to be built at Hampton Gardens (dates to be agreed and presently being considered).

7.7 Secondary

There are a limited number of current vacancies in each year group (Year 7 = 178, Year 8 = 307, Year 9 = 253, Year 10 = 109 and Year 11 = 62). This will present challenges for expected In-year demand and new arrivals to the city. A key dependency here is to have accurate data from schools regarding their “leavers”.

7.8 City Of Peterborough Academy, The Voyager Academy and Ken Stimpson Community School are the only schools with capacity. It is noteworthy that The Voyager Academy at Year 7 is 50% below PAN.

7.9 The challenge is to create sufficient places in Year 7 following the expansion in recent years of primary pupil numbers. The present PAN is 2674 but in year 4 there are 2801 children, year 3 is 2997, Year 2 is 3018, Year 1 is 3123 and Reception is 3073 a shortfall of between 127 and 449 places.

7.10 The constraints are that we have rebuilt or redeveloped all secondary schools in Peterborough during the last 10 years and that the school sites are largely at their maximum with little room for expansion that enables compliance with Sport England’s requirements re loss of playing fields and the DfE Section 77 requirements re loss of area.

7.11 There are some expansion options like Jack Hunt which we are hoping, subject to planning approval, later this year to expand by 1 form of entry.

7.12 We are assessing the feasibility of expanding both Nene Park Academy and Ormiston Bushfield Academy by 2 forms of entry each whilst being compliant with both Sport England and Section 77 requirements.

7.13 Key is that we expand schools based on where the demand is and the school population reside, in order to mitigate transport costs. However the dependency is that those schools have the site capacity to expand as well as the educational capability / capacity to expand.

7.14 We are building Hampton Gardens Secondary School (8 forms of entry). This is to respond to the new housing developments but it also provides 4 forms of entry for children from the Yaxley primary schools.

7.15 We will be developing a new 8 form of entry secondary school at Paston Reserve to accommodate children from the new Paston and Norwood housing estates. We estimate a buffer of 3 forms of entry to cater for children from other areas thus providing “additional” capacity for the city’s growth.

7.16 In Year Growth

Every 2 weeks we run an allocation of school places for those applying for a school. During this period we also clean the database of leavers based on the information that the schools provide us with.

7.17 Every 2 weeks we receive circa. 100 applications. New to area applications again are typically around 50% of these.

7.18 A detailed review of school place planning is in its final stages using the January 2016 census data, latest NHS Birth Forecast data, the recent primary and secondary school allocations and the latest data on the tribal Admissions systems.

7.19 For the updated school Organisation Plan later this year recommendations will be made for expansions to address both primary and secondary shortfalls.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal or financial implications to this report. The report has a city-wide focus.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 Consultation takes place regarding all of the above with senior leaders and governors in schools, Schools Forum and elected members via the Education Scrutiny and Challenge Group.

10.0 NEXT STEPS

10.1 Following feedback from the committee, all responses will be considered by the senior officers and taken to headteacher and governor group meetings.

Actions taken will also be discussed and scrutinised further by the Education Scrutiny and Challenge Group.

11.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 11.1
- Promoting Good School Attendance – PCC Guidance for Schools;
 - Attendance Statistics released by the Department for Education; and
 - School Organisation Plan.

12.0 APPENDICES

- 12.1
- Appendix 1 – COTI July 16 Education Appendix 1 – Attendance Pb v National Data Trend
 - Appendix 2 – COTI July 16 Education Appendix 2 - Attendance Case Study 1
 - Appendix 3 – COTI July 16 Education Appendix 3 – Attendance Case Study 2,3,4
 - Appendix 4 – COTI July 16 Education Appendix 4 - Attendance Case Study 5
 - Appendix 5 – COTI July 16 Education Appendix 5 - Attendance Case Study 6
 - Appendix 6 – COTI July 16 Education Appendix 6 - School Places Plan

