

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
18 NOVEMBER 2021	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Wendi Ogle Welbourn, Executive Director, People and Communities	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Lynne Ayres - Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University	
Contact Officer(s):	Jonathan Lewis – Service Director (Education)	Tel. 01223 507165

SERVICE DIRECTOR REPORT, EDUCATION INCORPORATING THE PORTFOLIO PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION, SKILLS AND THE UNIVERSITY

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Jonathan Lewis – Service Director (Education)	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the position of Education around Covid-19 and wider activities and comment on areas the committee may wish to review moving forward as we move into the next stage of recovery. 2. Provide feedback on the school improvement strategy, the updated school organisation plan and our sufficiency strategy for early years. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report has been written by the Service Director (Education) at the request of the committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the latest position on Education in Peterborough. The challenge of Covid-19 remains but the report also outlines other key progress in our continual focus on improving educational outcomes.

2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council :

Education, including

- a) University and higher education;
- b) Youth service;
- c) Careers; and
- d) Special needs and inclusion.

2.3 This report links to –

- Corporate priority:
 - Improve educational attainment and skills

- To drive growth, regeneration and economic development
- Children in Care Pledge: Support children in care to have a good education.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

Progress report for the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University - Priorities for Education

4.1 Delivering business as usual activity remains hugely challenging in Education. Covid-19 is very much still part of our daily work. However, we are now focusing on wider areas which will contribute to our work and objectives moving forward. Upcoming reports to this committee will outline these areas further but the current areas of priority are –

- Supporting schools with the continued challenge of Covid-19. This is likely to remain until Spring 2022 due to the vaccination roll out for children and the impact of the Delta variant in school-age children.
- We have not yet seen the full impact of Covid-19 on families and vulnerable children and young people – behaviour, SEND needs and mental health challenges are emerging. We will need to respond to support this and broker additional services to support children. We do not currently have any additional funding for this.
- Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on pupils learning. This is not yet fully understood and will not be established nationally until next year with the first set of published performance data. Our school improvement advisors are looking at the challenges with maintained schools and we will be collecting predicted data early in the new year.
- Recruiting to vacancies across the service – As a result of retirement and recruitment challenges in a highly competitive market, we have been unable to recruit to a number of key roles. We are struggling to recruit to key roles including the Assistant Director School Improvement and Educational Psychologists. To deliver current and future priorities, we need further capacity.
- Increasing the take-up for free school meal entitlement, especially for families who are on low incomes due to the impact of Covid-19. We also want to increase the take up of 2-year-old funded places and the early years pupil premium (3 and 4-year-olds) as we know settings are losing out on financial support which is vital to support catch up in these establishments.
- Ensure attendances continues to be high across all groups including a focus on vulnerable groups. We will also offer advice to parents who are considering elective home educating their children in line with the new requirement brought in during Covid-19.

4.2 Planning for the longer term is challenging at the current time however the key focus areas for the directorate can be listed below –

- Commission a new primary and secondary school at Great Haddon for September 2026. This will be undertaken through the LA-led free school presumption processes and support trusts with free school bids.
- Developing a school improvement strategy that will bring all outcomes above national average and to the top of our statistical neighbours – focus areas:
 - Improving Key Stage 2 / 4 outcome. All other areas have seen significant

improvements and more schools becoming good and outstanding.

- Focus our challenge and support to Academy Trusts over their performance.
- Improving reading with a focus on early language acquisition and phonics in primary schools.
- Refocusing our strategy to support EAL learners (English as an additional language) and developing an approach to support the wider curriculum development for all learners.
- Ensure we effectively respond to the Ofsted/CQC LASEND revisit which is expected to happen in Autumn 2021. The last inspection took place in 2019.
- Build a strong Local Authority led family of maintained schools to deliver and sustain outstanding school improvement and a culture of self-improvement.

4.3 It is now nearly 5 years since I wrote my improvement plan for Education in the City and this report outlines the ongoing improvements taking place. Officers continue to focus on ongoing improvement and the remainder of the report outlines some of these areas of change.

Service Director Updates

4.4 The remainder of the report covers the key issues the council is facing in the delivery of its statutory functions along with education settings from early years to further education. It is covered across the 4 core areas of business:

1. Covid-19 Response and the Local Authority Support for Education
2. School and Setting Improvement
3. Special Education Needs and Disability
4. Capital and Place Planning

Covid-19 Response and LA Support for Education

4.5 Covid-19 remains a huge challenge for all education establishments during the first half of this Autumn term. We have seen a significant rise in confirmed cases as the term has proceeded and following the removal by the Department for Education of a number of the protective measures, including bubbles.

4.6 The position over the autumn term can be seen below (based upon cases report by schools, colleges and early years settings to the LA):

	Cases	Settings
W/C 30 th August	18	12
W/C 6 th September	145	32
W/C 13 th September	204	51
W/C 20 th September	173	49
W/C 27 th September	238	41
W/C 4 th October	368	57
W/C 11 th October	389	61
W/C 18 th October	589	80
W/C 1 st November	314	70

4.7 As a result of concerns around the rising cases, we recommended to schools that they introduced additional local measures to help contain the rise in cases. These measures, introduced on the 6th October, were –

- Face coverings for staff and secondary school students in communal areas
- Staff socially distance and recommend staff meetings are virtual.
- All visitors to schools must wear face coverings in school buildings.
- All non-essential events where parents visit schools are moved to being held virtually.
- Promoting and monitoring uptake of twice weekly LFD testing in secondary schools (staff and students) Primary school (staff)

4.8 Following the designation of Peterborough as an Enhanced Response Area (ERA), the government agreed that the measures we put in place on 6th October will continue until 10th December 2021.

4.9 In addition, there are a range of measures that we can consider when there is an outbreak. For schools, an outbreak is where there is a rapid increase in cases, 5 cases in a group that has mixed closely (i.e. a class) or 10% of the school numbers. At this point, we hold a supportive call where an LA officer and the school consider next steps. Measures will be considered based upon the context of the school. The ERA allows us to consider the following steps only under an outbreak –

- Recommend a one-off PCR test for a wider group or cohort
- Daily LFD testing for close or household contacts (identified by NHS Test and Trace or the setting) while awaiting the results of a PCR test. We can also recommend to parents of primary age pupils they undertake PCR tests
- Introduce methods to reduce intergroup mixing (for example separate break times, staggered entry etc.) – the ringfencing of classes
- Increased frequency of LFD testing (staff and secondary aged or above pupils only) including daily testing where case numbers are very high amongst an identified group or cohort. This should be done for a minimum of 5 days, increasing to 7 days as necessary to ensure the final test is taken on a school day
- Reinstating on-site LFD testing. (Assisted testing site or Supervised Self Testing) (Secondary and Special Schools only)
- Temporary reinstating face coverings in secondary age classrooms for pupils/students / staff.

4.10 Aside from the challenge of Covid-19 cases, there are a number of other challenges we are facing in delivering education –

- Anxiety in parents and staff – the challenge of running schools where there are high cases is significant and this has seen attendance in some schools decline. We have also had a number of staff with significant anxiety especially where classes have seen large outbreaks. We are very grateful for our school staff being so committed to ensuring education continues.
- Rising sickness levels – sickness levels are higher than normal. On 4th November, 5.6% of staff in schools were absent. This is a combination of both Covid-19 and higher than usual respiratory illness. We would expect a rate nearer to 2% at this time of year.
- Supply availability and funding – a number of schools are reporting there is a lack of supply staff. This is due to high demand due to staff absence and supply staff being deployed supporting tuition in schools. Schools are also reporting challenges with budget – there has been no additional funding to support the costs of delivering additional measures resulting from Covid-19. The only funding schools currently have available is to support pupil catch up.
- Testing rates and vaccination rates – we have been pushing hard to ensure eligible pupils and staff continue to test. There is a challenge around reporting but we continue to focus on areas in the city where testing is low. The 12-15 and 16-17-year-old vaccination programme continues to be rolled out (see the table below for the 2nd November). The initial school visits for 12-15 year olds will be completed by early December.

Area	12-15 vaccination uptake	16-17 vaccination uptake
Peterborough	13.3%	47.5%
East of England	28.5%	61.7%
England	24.2%	56.6%

4.11 Data continues to be monitored on a daily basis and we continue to take account of the balance between maintaining educational attendance and safety in recommending these additional

- *Schools need to be prepared to share areas and info where they need input/support with. There is opportunity for engagement and opportunity to input into strategic planning.*

Support for School Improvement

- *Support for safeguarding always excellent, and the recent Safeguarding Review was really positive and useful.*
- *LA support for our maintained nursery is very limited and we feel like we 'slip through the gap' between the school improvement team and the early years team. The new School Improvement Advisor this year has been a really positive experience.*
- *General thank you for all of the support and briefings (both zoom and daily updates) these have been well thought out, informative and supportive (And actually been a huge part of supporting wellbeing at this difficult time). As a school we feel that we have been well supported by the Local Authority at various levels. Our school Improvement advisor has been amazing within school supporting and challenging the school but she has also supported wellbeing. The Heads meetings have been of a high quality and documentation to support schools during this time has been well thought out. SEND hub is well supported for communication and language with regular meetings. The LA Safeguarding team have been supportive. English strategy development is well thought out and support for both reading and writing is excellent. The LA have supported the leadership development of the school working with our phonic champion leaders in collaborative work with other schools. There has been fantastic working alongside our EYFS leader - together they have run some joint sessions for schools to school support with a focus on Early Adopter and EYFS high quality teaching and learning. Governors have felt well supported by the LA with briefing and training. Considering the limited funding and resources that the LA have it is unbelievable how much they all do to support schools - I think there must be a lot of people doing a lot over and above for the benefit of the pupils, families and staff in this Authority*
- *Support is offered and promoted to all schools, but somehow it doesn't quite connect with the schools who need it most and often doesn't seem to bring us all together as a LA community of learners. Better school-to-school support systems would be hugely beneficial.*
- *I think we have a knowledgeable, proactive and very dedicated team of staff at LA.*

Facilitating Access to Services

- *The regular HT briefings led by Jon Lewis, in addition to his emails, guidance, clarification and support throughout the pandemic, have been exceptional and invaluable. This has supported HT well-being, offered reassurances and alleviated pressures. Thank you.*
- *The LA does not appear to have the capacity, staff, or drive to facilitate access to services. There is only so much that one person can be expected to do.*
- *HT wellbeing supported as I have always used an LA officer to run my Performance Management. This has been valuable and supportive.*
- *Finance support has been extremely stretched this year. I would advocate the benefits of the Cambridgeshire model where you can 'buy in' to Financial adviser support, meaning they attend regular support meetings during the year to assist with key points in the financial year.*

Access/Promoting Social Inclusion

- *Personnel change, it is difficult to keep up with whom to contact. People are difficult to contact, response times are often poor.*
- *We have found the Transport team very helpful as they always send messages back to us promptly and are available to support us when needed (Pupil absence and changes to taxi times etc.)*
- *Following our safeguarding audit, we have asked for support with health and safety and risk assessing but are yet to receive this. Further guidance/training/templates would be useful.*
- *In the co-ordination of the admissions process, improved communications between the SEND Team and the Admissions Team would be of benefit given the extremely late notification of additional pupils with EHCPs to EYFS, taking us above PAN, on 3 consecutive years. A coordinated approach would be of benefit.*

- *I think that the Fair Access process has probably improved from what it was in the past.*
- *New Fair Access policy, panel and procedures are beginning to work better now, since joining with Cambs teams.*
- *Services and support vary widely. Some excellent, some poor - hence adequate in a number of cases.*

Vulnerable Pupils

- *Supporting services are endlessly hampered by staff absence, unfilled vacancy and shortage of specialism. We are over full, too busy and impatient. When the 2 come together it just leads to frustration.*
- *Ed psych are excellent, but short staffed. Social Care and Health the same.*
- *SEND services remain the source of much frustration*
- *We have found the support from the Looked after children lead to be of a high quality. Very knowledgeable and supportive of some of the complex needs of pupils who become looked after children.*
- *I feel unsupported by the LA SEN team - communication can be sporadic, with members of the team difficult to contact and communication via email and at meetings can be unhelpful and unsupportive to schools who are trying their best with the resources and knowledge they have.*
- *EHCP Annual Review paperwork has not been received back from the LA within expected timescales.*

Covid response

- *I am so grateful for the LA support during the Pandemic. Thank you for timely zoom meetings, regular updates and the availability of the team at the end of the phone/email to support. We could not have got through this without you.*
- *Support and communication during COVID has been excellent.*
- *The support for leaders during the Covid pandemic has been absolutely exceptional. Daily emails with updates and digests of new publications, support for risk assessment, contact details for support at weekends have been invaluable.*
- *In what has been probably the hardest year working in a school, I have felt so fortunate to be working in a Local Authority maintained school, and particularly in our Local Authority. The level of support that has been available to schools and Headteachers has been second to none and has been available pretty much 'round the clock'. We could not have asked for anything more, thank you to the team.*

4.16 In analysing individual questions, the 10 questions below were the strongest responses -

	2021	2018
The effectiveness of your LA's communication with your school	3.6	2.3
The effectiveness of the leadership provided by senior officers	3.5	2.5
The effectiveness of LA support for Education Safeguarding, including the quality of the training provided	3.4	3.0
The effectiveness of LA support for looked-after children i.e. the Virtual School	3.1	2.7
Your LA's knowledge and understanding of your school and its local context	3.1	2.6
The effectiveness of your LA's support for promoting pupil attendance	3.1	2.5
The effectiveness of the leadership provided by elected members	3.1	2.1
The effectiveness of your LA's support for the professional development of teachers, including NQTs	3.0	2.3
The quality of the information the LA holds on its website and Learn Together to support schools	3.0	2.0
The clarity of your LA's service offered to schools	2.9	2.2

4.17 The 10 lowest scoring questions are below -

	2021	2018
The effectiveness of your LA's co-ordination of the admissions process	2.4	1.6
The effectiveness of your LA's planning of school places (including SEND)	2.3	1.9
The effectiveness of support for schools working with pupils at the SEND support phase	2.2	New
Your LA's planning of SEND provision to meet identified needs	2.1	1.4
The effectiveness of facilitation of integrated joint working with social care and health	2.1	New
The effectiveness of LA support for meeting the needs of pupils with English as an additional language	2.1	1.7
The effectiveness of LA support for Annual Reviews of EHCP's	2.0	New
The effectiveness of communication with SEND services	2.0	New
The effectiveness of LA support to schools in bidding for external grants	2.0	1.2
The efficiency with which statutory assessments of pupils with SEND are made	2.0	1.6

- 4.18 An action plan to consider all aspects of the feedback is being developed and will form part of the next iteration of the education strategic plan.

Household Support Grant

- 4.19 The Winter Grant Scheme was initiated in November 2020 via a central government grant to local authorities to provide practical support to those whose lives have been impacted by Covid-19 through the winter months. From April 2021 onwards the scheme has been renamed the Covid Local Support Grant. The Winter Grant Scheme provided us with an opportunity in Peterborough to reach those who needed support with food, fuel, or other essential supplies through the winter months. It also simultaneously presented an opportunity to link individuals and families with longer term support who otherwise may not have known about or felt confident enough to seek it.
- 4.20 The approach to delivering this in Peterborough has been one of partnership working with the public sector, voluntary sector partners and communities, recognising that those who live and work locally are often best placed to identify those in need of support. The Grant enabled us to provide food vouchers to those children eligible for free school meals in the school holidays, an increased investment into our universal preventative services to support households facing financial hardship. A Direct Award scheme was also set up to give community groups and other public sector partners the ability to provide immediate support with food, fuel, or other essential supplies to those in their community who are experiencing financial hardship, whilst also linking them to longer term support. This hybrid model of delivery has enabled us to reach those who we may not otherwise have reached, through local networks.
- 4.21 This way of working reflects the Think Communities principles of person-centred, place-based and system working to support individuals and families. We have also seen the benefit of the 'hub' model of working, which at times has included proactive contact to families and individuals (not waiting for them to find/come to us) and helping families and individuals navigate the system to access the support they need, be it debt advice, housing problems or support to self-isolate due to Covid-19. It also recognises the importance of addressing and alleviating the presenting 'symptoms' of poverty (i.e., that people have food on the table, can heat their homes and can access other essential supplies) to effectively engage more preventative forms of support and opportunities that may increase social mobility.

4.22 The proposed allocation of the Household Support Grant is shown in the table below.

Grant Received	1,824,636
Proposed allocation -	
• Direct Voucher Scheme (*)	691,120
• Wider Support Scheme	1,133,516

(*) this is a current estimate based upon the summer voucher scheme take up.

4.23 The grant has specific terms and conditions including:

- At least 50% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children, with up to 50% of the total funding to other households genuinely in need of support this winter. This may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits.

4.24 Eligible spend includes:

- Food. The Fund should primarily be used to provide support with food whether in kind or through vouchers or cash.
- Energy and water. The Fund should also primarily be used to support with energy bills for any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders. It can also be used to support with water bills including for drinking, washing, cooking, and sanitary purposes and sewerage.
- Essentials linked to energy and water. The Fund can be used to provide support with essentials linked to energy and water (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.), in recognition that a range of costs may arise which directly affect a household's ability to afford or access food, energy and water.
- Wider essentials. The Fund can be used to support with wider essential needs not linked to energy and water should Authorities consider this appropriate in their area. These may include, but are not limited to, support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing, and essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or paying for fuel. This list is not exhaustive.
- Housing Costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, the Fund can be used to support housing costs. The Authority must also first consider whether the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and therefore owed a duty of support through the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG).
- In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, households in receipt of Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, or Discretionary Housing Payments can still receive housing cost support through the Household Support Fund if it is deemed necessary by their Authority. However, the Fund should not be used to provide housing support on an ongoing basis or to support unsustainable tenancies. The Fund cannot be used to provide mortgage support, though homeowners could still qualify for the other elements of the Fund (such as food, energy, water, essentials linked to energy and water and wider essentials).

4.25 It is expected that the focus of support should be on food and bills and that support for housing costs should only be given in exceptional cases of genuine emergency. Beyond this, authorities have discretion to determine the most appropriate scheme for their area, based on their understanding of local need and with due regard to equality considerations.

4.26 It is our intention to continue to provide the direct voucher scheme in a similar way to the process we followed in the past 12 months.

4.27 The Direct Voucher Scheme offers parents a voucher for a choice of supermarkets which are sent to eligible families automatically using school data and information held by the Local Authority.

Each eligible child received a £15 voucher for each week of the school holidays (£3 per day).

Those eligible for the voucher will be those pupils who met the following criteria:

- Early Years Pupil Premium
- Children that access funded two-year-old education
- Eligible for Free School Meals
- Students eligible for 16+ bursary

4.28 We fund pupils on school roll, regardless of where they live. We have a reciprocal agreement with other LA's in the Eastern Region to fund pupils in their own setting for 4-16 education. For colleges, we work with each of the establishments to follow similar arrangements they may operate with their eligible pupils. This may involve cash payment. We will only fund in this position those that live in Peterborough. We will also seek to reach out to parents in independent schools in the City to offer them support if they meet the criteria.

4.29 The scheme we are proposing will fund vouchers across the following periods:

- October Half term - £15 per eligible child
- Christmas - £30 per eligible child
- February Half Term - £15 per eligible child

4.30 For the October half term, a total of 12,110 £15 vouchers were sent to eligible parents with a further £10k going to colleges to support their eligible students.

4.31 Like the voucher scheme, we will continue to provide a wider support scheme. We have started detailed discussions with our partners. These discussions will help shape and target the approach we take with the remaining funding, but the core offer will closely align to our most recent delivery models:

- A direct awards to households in urgent need
- Funding to support the work of our Local Assistance Scheme, which brings together a range of agencies with coordination provided by the Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Investment into other agencies that can provide urgent and practical assistance when needed, including voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.

4.32 We also propose to engage with our City Councillors who have supported significant levels of community activity throughout the pandemic, to make sure that we harness their local knowledge, and direct any funding, if available, to local groups that might more easily reach people in greatest need than we can.

4.33 Fundamental to the way this fund is spent is our ability to proactively identify people in need, and we will be developing mechanisms to analyse data from multiple sources to help with this. We will continue to operate a relatively light touch application process, especially important given that people are likely to be in immediate need and will continue to also try to encourage and enable people helped with financial or other practical support to also seek support from advice and other agencies.

4.34 We will also make sure our own services are aligned to the scheme, most notably our adult skills and libraries services, both of which can provide longer term connectivity and support to help people increase their learning and earnings.

4.35 A small proportion of the funding will need to be retained to cover our staffing costs for the wider support and voucher scheme, and this will be less than 5% of the total allocation.

School and Setting Improvement

4.36 One of original findings from the 2018 school survey was the lack of a clear plan for school improvement. As the results show, the LA has changed significantly and our more recent focus

has been on developing our approach to School Improvement. Appendix 1 outlines our proposed school improvement strategy and our approach to tackling under performance.

4.37 It outlines 4 priorities -

- Covid-19 response recovery, which includes developing leadership and supporting well-being
- Ensuring schools have a broad curriculum that is relevant to their context
- Ensuring end of key stage outcomes in English and Maths continue to improve, and improve outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in all phases and close the gaps between them and other pupils in the country and nationality
- Improving Phonics and Early Reading

4.38 It is our intention to consult schools on this strategy before finalising in the new year. Comments are welcomed from the committee on this document.

4.39 More widely, the focus of our school improvement team this term has been -

- Establishing new relationships with link for school improvement advisors. We now have three highly regarded seconded headteacher who are bringing a new level of challenge and support to our schools alongside our experienced existing advisors.
- Headteacher performance management meetings with governors and autumn-term visits
- A blended programme of high-quality CPD with the resumption of some face-to-face events
- Schools implementing with confidence the revised Early years foundation stage (EYFS), the new Reception Baseline Assessment and the New Early Career Teacher (ECT) framework
- Additional support for safeguarding in priority schools
- A very exciting Phonics Programme is now planned in partnership with the DfE Opportunity Area and Launch of the Aiming High / Higher Programmes
- Twelve schools signed up to the Making a Difference for The Disadvantaged Programme with the Education Endowment Foundation and Norwich Research School
- Six schools now engaged with the curriculum project in partnership with Haringey Education Partnership
- Governor Training has remained virtual during Autumn Half Term 1, aligned to the risk posed by gatherings of different people. The decision has also been taken to continue this approach for Autumn Half Term 2 given the current prevalence of cases within the locality. The Local Authority now advises a preference for meetings and monitoring to continue virtually but has allowed for localised decision making amongst Headteachers and Chairs of Governors based upon school specific circumstances and Risk Assessments. Some schools have therefore returned to meetings in person
- The School Governance Team continue to work alongside schools, their leaders and governors across the City. They are currently prioritising re-implementing Pre OFSTED Governance Checks to consider school's readiness for inspection, which is particularly significant as the inspectorate have now recommenced a structure of inspection visits, following changes to the process during the pandemic.

Special Education Needs and Disability

4.40 Written Statement of Action (WSOA) – LA SEND Inspection

4.41 The Local Area of Peterborough was inspected by OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) from 10 to 14 June 2019 to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The lead Inspector determined that Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group were required to jointly submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA), because of five areas of weakness in the local area's practice:

1. *“Joint planning, including commissioning, and intervention are not sufficiently well established to make sure that all agencies and services play an active role in meeting the requirements of 2014 disability and special educational needs reforms.”*
2. *“There is no quality assurance framework for the local area’s work for children and young people with SEND. Intended outcomes for children and young adults are not targeted, measured or evaluated well enough to inform leaders about the impact of the work to implement the reforms effectively.”*
3. *“The current arrangements for the DCO in relation to the implementation of the reforms do not allow the postholder to fulfil the obligations of the role sufficiently.”*
4. *“Early support is well embedded for children in early years but does not follow through in all areas of the lives of children and young people as they get older. It takes too long for children, young people and families to get the support they need”.*
5. *“The effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities in particular the provision for young people aged 18 to 25 was not sufficiently developed to make sure that young adults had the full range of opportunities and support that they needed as they moved through into adulthood.”*

4.42 The WSOA was co-produced between Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group and members of the Peterborough Parent Carer Forum, Family Voice. The WSOA includes the improvements required to meet the requirements of the inspection and includes an action plan with specific areas of work explained in greater levels of detail. The WSOA was signed off by Ofsted and the CQC in November 2019.

4.43 As part of the LASEND inspection framework, a monitoring period of 18 months is required between the Local Authority, the Department for Education and NHS England to monitor the progress of the WSOA. Due to the pandemic, revisits have been delayed although we have continued with the monitoring visits. Since November 2019, 5 monitoring visits have taken place, plus a series of deep dive sessions on each significant weakness. Lead officers from across education, health, social care, early help, commissioning, Family Voice, the DfE and NHSE have attended all of these sessions. The sessions have been extremely useful and helped inform the creation of an impact report that demonstrates progress against the weaknesses. Appendix 2 provides an overarching summary of progress against each weakness.

4.44 The impact report is in the final stages of development in preparation for an imminent revisit by Ofsted and the CQC (expected this term, ie before Christmas). We are confident we have addressed the vast majority of the issues highlighted although there are some areas that have been impacted by Covid-19, and these have been fully contextualised. A report will be brought back to the Scrutiny committee after this visit has taken place.

Joint SEND strategic Action Plan

4.45 [Everybody’s Business](#)’ was developed with stakeholders and sets out what we want to achieve for children and young people with SEND and their families. There are three themes:

- SEND is Everybody’s Business
- Identify and respond to needs early
- Deliver in the right place at the right time

4.46 The Strategy is supported by an action plan which describes, in more detail, what success will look like and records the progress being made.

4.47 The Joint SEND Strategic Action Plan is being implemented utilising a phased approach. This allows agreed priorities to be extracted from the larger co-produced plan and focusses attention on impact and outcomes towards agreed priorities that have also been selected through co-

production with all stakeholders. The Phased approach runs from May to May each year with the first Phase being implemented between May 2021 and May 2022 (there was a delay due to COVID). An interim progress report will be produced in November of each year. And new priorities will be agreed in March, annually, to ensure that the plan is ready to be implemented by May.

4.48 Phase One follows each of the three themes with a senior accountable sponsor responsible for each area and the agreed priorities that have been secured through ongoing co-production:

1. SEND is Everybody's business – Senior Accountable Officer – Toni Bailey, Assistant Director for SEND and Inclusion

Agreed Priorities

- Local offer (due to be renamed 'SEND information Hub')
- Communications (now with a bespoke working party group)

2. Identify and Respond to Needs Early – Senior Accountable Officer – Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director, People & Communities

Agreed priorities:

- Getting Support Early
- Legal Compliance
- Role of the Designated Clinical Officer
- Preparation for Adulthood – 18-25

3. Deliver in the Right Pace at the Right Time - Senior Accountable officer – Oliver Hayward, Assistant Director Commissioning

Agreed priorities:

- Joint Planning and Commissioning
- SEND Quality Assurance

4.49 The plan has been undertaken in close partnership with workstreams addressing the WSoA in Peterborough, nevertheless, there has been progress and impact across the plan in both LA's and partnership approaches have served to support this progress as outlined in the action plan format. Further work is needed to highlight impact of the progress made, which will be collated to provide information and data for the mid-term progress report in November.

Joint SEND Pledge

4.50 The joint SEND pledge outlines a set of principles and promotes commitment that will help us to deliver on the themes of the Joint SEND Strategy. The Pledge focusses on 7 outcomes based on everyone being able to:

Make transitions easy – **Healthy**

Deliver care as close to home as possible – **Safe**

Nothing about me without me – **Respected**

Have high expectations for me – **Aspirational**

Identify my needs early – **Successful**

Include me – **Included**

Know that I am empowered – **Confident**

You can see the full detail / document here: [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SEND Pledge - March 2020](#)

4.51 We have shared the pledge with all schools and settings across education, early years, social care and health and we are recording who has successfully signed up to deliver the pledge. Currently, we have 367 settings who have signed up to the pledge, which is a positive start, but

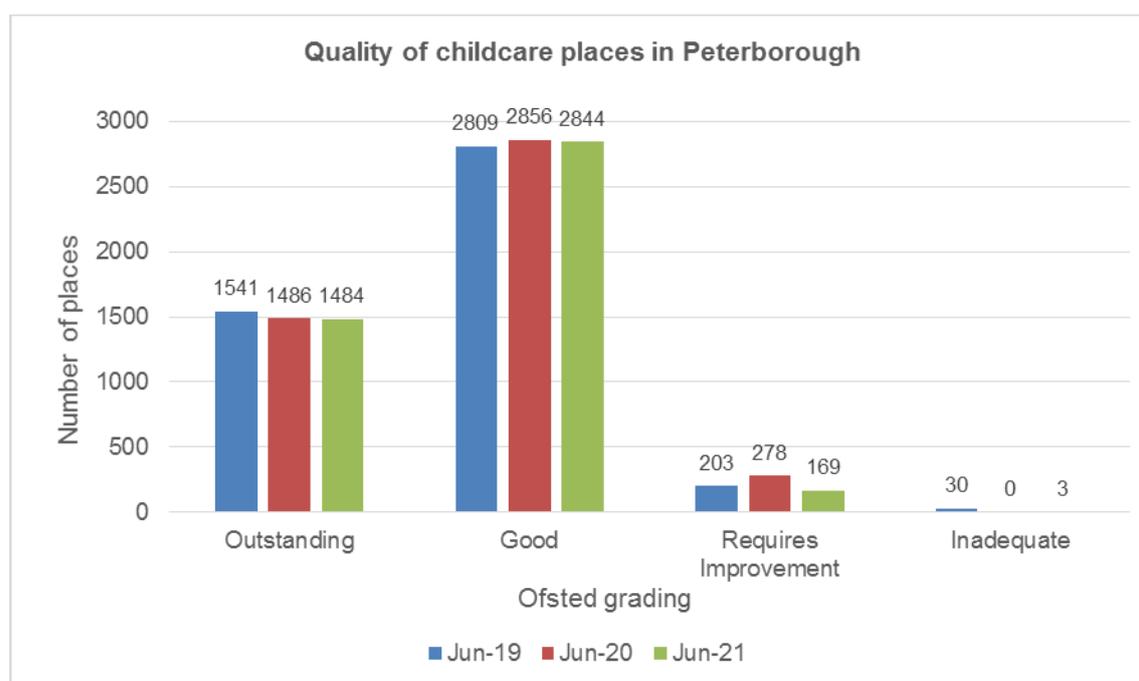
we have high ambitions to get as close as possible to 100% of settings signed up by the end of Phase One of the Strategic Action Plan.

Updates to Exclusion guidance for Peterborough

- 4.52 New exclusion guidance has been implemented across Peterborough City schools and settings that includes robust guidance on the use of Reduced Timetables.
- 4.53 The process for applying for, recording and review of reduced timetables is now fully embedded and there has been a positive impact and reduction in the number of reduced timetables in Peterborough across needs such as medical needs, behaviour / emotional needs and with children with EHCP's.
- 4.54 Review of these timetables is now included as part of the Behaviour Panel and feedback from education provisions and settings is that this panel is highly effective. Since November 2020, we have heard 403 cases at Behaviour and Inclusion Panel which have avoided the need for permanent exclusion.

Capital and Place Planning

- 4.55 Early Years Sufficiency
- 4.56 Ensuring all children in Peterborough achieve their full potential is a priority for Peterborough City Council. Evidence shows that regular, good quality early education has lasting benefits for all children. High quality early years provision is therefore essential if we are to improve outcomes for the youngest children. There is strong evidence that good experiences in the early years are an essential part of a child's development. The quality of pre-school provision is a vital feature of early years education and care; research shows that children who attend higher quality provision tend to show better outcomes at the end of year one.
- 4.57 The longer term impact of pre-school is also clear in research with evidence showing that whilst not eliminating disadvantage, pre-school can help to ameliorate the effects of social disadvantage and can provide children with a better start to school. Therefore, investing in good quality early years provision can be seen as an effective means of achieving targets concerning social inclusion and breaking cycles of disadvantage.



- 4.58 To ensure the availability of good quality provision across the city there is a wide range of advice, support and training available to improve the quality of early years provision in the city and improve

practitioner practice, knowledge and skills; this is delivered through the Early Years and Childcare Service within the local authority.

- 4.59 The majority of the early education and childcare provision in Peterborough is operated by private, voluntary managed or independent (PVI) groups, delivering services to meet the needs of Peterborough families therefore requires a partnership approach between the city council and the PVI sector. Childminders are also a vital element within this overall childcare mix and offered the same opportunities for training advice and support.
- 4.60 The Early Years Education Funding Entitlement Market Position Statement (see Appendix 3) both underpins and supports the development of this good quality early years provision. Ongoing analysis of market development has been conducted at ward level since 2013. These geographical areas are small enough to take account of localised issues and help ensure families have access to local services.
- 4.61 As previously stated accessing good quality early years provision is important in improving outcomes the table below shows the take up of the two three and four year old take up;

			2019	2020	2021
2-year-olds	Number accessing in Peterborough		879	811	691
	% Take up	Peterborough	69	66	62
		England	68	69	62
3-year-olds (universal)	Number accessing in Peterborough		2936	2789	2665
	% Take up	Peterborough	91	87	85
		England	92	91	84
4-year-olds (universal)	Number accessing in Peterborough		3023	3012	2918
	% Take up	Peterborough	93	92	90
		England	95	94	93
3 & 4-year-olds (universal)	Number accessing in Peterborough		5959	5801	5583
	% Take up	Peterborough	92	90	88
		England	94	93	88
3 & 4-year-olds (extended)	Number accessing in Peterborough		1413	1501	1508

Department for Education (2021) [Education provision in Children Under 5 Statistics](#). – based on the annual Early Years Spring census.

- 4.62 The cost of childcare however is a national issue for parent/carers, there is available support through the Government funded entitlements for two, three and four-year-olds, along with the additional extended 15 hours and other options including Tax Free Childcare for working parents and for low income working families who can receive support through the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credits or through Universal Credit, which may enable families to claim back up to 85% of childcare costs.
- 4.63 Both early years providers and the children accessing their settings have experienced significant disruption due to COVID-19 and have been required to respond to continual changes in guidance as the pandemic has progressed. As well as supporting the sector practically throughout the pandemic, the local authority has both signposted to government support, as well as offering local levels of financial support to providers since the pandemic began. It is clear from take-up data and data collected throughout the pandemic that the majority of providers are experiencing slow recovery, however ongoing support is being provided to ensure the continuation of vital services

to improve the outcomes for those children adversely impacted by the pandemic.

- 4.64 Peterborough is a growing city. Further large-scale housing developments are planned over coming years, and as with any development, there will be an increased need for early years provision in certain areas, ongoing analysis across the city is therefore crucial.
- 4.65 At present, data suggests there is sufficient capacity within the childcare market to accommodate children for their universal and extended funded entitlement in the next 12 months, however pressure is emerging in the Fletton and Woodston ward. This should be monitored closely with any new planning applications, alongside the pupil yield calculator. Stanground is still a potential pressure area but there is a proposed new development within the area which will increase available places and reduce this pressure.
- 4.66 There are currently confirmed expansion to support growing needs within the city as follows:
- Hampton Lakes Primary school 26 FTE places opened September 2021
 - Private day nursery in Orton Waterville ward 52 FTE places opened September 2021
 - Hampton East Primary school (B) 26 FTE places due to open September 2022
 - Paston Reserve / Manor Drive Academy 26 FTE places due to open September 2022
- 4.67 There are two further projects in the early developmental stage with opening to be confirmed:
- Private day nursery in Orton Waterville ward
 - Day Nursery in Stanground South ward (up to 78 FTE places)
- 4.68 There is however a potential risk to sufficiency due to the work currently being undertaken in relation to Community Centres, a number of these centres house early years provision that could be displaced depending on what is decided for the assets. This will be monitored closely so action can be taken swiftly should the need arise.

Peterborough School Organisation Plan

- 4.69 The Council has a legal duty to ensure sufficient early years, school, post 16 and SEND places. The Education Organisation Plan (see Appendix 4) sets out how we plan to achieve this. Peterborough remains one of the fastest growing cities in the country and two new primary schools and one new secondary school will open in 2022/23. However, the demographic patterns have changed as there has been a fall in recent number of annual births which is resulting in a lower demand for early years and primary school places. On the other hand, secondary and SEND numbers are forecast to continue to increase for the next five years.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 We intend sharing key documents from this report with education setting and accepting feedback before they are finalised.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 The actions outlined above have provided support for pupils, families, schools and early years settings. There is a significant amount of work to be undertaken to fully understand the ongoing impact the situation has had on pupils.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 We value the committee's feedback on our strategic plans to help shape the best possible outcomes for education.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The report outlines our response to Covid and we have approached this with the best intention to support children, young people, staff in schools and setting and the wider community. This has

changed by the day and we have reflected on our actions and the impact that they have had.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 The costs of all the initiatives are currently met within existing resources. The Household Support Grant is funded by central government.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 None

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 None directly but we have provided advice and support to schools on developing an equality impact assessment on reopening to ensure all groups are considered in this process.

Rural Implications

- 9.4 None – the report covers all schools and education settings in Peterborough.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 9.5 There has been no direct impact as a result of this report outside of the normal projects we are undertaking around Covid-19. Individual projects which may have an environmental impact will be considered through their normal governance arrangements.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 *None*

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 *List any appendices to the report.*

Appendix 1 – Draft PCC School Improvement Strategy
Appendix 2 – WSOA overarching summary of progress
Appendix 3 – PCC Market Position Statement for Early Years
Appendix 4 – Peterborough Educational Organisation Plan

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