

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	20 MARCH 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	SCHOOLS IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Cllr TONY JONES	PORTFOLIO:	EDUCATION
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary update to the ACE Committee on the progress of improving pupil achievement and attainment in Reading's schools.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note the progress of improving pupil achievement and attainment in Reading's schools.
- 2.2 That a further update is brought to the next meeting of the Committee outlining on a "school by school" basis their current respective status and, as a matter of scrutiny, their prospects of improvement.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Last year the council published the "Reading First Partnership Educational Ambition and Achievement strategy 2016-2018" (the "improvement strategy") which has a key target of ensuring all schools in Reading are classified as being "good or better" by Ofsted standards by 2019.
- 3.2 The role of the Local Authority is to ensure that the needs of all children and young people are met. Reading Borough Council has particular responsibility for the most vulnerable learners in our community.

- 3.3 Reading Borough Council recognises and values the diversity and distinctiveness of individual learners, groups and institutions. It actively promotes the concept of schools as self-regulating institutions within a professional, supportive and collegiate framework which sustains a climate of continuous improvement.
- 3.4 All pupils are subject to a number of tests at the end of each phase during their time at school which determine school performance against national benchmarks in terms of grades (achievement) and progress made from various starting points (progress).
- 3.5 In order to share aggregated data all schools in Reading have entered in to a data sharing agreement to allow an aggregated analysis to be provided in this report.
- 3.6 Reading First Partnership is committed to driving the three priority areas; known as strand 1 - leadership and management, strand 2 - recruitment and retention of staff and strand 3 - improving the outcomes for the most vulnerable learners.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 There has been progress since the adoption of the improvement strategy which means that council maintained schools are on track to meet the target of 100% being good or better by 2019. However, two academies have remained as "Requires improvement" and may not be visited by Ofsted until late 2018 or early 2019, so putting the achievement of the overall target of all schools being good or better by 2019 at risk.
- 4.2 Outcomes for Early Years and Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 show improvements when compared to the national rankings on our position in previous years. All Primary Schools in Reading are above the national floor target and Reading is above national for combined Reading, Writing and Mathematics for the first time in over ten years.
- 4.3 **Early Years:** Outcomes have shown a year on year improvement in Early Years at least expected standard is 4.9% above national and a Good Level of Development is above national by 1.7%.
- 4.4 **Key Stage 2:** Our ranking against the 152 local authorities has improved in 2015 Reading Borough Council were 103rd for Reading, Writing and Mathematics (RWM) at level 4+; and 109th at level 4B+. This year the council is ranked 50th for RWM at the expected standard and 7th at the higher standard. No schools have been identified as coasting schools within the primary phase. The key measure of combined RWM has moved from 103rd to 49th (this places Reading in the top third nationally).
- 4.5 **Key Stage 4:** There have been good outcomes in relation to attainment, which is "significantly above national the average" for Attainment 8 and "above national average" for the English Baccalaureate. The percentage achieving both English and Mathematics is described as in 'line with national' (62%), being slightly above the national figures at 64%.

4.6 Areas for improvement within Key Stage 4 are those children with Education, Health and Care Plans, those identified by schools as requiring Special Educational Needs Support and children eligible for Free School Meals. There have been improvements in some schools, along with those schools where action is being taken to address underachievement.

5. WORK UNDERWAY

5.1 As previously reported to the committee the "improvement strategy" is being delivered through the schools led "Reading First Partnership" and the council's School Improvement Team, and comprises of three "strands" of work: 1. Leadership and Management, 2. Recruitment and Retention of staff and 3. Improving the outcomes for the most vulnerable learners.

5.2 Within strand 1 - Leadership and Management - a 'Her Majesty's Inspector' has been working with school leadership teams, led by a School Partnership Adviser. To date 6 schools have undertaken this coaching, a further 6 are currently undertaking this program and a further 6 will take part in this strategic coaching of leaders and headteachers in the summer term.

5.3 Schools categorised as a Raising Achievement Schools and those with the lowest performance have regular progress reviews, which brings the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, School Partnership Adviser and the Strategic Lead for School Improvement together to review progress against an agreed plan. This process has led to improvements in 2016 and continues this academic year. These meetings have been further improved through an increased challenge and with clearer information being required from both the school and the School Partnership Advisors following both Ofsted focussed inspections and monitoring visits, undertaken through Teaching and Learning reviews.

5.4 For strand 2 - recruitment and retention - a discounted package with a provider has been negotiated for primary schools and academies within Reading Borough Council to purchase, this ensures that high quality advertisements can be promoted nationally. The impact of this initiative is currently under review, with work is on-going in relation to a similar package for secondary schools and academies.

5.3 Within strand 3 - Improving the outcomes for the most vulnerable learners - the School Improvement Team is providing support to those maintained schools identified through the School Monitoring Group as requiring specific support. There is a planned agenda throughout the year for visits and issues identified for individual schools are being both challenged and addressed, in partnership with the schools.

5.4 In addition, specific work within strand 3 for Governors and leadership teams within schools is being provided by the School Improvement Team focussing on Pupil Premium, Special Educational Needs and Cultural Capital, along with under-performing groups.

6. WORK PLANNED

6.1. For strand 1, Ofsted preparation has been set up by the School Improvement Team and Tribal Education for 20 Headteachers and Leaders

within schools to provide training on the new framework under which Her Majesty's Inspectors and Ofsted Inspectors are working.

6.2 For strand 3, the School Improvement Team have initiated and coordinated a course on 'Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants'. One training event has taken place, with another two planned on 14th March 2017 and 13th June 2017. There was a Special Educational Needs and Disability Conference on 6th March 2017 and a Newly Qualified Teachers Quality First Training Day on 2nd March 2017. This will be supplemented by an Early Years Pupil Premium Conference on 17th March 2017.

6.3 Also within strand 3, a Breaking Down Barriers Conference is planned for 16th June 2017. This is a pan-Berkshire Conference in relation to Poverty, Special Educational Needs and closing the attainment gaps for Disadvantaged Pupils. Confirmed Speakers are Mike Brearley (St Johns College Cambridge), Sir Kevan Collins (Chief Executive at the Education Endowment Foundation), Prof. Allen Thurston (Director of the Centre for Effective Education, Queens University College, Belfast), Will Millard (Writer and Broadcaster) and Rob Webster (Institute of Education at University College London).

7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

7.1 This report contributes to Reading Borough Councils' strategic aims "to establish Reading as a Learning City and a stimulating and rewarding place to live" and "Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living".

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

This report does not impact on community engagement and information.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

None required in relation to this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications contained within this report.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications based on this report.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous reports to the ACE Committee in 2015/2016, 2016/17