

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

**Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services and Safeguarding)
15th March 2022**

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Diane Roscoe	Education	June 2022

Education Excellence

Recruitment to vacant posts within Education Excellence continues. Skilled external consultants have been deployed to work with school improvement on targeted support across our schools and settings and to develop and use the expertise within Sefton schools.

Schools

This half term we have had the final reports for two primary schools and one secondary academy. Woodlands Primary continues to be a good school and Our Lady of Walsingham has moved from Good to Requiring Improvement. Education Excellence will work with the Archdiocese and the DFE on a programme of support and challenge. Range High School is now judged 'Good' from the previous 'Requiring Improvement' judgement.

The DfE pieces of work across South Sefton and Liverpool Schools is in final stages. On completion, the work on attendance and speech, language and communication and the secondary focus on literacy will be evaluated for impact. It is expected that good models used in the programmes will be continued and built upon.

All primary schools rated good or outstanding due for an inspection continue to be offered health checks in a range of areas including early years; school improvement and curriculum; SEND and leadership and management. This is funded by the School Improvement budget. Schools have found this extremely beneficial and enabled them to target areas for development in preparation for inspection. In addition to this the 175/157 Audit self-evaluation safeguarding has been updated aligned with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The Secondary School Research Project (2 year programme) works on developing a self - sustaining school improvement model across all secondaries including academies and continues to have full engagement across the sector. Discussions are taking place with School Improvement, Research School Meols Cop and School Improvement Groups to develop a model for primary schools. School Improvement will invest in the right model tailored to meet the needs of schools following these discussions.

St Teresa's

Sefton cabinet agreed on the 26th May 2022 to the closure of the school with effect from 31st August 2022.

Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart Catholic College has been approved by the Regional Schools Commissioner for Lancashire and West Yorkshire to join Pope Francis Multi Academy Trust. The school should have converted to academy on the 1st June 2022.

Savio

We still do not know what is happening with Savio. The buildings are still causing an issue and we are still awaiting further information from the DfE with regards the next steps. We continue to support and challenge the school through the Secondary programme.

Exams, assessments and tests

Phonics Screening test have been completed for Year 1 pupils following the Autumn Term Year 2 phonics screening. Test administration is monitored by school improvement. Evidence noted during the 10 % school visits is that pupils are responding well to the tests and rapid intervention in teaching has had a positive impact.

Year 6 pupils completed SATS in May for Reading, Mathematics and Spelling/Punctuation/Grammar. Teacher assessment for writing is moderated in 25% of schools including academies and is being carried out in June. Evidence from assessment submitted shows that COVID 19 has had a detrimental effect, particularly on reaching the higher standard of writing.

Attendance

Attendance continues to be incredibly challenging for all school leaders who have been dealing on a regular basis with positive cases of COVID 19. There is still some parental anxiety about sending children to school due to COVID 19 especially since the relaxation of all legal requirements.

The levels of persistent absence have increased across all schools but have stabilised.

Schools continue to report that one of the most significant challenges they face is supporting young people with mental health difficulties to engage in the full education offer. Local Authority Officers continue to support schools and families.

The attendance team has continued to provide additional support for children who have a social worker by continuing with the first day response scheme.

On the 6th May 2022, the Department for Education published new guidance for schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities on the importance of working together to improve attendance.

The Secretary of State intends to legislate to make the new guidance statutory as soon as possible but the guidance will not become statutory any sooner than the beginning of academic year 2023-24.

The new guidance also covers:

- The importance of working together to improve attendance
- Expectations of schools
- Expectations of academy trusts and governing bodies of maintained schools
- Support for persistently and severely absent pupils
- Attendance legal intervention
- Recording in the attendance and admission registers

ILACs

The inspection focused on the Virtual School; safeguarding; elective home educated; children missing education and alternative provision were the key focus for Education excellence teams. Officers were interviewed; random cases were considered; schools contacted, and documentation examined.

Virtual School

The main areas of focus for improvement are raising aspirations and improving outcomes, improving Personal Education Plans (PEPs), attendance, and further reduction of NEET figures. From September 2022, PEPs will be electronic, and training will be delivered in September to designated teachers and social workers.

A Deputy Virtual Head Teacher has been appointed and will take up post in September. This will enable the Virtual Head Teacher to focus more keenly on the strategy to raise aspirations and promote education for all children with a social worker.

Government funding will be used to appoint an additional Attendance Officer (initially fixed term for one year) to focus on children with a social worker. An additional Deputy Virtual Head Teacher post will also be created, initially for one year, to work with the schools and Children's Social Care to improve policy, practice and training to promote the education of our most vulnerable children.

A post-16 Education Coordinator was appointed in January 2022 and is focusing mainly on Cared for Children who live outside Sefton (Career Connect support young people living inside Sefton). This is having a positive impact, as tracking has improved, and intervention is timely and person-centred.

The Virtual School and Career Connect meet regularly to discuss particular cohorts and 'stuck cases', in order to improve planning and avoid drift.

Monitoring attendance continues to pose difficulties, with much of the data still produced manually. The Virtual School is working with our colleagues in Business Intelligence to improve the collection of data in Sefton. Attendance outside Sefton is monitored through Welfare call, a commissioned service.

Termly rewards are in place for pupils who have improved their attendance or maintained a high percentage. The Virtual School is in the process of developing an admin post for a care experienced young person.

The safeguarding processes for those children missing education (CME) and the group of electively home educated (EHE) children were judged in the inspection as being effective.

Update on CME and EHE

The government is proceeding with a registration system for Children Not In School (CNIS). Legislative measures to establish a local authority registration system for children not in school, as well as a duty for local authorities to provide support to home-educating families, are included as part of the Schools Bill introduced to Parliament on 11 May 2022. This will help local authorities undertake their existing duties to ensure all children receive a suitable education and are safe, regardless of where they are educated.

The CNIS measures seek to:

- Place a duty on local authorities in England to establish and maintain CNIS registers, and to provide support to interested home educators.

APPENDIX B

- Ensure local authorities are aware of the children not in school in their area to undertake their existing safeguarding responsibilities more effectively, including trying to identify CME.

Changes will be made to School Attendance Order (SAO) legislation in England to help increase the efficiency of the process.

The local authority registers will only record children of compulsory school age that are: not on a school roll (for example due to being electively home educated), flexi-schooled, or receive some or all of their education in a non-school setting (which will be set out further in regulations). Registers will not include children on a school roll who are simply absent from school, as these children will already be visible through existing school registers.

SEND

The revised action plan and scorecard are being developed in conjunction with key stakeholders. There will be a greater emphasis on what is happening in schools for pupils identified as SEND. It will be signed off and monitored by the SEND Continuous Improvement Board.

We continue to work with special schools, resource bases and mainstream schools to right size budgets and develop the new banding systems. There is work ongoing around the SEND Capital Programme and an updated High Needs position statement. An increase of specialist placements has been actioned for September 2022 and work will be ongoing in line with the Capital Programme once agreed.

EHCP timeliness has reduced this year but steps of progress are being demonstrated. This has been due to a variety of factors including:

- Increase in requests for assessment
- Increase in change of placements
- Increased requests for specialist placements leading to difficulties finalising EHCPs
- Specific performance issues within the team