
Children Services Scrutiny Committee – 20th January 2021

Report of the Interim Director Children's Services

Education Report

Purpose

1. To update Members with respect to the following;
 - Education Strategy
 - Interim Ofsted visits
 - Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
 - Alternative Provision strategy
 - Illegal off-rolling
 - Dudley Virtual School

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that;
 - Members note and comment on the contents of this report

Background

Education Strategy

3. The Education Strategy for Dudley 2020-21 was launched with all internal stakeholders, elected members, schools, academies and Chairs of Governors during the first half of the Autumn term.

It was well received, as intended, in providing the essential framework to all of the borough's education and inclusion work, and a coherent context for all of the other workstreams and initiatives.

4. With this strategy in place, we have continued to build steadily, as much of the work demands a complete change of culture for schools and services, and we need to take them with us, to give them the confidence that this approach will succeed.

With reference to each of the key principles of the Education Strategy, a summary of progress is included below;

5. **As a borough we take full responsibility for ensuring that all our children and young people have high quality education, which meets their individual needs and aspirations.**

- It was made clear in all the launch presentations that we need to challenge as well as support our schools and academies.
- With schools that have been reluctant to work with us in the past, we have taken the lead in developing the necessary relationships, using regular meetings with Headteachers collectively and individually to drive the process.

6. **We expect all our schools and academies to be fully inclusive.**

- A summary of all schools' Fixed Term Exclusions, Permanent Exclusions and Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) data has been sent to secondary Headteachers and inclusion is a regular item on meeting agendas. As above, the focus so far has been on cultural change but, when this becomes more embedded, targets for individual schools will be set.
- The same approach is in place with primary Headteachers, although the later launch date with this group has meant that the work is less advanced at this stage
- Work with our Educational Psychology Service and the Violence Reduction Unit (part of the Police and Crime Commissioner's team) has resulted in plans to roll out a Wellbeing Chartermark in 5 schools in each township from January 2020. This will replace the planned inclusion audits on the premise that, in order to support the development of stronger relationships with our schools and academies, it is better to accredit the good practice that is already in place, and use this to identify areas for further development, than to set targets per se.

7. **We are working to ensure that there is clear continuity between mainstream schools, bases, alternative provision and special schools.**

- A full review of our special school designations is underway, to ensure that the local authority has the appropriate number of places in relation to the primary needs identified on our pupils' collective Education Health and (EHCP). All our special schools will be re-designated according to the four areas of the Code of Practice; communication and interaction; social, emotional and mental health; physical and sensory; and cognition and learning.
- We are also looking to develop and commission Inclusion Centres in a number of our mainstream schools, to support them in meeting the needs of pupils who have less complex needs. The Centres will provide for pupils when they are dysregulated and give sanctuary during unstructured times, but the presumption will be that they spend the majority of the school day in mainstream classes
- These pieces of work will enable the local authority to place more of its children and young people with (EHCP's) within its own special schools, reducing the demand for costly 'out of borough' provision.

8. **We are committed to reducing exclusions, and the movement of children and young people between our schools and academies.**
- A key strand of the Alternative Provision Strategy is the introduction of Inclusive Pathways, which will provide schools with a wide range of support for pupils who are identified as being at risk of exclusion. An update is provided later in this report.
9. **As a local authority we will ensure that our teams are fully co-ordinated, and that we work proactively to provide schools and academies with the support and challenge they need.**
- The Education Outcomes team is working much more effectively, and the linking in of strategic Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) issues is an important part of this. Weekly meetings are used to discuss individual schools in relation to their level of need and, as a result, we have a more holistic understanding of the issues, particularly those which are less easy to capture by data alone.
 - We then follow up the meetings of our own team with meetings with individual schools, to share our understanding and refine our ongoing work with them
 - Further re-organisation of the Education Outcomes team will be achieved in line with the recommendations of a review of our Specialist Inclusion services, and further to a separate review of Early Years services.
10. **We will communicate regularly with all our schools and academies and expect them to keep up to date with the information we provide.**
- To support improved relationships with our schools, we are now much more transparent in sharing information, such as with the Fixed Term Exclusions, Permanent Exclusions and EHCP's data mentioned above.
 - By also sharing birth rate data, we have drawn up a proposal for additional secondary capacity in Halesowen, in consultation with all of the Chief Executive Officers concerned, and identified 4 primary schools where we need to temporarily reduce the Published Admission Number (PAN) in line with declining pupil numbers in all of our townships, with the exception of Brierley Hill.
11. As mentioned above, the Education Strategy has provided a coherent context for all of the local authority's other workstreams and initiatives and, to ensure that this is consolidated, a new meeting structure is being introduced.

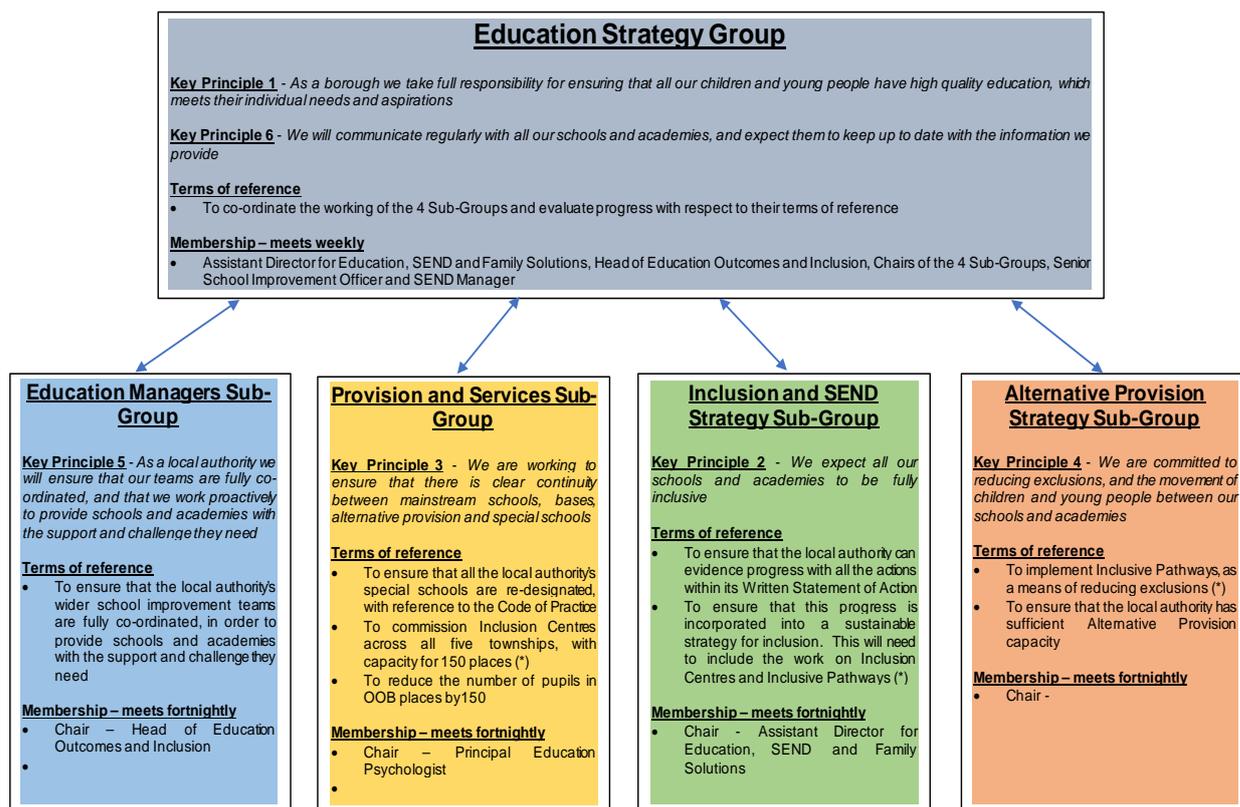
Each of the existing project groups has been assigned to one of the Key Principles of the Education Strategy, and detailed terms of reference are being drawn up.

An over-arching Education Strategy Group has also been established, in order to direct the work of these Sub-Groups and ensure that their work is fully co-ordinated.

The overall meeting structure is shown below.



Education Strategy meeting structure 2020-21 – draft 1



Interim Ofsted Visits

12. On 17th March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Since this date, teachers, headteachers and support staff have been stepping up to support pupils, families and the communities they serve. We know that this work continues as staff and pupils return from the summer break.

As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out 'interim visits' to schools from autumn 2020. These visits are designed to support schools in their important work to welcome all pupils back full-time.

13. **Interim visits will not:**

- Result in any evaluation or graded judgement of a school.
- Change a school's current Ofsted inspection grade.
- Use the education inspection framework and school inspection handbook.
- Judge schools on their response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020.
- Require any pre-written planning, self-evaluation or other documentation.
- Require teachers to prepare any lesson plans or examples of assessment, or to put up any displays for the visit.

- Use lesson visits as a method of collecting evidence.
- Involve a general review of a school's policies.
- Provide any evidence or lines of enquiry for later inspection events, once routine inspection resumes.

14. This operational note sets out the process and range of activities that inspectors will carry out in these interim visits, from notifying a school that an interim visit will take place to publishing an outcome letter.

Interim visits will take place from 28 September 2020 to December 2020 inclusive.

15. The purpose of interim visits

These interim visits are to reassure and inform parents, government and the public about how schools are managing the return to full education for all pupils.

Interim visits will help parents and the public to understand how individual schools are returning to the school's normal curriculum. We will not be evaluating what leaders did during the spring and summer term 2020, when schools were not open to all pupils, but we may need to understand the broad context of its impact on the school.

The lead, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) will write a short letter after each interim visit. The letter will summarise briefly the discussions inspectors had with leaders. This is to provide parents with information about what leaders are doing to help pupils back into full-time education. Letters will not provide any evaluation or graded judgement. They will be published on our reports website.

16. Schools that have been visited:

| School | Date | Final Letter Received | Letter |
|---------------------|-------|-----------------------|--|
| Foxyards Primary | 08/10 | Y |  10156241 Foxyards Primary School 1037 |
| Withymoor Primary | 13/10 | Y |  10156601 - Withymoor Primary |
| Sycamore SSS | 13/10 | Y |  10156665 Sycamore Stort Stay PRU 1347 |
| Peters Hill Primary | 15/10 | Y |  10156602 - Peters Hill Primary - 103791 |
| Netherbrook Primary | 22/10 | N | |
| Hob Green Primary | 03/11 | N | |

All schools stated that HMI followed the agenda as set out in the following document <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/interim-phase-maintained-schools-and-academies>

17. **General**

- Visits were supportive and sensitive to the needs of the school.
- All visits started at approximately 10am and were finished by 2.30 to 2.45pm.
- Feedback was constant throughout the day – no ‘final’ meeting.
- No visits to classes or walks around school.
- No conversations with staff, pupils, Governors, Local Authority or the Multi Academy Trust. Inspectors spoke only with Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team and Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- A lot of questions were repetitive as they had to be QA'd by different people
- Very keen to look at positives as well.

18. **Priorities for HMI Visit.**

Response to COVID.

- What are your school priorities post lockdown?
- What has been the Impact on staff /pupils?
- What were the challenges?
- How did you communicate with parents?
- Have you accessed any external support?

19. **Safeguarding**

- What were your procedures during lockdown?
- What has been the impact on staff / pupils?
- How has the Safeguarding policy changed since lockdown?
- If there has been any recruitment since during lockdown or after schools last inspection – HMI looked at the schools Single Central Record for those individuals
- Has anyone been employed after 23rd March 2020 – this was checked?

20. **Behaviour and Attendance**

- Staff attendance during and after lockdown.
- Pupil attendance after lockdown – strategies.
- Part timetables.
- How many Elective Home Education pupils pre/post lockdown.
- Remote learning for those pupils / bubbles that have been isolating; what have you done and what are the challenges?

- What routines / expectations have been implemented differently. How have these affected staff/children?
- How has the behaviour policy changed since lockdown?
- How have the learning behaviours of children changed since return to school?

21. **Curriculum**

- Longest meeting for all schools.
- Where are the gaps in children's learning; how are you planning to close them?
- Which children have you identified as having gaps and have you had a chance to baseline?
- What have you returned to / not returned to and why? (At the moment).
- What has been the impact on the curriculum post lockdown?
- How are you allocating 'Catch-Up' premium?
- Remote learning; what will you do if lockdown happens again?

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

22. **Leadership and Governance**

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Management Team remains in place: This has ensured robust management oversight and responsibility for the oversight of cases.
- Using Virtual Special Educational Needs and Disability handbook to drive send compliance with statutory duties.
- Focus on early years and targeted post 16 and post 19 has enabled timely decisions for placement and cessation of EHCP's no longer required.
- Weekly Multi- agency Panels for decision making; managing accountability for placement decisions, resources across health, social care and education to facilitate joint and tripartite funding arrangements

23. **Capacity and Staffing**

- 10 of 11 permanent case officers in post. The last to join was on the 4th January, 2021.
- A Senior permanent post has been unsuccessful in being appointed twice (August 20th and Nov 20th 2020).
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Advanced Practitioner Post was recruited to on 24th September 2020
- Increase in Business Support to administer Panels and manage invoicing and financial processes.
- Tribunal officer and the Local Offer and Participation Officers have been in post since the summer.

24. Performance Management

- At the end of September 2652 active EHCP'S with an average caseload across 12 persons is 221 cases -but with 1 staff down, the case load can be up to 241 per person.
- The Autumn term is preparation for Secondary transfers (year 6) to hit deadline by 15th February 2021 and also primary transfers (reception) for 15th February 2021 in order to ensure children have a school place for September 2021.
- Year 11 and Year 14 transfers for post 16 and post 19 are being worked on in order to meet the 31st March 2021 deadline.
- A Special Educational Needs and Disability System Governance group has been set up to review and monitor quality of the Special Educational Needs and Disability data system.
- Cross referencing data quality with other agencies such as the virtual school, Connexions, Colleges to ensure relevant data reflects Special Educational Needs and Disability data.
- Work with adults has strengthened the Performing for Adulthood and the multi-agency approach with stakeholders is supporting both the Performing for Adulthood strategy and development of the Performing for Adulthood Performance dashboard

25. Quality of Practice

- EHCP format has been revised and shared with relevant stakeholders ready to be implemented following the 'Good Plan' event and ECHP checklist process has been agreed.
- Multi-agency Audit process have been developed to be undertaken on a quarterly basis.
- Internal monthly audit program being developing using the Centre for Professional Practice quality assurance framework.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability training held on EHCP format and content requirements with health and social care.
- Multi- agency meetings held with stakeholders and agreed to improve practice.
- Termly meetings with Special School Heads were in place to improve case management and processes.
- Working on the Special Educational Needs and Disability tool kit to provide resources that can be accessible across the 0-25 pathway

26. **Enabling**

- Co-production meeting had been agreed within 20- week process to develop relationship with families, children and young people.
- Working with the virtual school to improve pathways for Children Looked After (CLA) with EHCP.
- Working in collaboration with Adult Social Care about best interest assessment to capture the wishes and feelings of Special Educational Needs and Disability young adults.
- Active participation with colleges and providers about the commissioning of places and developing new provision.
- Multi-agency Communication and Culture group started by Special Educational Needs and Disability and co-chaired by CVS and the Local Authority's Communications Department to ensure consistent messaging across education, health and social care.
- Launch of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Network and SENCo Cluster group to support Heads and SENCo's deliver the graduated approach

Alternative Provision Strategy Project Update

27. **Context for the establishment of the Project**

National Context (School Exclusion Statistical First Release (2017 to 2018) evidences that of the 14 Local Authorities within the West Midlands Region, Dudley ranks as follows:

- 4th highest for Primary School Exclusions.
- 5th highest for Secondary School Exclusions.
- The highest for exclusions in Special Schools.
- 4th highest Local Authority for overall exclusions

Numbers of Dudley Children and Young people experiencing Permanent Exclusion:

- 2016-17 119
- 2017-18 99
- 2018-19 104

If Exclusions from Alternative Provisions are included:

- 2016-17 149
- 2017-18 129
- 2018-19 134

28. Project Development and Delivery Timeline

January to April 2020

Development of Alternative Provision Strategy Project Brief informed by Diagnostic Commissioning Paper (3year trend analysis and projected demand analysis).

May 2020

Dudley Leadership Team agreement of Project Brief; delivery of Phase 1 begun through MS Project.

June to November 2020

Scheduled delivery of all workstreams and milestones within Phase 1

November 2020

Projected delivery of completed Phase 1

29. Project Brief

Objectives

1. **Establish demand-led place planning:** To provide diagnostic assessment of demand for 6th day provision in order to commission Alternative Provision for those children and young people who experience permanent exclusion and those at risk of exclusion.
2. **Commissioning:** To commission sufficiently broad-ranging Alternative Provision that is fit for purpose in meeting needs, improving outcomes and post-16 Education Employment Training and is judged to be of a good standard through the Common Inspection Framework and ongoing Government Review of AP.
3. **Establish robust Preventative Pathways:** To ensure all settings have equitable access to preventative pathways (including a Special Educational Needs Graduated Response), in order that all Children and Young People experience consistent and inclusive education that is sufficiently informed to meet needs.
4. **Remove current barriers:** To address current issues by removing barriers to educational access for permanently excluded children and young people across all Key Stages, in order to ensure that the Local Authority fulfils its Statutory Duties in ensuring all children and young people are safeguarded and achieving.

30. Desired Outcomes

- Sufficient appropriate commissioned Alternative Provision by the Local Authority (for 6th Day+ following a Permanent Exclusion) and Schools (Inclusive/preventative) to ensure that no pupil is without a place
- Children and Young People who are permanently excluded/at risk of permanent exclusion are Children Missing Education.
- Schools routinely commission DFE-registered good Alternative Provision as part of inclusive pathways to reduce the need to permanently exclude.
- All settings (including Alternative Providers) have equitable access to preventative pathways.
- LA fulfilment of Statutory Duties in Safeguarding and provision of Education for all Children and Young People.
- Dudley is recognised as an Inclusive Local Authority.

31. **Project Progress to Date (Milestone completion)**

Project Milestones delivered:

- Diagnostic assessment of Alternative Provision demand complete and informing commissioning.
- Safeguarded Continuing Learning implemented for Permanently Excluded Children Missing Education.
- Alternative Provision Strategic Policy Consultation complete.
- Traded Services Review complete.
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis of commissioned Key Stage 4 AP complete.
- Current Key Stage 4 AP support costing transparent and available to Alternative Provision Governance.
- Key Stage 4 Contract Variations approved and commissioning for 2020-2021 complete.
- Universal Starting Points Resource Bank available for all schools and settings (Revolution Portal).
- Dudley Supplementary Exclusions Guidance published for all settings
- Year 11 Pupil Placement Standard Operating Procedure and Fair Access Panel Protocols reviewed, consulted on and implemented.

32. Milestones to deliver by end of Autumn Term 2020:

- Alternative Provision Strategic Policy 2020-2021 and Alternative Provision Access Protocols published.
- Inclusive Pathways established and Inclusive Pathways Guidance published to support implementation.
- Effective contractual commissioning of Cherry Tree Learning Centre (Academy Pupil Referral Unit including Home and Hospital Education Service).
- Effective Service Level Agreement established for Sycamore Short Stay School commissioning (Key Stage 1-3 Pupil Referral Unit).
- Update of Headteacher and Governor Exclusions Training Programme to include Dudley Supplementary Exclusions and Inclusive Pathways Guidance (delivery to commence January 2021).

33. **Alternative Provision Strategy Phase 2 (December 2020 to September 2021)**

Work for the remainder of the financial year includes:

December 2020

MS Project schedule to be developed for all workstreams and milestones incorporating:

- Tender and Procurement of AP for the next 5 years.
- Phase 1 impact evaluation and monitoring.

January 2021

Approval to tender document signed off. Market Testing event and finalisation of service specification for AP lots to be tendered.

February 2021

Service specification approved. Tender pack written and approved. Tender documents published.

March 2021

Following tender closure: Tender evaluation process, interviews, decision to award and approval.

34. **Statement on Illegal Off-rolling**

The OFSTED education inspection framework sets out an expectation for the judgement of leadership and management in a school that they do not allow or engage in gaming or off-rolling of students.

35. It goes on to explain that “There is no legal definition of ‘off-rolling’. However, we (OFSTED) define ‘off-rolling’ as the practice of removing a learner from the provider’s roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the provider rather than in the best interests of the learner. Off-rolling in these circumstances is a form of ‘gaming’.
36. In Dudley there are no confirmed cases of illegal off-rolling. Local Authority officers in the Education Investigation Service monitor all notifications of removing students from roll, via a ‘Regulation 8 referral’, this referral aligns to Regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which specified the legal reasons when a student can be removed from a school roll. If an officer suspects a school of encouraging a parent to remove their child to another school or elective home education, they will either investigate the incident or refer the case to the officer for Elective Home Education and Gypsy Roma Travellers services for further investigation with the parties involved.
37. A recent incident came to light where it had been identified that a number of Year 7 students who had failed to attend the school in September had not been put on roll by Beacon Hill, this matter was discussed with the schools Designated Safeguarding lead who raised the issue with their Senior Leadership Staff, and the school worked closely with Dudley Admissions Service and the matter has been resolved. All students have been put on roll at the school and non-attendance has been followed up.

Virtual School - Summary

38. Academic Outcomes

This has been an extraordinary ‘exam season’ where our young people have experienced a great deal of anxiety around their results, particularly at Year 11. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all SATS Key Stage One, and Key Stage Two Primary aged children, exams for Key Stage 4 and Post 16 were cancelled in March and the grades initially were based on Ofqual data submissions by schools. The DFE announced, on the 17th August 2020, to revert back to Teacher Assessment grades submitted to the DFE. Nexus data is not available at the time of this report, and it is unlikely to be so this academic year.

39. There is no data available for Early Years, Key Stage One, Year One or Key Stage Two. The results have been collected from the educational settings for Key Stage Four, there has been no refining to identify the OC2 group (ie those that have been in care for at least 12 months on 31st March). There are also two further young people who have just competed Year 11 but are in fact Year 12 so have not been included in this analysis. The data will continue to be analysed to help inform discussions and work with educational settings.

40. The Year 11 cohort consists of 56 young people (28 female, 28 male) with 48.3 % having identified Special Educational Needs and Disability (EHCP 29.3%, SENS 19%). The majority of the group (52%) attended educational settings out of borough.

Table One: Year 11 (Key Stage Four) Unvalidated Outcomes 2019.20

| Category | Number | % |
|--------------|--------|----|
| Eng 4+ | 19 | 33 |
| Maths 4+ | 13 | 23 |
| Eng 5+ | 11 | 19 |
| Maths 5+ | 9 | 16 |
| Eng/Maths 4+ | 13 | 23 |
| Eng/Maths 5+ | 7 | 12 |
| E-Bacc | 7 | 12 |

41. This represents an improvement on the outcomes from the academic year 2018 to 19 where the young people with English/Maths combined at 5 plus was 6.1% (7.9% in 2017 to 18).
42. The unvalidated data in Table One suggests that young people attending Dudley educational settings have improved on the previous year where the Out Of Borough young people outperformed those in borough. The focus English and Maths in Pep targets will be continued this year, with a further focus on SMART targets.
43. As in the last academic year, there is a cohort of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability who are following courses leading to Level One or below outcomes. These are very appropriate to their learning needs at this time and can lead to Level Two in future years.
44. The reporting of the Attainment 8 and Progress 8 will not be possible this year. Similarly, the comparative data with other groups, Special Educational Needs and Disability, local authorities and trends will not be made available.
45. The number of young people with no qualifications in the last academic year was a concern. This has been a focus this year with a 44% reduction of the number of young people in this category. Of these, the three young people attending educational settings out of borough, two who attended special schools were engaged in a learning programme that will support more independent living, and the third attended a Free School (Alternative Provision). Similarly, in Dudley, one young person attends a Special School and the second AP.

46. The Pathways Programme has been targeting this group over the academic year. There is a group of eight young people who have followed targeted tuition in Functional Skills, two who have secured a Level Two qualification in Numeracy, two who have been re-engaged and moved onto Post 16 with the remainder looking to secure their qualifications this term.
47. All Year 11 have identified destinations, have been followed up as the new Post 16 term starts to ensure all young people are engaged.

48. **Attendance And Exclusions**

The attendance of our young people over the last academic year was severely affected by the period of lockdown. The new academic year has seen a return to educational settings across the full children in care (CiC) cohort.

There continues to be a priority of ensuring that CiC are not permanently excluded from their educational setting. This work continues to demand strong relationships with schools, a workforce development programme and collaboration with Health and Social Care. The work to reduce fixed term exclusions continues alongside schools and educational settings.

The Virtual School have also extended their emotional well-being offer, complementing the Dudley Lighthouse Links programme.

49. **Personal Education Plans**

The work to develop the quality and impact of the Personal Education Plan (Pep) has continued throughout the last academic year. The number of completed Pep's has risen to 97.4%, with 89.1% being Good or better. The number of young people with no Pep's has significantly reduced to 2.7%.

The e-Pep has been introduced at Post 16 and is being embedded this academic year.

50. **Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET's)**

The Virtual School, in working with Post 16 young people primarily support those in Year 12 and 13, have a dedicated Education Adviser working alongside the Connexions PA. The pathways programme, linked to a work-based training provider has been successfully introduced to engage young people in this age group.

Learning Developments

51. **Arts**

The Arts Link offer has continued to develop on-line. Dudley young people are one of the highest users in the region of this service, and one of our young people's art work has been featured on it.

52. The Arts Award is an ongoing offer via Artslink and supported by the Dudley Arts Ambassador and the Dudley Participation Officer. In the summer term four young people commenced the scheme and these will be completed during the Autumn Term. This scheme is also being offered to more of the cohort, linking with educational settings and the DVS are currently reviewing the benefits of working with residential homes.

53. **The Challenge Tuition Programme**

The Virtual School had introduced a range of tutoring opportunities over the last academic year. This targeted and framed approach has allowed a more informed programme to be developed to inform work with schools now the young people have returned to their educational settings. As these settings are starting to plan for the introduction of the National Tutor Programme and catch-up funding, the Virtual School is able to offer advice and guidance around the qualities of a number of the tutor companies available. The tutoring sessions therefore have gradually been re-integrated back into the school-linked offer via the Pep meetings. This is increasingly ensuring that all tutor programmes offered as part of a Pep target are linked to the learning offer of the school.

54. **Sports Link**

A second strand, Sport, has been added to the collaborative work across the region. The Virtual School have appointed a Sports Ambassador for Dudley and the Autumn Term is being used to plan the introduction of a new programme in 2021.

Finance

55. The Education functions underpinning the Education strategy are funded for 2020/21 from a combination of:

- General Fund Revenue Budget Education - £3.7m
- Dedicated Schools Grant Central School Services Block - £1.8m

Funding to support the Alternative Provision strategy is contained within the High Needs block allocation of £35.2m.

Law

56. The Education Strategy for Dudley 2020-21 was launched with all internal stakeholders, Elected Members, Schools, Academies and Chairs of Governors during the first half of the Autumn term 2020.

Equality Impact

57. The Equality Impact will continue to be considered as the strategy is implemented

Human Resources/Organisational Development

58. The HR/OD Business Partner is fully engaged with officers within the Children's Services Directorate to support the delivery of the key principles of this strategy

Commercial/Procurement

59. As part of this report the positive actions building relationships with schools helps with commercial opportunities and has a positive impact on sales to our school customer base.

There are no procurement implications associated with this report

Health, Wellbeing and Safety

60. This strategy is consistent with building stronger, safer and more resilient communities in line with the Dudley Vision and Inclusion plans for Dudley borough.

By creating a more inclusive culture and practice, we will have less disruption to children's and young people's education, creating a more stable environment for our young people to be able to thrive and achieve. By having greater partnership working with options to provide the most suitable support to some of our most vulnerable children, an informed and inclusive model will improve the health & wellbeing and life chances of Dudley's children and young people. Ultimately, building greater resilience in our future community residents, in turn improving their physical, and emotional health for the future.

61. Monitoring should take place of the inclusive strategy and practice to ensure the best outcomes are being achieved and the capacity within settings is managed.



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4 November 2020

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Dear Mrs Lowe

Ofsted visit to Foxyards Primary School

Following my visit with Chris Stevens, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 9 October 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the visit's findings. Thank you for the time you made available to discuss your actions since September 2020, when the government expected all schools to open fully to all pupils.

This visit was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections are temporarily suspended.

Ofsted's visits to schools during the autumn term are not inspections. We are not giving graded judgements. We did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and were unable to check other sources of evidence, such as visits to lessons or looking at pupils' work. The content of this letter gives an overview of our discussions about what has happened in your school this term.

During the visit, we spoke to you, the deputy headteacher and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

Context

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's education system is managing the return to full education for pupils following an extended break in formal schooling due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

In undertaking this focused work, HMI are visiting a broad range of schools. HMI will visit a sample of:

- approximately 1,200 schools across all Ofsted grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate)
- maintained schools, academies and free schools, special schools and centres of alternative provision, including those in cities, and coastal, town or rural communities.

The information from this visit will feed into Ofsted's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. We did not find any significant concerns during the visit. In such a case, an inspection report would be published on our website and available to parents and carers.

We did not consider your response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020, when the school was not open to all pupils.

From this visit, inspectors noted that:

- The school reopened to all pupils on 1 September 2020. From this date, pupils were expected to attend full time, except for some pupils with specific needs.
- Overall attendance for the term is very slightly below what you would normally expect, due to some families taking holidays that they were unable to take during the lockdown period.
- Pupils are studying their usual subjects, with some adjustments across the school. For example, four pupils in Years 3 and 4 are currently not being taught modern foreign languages. You told us that this is so these pupils can focus on their literacy and mathematics skills. You plan to return to the teaching of all subjects by summer 2021. The school is offering extra-curricular activities and continues to provide its wrap-around care for pupils before and after school.
- You are using information about what pupils currently know and understand in reading and mathematics to target support differently in different year groups. For example, in early years you are focusing on children's communication and language skills. In Year 2, the focus is on pupils' phonics knowledge. In Years 5 and 6, you are prioritising the teaching of number work and the application

of times tables. You told us that your checks and observations have found these to be priority areas after the COVID-19 lockdown.

- You are using blended learning, a mixture of video lessons and work packs to support pupils who are self-isolating. The work provided is in line with this term's classroom work. The school has purchased extra computer resources to ensure that pupils can access this work from home if needed.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you have shared will help to inform future policy.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dudley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector

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3 November 2020

Alison Wootton
Headteacher
Withymoor Primary School
Gayfield Avenue
Brierley Hill
Dudley
West Midlands
DY5 2BH

Dear Mrs Wootton

Ofsted visit to Withymoor Primary School

Following my visit with Jonathan Leonard, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 13 October 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the visit's findings. Thank you for the time you made available to discuss your actions since September 2020, when the government expected all schools to open fully to all pupils.

This visit was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections are temporarily suspended.

Ofsted's visits to schools during the autumn term are not inspections. We are not giving graded judgements. We did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and were unable to check other sources of evidence, such as visits to lessons or looking at pupils' work. The content of this letter gives an overview of our discussions about what has happened in your school this term.

During the visit, we spoke to your deputy headteacher, who is also responsible for safeguarding, two assistant headteachers, the inclusion manager and the business administrator. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

Context

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's education system is managing the return to full education for pupils, following an extended break in formal schooling due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

In undertaking this focused work, HMI are visiting a broad range of schools. HMI will visit a sample of:

- approximately 1,200 schools across all Ofsted grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate)
- maintained schools, academies and free schools, special schools and centres of alternative provision, including those in cities, and coastal, town or rural communities.

The information from this visit will feed into Ofsted's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. We did not find any significant concerns during the visit. In such a case, an inspection report would be published on our website and available to parents and carers.

We did not consider your response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020, when the school was not open to all pupils.

From this visit, inspectors noted that:

- The school opened to all pupils on 3 September 2020. Children in the Reception class had a phased return until 16 September 2020.
- Leaders told us that pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the normal attendance for this time of year.
- Pupils across the school are studying all of the usual subjects. You anticipate all pupils will return to their full curriculum by spring 2021. You have changed some aspects of practical subjects. Some school clubs have resumed but educational visits and non-essential visitors are currently suspended.
- Teachers are carrying out assessment checks in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6. You intend to use this information to teach the things pupils have missed and provide support for any pupils who may have fallen behind.
- Leaders told us that reading is a whole-school priority. Additional teaching time for phonics has been introduced for some pupils in Year 1. You expect all pupils to read regularly and books are sent home for pupils to practise.
- Teachers are assessing pupils' mathematical understanding to check their knowledge and skills. Leaders have decided to focus on pupils' reasoning skills.

Leaders said that pupils with special educational needs have been more successful with remote learning in mathematics than in English.

- Leaders have prioritised history, geography and science this year in the wider curriculum. Teachers are covering any missed content as it arises and modifying how they teach some aspects. For example, science experiments are teacher led rather than pupils investigating in groups.
- You have recently adopted a digital resource to support remote learning and have used this for pupils who are self-isolating. Curriculum content mirrors that provided for other pupils in school. You plan to extend online learning, should this be needed in the future, and ensure that all pupils have access to the necessary equipment.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you have shared will help to inform future policy.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dudley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson
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6 November 2020

Steve Derham
Headteacher
Sycamore Short Stay School
Old Farm Estate
Dudley
DY1 3QE

Dear Mr Derham

Ofsted visit to Sycamore Short Stay School

Following my visit with Chris Pollitt, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 13 October 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the visit's findings. Thank you for the time you made available to discuss your actions since September 2020, when the government expected all schools to open fully to all pupils.

This visit was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections are temporarily suspended.

Ofsted's visits to schools during the autumn term are not inspections. We are not giving graded judgements. We did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and were unable to check other sources of evidence, such as visits to lessons or looking at pupils' work. The content of this letter gives an overview of our discussions about what has happened in your school this term.

During the visit, we spoke to the senior leadership team and deputy leader responsible for safeguarding. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

Context

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's education system is managing the return to full education for pupils, following an extended break in formal schooling due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

In undertaking this focused work, HMI are visiting a broad range of schools. HMI will visit a sample of:

- approximately 1,200 schools across all Ofsted grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate)
- maintained schools, academies and free schools, special schools and centres of alternative provision, including those in cities, and coastal, town or rural communities.

The information from this visit will feed into Ofsted's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. We did not find any significant concerns during the visit. In such a case, an inspection report would be published on our website and available to parents and carers.

We did not consider your response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020, when the school was not open to all pupils.

From this visit, inspectors noted that:

- The school opened for the start of the autumn term on 3 September 2020. Pupils were admitted over a two-day phased period. The school opened for all pupils on 7 September. You told us that some pupils will remain on part-time timetables until other alternative provision is in place to support their full-time return to school.
- There are individual plans in place to support each pupil's return to school. You work with families and specialist external agencies to support and maintain pupils' attendance. Attendance comparisons with previous years are difficult to make as the school is a short stay provision.
- Most pupils who join the school have had prolonged periods out of education. A number of pupils have joined the school during the lockdown period. You have used a range of assessments to identify gaps in pupils' learning, including in reading, English, mathematics and science. This information is used to develop individual learning plans. Pupils' social and emotional needs are also assessed to identify any additional pastoral support they may need.
- Assessments of pupils' phonic and reading skills have been completed in all year groups. Teaching is based on these assessments. All pupils read every day in school and have weekly group reading sessions. Where needed, additional one-to-one reading support is provided.
- In mathematics, you assess where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The mathematics curriculum is focused on the gaps identified.
- Timetables and classroom organisation have been adapted so that pupils can study the usual range of subjects. This includes practical subjects such as music, food technology and physical education. However, pupils are not able

to go swimming because the facilities they use are not open. In addition, pupils are currently not able to access the outdoor education provision.

- You have developed a range of remote learning resources for pupils, including online learning and paper-based work packs. Due to the different needs of each pupil, you have provided each pupil with an individualised package of remote learning. You provide parents with guidance and information about the home learning resources. You are intending to continue this remote learning as and when required.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you have shared will help to inform future policy.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dudley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ann Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

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3 November 2020

Simon Duncan
Headteacher
Peters Hill Primary School
Peters Hill Road
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Brierley Hill
West Midlands
DY5 2QH

Dear Mr Duncan

Ofsted visit to Peters Hill Primary School

Following my visit with Heather Simpson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 15 October 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the visit's findings. Thank you for the time you made available to discuss your actions since September 2020, when the government expected all schools to open fully to all pupils.

This visit was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections are temporarily suspended.

Ofsted's visits to schools during the autumn term are not inspections. We are not giving graded judgements. We did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and were unable to check other sources of evidence, such as visits to lessons or looking at pupils' work. The content of this letter gives an overview of our discussions about what has happened in your school this term.

During the visit, we spoke to you, two deputy headteachers, and the school safeguarding officer. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

Context

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's education system is managing the return to full

education for pupils, following an extended break in formal schooling due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

In undertaking this focused work, HMI are visiting a broad range of schools. HMI will visit a sample of:

- approximately 1,200 schools across all Ofsted grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate)
- maintained schools, academies and free schools, special schools and centres of alternative provision, including those in cities, and coastal, town or rural communities.

The information from this visit will feed into Ofsted's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. We did not find any significant concerns during the visit. In such a case, an inspection report would be published on our website and available to parents and carers.

We did not consider your response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020, when the school was not open to all pupils.

From this visit, inspectors noted that:

- The school opened to all pupils in Years 1 to 6 on 3 September 2020. Children in the early years started on 17 September 2020.
- Leaders told us that attendance is above normal for this time of year.
- All pupils are studying their usual range of subjects. Leaders have changed some activities. For example, in physical education, you have decided to pause the teaching of swimming. You plan to return pupils to their full curriculum by summer term 2021.
- Teachers are checking pupils' knowledge in lessons. You are planning to test pupils in mathematics and English later in the term.
- Teachers have identified younger pupils who are being supported with their reading. You have introduced an additional daily phonics lesson for all pupils in Years 1 and 2. Your aim is that these additional sessions will help pupils to catch up.
- Leaders told us that teachers' checks in mathematics have shown gaps in pupils' knowledge of place value. In addition, you told us pupils are struggling to remember their times tables. You aim to support pupils in mathematics by increasing the opportunities they have to revise and practise number skills.
- Teachers have changed planning in other subjects to cover key content missed in the summer term. For example, Year 5 pupils had an 'electricity day' that covered content from Year 4 science.

- Leaders have recently introduced a digital platform for pupils to use at home. Teachers are using this resource to set homework. You intend for pupils to use this digital platform to access remote lessons in all subjects, if needed in the future.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you have shared will help to inform future policy.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Dudley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Leonard
Her Majesty's Inspector