
Meeting of the Children's Services Select Committee – 11th March 2024

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Education Report

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update on Education Outcomes to Children's Services Select Committee

Recommendations

2. The Select Committee are asked to note and comment on the contents of the report.

Background

3. The report contains updates on the work of the Education Outcomes team as follows:
 - Dudley Performing Arts
 - Suspensions
 - Admissions
 - AP Strategy
 - EHE Numbers
 - CME Numbers

Dudley Performing Arts

4. Dudley Performing Arts (DPA) continues to provide musical opportunities for young people attending maintained schools and academies. The service is currently engaging with 94% of all possible settings with regular weekly

tuition delivered in 82% of all schools. Numbers of students learning continue






5. to rise steadily following a decimation of student numbers during the pandemic. In recent years the service has prioritised a focus on inclusion that has resulted in extensive work with our special schools, a strategic partnership with Dudley Virtual School and a series of projects with Youth Justice.
6. Dudley MBC has submitted an application to lead the new Black Country Music Hub from September 2024. Preliminary work has included the development of a memorandum of understanding for the other Black Country Music Services who have all agreed to support the application. If successful, this will lead to annual funding of £1,973,994 per annum (subject to spending review) and a capital grant of £649,041. Arts Council England are scheduled to announce the new hub leads in April with a start date of September 1st.


Suspension & Exclusion data – Term 1 2023/24

7. Across Dudley schools, there have been 1430 individual suspensions recorded since the beginning of the academic year, 2023-24. Within that number, 868 individual child/young person have received a suspension, with 294 receiving one or more suspensions. This is showing an increase from the same period of the previous academic year.

Primary - % of all suspensions






8. We are seeing an improving trend of reducing suspensions across EYFS, KS1 and KS2. In every year group of statutory school age children at Primary Schools, the percentage of suspensions have reduced. This can be seen in the table below which shows the percentage of suspensions to date in term 1 this academic year against term 1 last year.

Data set / group	22/23 – Term 1	23/24 – Term 1	Trend
Reception	0.7%	0.5%	
Yr1	2.2%	1.7%	
Yr2	2.1%	0.8%	
Yr3	1.6%	0.6%	
Yr4	1.8%	0.3%	

Yr5	1.5%	1.1%	
Yr6	1.9%	1.1%	

Secondary - % of all suspensions



9. There is an increase in the number of suspensions being seen at KS3 and KS4 across the Secondary schools. All year groups have seen a general increase, with the greatest increase in KS3, with Year 9 having nearly 25% of all suspensions for term 1, and an increase of almost 150 additional suspensions to the same time last year. This year group were in Year 5 when schools went into lockdown and may have missed out on significant transition to secondary school. Within the table there is a improvement in the percentage of suspensions at KS4.




Data set / group	22/23 – Term 1	23/24 – Term 1	Trend
Yr7	7.0%	7.8%	
Yr8	19.1%	21.7%	
Yr9	16.5%	24.3%	
Yr10	24.2%	21.6%	
Yr11	21.1%	18.3%	

Highest groups / reasons - % of all suspensions

10. The greatest reason for the increase in suspensions is around verbal and threatening abuse aimed at adults. Pupil on pupil assaults have seen a slight decrease in the percentage of suspensions, where Persistent Disruptive Behaviour sees around the same amount. It is worth noting that it is the percentage of the suspensions that remains the same, but there is an increase in those numbers.

The percentage split between male and female remain on par with the previous year. In terms of ethnic split, 72% of all suspensions are of White British, with White British Boys at 44% of all suspensions.

Data set / group	22/23 – Term 1	23/24 – Term 1	Trend
Male	64.4%	64.0%	
Female	35.6%	36.0%	

PDB	43.4%	43.1%	
Assault of pupil on pupil	18.5%	16.0%	
Verbal / threatening abuse	18.3%	25.2%	

Exclusions

11. Up to the end of the first term there had been 52 permanent exclusions issued across all Dudley schools, an increase from 33 last year. Not all that are issued become upheld as some are withdrawn (due to the work of the Inclusion Team), overturned (by governing bodies) or appealed by the parent/child and placed at an IRP (Independent Review Panel). There is still an increase of upheld PX decisions at 37, up from 23 for the previous year.
12. This increase compared to regional and national figures shows that Dudley are above these. The trends from 21/22 when 66 had an upheld PX with Dudley at 0.14% per 100 children, Regional at 0.11% and national at 0.07%. In 22/23, 74 had an upheld PX (up by 8) with Dudley at 0.15%, regional at 0.14% and national at 0.10%. Although the gap has closed to national, we are still well above the national average.
13. Going against the suspension data, Year 11 have seen an increase in permanent exclusions. During 22/23 academic year there were 7 total issued, with 4 upheld decisions. Already at the end of term 1, there have been 10 issued, with 8 upheld. There is a significant decrease of exclusions at Primary Schools, where the work of the Inclusive Pathways team is showing impact and effect.
14. The table below shows the trend of percentage of permanent exclusions against the total percentage for the previous academic year. There is an increase in one off reasons for the exclusion rather than Persistent Disruptive Behaviour, in particular on pupil-on-pupil assaults.

Data set / group – total issued	22/23 – Total	23/24 – Term 1	Trend
Primary	15.7%	5.7%	↓
Year 7	5.5%	7.7%	↑
Year 8	22.7%	21.2%	→
Year 9	21.1%	15.4%	↓
Year 10	29.7%	26.9%	↓
Year 11	5.5%	19.2%	↑↑
PDB	43.8%	38.5%	↓
Assault – pupil	19.5%	30.8%	↑↑
Assault – adult	9.4%	17.3%	↑
Weapon related	10.2%	9.6%	→

15. In terms of ethnicities, 78% of upheld exclusions are White British, with the next group 12% are White & Black Caribbean. We have seen a reduction with those on EHCP – 5 issued, 3 upheld – in total last year 14 were issued, 7 upheld. There has been one CLA (not Dudley Borough) that has been excluded. This went to appeal and upheld by the panel.

Summary

16. There has been an increase in suspensions and exclusions across Dudley. One school, The Wordsley School has accounted for 22% of all suspensions. 13% of all children and young people with suspensions and 23% of all who have received one or more have come from this school. Significant support is being given to the school with weekly meetings to triage their young people with the Inclusion Team and AP external providers, an increase of Inclusive Pathways caseload and regular meetings with the Headteacher.
17. The Inclusion Team continue to challenge schools with suspensions and exclusions, with schools receiving individual conversations about their data,

and what support can be offered to improve this. The Dudley Pathway strategy due to be launched September 2024 will ensure that school interventions are consistently identified and implemented for children and young people at risk of repeat suspensions and exclusion, alongside appropriate assessments to identify need and barriers to engagement. A clear pathway into base provisions and an assessment centre will provide specialist support for children, young people, and families.

Admissions Update

18. Admissions data is in line with the birth rate overview as expected over recent years. Applications to primary have dropped as the ‘bulge’ years move through secondary. There is spare capacity across the primary phases and more pressure in the higher years of secondary. This is expected to level out in the coming years. Birth rates have not returned to pre-pandemic levels at present.
19. New arrivals and in year transfers is showing a significant increase with almost 1500 applications in the first term this year compared to 2533 for the entire academic year previously. The number of students joining schools (and the borough) with English as a second language is significantly higher. Secondaries are currently working collaboratively through the FAP process to establish a New Arrivals and ESOL base.

20. **School Admissions – January 2024**

Primary	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
No. of Applications	3701	3627	3686	3561
% of 1 st Preference Offers	90% (NA 90.2%)	91% (NA 91.8%)	90% (NA 92.25)	90% (NA 92.5%)
% of One Preference	97% (NA 97%)	98.5% (NA 98.4%)	97% (NA 98.4%)	98% (NA 98.6%)
No. of Appeals	75	51	67	39
No. of Successful Appeals	1	2	1	0
Secondary	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
No. of Applications	3670	3804	3838	4031
% of 1 st Preference Offers	86% (NA 82.2%)	86% (NA 81.1%)	88% (NA 83.3%)	84.5% (NA 82.6%)

% of One Preference	96.5% (NA 95.6%)	97% (NA 95.5%)	97% (NA 95.8%)	96% (NA 95.6%)
No. of Appeals	82	79	85	128
No. of Successful Appeals	7	5	9	22

AP Strategy Update

21. The Alternative Provision strategy is now being redeveloped to ensure that it is fit for purpose and meeting the needs of CYP across the local area. This was launched in September 2023 with an internal meeting of LA Officers, Health, Social Care and other stakeholders to outline a clear rationale behind the direction of travel. There have been several workshops with schools, external providers and Officers are now crafting an options appraisal for consultation in the coming weeks.
22. The Alternative Provision Strategy is being developed to be consistent with the principles underpinning the SEND Strategy and our Inclusive Pathways programme in order to:
- increase the number of children and young people supported in mainstream provision
 - reduce the number of exclusions from schools
 - address the rising number of young people receiving home tuition
 - stop off-rolling, leaving young people without education
 - reduce the increasing use of specialist provision
 - ensure specialist provision is in the right locations.
 - increase the number of young people in education, employment and training, therefore reducing our NEET statistics.

OUR END GAME

- 23.
1. Clear Ethos & Vision for Alternative Pathways
 2. A change in 'language' from AP to 'Educational Pathways' which meet children's needs.
 3. New Inclusion Strategy and development of Inclusive Pathways
 4. A comprehensive review and implementation of new AP Places/Alternative Curriculum – with good physical space and buildings
 5. A focus on Behaviour Outreach/development of relationships
 6. Development of a 'behaviour curriculum' in schools
 7. Effective Transition in AND out including date stamped exit points.

EHE Numbers

24. Since 2016 the number of children in Dudley whose parents have chosen to provide education otherwise than at school, by enacting their right to provide 'Elective Home Education' has increased significantly.
In the academic year 2016/17 there were 192 instances of children registered as EHE, this rose to 310 in 2017/18 and 393 in 2018/19. 2019/20 saw this figure rise again to 430 due to the start of Covid measures and increase again to 555 in 2020/21.
25. Since Covid measures were removed the numbers of EHE has continued to rise with 665 in 2021/22 and 725 in 2022/23.
Currently in 2023/24 there has been 578 instances which is expected to increase throughout the academic year.
The numbers of EHE children remaining stubbornly high despite the concerns that many children are not receiving a sufficient education provision in this way.

26. **Pupils that have started with the EHE Service since 1st September 2016 and were active during the following Academic Years.**

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
			9					
Elective Home Education	192	310	393	430	555	665	725	578
Female	102	148	202	219	279	337	381	305
Male	90	162	191	211	276	328	344	273
SEN Support	50	78	95	102	107	137	136	109
No Special Educational Need	116	195	264	287	392	465	522	423
SEN Discontinued	13	18	12	11	13	11	7	3
Education, Health, and Care Plan	13	19	21	29	40	46	50	38
Statutory Assessment	0	0	1	1	3	6	10	5

27. Each year we see a significant number of children leaving EHE for a variety of reasons. Some parents chose to return their children to mainstream education provision, others may be assessed as providing insufficient education and are transferred to Children Missing Education to support or direct a return to mainstream education.

28. In 2021/22 school year there were 245 children removed from EHE, 86 of those were over compulsory school age meaning 159 left EHE to be returned to mainstream education.
29. In 2022/23 304 children were removed, 117 were over compulsory school age leaving 187 who were returned to mainstream education
In 2023/24, so far there have been 74 children returned to mainstream education.
30. In 2016 the resources made available by the council to review, assess and support EHE children were reported to be below the levels expected nationally, with 1fte officer to overview 192 children, this resource was increased in 2021/22 by the equivalent of 1fte which has since been reported to be insufficient to meet the statutory requirements to assess and support 724 children registered in 2022/23.
31. Authorities assessed by OFSTED to be delivering best practice are reported to have 1fte officer per 100 children. To meet this requirement Dudley would need 5fte officers to provide assessment and support to effectively deliver our statutory obligations and meet the needs of Dudley's EHE population.
32. EHE Regional comparison data shows that in 2021/22 Dudley had 660 children registered as EHE on the census day compared to Shropshire with 630, Solihull with 470 Stoke on Trent with 470, Telford & Wrekin with 530, Walsall with 560 and Wolverhampton with 670.

CME Numbers

33. Children Missing Education represent the children who are known or thought to reside with Dudley Borough who do not have a school place or are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.
34. Since August 2022 the monthly numbers of CME children has been high. This is in the main due to regularly high numbers of children newly arriving in Dudley from other countries or other authority areas. Most of these children meet the authorities Fair Access criteria and are placed in schools via our Fair Access Panels.
35. In January 2024 there were 369 children recorded as CME, 123 children were newly identified CME during January, 66 children were placed in provision in January alone. Other children have been allocated school places in January and are yet to confirm their on-roll status.
36. In January 140 children were identified as new movers into the borough, in previous years this has been:

January 2023 – 132, January 2022 – 85, January 2021 – 37, January 2020 - 75

The numbers of CME trend shows:



37. In addition, the numbers being removed from the CME register because they returned to school, left the area, become over compulsory school age or accessed a suitable education otherwise than at school are:

Children Missing Education Academic Year Left CME													
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
18/19	127	57	60	38	52	41	65	44	49	76	25	2	636
19/20	109	49	49	29	71	32	40	3	16	62	4	9	473
20/21	66	50	72	24	46	32	51	33	48	67	15	3	507
21/22	72	63	58	23	79	40	57	53	63	65	41	2	616
22/23	142	91	106	43	125	59	88	62	103	124	58	10	1011
23/24	201	125	143	50	64	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	583

The authority identifies CME via many different sources and uses a range of investigatory powers and methods to try and identify the whereabouts of children who leave the authority without notifying their school or other departments.

The authority has 2fte officers who work to identify CME children and support the parents to apply for school places.

Finance

38. There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposals outlined in the report.

Law

39. The law governing Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council’s (the Local Authority) statutory duties in relation to education in its area is provided by

the Acts of Parliament, Regulations and Statutory Guidance regularly published and updated by Central Government.

In particular, the Education Act 1996 obliges the Local Authority to:

“... ensure that their relevant education ... and ... training functions are ... exercised ... with a view to ... promoting high standards, ... ensuring fair access ... and ... promoting the fulfilment of [the] learning potential by every person to whom this subsection applies.”
sub-section 13A(1)

AND

“... establish primary schools and secondary schools ... maintain primary and secondary schools, whether established by them or not; and ... assist any primary or secondary school which is not maintained by them [for the purpose of fulfilling their functions under this Act] ...” sub-section 16(1)

The Local Authority must therefore have policies and procedures that enable it to collate, interpret and act upon data regarding the social and educational needs of local children and young people, as well as the progress of local schools. This will enable the Local Authority to improve the educational provision available and the attainments and outcomes of the pupils and students in its area.

Consequently, because this report summarises the data being collated and describes the work being done by officers within Education Outcomes, it demonstrates how they are ensuring that the Local Authority is complying with the statutory duties cited above.

Risk Management

40. There are no deemed risks as this report is provided for information purposes only.

Equality Impact

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

Human Resources/Organisational Development

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

Commercial/Procurement

43. There are no direct commercial or procurement implications associated with this report, however improved relationships with Dudley schools does create opportunity for increased trading.

Environment/Climate Change

44. The report is for information only and there is no perceived impact on climate change or environmental factors.

Council Priorities and Projects

45. A place where everybody has the education and skills they need, and where outstanding local schools, colleges, and universities secure excellent results for their learners.

A place of healthy, resilient, safe communities with high aspirations and the ability to shape their own future.



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