

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 17th January 2018

Wards: All wards

Subject: Departmental Update Report December 2017

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley, Director of Children, Schools and Families Department

Lead member: Cllr Katy Neep, Cabinet Member for Children Services
Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

Contact officer: Mark Gwynne, Interim Head of Policy, Planning and Performance

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The report provides members of the panel with information on key developments not covered elsewhere on the agenda and affecting the Children, Schools and Families Department since the panel's last meeting in November 2017.

2 DETAILS

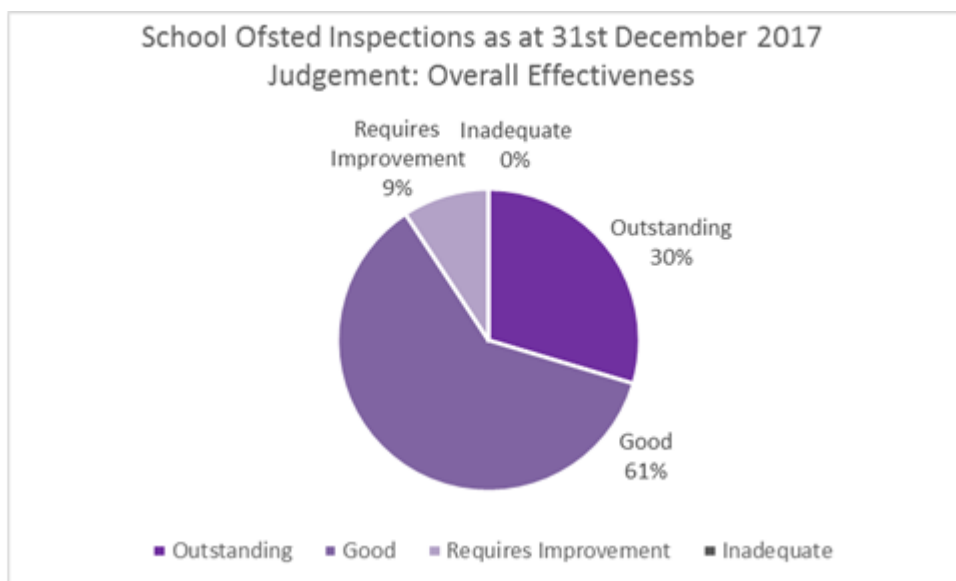
2.1 **GCSE Exam Results** – A comprehensive overview of provisional results on the reformed GCSEs in English language, English literature and mathematics, along with the phasing in of changes to GCSEs in other subjects was provided for the last meeting. Information on the final GCSE and A Level results will be published within the School Standards Report later in the year.

2.2 **Phonics Screening** – National results have been published which confirms that Merton performance has improved by 4 percentage points over the past year, which is in the top ten largest improvements in the country. This places Merton schools above the national average of 81% for standards achieved by the end of Year 1 and has received praise from the Minister (letter attached as Appendix 1).

2.3 **School Ofsted Inspections** – Following the recent inspection of primary schools: Cricket Green has retained its "Outstanding" rating whilst Gorrington Park has moved from "Requires Improvement" to "Good". The Sherwood, St John Fisher and Abbotsbury Primary schools were all inspected during October or November and have retained their "Good" ratings.

2.4 For secondary schools: Ricards Lodge has improved from "Good" to "Outstanding" rating and St Marks has retained its "Good" rating. The report on Wimbledon College is awaited and a verbal update will be made at the meeting if the report has been published by then. This results in 100% of secondary schools being rated as "Good" or

“Outstanding” with 50% rated as “Outstanding”. Overall, these changes mean that 91% of schools are now rated as “Good” or better (as shown in the diagram following) and 93% of our pupils are educated in schools rated as “Good” or better.



- 2.5 **Secondary school place demand and Harris Academy Wimbledon** – The Council has received 268 additional resident applications compared to last year: 209 of these residents have stated a LB Merton school as a first preference. LB Merton schools have received 255 additional first preference applications for September 2018 compared to last year (i.e. including applications from out-borough residents).
- 2.6 The proportional rise in first preference applications for Merton schools is therefore larger than the increase in the child population, which is a welcome endorsement from residents on the excellent progress made in our secondary schools. However, this presents additional challenges in placing all children for September 2018. Officers are therefore working closely with the Harris Federation and ESFA colleagues to ensure that Harris Academy Wimbledon can open for September 2018. Officers are also in dialogue with existing schools to consider whether any may take an additional class in September to ensure sufficient year 7 places are provided. Any decision on this would not be made in mid-February following data exchanges as part of the pan-London admissions process, when the specific impact will be better considered.
- 2.7 The key to the permanent delivery of the new school at High Path is for Elim Church to be able to move to an adapted Merton Hall to ensure a clear site. The building works contract for Merton Hall was approved by Cabinet on 11 December 2017 but was called in to Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel on 10 January 2018 – this report is published before this date. There are also other issues such as a Historic Building listing application and a verbal update can be provided at this meeting.
- 2.8 **SEN School Expansion** – There continues to be a significant increase in demand for special school places, especially for ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) and MLD (Moderate Learning Difficulties) children, which continues to place pressure on budgets. The council is working on projects to increase provision in our special schools. Construction of the expansion of Perseid School is at the half way stage and a planning application has been submitted to expand Cricket Green School.

- 2.1 **30 hours** – Following on from the work of the summer term, early years providers, including schools, continue to engage with families and the local authority to facilitate implementation of the policy for 30 hours of free early education which came into effect in September 2017. Data shows that over 536 children took up the additional free hours across 108 local early education providers in Merton including nursery classes in schools, private nurseries and childminders.
- 2.2 **Ofsted Inspection Action Plan** – Following the inspection, our action plan has been approved by Ofsted and is being implemented with progress on initial actions to be reported to the February meeting.
- 2.3 **Inspection Update** – The new Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) inspection framework has been published for implementation from January 2018. This requires submission of an annual self assessment followed by a discussion between the link officer at Ofsted and the Director of Children’s Services. A further update on what this means for Merton will be provided at a future meeting when more is known about the process and timescales.
- 2.4 **Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB)** – has extended key development priorities for 2016/17 through to 2019. These priorities are:
- **Think family:** A Think Family Coordinator has been appointed. The current focus is on adult mental health and embedding Think Family across adults and children. The Board is also reviewing its Young Carers’ Strategy and Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy: it is expected that this strategy will address DVA between adults; teenage relationship abuse; and elder abuse. The aim is for these strategies to be delivered and launched at the MSCB Joint Annual Conference;
 - **Supporting Vulnerable Adolescents:** The Self-harm protocol has been approved, along with Harmful sexual behaviour and Online Strategies, the focus on contextual safeguarding continues – addressing adolescent risk outside of the home. The CSE Protocol and strategy are being reviewed;
 - **Early Help:** The Merton Child, Young Person and Family Well-Being Model has been approved. We are updating tools and looking at implementing the Social Work Practice Model (including Signs of Safety) across the system.
- 2.5 These also link with the MSCB business as usual activities (e.g. CSE, Missing, PREVENT, FGM, etc.) undertaken by the Board and its sub groups. The Board continues to seek to improve its links to practitioners and their managers as part of our quality assurance processes to inform service improvement and development as well as maintaining our strong focus on the Voice of the Child / Young person.
- 2.6 Addressing the incidence and impact of neglect, is a cross-cutting theme that runs across the work of the Board and each of the priorities. An audit of neglect cases is being conducted and alongside this the Neglect Tool is being piloted across the system in Merton from January to March 2018.
- 2.7 **Transforming Families** – Following DCLG inspection, work is underway to gain “earned autonomy” which will enable us to continue to develop our Transforming Families approach.

3. **FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 No specific implications from this report.

4. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 No specific implications from this report.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No specific implications from this report

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No specific implications from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No specific implications from this report.

8. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

8.1 None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None