

**Committee:** Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Wards: All wards

**Subject:** Departmental Update Report October 2018

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families Department

Lead member: Cllr Kelly Braund, Cabinet Member for Children Services  
Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

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

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**Recommendations:**

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

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## **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 June 2018. It focusses on those aspects of particular relevance to the department and those where the Panel expressed an interest in receiving regular updates.

## **2 DETAILS**

- 2.1 **Harris Academy Wimbledon** – The school opened as planned in Whatley Avenue SW20 in September 2018 and is fully subscribed. The building is suitable for two years before the permanent site in South Wimbledon will be required. The planning application for the permanent site is expected to be considered at the planning applications committee later in October.
- 2.2 **Cricket Green School** – Planning permission has been received and Cabinet has agreed to commence works to expand the school, with works expected to start early in October: the first phase is expected to be completed September 2019 to enable the much needed extra SEN places to be provided.
- 2.3 **School Ofsted Inspections** – Further inspections have been held in the following schools where the report is yet to be published: West Wimbledon Primary School on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and Morden Primary on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018. New reports have been published for Hollymount and Cranmer schools since the last meeting, with both achieving Good ratings. This means that our results remain as previously reported, so we continue to have:
- 100% of secondary schools being rated as “Good” or “Outstanding”
  - 93% of all schools now rated as “Good” or better; and

- 95% of our pupils are educated in schools rated as “Good” or better.

- 2.4 **Primary Phase Outcomes** – Pupil outcomes have improved at the end of KS2. The proportion reaching the expected standard in each of reading, writing and maths, at 68%, is a two percentage point increase on Merton’s performance in 2017, and maintains the four percentage point gap above the national average achieved in 2016 and 2017. Indicative progress scores are again strong, and it is hoped that when these are published formally in December that Merton will retain its strong standing nationally: in 2017 the Borough was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> for reading and maths progress.
- 2.5 In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check and the end of KS1, the outcomes for Merton are all above the respective national averages except for writing at the expected standard at Key Stage 2, which is one percentage point below.
- 2.6 **KS4 outcomes** – It is estimated that 90% of exams in England this year were the new form of GCSEs; containing more difficult content, mostly marked on final exams rather than coursework, with grades expressed as 9 (the highest) to 1, instead of A\* to G (grade 4 and above being broadly equivalent to a C and above). Despite the raised expectations Merton schools have again demonstrated strong results. 71% of Merton students achieved grades 9 – 4 in both English and Maths. This is once again well above the national average for 2017 of 59%. There were strong and improved outcomes in the English Baccalaureate or ‘EBacc’ (grade 4 or above in English, Maths, Science subjects, either History or Geography and a language) with 37% of Merton students achieving these grades, keeping Merton well above the national average of 22% last year.
- 2.7 **Post 16 outcomes** – Students and teachers in Merton maintained schools are celebrating another good set of sixth form results in A-levels. In a year which has seen more significant changes nationally, the proportion of A\*-C grades achieved by Merton students was 78%, which is above the national percentage of 77%, and a good increase on the Borough’s performance last year. In 2017, students in England took new, more challenging exams in 13 subjects, with 11 more following this year. Applied Generals and Tech Level qualifications remain a popular choice for some sixth form students. These help students to develop the fundamental knowledge and practical skills that are valued in universities and the workplace. Just under a quarter of Merton students achieved success in these qualifications.
- 2.8 **Children’s Centres** – For the new financial year the service continues to prioritise the increased take up of 2-year-old funded places, to work with partners to increase referrals for targeted work with parents and young children and to increase our early help offer for families who have children with additional needs. A new parenting programme for parents of children aged 2 to the end of reception year who are on the autistic spectrum or have language delays and when parents are struggling to manage their child’s challenging behaviour. The programme, called Incredible Years Autistic Spectrum Disorder / language delay, was piloted in quarter 1. Ten families completed the 15-week programme, with seven families using the onsite childcare service provided, especially for this group of children and their siblings. Feedback from the pilot was very positive, and included:
- “This programme will change your outlook on parenting a child with special needs”
  - “I have learnt I am not alone and I can manage my child’s behaviour better”
  - “I have gained more confidence as a parent, improved the positive situations and learnt to manage the difficult situations more effectively”

- “Never question if you belong on this programme, because you will not regret it”.
- 2.9 As a result of the success of the pilot programme, the new service will be embedded into the core timetable and the second cohort of eleven families have started this terms programme.
- 2.10 There continues to be a focus on assertive outreach activities to ensure that services are promoted to families living within defined areas of the borough, with additional services set up in the summer holidays, with open garden activities run daily across three Children’s Centres located in areas of deprivation working with local families. Forty-five sessions took place, which had an overall attendance of 700 (with some families attending more than one session).
- 2.11 **Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB)** – The MSCB is continuing work on designing the new partnership arrangements and in establishing an improved multi-agency dataset to ensure effective management of the partnership and contributions from the key agencies involved. These should be ready to be implemented from April 2019. A full update on MSCB progress and the annual report is being presented to the next meeting.
- 2.12 **Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC)** – The partnership offers an alternative form of care proceedings for parents and children in those cases where substance misuse is a key factor in the decision to bring proceedings: known as the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC).
- 2.13 The FDAC service went live on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 and we still have 3 referrals in the service, however all boroughs are on track to meet their minimum referral numbers. The provider is meeting all contractual obligations and are currently looking for premises in Croydon. Partnership operational meetings held on a quarterly basis, monitor management information and data: board meetings with judges are also planned to be held quarterly in line with Operational Group meeting.
- 2.14 **Social Impact Bond (SIB)** – Following launch of the project on 15<sup>th</sup> January, Merton now has 11 accepted referrals, which is above the numbers we should be at this stage of the year. This is excellent news and we are strongly predicting that we will reach above our minimum referral numbers of 16 per year. Amalgamation of the current Panel into an Edge of Care panel has been approved and is currently being mobilised by teams.
- 2.15 The official launch of the MST / FFT service took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> September with many London Boroughs attending. Due to the successful implementation of London Borough of Barking and Dagenham into the Partnership, we are using this launch event to raise the profile of the Partnership to attract further boroughs.
- 2.16 **Contextual Safeguarding** – the promote and Protect sub-group of the MSCB has commissioned a contextual safeguarding audit to consider the governance structures, protocols and processes in relation to harm experienced by adolescents, often outside the family home and involving peer-on-peer abuse (sexual harm, youth violence and exploitation). The audit was completed in September 2018 and the findings have supported an expression of interest to Bedfordshire University (who have developed the framework) to receive additional support to implement the contextual safeguarding framework within Merton.

- 2.17 The intended impact of implementing a Contextual Safeguarding Framework will be more holistic assessments of harm, plans that aim to address the contexts where harm is most pronounced (including locations of concern and peer groups) and increased capacity of those who have an influence over contexts outside the family. These would not replace current child protection procedures or interventions with adolescents and their families, but would broaden the impact and intervention on systemic issues outside of the home. An Early Intervention Funding application has been made to increase the capacity for delivering peer group and location based interventions.
- 2.18 **Knife Crime Action Plan** – The Mayor’s Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner has requested that each council produce a multi-agency and community partnership plan to prevent knife crime. This has been completed with a range of actions and activities across the partnership.
- 2.19 **Think Family** – The Think Family strategy has been developed jointly with adults emphasising the ways in which we will work holistically with the family to address their needs and provide the support they require. The Think Family approach formed the focus for the MSCB annual conference in March 2018 and was well received by all attending. The new strategy is being consulted on over the coming months, enabling the strategy to be ready for April 2019.
- 2.20 **Inspection Update** – Preparations for upcoming inspections are in hand including for the Youth Offending and SEND inspections for which continued progress is being made. Main developments since the last meeting are summarised below:
- **Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS)** – the Annual Engagement Meeting with the regional HMI was held on 3 October, based on an initial self evaluation that was submitted towards the end of September. This set out many improvements made since our last inspection in June 2017.
  - **Joint Targeted Area Inspection** – the theme for this has moved on as part of the six monthly programme and is now focussed around child sexual abuse within the family. Given the fairly recent safeguarding inspection and new ILACS framework, we consider it unlikely that the council will be inspected in this theme which runs from September 2018 to March 2019 and will look at ten local authorities.
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

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