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Purpose: For Decision

Committee report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Date	6 SEPTEMBER 2018
Title	DELIVERING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE – IMPROVING OUTCOMES IN PRIMARY MATHEMATICS
Report of	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In June 2017, the Isle of Wight Council published a strategy document “Delivering Educational Excellence”. One of the strategic priorities set out in that document was to further improve standards of attainment. This report sets out the actions being taken to improve standards of attainment by the end of primary education in mathematics which is a key area requiring improvement.
2. Whilst there have been improvements in primary mathematics over the past six years, these need to be built upon so that more pupils are able to access the challenge of the secondary school mathematics curriculum.
3. Improving performance in mathematics will also lead to improvement in the Department for Education’s (DfE) key performance measure for primary schools at the end of Key Stage 2 which combines performance in reading, writing and mathematics.
4. This paper sets out the project that the local authority has developed to bring about this improvement. This programme has been the basis of a successful bid to the DfE to be funded through the Strategic School Improvement Fund and has attracted funding of £153,000.
5. At the heart of the approach lies a number of partners, teaching schools, the Solent Maths Hub, Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service and a group of Isle of Wight schools. The project focuses on a group of pupils who have

become “stuck” in mathematics and helping get them “get back on track” to attain age related expectations by the end of their primary education.

BACKGROUND

6. Over the past six years, Isle of Wight schools have made improvements in the proportion of pupils reaching the DfE’s threshold performance measures in reading and writing by the end of primary education, and secured these improvements in light of the recent changes to the curriculum and its assessment. However, the improvements in mathematics are less strong and require improvement.
7. As a result of this, the improvement in the DfE’s key performance measure of primary schools at the end of Key Stage 2 (the proportion of pupils that reach age related expectations in the three subjects areas of reading, writing and mathematics combined) is held back by the outcomes in mathematics. The performance in mathematics means that as well as pupils might do in the other two subject areas, the reading, writing and mathematics combined figure becomes “capped” as a result of their performance in mathematics.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

8. Broadly, the purpose of the project is to help schools improve pupils’ performance in Key Stage 2 mathematics and lead to improvement in the proportion of pupils who reach age related expectations (ARE). This will also improve the proportion of pupils reaching ARE in the combined reading, writing and mathematics measure at the end of the Key Stage.
9. The underperformance in mathematics cannot be due to generic weaknesses in the quality of educational provision given the performance of schools in reading and writing is broadly in line with national averages. This indicates that the issue lies with the teaching of mathematics. Furthermore, it cannot be due to the weak teaching of mathematics throughout the school as pupils perform in line with their peers nationally at the end of Key Stage 1. It suggests that there is a group of children for whom progress stalls through the final years of primary education.
10. The focus of the project is for schools and school improvement professionals to work together to use their skills and knowledge to identify these children and their blocks to progress, and then work with individual teachers to implement specific strategies to help them “get back on track”. In doing this, schools will reflect on any issues that are identified in mathematics and make changes to provision in light of these.
11. Pupils who reach Level 2b+ in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 should have a secure grasp of the subject. Therefore they should be expected to progress through the upper years of primary education (Key Stage 2) and reach ARE at the end of Year 6. The national data indicates that the

overwhelming majority do, although not exclusively so. In Isle of Wight schools, the proportion of Level 2b+ children who reach ARE in mathematics falls below that nationally. Consequently, the project focuses upon this group of children.

12. As the work is funded by the DfE, to be accepted onto the project schools have to meet the DfE's eligibility criteria around a need to improve school effectiveness. This means that it has not been possible to include all Isle of Wight primary schools as most are now performing well. However, the local authority, in consultation with the DfE, has been able to extend the range of the schools involved so that twenty Isle of Wight schools are currently part of the project.
13. The project was launched in April 2018 with Year 5 pupils. The work will continue with them through Year 6, with the schools extending the approach to new Year 5 pupils. It is the intention that as schools become accomplished at this approach that it is rolled out across the whole of Key Stage 2.
14. The work in schools is based on a ten week block of teaching, carried out four times. The first step leads to the identification of a group of approximately five Level 2b+ pupils who have become stuck. The second step brings external expertise in the teaching and learning of mathematics to help the school understand what the blocks are that these pupils have and the teaching approaches that can be used to address them. The third step involves refining these strategies and the final step evaluates the impact and the steps that need to be taken in the next ten week block.
15. The fidelity of the programme is monitored closely throughout the lifetime of the project, with impact being judged against a set of teacher assessment milestones. These have been identified such that if they are met, the overall conversion rate for Level 2b+ children will be at least in line with the current national figures. If conversion rates remain unchanged in the schools that are not part of the programme and the schools in the project meet these targets then 77% of pupils should reach ARE in mathematics at the end of their primary education in 2019. If performance in reading and writing remains unchanged, 63% of pupils will then reach ARE in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of their primary education in 2019.
16. The intention is that through the first year of the programme sufficient capacity is built in the schools so that the work can be sustained and expanded to include other schools that it was not possible to include in the first year.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

17. There are no additional financial considerations resulting from the recommendations in this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. The “Duty to promote high standards in primary and secondary education,” originates from the 1996 Education Act. This provision was amended in the 2006 Education and Inspections Act to include, “...and the fulfilment of potential.” The 2006 Act spells out the responsibility of the Local Authority to promote high standards; ensure fair access and promote the fulfilment of every child’s educational potential. This duty applies to children of compulsory school age and those of any age (up to 20) who are registered as pupils at maintained schools.
19. It is the 2006 Act which also introduces the inspection of LA statutory functions by Ofsted. “The Framework for Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement,” based upon sections 135 and 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, was published in May 2013. The LA duty to write an action plan following an unsatisfactory Ofsted inspection had already been introduced in the 2005 Education Act.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

20. Improved educational outcomes benefit all groups but have the most marked impact upon the life chances of the most vulnerable. Outcomes will be assessed specifically for children with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, those living in relative poverty and children in the care of the local authority.

SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

21. The attainment of better educational outcomes has a direct impact upon future economic wellbeing and, therefore, upon potential involvement in criminal activity.
22. Success at school promotes self-esteem, attendance and good behaviour leading to greater community cohesion, adult independence and active citizenship.

RISK MANAGEMENT

23. A clear understanding of examination results and priorities for improving them is necessary in order to improve school performance of the Isle of Wight and mitigate against poor educational outcomes for children and young people. Schools that do not reach acceptable attainment in core subjects are at risk of an adverse judgement at any subsequent formal Ofsted inspection.

EVALUATION

24. The impact of this project will be evaluated by the Local Authority and the Department for Education as a condition of the grant funding. It is envisaged

that this evaluation will be subject to a further report brought to the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services after the 2019 outcomes have been published.

RECOMMENDATION

25. Members are asked to note the contents of this report

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