

Agenda

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	THURSDAY 7 MARCH 2024
Time	5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Members of the committee	Cllrs R Quigley (Chairman), V Churchman (Vice-Chairman), D Adams, R Downer, S Hendry, J Lever and T Outlaw
Co-opted	Catherine Hobbs (Diocese), Rob Sanders (Diocese), Emily Rufian (Parent/Governor), Matthew Searle (Parent/Governor) Democratic Services Officer: Cat Boulter democratic.services@iow.gov.uk

1. **Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)**

To note any changes in membership of the Committee made in accordance with Part 4B paragraph 5 of the Constitution.

2. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 8)

To confirm as a true record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2023.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To invite Members to declare any interest they might have in the matters on the agenda.



Details of meetings can be viewed on the Council's Committee [website](#). This information may be available in alternative formats on request. Please note the meeting will be audio recorded and the recording will be placed on the website (except any part of the meeting from which the press and public are excluded). Young people are welcome to attend Council meetings however parents/carers should be aware that the public gallery is not a supervised area.

4. **Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

Questions may be asked without notice, but to guarantee a full reply, a question must be put (including the name and address of the questioner) in writing or by email to Democratic Services democratic.services@iow.gov.uk, no later than two clear working days before the meeting. The deadline for submitting a written question is Monday, 4 March 2024.

5. **Progress Update** (Pages 9 - 10)

To receive an update on the progress against the outcomes arising from previous meetings, and to provide an update on any outstanding actions

6. **Children's Services Transition** (Pages 11 - 36)

To review progress of the transition and to receive an action plan, to cover the next twelve months (to include place planning), in bringing Children's Services under the Council's control.

7. **Children's Services Ofsted Inspection** (Pages 37 - 72)

To review the outcome of the Ofsted inspection and action plan on where improvements can be made.

8. **School Attainment** (Pages 73 - 118)

To consider the annual report on school attainment.

9. **Safety Valve** (Pages 119 - 124)

To review the progress on implementation of the Safety Valve programme.

10. **Workplan 2024-2025** (Pages 125 - 128)

To consider any amendments to the current workplan.

11. **Members' Question Time**

Questions may be asked without prior notice, but to guarantee a full reply, a question must be submitted to Democratic Services no later than 5pm, Tuesday, 5 March 2024.

12. **Progress Update** (Pages 129 - 130)

To receive an update on the progress against the outcomes arising from previous meetings, and to provide an update on any outstanding actions.

CHRISTOPHER POTTER
Monitoring Officer
Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Interests

If there is a matter on this agenda which may relate to an interest you or your partner or spouse has or one you have disclosed in your register of interests, you must declare your interest before the matter is discussed or when your interest becomes apparent. If the matter relates to an interest in your register of pecuniary interests then you must take no part in its consideration and you must leave the room for that item. Should you wish to participate as a member of the public to express your views where public speaking is allowed under the Council's normal procedures, then you will need to seek a dispensation to do so. Dispensations are considered by the Monitoring Officer following the submission of a written request. Dispensations may take up to 2 weeks to be granted.

Members are reminded that it is a requirement of the Code of Conduct that they should also keep their written Register of Interests up to date. Any changes to the interests recorded on that form should be made as soon as reasonably practicable, and within 28 days of the change. A change would be necessary if, for example, your employment changes, you move house or acquire any new property or land.

If you require more guidance on the Code of Conduct or are unsure whether you need to record an interest on the written register you should take advice from the Monitoring Officer – Christopher Potter on (01983) 821000, email christopher.potter@iow.gov.uk, or Deputy Monitoring Officer - Justin Thorne on 821000, email justin.thorne@iow.gov.uk.

Notice of recording

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If you wish to record, film or photograph the council meeting or if you believe that being filmed or recorded would pose a risk to the safety of you or others then please speak with the democratic services officer prior to that start of the meeting. Their contact details are on the agenda papers.

If the press and public are excluded for part of a meeting because confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, there is no right to record that part of the meeting. All recording and filming equipment must be removed from the meeting room when the public and press are excluded.

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Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date and Time	THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs R Quigley (Chairman), V Churchman (Vice-Chairman), D Adams, R Downer and S Hendry
Also Present	VotingInattendanceRoleRepresentingList Catherine Boulter, Kev Brown and Lauren Wicks
Also Present (Virtual)	J Ball and S MacKechnie Stuart Ashley, Stephanie How, Natalie Smith and Melanie White
Apologies	Cllrs J Lever and T Outlaw

25. **Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)**

Cllr Tig Outlaw and Cllr Joe Lever sent their apologies.

26. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2023 be approved.

27. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Stephen Hendry declared an interest in various matters on the agenda as the chair of governors at Holy Cross Catholic Primary School and as a governor at Queensgate Foundation Primary School.

28. **Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

No public questions were received.

29. **Progress Update**

The chairman gave a verbal update of the progress against actions and outcomes from previous meetings. It was noted that the Chairman, on behalf of the committee, had written to the Minister about school transport and the response had been circulated to the committee.

RESOLVED:

THAT the progress report be noted.

30. **Mentoring in Schools**

The committee received a verbal presentation from the chair of OUS - an outreach program providing 1:1 mentoring to pupils in Sixth Forms across Hampshire since 2015. Information was shared and discussion took place about how the program had worked at mainland schools and how this would be transferred to schools on the Isle of Wight over the next 12 months. It was requested that the representative returns in 12 months to give the committee an update on progress. This was agreed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the presentation be received and noted.

31. **Children's Services Transition**

The committee received a verbal update from the Director of Children's Services on the end of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight partnership on 31 January 2024. It was reported that good progress had been made by officers on both sides and that the new Director of Children's Services had been appointed and would take up their post on 1 February 2024. The Education and Inclusion Service Manager has also been recruited. The post of Service Director for Children's Services was currently out for recruitment. The committee were advised that the results of the recent Ofsted inspection were due to be published on 15 December 2023 and suggested it be discussed at the next meeting. This was agreed. A discussion was had about what risks the committee were to be aware of and to closely monitor following the end of the Hampshire partnership.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update be noted.

32. **Performance & Budget**

The committee received a presentation update from the Isle of Wight's Service Manager Operations for Children's Services and Hampshire's Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion on the current position with regards to Q2 2023-2024. It was noted that demand for services continued to rise and that the costs of providing services is a significant pressure on the Council.

The biggest risks with the end of the Hampshire partnership were highlighted and discussed and this included that there would likely be an increase in the number of referrals from other professionals, that the number of Looked After Children could increase and this would further increase financial costs to the Council. It was also discussed that attendance and absence rates in schools need to continue to be addressed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Performance Report be noted.

33. IW Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report

The committee received the annual report from the Independent Chair of the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Partnership for 2022/23. This also included the priorities for IWSCP in 2023/24.

RESOLVED:

THAT the IOWSCP Annual Report be noted.

34. Annual Children in Care Report

The committee received the annual report for the first time and were advised by the Service Manager for Children in Care that this would be a key report for the committee to focus on moving forward. Positives and challenges were noted. It was requested that the committee receive a list of upcoming Children in Care events in order to attend. This was agreed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Annual Children in Care Report be noted.

35. SACRE Annual Report 2022-23

The committee received the annual report from the professional adviser to the Isle of Wight SACRE. The committee was presented with how SACRE has worked with schools on the Isle of Wight over the last year. This report included the challenges facing religious education and collective worship in schools and what is being done to address these. This annual report is to be shared with Department for Education and the national SACRE organisation once approved and agreed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Annual Report 2022-2023 from SACRE be noted.

36. Workplan

Consideration was given to the committee's workplan. The Chairman shared that a report on CAMHS and Special Schools was to be added to the workplan.

RESOLVED:

THAT the workplan be received and noted.

37. **Members' Question Time**

Cllr Downer asked an oral question in relation to the recent inquest into headteacher Ruth Perry's death and how OFSTED was being monitored. The Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion shared that OFSTED has agreed to use an independent source to investigate complaints and that their work is also subject to an annual review by the Skills Select Committee of the House of Commons. It was added that with the recent public scrutiny this would also feed into changes and amendments.

CHAIRMAN

Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education & Skills Scrutiny Committee - Progress on Actions & Outcomes

Meeting Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Update	Actioned
Outstanding Actions				
7 December 2023	Annual Children in Care Report It was requested that the committee receive a list of upcoming Children in Care events in order to attend.	Scrutiny Officer	Currently waiting for a list to be able to circulate to the committee	
Actions Completed (Since Last Meeting)				

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**Isle of Wight
Council**

Purpose: For Information

Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Topic	CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRANSITION

Background

1. The Isle of Wight Council entered a partnership with Hampshire County Council in 2013 following Ofsted judging the Isle of Wight children's services to be inadequate and with a failing schools' system. The partnership delivered positive results which led to the Island's first Ofsted judgement of 'good', in 2018.
2. Following Hampshire County Council's request for the strategic partnership to end, Cabinet agreed to the termination of the current partnership agreement with effect from 31 January 2024 returning the overall leadership and management of all Children's Services functions, including education, in-house, with arrangements for 'buy-back' of specialist service support/provision where there is a cost-benefit for a minimum period of twelve months.
3. The new Director for Children's Services will outline the ongoing plan and scrutiny will monitor the progress of the transition.

Focus for Scrutiny

4. What is the action plan and timeline moving forward?
5. What are the challenges that need to be monitored over the course of the next year?
6. How are any risks or issues being mitigated?

Approach

7. Set out the approach for the committee.

Document(s) Attached

8. Appendix 1 – School Placement Planning Presentation Feb 2024

Contact Point: Melanie White, Statutory Scrutiny Officer,
(01983) 821000 ext 8876, e-mail melanie.white@iow.gov.uk



Scrutiny Committee Report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Title	CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRANSITION TO COUNCIL CONTROL
Report of	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Executive Summary

1. Previous partnership arrangements with Hampshire County Council (HCC) relating to the delivery of children's services on the Island came to an end on 31st January 2024, and the new delivery model became operational on 1st February. This report provides an update on the transition of services to Isle of Wight Council control, and an overview of priorities for the next twelve months, including school place planning.

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee notes the:

2. progress with the establishment of the Council's new Children's Services Directorate.
3. decisions that need to be made about the future delivery model for services currently delivered under service level agreements (SLAs) with Hampshire County Council (HCC).
4. other key priorities for the Directorate over the next twelve months, and the role of Members in supporting successful delivery.

Background

5. The Isle of Wight Council assumed control of children's services as planned on 1st February, with the new Strategic Director of Children's Services and the new Service Director for Education, Inclusion and Access taking up their posts on that day. The new Service Director for Children's Social Care has been appointed and is due to join the Council later in March. The post is currently filled by an experienced social care leader who has joined the Council on an interim basis until then.

6. Service level agreements (SLAs) have been agreed with Hampshire County Council (HCC) for the delivery of several important services until the 31 January 2025. These include educational psychology, school improvement and the multi-agency safeguarding hub. The Council must decide its preferred delivery model for all services currently delivered under an SLA as soon as possible, so that time is sufficient to establish any required alternatives. It also cannot be assumed that HCC would be willing to extend the duration of the current SLAs on terms acceptable to the Isle of Wight Council.
7. During this period of significant organisational change, maintaining the stability and quality of services for children, young people and their families is a key priority. Fundamental to this is contract monitoring of the SLAs; review of current, and implementation of new, processes (such as relating to quality assurance, governance, and finance); and the embedding of the new directorate within the “One Council” agenda.
8. Leaders and colleagues across the Children’s Services Directorate are also focusing on the following priorities:
 - 8.1. developing our workforce, so that colleagues are able to provide high quality support to the children, young people, families and partners who need support;
 - 8.2. listening to the voices of children, young people, families and stakeholders so that their views can be included in the work that we do;
 - 8.3. working with other teams within the Directorate who may be supporting the same children, young people and families so that they receive joined up and integrated support;
 - 8.4. collaborating with other council departments whose services may also have relevance for improving outcomes achieved by children and young people;
 - 8.5. partnering with external agencies such as the Integrated Care Board and organisations such as those in the voluntary sector so that the expertise and resource made available for the benefit of children, young people and families is maximised;
 - 8.6. focusing on maximising the independence of children and young people from as early as possible, so that they are equipped with the skills they need to achieve their potential.
9. Additional priorities for the Education, Access and Inclusion team include:
 - 9.1. the development of a new holistic education strategy for the Island to improve education outcomes for all children and young people;
 - 9.2. the inclusion within this of strategies to improve the local area’s partnership arrangements relating to the provision of support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which will be inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in the near future;

the delivery of the Council's statutory duties relating to SEND; the financial sustainability of the SEND system on the Island and performance against the terms of the Safety Valve Agreement in place between the Council and the Department for Education. The Safety Valve Agreement is the subject of a separate item on this agenda;

9.3. the inclusion within the holistic education strategy of a new school place planning strategy and a strategy to address the financial stability of the Island's school system. More information about the development of the school place planning strategy, including a draft timeline of activity, is available at Appendix 1.

9.4. Priorities for the Children's Social Care team include:

9.5. the delivery of the action plan arising from the inspection of youth offending services on the Isle of Wight, the findings of which were published in November 2023;

9.6. the finalisation and delivery of the action plan arising from the inspection of the Isle of Wight local authority children's services that took place in October and November 2023. This is the subject of a separate agenda item at this meeting;

9.7. a review of practice relating to corporate parenting on the Island, and the implementation of any necessary improvements identified.

Appendices Attached

10. Appendix 1: School Place Planning Presentation

Background Papers

11. [Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve Agreement': Isle of Wight](#)
12. [An inspection of youth offending services in Isle of Wight YJS](#)
13. [Inspection of the Isle of Wight local authority children's services](#)

Contact Point: Ashley Whittaker, Strategic Director of Children's Services,
Ashley.Whittaker@jow.gov.uk

ASHLEY WHITTAKER
*Strategic Director of
Children's Services*

CLLR JONATHAN BACON
*Cabinet Member for
Children's Services,
Education and Corporate
Functions*

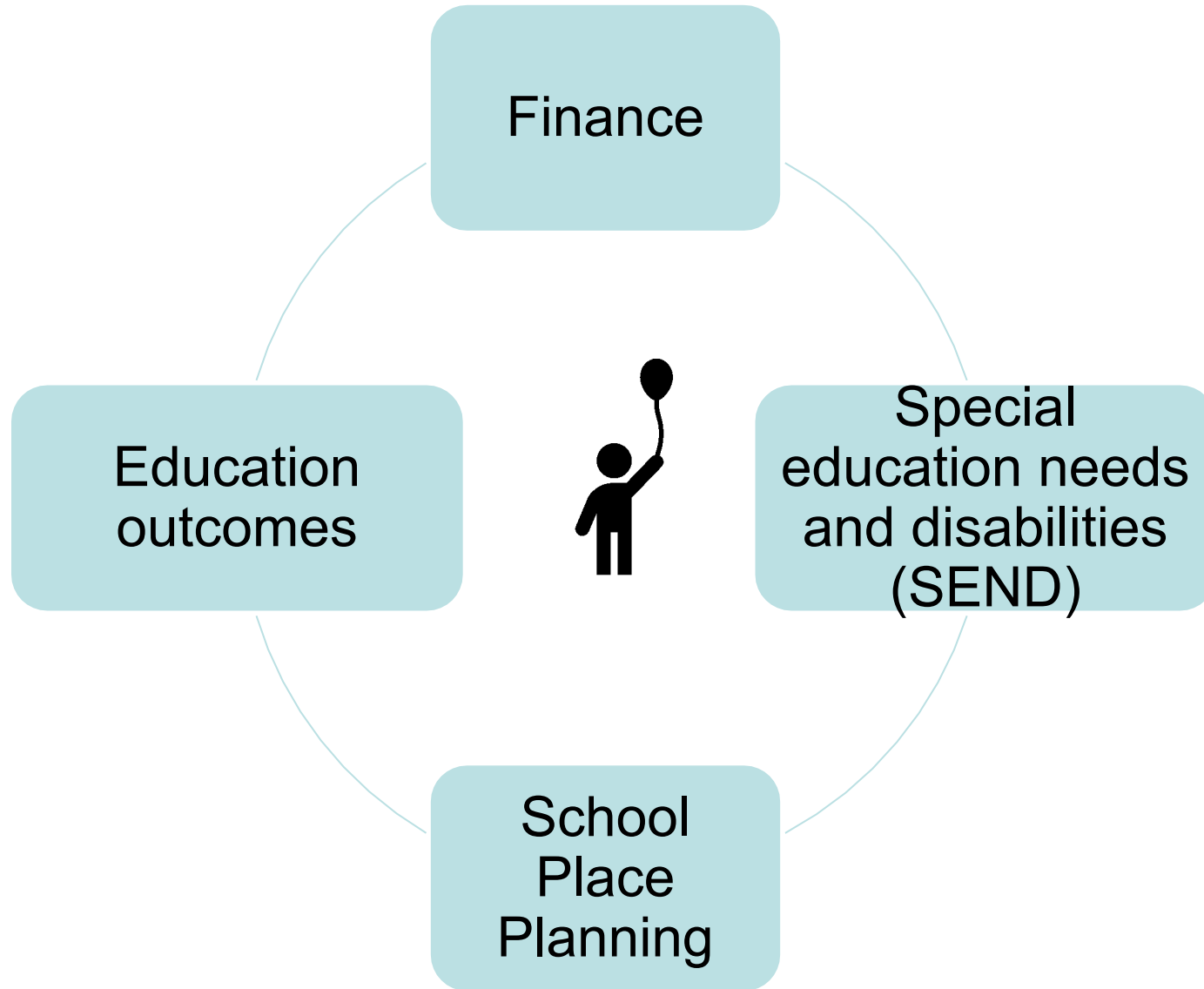
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Isle of Wight
Council

Children's Services - School Place Planning

23 February 2024



Agenda



Introduction



School Place Planning Overview



Forecasts and data

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Impacts of surplus places



Proposed timeframe



Questions

What is School Place Planning?

- The Isle of Wight Council has a statutory duty to ensure the sufficiency of school places for children living on the Isle of Wight.
- Accordingly, the Isle of Wight Corporate Plan, states that the Council will work with local communities to maintain and ensure appropriate local school provision.
- School place planning requires attention to all of the factors that will influence pupil numbers and also the factors that influence the abilities of schools to thrive.

Things considered when planning:

- Where the children who attend the school live
- Whether the children that attend a faith school do so because of its denomination
- Financial viability
- Transport implications
- Environment implications
- Quality of provision
- Number of pupils choosing to attend the school
- Fabric of the building
- Department for Education guidance about rural schools
- Pupil movement
- Local housing building
- Diversity (faith schools)
- Factors that arise during a consultation process

Federation/Academisation

Nearly half of Isle of Wight primary schools already share leadership
Most share part time staff or have staff that also work in other schools

Overview Data – Primary places



Forecast Islandwide capacity:

	4 year olds	Places available	Surplus
2023/24	1163	1349	186
2024/25	1079	1329	250
2025/26	1085	1319	234
2026/27	1044	1319	275
2027/28	920	1319	399

Isle of Wight Planning Areas



This review is not about individual planning areas. We require a whole Island approach

Overview Data – Primary places

Primary Planning Area	Number of Primary Schools	Year R: Total Planned Admission Number Sept	Year R: Number on Roll Sept	Year R: % surplus Sept	Surplus capacity - Year R:	Year R: Proposed Planned Admission Number Sept	Year R: Forecast No. on Roll Sept	Year R: Forecast % surplus Sept	Surplus capacity - Year R:
		2023	2023	2023		2025	2025	2025	
Ryde Town	6	240	204	15%	36	240	160	33%	80
Sandown & Shanklin	7	235	200	15%	35	235	164	30%	71
Cowes	4	180	139	23%	41	180	114	37%	66
Ventnor	4	112	71	37%	41	105	71	32%	34
East Cowes	2	90	75	17%	15	90	66	27%	24
Ryde Rural	2	45	43	4%	2	45	26	42%	19
Newport	9	373	292	22%	81	350	346	4%	4
West Wight	4	74	76	3%	-2	74	81	-9%	-7
		1349	1100		249	1319	1028		291

The reason we must take action:

- This isn't an issue that is forecast to happen, it is upon us now. Currently, we have **1898** vacant primary school places
- By March 2026, it is forecast that 21 Primary Schools will be in budget deficit. Primary School deficits are estimated to be a cumulative **£3.8m** and pose a significant financial risk to the Isle of Wight Council
- As surplus numbers increase over the coming years schools will be faced with ever greater financial challenges and reduced ability to offer a wide, quality, and varied curriculum. Ultimately impacting school standards
- Parents, carers, staff, and pupils would continue to be faced with uncertainties around the availability and quality of the educational offer on the Island
- We have an opportunity to implement change across the Island's education system.

What is a small school?

- The Department for Education define a small school as one form of entry or less
- There are only 11 primary schools on the Isle of Wight with greater than one form entry
- 27 schools on the Isle of Wight are small schools, many of which will have to have mixed aged classes – these can be much harder to teach well – and much harder to recruit to - and much harder to afford.

Impacts of surplus places: finances

- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires local authorities to have a Scheme for Financing Schools. The scheme drives the requirements of schools in managing their deficits and the LA role relates to adherence to the scheme only, as it has no power to write off or contribute towards individual school deficits
- Most schools on the Island are raising concerns about the ability to set balanced budgets in coming years. In a recent consultation with mainstream schools on school funding, most respondents emphasised concerns around the overall quantum of funding not being sufficient to meet current costs, in particular pressures around support staff pay and cost of supporting children with education and healthcare plans
- Maintained schools and academies receive the same funding from the DfE.

Impacts of surplus places: finances

- When schools are required to become (sponsored) academies, this results in deficits falling to the local authority
- If schools choose to join an academy trust, any debt falls to the incoming trust, but it is highly unusual for trusts to agree to take on schools with deficits
- When a maintained school closes, any deficit balances fall to the local authority and therefore surplus capacity increases the risk of inefficient schools and potentially increased deficits, impacting local authority budgets.

Impacts of surplus places:

Educational outcomes

- September 2021 – June 2022 analysis of Ofsted outcomes show that England's smallest schools are 5 times more likely to be rated as inadequate than the largest ones, with none rated outstanding
- Isle of Wight headteachers have shared with us that in small schools with few staff, it is very difficult to spare teacher time to commit to undertake and embed the training required to deliver a broad curriculum that leads to excellent outcomes for children, and is also required to be fully in place in order to be judged to be good by Ofsted
- This results in, more time required to plan the curriculum and putting the required assessment criteria in place
- Teachers may have to teach mixed age/stage classes, causing additional workload, stress and wider differentiation for the pupils. This not only effects teacher well-being and mental health but affects standards as with a variety of breath and ages within one class, pupils cannot receive the tailored support they need to thrive and achieve. Teachers struggle to cater for the range of academic needs within one class.

Impacts of surplus places:

Educational outcomes

- ✦ Whilst the Isle of Wight primary schools have improved in all key indicators, the Isle of Wight is still below the national average
- ✦ Secondary schools continued to improve relative to other LAs nationally

Social wellbeing

- ✦ Isle of Wight Headteachers have shared with us that they find children thrive when they have a peer group that they can interact with; even more so when the school can field a team and compete with other schools in events.

Impacts of surplus places: SEND



Larger schools are more likely to be able to support resourced provisions



Larger schools are more able to afford additional adults and specialist provision



Shortfall of SEND Places– maximise the opportunity to reutilise accommodation to address the issue across the Island

Proposed **Draft** Consultation Timeframe:

	Date	Comments
Members briefing	23 February 2024	
Public Engagement	April 2024	To include high level summary of the issues and impacts of surplus places. Briefings to be undertaken across the Island, and views sought on how the process could be managed going forward.
Cabinet	13 June 2024	Paper to Cabinet to note SPP concerns and seek approval to consult on removal of surplus places
Commence public consultation	21 June 2024	
Conclude 6 week consultation	2 August 2024	
Cabinet	12 September 2024	Paper to Cabinet with outcomes of consultation and seek approval to publish notices for final recommended options
Commence public consultation	27 September 2024	
Conclude 6 week consultation	8 November 2024	
Cabinet	9 January 2025	Approval to issue final Public Notice
Proposed closures	31 August 2025	

Summary

- The Council has a statutory duty to manage the provision of school places
- School place planning is a continuous workstream. The data is clear that we currently have and will continue to have a significant level of surplus capacity in the primary sector that must be addressed
- We understand this is a very sensitive topic and we hope this presentation has helped set out all the complexities that surround this issue
- The well-being and support of education staff across the Island must be kept at the forefront during this difficult time.

Thank you

Questions



**Isle of Wight
Council**

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Purpose: For Information

Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Topic	CHILDREN'S SERVICES OFSTED REPORT

Background

1. The Ofsted report that was published on 18 December 2023 determined that the Isle of Wight Council's services for children in need have been rated "Good" following a four-day inspection.
2. The judgement of 'the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection' was graded as 'requires improvement to be good'.

Focus for Scrutiny

3. Have the areas that were highlighted for improvement from the previous inspection been improved?
4. What are the key recommendations for improvement resulting from the recent Ofsted inspection?
5. What plans are in place to address those recommendations and how will they be monitored?
6. What are the main areas scrutiny should focus on in its upcoming meetings to ensure that improvements are made?

Document(s) Attached

7. Appendix 1 – IWC Ofsted Report Oct23.
8. Appendix 2 – Draft Ofsted Action Plan

Contact Point: Melanie White, Statutory Scrutiny Officer,
(01983) 821000 ext 8876, e-mail melanie.white@iow.gov.uk

Scrutiny Committee Report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Title	CHILDREN'S SERVICE'S OFSTED REPORT AND ACTION PLAN
Report of	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of the Isle of Wight children's services held between 30th October and 3rd November 2023, and to share the draft action plan arising from the inspection.
2. The outcome of the inspection was as follows:

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good.
The experiences and progress of children in care	Good
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

3. In addition to many areas of strength, Ofsted identified some specific areas for improvement. These are:
 - 3.1 The routine inclusion by the local authority of partner agencies in child protection strategy discussions and assessments.
 - 3.2 The opportunities for the voices of children and care leavers to be heard at a corporate level.

3.3 The quality of oversight and monitoring of:

- 3.3.1 the pre-proceedings process in the Public Law Outline (PLO)
- 3.3.2 permanence for children
- 3.3.3 private fostering

3.4 Caseloads in the children's assessment and safeguarding teams

4. The local authority is required to produce an action plan in response to the findings of the inspection, detailing where service improvements will be made, and how progress will be monitored. This action plan must be submitted to Ofsted by 27th March 2024. The draft action plan has been considered by the children's services departmental management team and is now being presented for discussion prior to being finalised for submission to Ofsted.

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

- 5. notes the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of children's services;
- 6. reviews and provides feedback on the draft action plan;
- 7. supports the mechanism for monitoring progress against the measures included within the plan so that accountability for progress in delivering excellent services for children is maintained at the highest level.

Background

8. Strengths identified by Ofsted included:

- 8.1 Effective Early Help Service Provision and Support. Evidence was found of the investment in and commitment to early help services, ensuring families have access to appropriate support at an early stage. Evidence was also seen which demonstrated the availability of various services during times of crisis for families, including evidence that we undertake comprehensive child protection enquiries, and provide effective support for children at risk outside the home.
- 8.2 Comprehensive Assessments and Direct Engagement. This area focuses on there being evidence of comprehensive assessments for most children, demonstrating a clear understanding of their needs. Additionally, direct work evidenced that methods are used to understand children's wishes and views better, enhancing the effectiveness of work done with them.
- 8.3 Strengthening Parenting Capacity and Education Support. Efforts are made to strengthen parenting capacity through successful programmes, which are reducing risks and supporting children to remain safely at home. Additionally, there is effective support for children who are missing from, or not in full time education.

- 8.4 Consistent Care, Recognition, and Development. This area highlights the consistent provision of good support and care from social workers and foster carers. It also includes the recognition of children's achievements through regular events and ceremonies. The inspection noted improvements in personal education plans and the allocation of personal advisors at age 16 which provides greater opportunity for meaningful relationships to be built at this critical stage in the life of a cared for young person. It was further recognised that there is a focus on workforce development, with efforts to increase and develop the workforce to ensure better support can be consistently provided for children and families.
- 8.5 Resilient and Adaptable Senior Leaders. Senior leaders have demonstrated resilience and adaptability in their responses. They have shown the ability to navigate challenges effectively and adjust strategies as needed to address the evolving needs of children and families under their care.
- 8.6 Informed and Supportive Corporate and Political Leaders. Corporate and political leaders are well-informed and supportive of initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of children and families. They are actively involved in decision-making processes and demonstrate a commitment to providing the necessary resources and support, to drive positive outcomes.
9. The actions being taken to address the areas for improvement identified in 1.3 above include the following:
- 9.1 The routine inclusion by the local authority of partner agencies in child protection strategy discussions and assessments. Work is being undertaken with our partner agencies including safeguarding leads. This work is being delivered through the Local Safeguarding Partnership and protocols are in place to ensure invitation to and attendance of representatives at these meetings in which important decisions are made. A themed practice audit and dip sampling will enable us to evidence an increase in partners' attendance at these meetings and going forward, this will be form part of our performance monitoring with operational managers from the various agencies that make up the safeguarding partnership.
- 9.2 The opportunities for the voices of children and care leavers to be heard at a corporate level. Work has begun to refresh our corporate parenting board action plan. This has now been updated to include more opportunities for participation. The findings, actions, and impact on improvements from the two separate children in care and care leavers Bright Spot surveys are reported into the corporate parenting board. Corporate parents are offered the opportunity to meet with children in care and care leavers. These opportunities include the STAR Awards, Come Dine with Us, social activities, and Have Your Say Weeks. Corporate parents are also invited to the Youth Council and the Hearing Young People's Experiences group.
- 9.3 The quality of oversight and monitoring of the pre-proceedings process in the Public Law Outline (PLO). A new process has been implemented for members of the senior management team to track the quality of practice and provide oversight and monitoring of the timeliness of the pre-proceedings process.

Systems for the review of all pre-proceedings activity are being refreshed to ensure there is line management accountability and service manager oversight for all children who are subject of this process. This monthly review is now recorded on a child's file demonstrating oversight of progress. PLO performance is reported through to the children's management team regularly.

- 9.4 The quality of oversight and monitoring of permanence for children. Every child in care now has their legal permanence status tracked and progressed by the service manager. From March 2024, a monthly care planning meeting will be held to review the progress of permanence planning for each of our cared for children. Through this mechanism, opportunity is provided to consider if there is any drift or delay in the progression towards permanence for each child. This means steps can be taken to address any areas of practice which might be contributing to delays in outcomes being achieved for children in a timely manner. The outcome of these discussions will be recorded on our electronic files.
- 9.5 The quality of oversight and monitoring of private fostering. Guidance has been reissued to all front-line staff, on the assessment and management of private fostering arrangements. A flow chart has been developed to support staff and managers in following processes. These are available to all staff and can be located within the Children's Toolkit. Workshops have been provided to managers to support a consistency in approach to responding to referrals, indicating a child may be living in a private fostering arrangement. Case file audits were undertaken to ensure those children who had been identified as potentially living in privately fostering arrangements, had been appropriately assessed and that any plans arising were of good quality. Any newly identified private fostering arrangements are now reported through to senior managers in the performance meetings in order to ensure senior management oversight of any arrangements. An e-learning training package is being developed for all staff and will be delivered this spring.
- 9.6 Caseloads in the children's assessment and safeguarding teams. There is weekly oversight of caseloads by service managers. Caseloads have reduced overall due to new staff joining the services allowing work to be more evenly distributed amongst social workers. This continues to be an area of focus for managers and work is planned to ensure caseloads are maintained at the lowest level possible. Service demand is routinely monitored so that reasons are well understood so that strategic responses are put in place to respond to demand wherever possible. Recruitment and retention activity continues to ensure vacancy rates are reduced. The introduction of the enhanced market supplement in 2023 for social workers within frontline teams has proven successful and has led to reduced turnover rates. Recruitment activity in December 2023 has also led to an increase in agency social workers joining the council. The new permanent senior management team have worked at pace with the service managers, to quickly establish the new arrangements for managing the service and those by which we will self-govern and monitor ourselves against performance indicators and other measures to assure ourselves that a relentless focus on high standards of practice continues.

10. A self-assessment of all elements of children’s social care provision is currently being undertaken and this will inform a wider action plan. Together with the action plan resulting directly from the inspection, these documents will form the basis of the presentation to Ofsted as part of the annual conversation in July 2024.
11. Defining our ethos. Following staff groups and manager meetings, our new approach to the work we do has started to emerge, which has led to the defining of the Isle of Wight ethos. This approach is bringing a clear sense of direction for the service in the way we will be shaping our service. “Creating Change Together” is the heading under which our new approach to the work of children’s services will be delivered. This defines the way in which we will work with partner agencies including our education colleagues, and most importantly with our families and young people. Whereas previously, the education, special educational needs, access and resources and children’s social care teams all operated separately, reporting into different Assistant Directors in Hampshire, the new senior management team is bringing the directorate together as one cohesive service for the benefit of local children and families. Staff believe there is good potential to improve as an independent children’s service.
12. A new Children and Young People’s Plan is being drafted with consultation planned with children and young people informing the shaping and delivery of the plan. This is being developed and implemented through the Children’s Trust, a multi-agency partnership focussed on safeguarding children and promoting better outcomes.
13. The project overseeing the implementation of the new electronic case management system called Mosaic re-commenced on the Isle of Wight in February 2024, with implementation of the new system anticipated later this year.
14. The leadership team is working to ensure measures are in place for equality and inclusion issues to be considered and effectively responded to as a golden thread throughout all our work.

Appendices Attached

15. Appendix 1: Ofsted report published on 15 December 2024
16. Appendix 2: Draft Ofsted Action Plan, March 2024

Background Papers

17. [Ofsted focused visit to Isle of Wight Children’s Services, July 2021.](#)
18. [Ofsted inspection of children’s social care services, November 2018.](#)

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ASHLEY WHITTAKER
Strategic Director of Children’s Services

CLLR JONATHAN BACON
*Cabinet Member for Children’s Services,
Education and Corporate Functions*

Inspection of the Isle of Wight local authority children's services

Inspection dates: 30 October to 3 November 2023

Lead inspector: Amanda Maxwell, His Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Good
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

Most children and families in contact with children's services continue to receive a good service, with some improvements to quality since the last inspection in 2018. There has been some recent deterioration in discrete areas of practice, in particular in relation to children who need help and protection. The 10-year strategic partnership between the Isle of Wight Council and Hampshire County Council ends in January 2024 and leaders are focusing on achieving a seamless transition. The partnership has brought about stable and consistent leadership. The island presents unique challenges and opportunities that leaders have understood and used to create a service that improves the experiences and progress of most children and families.

Demand for services has increased rapidly since the pandemic. Senior leaders have been resilient and adaptable in their response and have been supported by additional funding agreed by elected members. There has been investment in and commitment to the early help offer, the chosen social work approach and increasing sufficiency, to provide more and varied options so that children and care leavers can remain living on the island. Consultation with partner agencies is not consistently strong, and management oversight in discrete areas is not robust enough. Children's voices are not always heard at the most senior levels. Caseloads in some teams are too high.

What needs to improve?

- The routine inclusion by the local authority of partner agencies in child protection strategy discussions and assessments.
- The opportunities for the voices of children and care leavers to be heard at a corporate level.
- The quality of oversight and monitoring of:
 - the pre-proceedings process in the Public Law Outline (PLO)
 - permanence for children
 - private fostering.
- Caseloads in the children's assessment and safeguarding teams.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: requires improvement to be good

1. Children and families have good access to a wide variety of early help services that deliver the right support to families at an early stage. Skilled lead practitioners work effectively with families and other key professionals to support and enable families to make positive changes. Family plans ensure that timely progress is made for children. If concerns escalate, referrals are made promptly to statutory services.
2. Workers in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) undertake checks swiftly and gather information from partner agencies to help to understand and identify children's needs, including levels of risk and harm. Partner agencies and schools understand thresholds well. There is consistent management oversight at all stages and decision-making is robust and appropriate, although the detail and quality of management recording are variable. While attempts are made to inform parents or carers of referrals at an early stage, consent is not routinely sought.
3. A significant number of children are subject to repeat referrals. For some of these children, the support provided has not helped to achieve sustained improvements to their lives. Senior managers continue to analyse these figures to identify any contributory factors.
4. Arrangements to provide children, parents and carers with support at times of crisis and distress outside of office hours and at weekends are effective. Staff in the out-of-hours service liaise appropriately with daytime services to help to ensure that they provide coordinated support to children.
5. When children are at risk of harm, child protection strategy meetings are held in a timely way; decision-making is clear and is based on the information available. However, relevant multi-agency partners are not routinely invited to attend strategy meetings. This means that there is not effective sharing of

information at these meetings, where important decisions are being made about action to be taken.

6. Children subject to child protection enquiries are seen swiftly and spoken to alone, and most enquiries are used purposefully to help to safeguard children and to inform children's assessments and outcomes. The majority of child protection conferences and core group meetings are timely and well attended by family and professionals; the subsequent plans are shaped to improve children's lives.
7. Most children's assessments are comprehensive and contain helpful information about children's needs, experiences and family life, including consideration of previous concerns and interventions. However, for some children, the assessments are being closed too quickly and without relevant input from other agencies. They lack thorough analysis, and the cumulative impact of neglect and domestic abuse is not always recognised.
8. Most children are seen regularly at home and alone by workers who get to know them well. Direct work helps children's wishes and views to be understood and articulated within their assessments, plans and reviews.
9. The resilience around the family team (RAFT) works intensively with children and families to enable children to remain with their families or as part of focused intervention identified within child protection plans. The team is successful in strengthening parenting capacity, helping to reduce risk and support children to remain living safely at home.
10. Disabled children in need of help and protection receive good support from their workers, who know them well. Person-centred assessments and plans support them to remain living with their families.
11. Children at risk outside of the home are supported and reviewed effectively through the missing, exploited and trafficked risk assessment conference (METRAC) group. High-risk strategy meetings consider the risks to children and appropriate action is taken when necessary to secure their physical safety.
12. Social workers are well supported by accessible managers, although in the children's assessment and safeguarding teams (CAST), where caseloads are high, this was not routinely evidenced in records.
13. Children aged 16 and 17 who are at risk of becoming homeless are provided with information in respect of their rights and entitlements. Children are supported into safe accommodation when needed and appropriate.
14. The small number of children known to live in private fostering arrangements are not always identified, assessed or supported in a timely way. Senior leaders

do not have robust oversight of these children's arrangements and support and services are not delivered in line with regulations.

15. When concerns escalate or remain too high for children, appropriate steps are taken to initiate the pre-proceedings phase of the PLO process. Letters to parents are purposeful and of good quality. Children and parents routinely spend extended periods of time within the pre-proceedings phase to support diversion from care, and diversion rates are high. The rationale for this prolonged time period is not well recorded. The quality of senior leaders' oversight and tracking is insufficiently robust to ensure that families achieve timely change within children's time frames.
16. The local authority designated officer provides an efficient and effective service in response to concerns that are raised about adults who are in positions of trust.
17. The local authority's work to support children who are not in full-time education or are identified as missing from education is effective. Much of this work is carried out by experienced members of staff who fully understand the importance of their work in this area. Numbers of children who are electively home-educated have increased considerably in recent years; appropriate action is taken to safeguard them when concerns arise.

The experiences and progress of children in care: good

18. Children come into care when they need to. They benefit from consistently good support and care from committed and caring social workers and foster carers.
19. Children's reviews are timely, and the voice of children is evident in their plans. Independent reviewing officers monitor children's progress between reviews effectively. Children's records are mostly well written directly to them.
20. Children return home in a planned way when it is safe for them to do so. Reunification plans focus on their best interests and needs. Plans are implemented at a pace that supports a successful return home. When reunification with parents is not an option, many children are supported to live within their wider family network, following connected persons assessments and other considerations of the child's wider family.
21. The vast majority of children in care are settled in foster families that embrace them and they make good progress. Children are supported and encouraged to have interests and hobbies. Children, including those who are adopted, live with their brothers and sisters whenever possible, when it is in their best interests. They are helped to understand the reasons why they are in care and how this influences the time that they can spend with their families. While many children live in successful long-term arrangements, some of them have not had the

opportunity to experience the emotional and practical sense of security that formal confirmation of these arrangements brings.

22. Regular social events and ceremonies are held to celebrate children's achievements. Senior children's services and corporate leaders and members attend these celebration events. They have opportunities to talk with Isle of Wight children in care and hear about their experiences. However, children's attendance and influence at the corporate parenting board are very limited. Leaders have recognised this and have appropriate plans in place to address this swiftly. There is minimal consideration of how to engage and reflect the voice of those children who live at a distance from the island.
23. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children receive high-quality support from specialist workers. Children are seen regularly and are supported by interpreters who are familiar to them. There are positive relationships between children and their social workers. This helps workers to fully understand children's circumstances, situations and journeys. This information is well considered in drawing up effective plans that support children. Children are helped to trace their family when connections have been lost.
24. The majority of children in care are supported effectively by their social workers, who build meaningful relationships with them. Some children experience helpful and powerful life-story work with a specialist worker, which helps them to understand their individual stories. Children placed for adoption benefit from thoughtful, detailed and well-illustrated life-story books. However, there is insufficient capacity to offer this more widely and so not all children who could benefit from life-story work are able to do so.
25. Children in care who are at risk of extra-familial harm have their needs considered and addressed effectively; this helps to minimise risk for children. When children go missing, they are offered a return home conversation, although current recording problems mean that take-up rates are not clear.
26. Planning for disabled children's transition into adulthood begins at an early stage. Social workers advocate for the support and funding that is needed to meet children's needs as they become adults. 'Staying put' arrangements, Shared Lives or suitable residential provision are explored, and parallel planning is undertaken so that any uncertainty about adult services is managed and mitigated early.
27. Children's physical health needs are met and regularly reviewed. For some children, there is delay in accessing more specialist assessments to meet their emotional and mental health needs. This is a particular challenge when children live at a distance from the local authority.
28. Children are encouraged to attend and engage in education. They are well supported by their carers, who encourage them to be aspirational in their

learning and educational achievements. Recent changes to improve the quality and impact of personal education plans for children are beginning to have a positive effect, although senior leaders know more work is needed to ensure that this is embedded. Staff at the virtual school are ambitious for children and some children are making positive progress within their capabilities as a result of the support that they receive.

29. The local authority has robust systems in place to assure itself that its commissioned supported accommodation providers have been, or are in the process of being, registered with Ofsted. Children living in supported accommodation have their individual needs well met and this is evident through their plans and through the progress that they make. Children are very rarely placed in unregistered children's homes, and none are in use at this time.
30. Senior leaders demonstrate an effective commitment to increasing the sufficiency and stability of foster homes and children's homes for children in care. They maintain an ongoing focus to positively support foster carers in meeting the needs of the children in their care. This is alongside the continual foster carer recruitment programme and a recognition of the need to improve the response rate to enquiries and applications. The approach of the fostering team provides carers with comprehensive and informed support.

The experiences and progress of care leavers: good

31. Care leavers benefit from the allocation of personal advisers (PAs) at the age of 16. This affords them opportunities and time to develop positive and trusting relationships with their PAs. These positive relationships form the foundation of the support that assists care leavers as they move into adulthood. PAs are committed to their young people and advocate for them well; they also help them to maintain positive relationships with family and friends. Care leavers are visited regularly by their PAs and the use of digital communication helps them to stay in touch and ask for help and support if needed.
32. Most care leavers are helped to maintain good physical and mental health through the support and guidance given to them by their PAs. However, additional emotional and mental health support is not readily available to care leavers, so PAs signpost them to alternative services while they wait to access universal services.
33. Care leavers are routinely provided with passports and the other important documents that they need. Care leavers know how to access their health information and PAs support young people to access their information and records when needed.
34. The local offer for care leavers is lengthy and not easily accessible. It does not demonstrate a genuine commitment to support care leavers, nor does it show ambition and aspiration for them to succeed. Senior leaders are currently

reviewing the local offer and working to improve its accessibility. PAs advocate for care leavers, which ensures that their individual needs are met. Care leavers living on the Isle of Wight are exempt from council tax, but this support is not consistently available to those living elsewhere.

35. There is limited evidence of care leavers being involved in, influencing and participating in the development of services.
36. The availability of suitable housing is a challenge. A very small number of care leavers live temporarily in bed and breakfast accommodation, although PAs do all that they can to identify more suitable arrangements and encourage care leavers to make more permanent choices. Senior leaders have been successful, as need rises, in increasing and improving their housing offer options for care leavers.
37. Care leavers' pathway plans, known as 'My life, my future', are dynamic and personal. They capture care leavers' needs and ambitions and detail what is required to meet those needs and to help care leavers to make progress in their daily lives. Some care leavers chair their own reviews. Many plans celebrate their individual achievements and detail their circumstances, and the relationships and support that they experience.
38. Care leavers who are parents receive vital person-centred support that assists them to care for themselves and their children. Care leavers in custody and on release receive regular and effective support.
39. PAs provide highly effective support to unaccompanied asylum-seeking care leavers and seek to understand the complexities of their needs and vulnerabilities. PAs take time to gain insight into their journeys to the UK and the impact this has had on them.
40. PAs are sensitive and supportive as care leavers explore their gender and sexuality.
41. Care leavers are supported to engage with a range of services that help them to access education and employment. There is currently no active plan or offer in place to address and provide wider occupational opportunities for training and employment, including apprenticeships.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: good

42. The inspection took place at a very difficult time for the local authority, following closely on from the serious illness and subsequent death of a senior manager. During this time, a number of her colleagues had stepped in to cover more senior roles, while managing their own as well as colleagues' sadness and grief.

43. Senior leaders have sustained and further developed the quality and impact of social work practice on the island since the inspection in 2018. They have maintained a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service through some very challenging times, including the pandemic, the rise in demand and workforce turnover. While some areas of practice have improved since the previous inspection, the experiences of children in need of help and protection are not as consistently strong as they were in 2018.
44. Corporate and political leaders and members are well informed and supportive, and maintain a thorough understanding of the service's strengths and weaknesses.
45. The corporate parenting board has recently undergone some changes to improve its effectiveness. New members are undertaking training to ensure that they fully understand their responsibilities. Corporate parents have a clear action plan that identifies areas they wish to improve and develop, which includes that children are fully visible and engaged in the corporate planning board meetings. However, the plan is not sufficiently aspirational for children overall. For example, there is not a collective sense of responsibility for all children for whom they are the corporate parent.
46. Senior leaders, together with political leaders, have responded well to growing demands. There has been significant pressure on the workforce due to the increase in demand in the MASH, alongside a churn in workers within some teams, but especially in the children's assessment and safeguarding teams. This has meant that some workers have had much higher caseloads than senior leaders would like, and this has had a negative impact on some areas of practice. Senior leaders made some amendments to the structure and number of social work teams a few months ago in an effort to improve resilience and address this. However, demand has continued to increase, and senior leaders have recently identified that additional workers and teams are needed to reduce caseloads to the desired level; some agency social workers have been recruited recently to assist with this.
47. The majority of staff in the service benefit from regular, effective and reflective supervision that guides and supports workers with their practice. However, social workers in the children's assessment and safeguarding teams do not routinely receive this level and quality of supervision. Senior leaders are taking action to improve this area of practice.
48. A wide variety of programmes and initiatives are helping to increase and develop the workforce. This is alongside the various additional learning and development opportunities, including the apprenticeship scheme. Staff value the opportunities available to them.

49. Senior leaders have continued to take assertive steps to increase the sufficiency of accommodation for children on the island. They are continuing to develop and improve their sufficiency offer through the modernising placements programme. This has included strengthening the offer for foster carers and being creative in the commissioning of accommodation and placements to meet children's needs.

50. Senior managers use learning from feedback, surveys and complaints effectively to inform them of areas of practice that require review or improvement and development. They have commissioned reviews of aspects of the service to improve their understanding, such as a review of services in the MASH.

51. There is a wealth of reporting systems and a clear structure for quality assurance and performance oversight. However, workers have been significantly hindered by the inaccurate data produced by the current electronic recording system, which is cumbersome and inefficient and does not support effective social work practice. Plans have been in place for some time to address this and senior leaders report that the new system will be in place shortly. Managers have had to create workarounds to ensure that the data that they gather provides them with clarity and a true reflection of their work. Audit activity also provides senior leaders with an insight into the quality of practice. There are regular performance meetings and reports that provide helpful and insightful information about all areas of practice and impact.

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2024

The inspection of the Isle of Wight local authority children’s services took place between 30 October and 3 November 2023. The outcome was that the Island achieved an overall grading of Good. Leaders and staff in children’s services were pleased to note the many positives that were highlighted throughout the inspection. More work is required to demonstrate that the island is providing consistently good services for children who need help and protection.

The inspection was undertaken during a period of transition as the strategic partnership between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight was drawing to close. The conclusion of this successful partnership was 31 January 2024.

There is a recognition that more work needs to be done to improve services for some children. It was recognised that there has been a challenge for the island, in recruiting and retaining social workers. Consequently, there have been periods of higher vacancies which has increased caseloads for some. Leaders know and understand the correlation between higher caseloads and the impact of this on the quality of work with children and families. It was acknowledged during the inspection that leaders understood staffing levels needed to increase and caseloads needed to reduce. A further priority is that managers need to have time and space to provide consistently good standards of supervision and management oversight so that all staff in children’s social care, are well supported in their roles to deliver high quality services.

For some families, children are being re-referred and therefore a revolving door situation occurs. There is a need to reduce the number of families who are re-referred, and this is better achieved when there is concerted focus on getting interventions right first time.

The Island is a unique and wonderful place to work. Now in a position of having independent control in how services are shaped and delivered, work has begun to set about establishing refreshed policies and procedures and systems through which social workers will be supported to do their best work and the managers are supported to effectively and consistently provide oversight and scrutiny of practice to ensure all planning for children is of the highest standard and progressed in a timely manner. The infrastructure

supporting the delivery of children's services is being refreshed for example a new electronic recording system has been purchased and the move to this system will take place later this year. This will resolve areas found by inspectors in which the current system is creating problems for staff in being able to record their work easily and effectively.

The priorities for Children's Services are to not only respond to areas highlighted by the inspection but also build on the progress made thus far by aspiring for excellence in the delivery of services. This work is being underpinned by an ethos of "Creating Change Together" which speaks to the determination to ensure that services are built with children and their families and with partner agencies included in the ongoing development of these services. In children's services it is recognised that the journey to an outstanding service, can only be achieved when we continually get the basics right and when each and every person involved in delivering services for children, from members to council leaders to officers, shares the same aspiration for the island's children to have the very best.

Many of the necessary ingredients are in place, for this aspiration to be achieved. For now, and with a new leadership team in place, and an engaged and motivated workforce, the focus is on getting the basics right for all children and building our vision.

The following plan addresses the key areas for improvement highlighted at the outcome of the inspection which were:

- The routine inclusion by the local authority of partner agencies in child protection strategy discussions and assessments.
- The opportunities for the voices of children and care leavers to be heard at a corporate level.
- The quality of oversight and monitoring of:
 - the pre-proceedings process in the Public Law Outline (PLO)
 - permanence for children
 - private fostering.
- Caseloads in the children's assessment and safeguarding teams.

The plan responds to these areas and other themes highlighted within the inspection report and areas for action are group into the following themes.

Quality of practice and management oversight including pre-proceedings, private fostering and permanence.

Effective partnership working

Quality assurance systems.

Voice of the child and participation in shaping service delivery.

DRAFT

Quality of practice and management oversight

1. Caseloads and the impact this has on the quality of work and intervention.

What needs to improve?

A reduction of some caseloads in the children's assessment and safeguarding teams is required.

What inspectors found:

Caseloads in some teams were too high. This has had a negative impact on some areas of practice. There was some variability in children's assessments. Children's history and cumulative risk is not always fully considered, and some children subject of multiple re-referrals and numerous assessments because of a repeated pattern of abuse. Thorough analysis of the cumulative impact of neglect needs to be consistently evidenced. Management supervision was not always consistently reflective for teams with higher caseloads had greater challenge in evidencing a consistent approach to supervision. There is consistent management oversight at all stages and decision-making is robust and appropriate, although the detail and quality of management recording are variable.

Ref	Action	Action Owner	Commencing	RAG	Progress and Impact to date
1.1	Reduction in caseloads for staff in Child Assessment and Safeguarding Teams. Caseloads should be maintained at an agreed level unless agreed by exception with Service Manager oversight.	Service Director Service Manager Operations	December 2023	A	Several new staff have joined the local authority since December 2023. This has led to a reduction in caseloads. Work is required to continue to reduce caseloads down further, this is an ongoing priority.

	<p>Caseloads to be reviewed weekly by team managers to ensure workflows are correctly followed and case closures/transfers happen in a timely manner.</p> <p>Ensure staffing levels are maintained at a level to support caseloads being maintained at agreed local levels.</p>	Team Managers			
1.2	<p>Ensure children's assessments are consistently comprehensive and of excellent quality.</p> <p>Assessments will demonstrate well informed analysis of historical and current factors relevant for the family and individual children.</p> <p>Assessments will be prepared to be dynamic and evolving to changing needs for children.</p> <p>Assessments will lead to smart plans for families which are proportionate to identified need.</p> <p>Families will not need to repeat their stories as these will be effectively captured in assessments, case summaries and supervision.</p>	Service Director Service Manager Operations Team Managers	March 2024	A	<p>Workshops are planned for social workers providing a standardised approach for achieving a good standard of assessment and SMART planning.</p> <p>A suite of documents demonstrating "what good looks like" will be made available to staff via the children's toolkit.</p>
1.3	<p>Ensure all staff consistently complete chronologies on children's case files which draw both on partners and historical information gathered through</p>	Service Manager Operations &	April 2024	A	<p>Team data days are in the process of being implemented to ensure all staff can have focus on updating chronologies and other aspects of</p>

	MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) processes.	Team Managers			children's files which will support effective analysis of a child's circumstances and inform appropriate planning.
1.4	Undertake collaborative thematic audits to ensure focus with the appropriate manager and allocated practitioner, to drive individual practice and whole service improvement.	Children's Management Team	May 2024	A	Audit timetable has been established. Workshops to focus on the quality of assessments are in development and will be delivered to all case holding teams.
1.5	Effective monitoring of a Service Level Agreement for MASH to ensure work passed to the Child Assessment and Safeguarding Team meets local threshold.	Service Director	April 2024	A	Contract monitoring arrangements will be put in place by the incoming Service Director who joins the service on 18 March.
1.6	Ensure that the escalation policy is consistently applied and in a timely manner, to address any matters arising in disputed application of thresholds.	Service Manager Operations Team Managers	April 2024	A	Incorporating a refresh of the escalation policy within the 'all managers' community of practice.
1.7	Work will be undertaken as part of the contract monitoring process regarding how and when families' consent will be sought to ensure this is as at the earliest possible point of our work with them.	Service Director	April 2024	A	Contract monitoring arrangements will be put in place by the incoming Service Director who joins the service on 18 March.
1.8	Undertake a system review of our work with families where consent has not been obtained.	Children's Management Team	April 2024	A	This would be undertaken in conjunction with the contract monitoring activity.

1.9	Refresh supervision recording protocols to ensure all managers are aware of current expectations for recording supervision and management oversight.	Children's Management Team	April 2024	A	'All managers' community of practice meetings will take place monthly. Quality supervision and consistent recording of supervision session will take place as a priority topic. Lite bite sessions will be based around "best practice recording" and will be a collaborative session led by practitioners.
1.10	Review and update "what good looks like" suite of exemplars contained within the children's toolkit.	Children's Management Team	April 2024	A	Prioritisation of this work has taken place and will feed into 'All managers' community of practice meetings.

2. The pre-proceedings process in the Public Law Outline (PLO)

What needs to improve?

The timeliness of decision making for children subject of a pre-proceedings process and the recording of rationale when timeframes are extended to allow families extra time in which to make necessary changes.

What inspectors found:

There needs to be improvement in the quality of oversight and monitoring of work in the pre-proceedings phase to ensure that there is clear rationale where plans are prolonged to support diversion from court and to ensure families achieve timely change within children's timescales.

Ref	Action	Action Owner	Commencing	RAG	Progress and Impact to Date
2.1	Introduction of a revised Pre-Proceedings Framework has been made available to staff and added to the Children's Toolkit.	Service Manager Operations	March 2024	G	A new framework has been introduced and toolkit shared with staff.
2.2	Introduction of a pre-proceedings panel to ensure Service and Team Manger oversight for effective and timely progression of work.	Service Manager Operations	March 2024	G	A process for tracking progress of pre-proceedings activity has been implemented with a tracking panel chaired by the Service Manager.

3. Private Fostering

What needs to improve?

The quality of oversight and monitoring of private fostering.

What inspectors found:

The small number of children known to live in private fostering arrangements are not always identified, assessed, or supported in a timely way. Senior leaders do not have robust oversight of these children's arrangements and support and services are not delivered in line with regulations.

Ref	Action	Action Owner	Commencing	RAG	Progress and Impact to date
3.1	Guidance was re-issued regarding Private fostering requirements.	Lead IRO	December 2023	G	Practice and recording guidance have been re-issued to all teams.

3.2	There is a record of senior management oversight of private fostering arrangements to ensure robust assessments are carried out in a timely manner. Where needs are identified through the course of an assessment, these should be responded to in a timely manner which is confirmed at the point of manager's sign off.	Lead IRO and Service Manager Operations	December 2023	G	Reporting by all managers on any new private fostering arrangements is in place via our monthly performance meetings from November 2023.
3.3	Mandatory training is to be completed by all practitioners to ensure they understand and comply with private fostering standards.	Learning and Development Team	March 2024	A	Learning and Development have developed an online training activity which is currently being built; delivery date to enable trial and review of the learning activity is 29/02/2024. Training will be mandatory for all social care practitioners.

Ref	Action	Action Owner	Commencing	RAG	Progress and Impact to date
4.1	Implementation of monthly Care Planning Panel meetings will ensure all children will continue to have their permanency progression tracked and progressed in a timely manner.	Service Manager Children in Care Service Manager Operations Legal Services Virtual School Head Permanency Team Lead IRO	March 2024		A regular care planning panel is scheduled to review the plans for all cared for children, whose permanent arrangements have not yet been finalised. This is to provide senior leadership oversight and constructive challenge on each child's permanency plan to ensure this is progressing in a timely way.
4.2	Section 20 reviews by the Lead IRO will provide continued oversight for all children voluntarily accommodated to	Lead IRO	March 2024		A S20 review panel is now organised to take place monthly to ensure review of the appropriateness of such

	ensure they are getting the right level of support to progress permanency at the right time.				arrangements or request escalation in the case of a plan not being deemed to be suitable.
4.3	To ensure that all children who would benefit from life story work are able to access this in a timely way.				<p>Session with managers regarding the range of life story work available will take place through the 'all managers' community of practice.</p> <p>Workshops of practitioner led sessions for social workers working with children who are cared for are planned.</p> <p>Review of life story training offer will take place to ensure this is sufficient to meet practitioners' development needs.</p>

5. Effective Partnership Working

What needs to improve?

The routine inclusion by the local authority of partner agencies in child protection strategy discussions and assessments.

All children are supported to access specialist assessments in a timely way including those who do not live on the Isle of Wight.

What inspectors found:

Consultation with partner agencies is not consistently strong.

Relevant multi-agency partners are not routinely invited to attend strategy meetings. This means that there is not effective sharing of information at these meetings, where important decisions are being made about action to be taken.

For some children, the assessments are being closed too quickly and without relevant input from other agencies.

For some children, there is delay in accessing more specialist assessments to meet their emotional and mental health needs. This is a particular challenge when children live at a distance from the local authority.

Ref	Action	Action Owner	Commencing	RAG	Progress and Impact to date
5.1	A process is established for consistent notification of strategy meetings so that partners with relevant information receive an invitation to attend or to share this electronically to aid decision making as part of the Strategy Meeting and/or S47 enquiries.	Service Manager Operations	January 2024	G	<p>A multi-agency meeting was held in December, with an agreed process for implementation which commenced January 2024.</p> <p>All Strategy Discussions on open cases are now being held face to face over Teams with MASH Police, Health and education attending.</p> <p>Regular multi agency operational meetings will take place on a quarterly basis. This will enable opportunity for review of the effectiveness of our safeguarding processes.</p>
5.2	Delivery of multi-agency workshops and/or briefings outlining roles, responsibilities, procedures, and requirements of Working Together 2023.	Service Manager Operations and IOWSCP	January 2024	G	<p>A workshop was held for Childrens Services team managers in January 2024 regarding the implementation of new processes.</p> <p>Multi agency training and workshops are currently under development via the IOWSCP.</p>

5.3	Regular dip sampling and bi-annual thematic audit to be undertaken to ensure all strategy meetings are compliant and that assessments consider partner agency information.	Service Manager Operations and Lead IRO	March 2024		First thematic audit is scheduled to assess impact of practice change in respect of strategy meetings. This audit will also provide a baseline for compliance in ensuring assessments consider partner information and inform work within the service and with partner agencies to ensure effective working together arrangements are in place.
5.4	All children are supported to access specialist assessments. Work with partners to ensure that children are assessed in a timely way. Where this is not possible, particularly for children living off island, ensure managers escalate this in a timely manner to Service Managers for resolution.	Service Manager Children in Care	April 2024	A	<p>'All managers' community in Practice is arranged covering escalation protocols.</p> <p>IRO session is planned to ensure escalation within Children Services and via health is consistently implemented. Work within children services and with LAC Health team is planned to identify how many children are awaiting assessments and the levels of delay experienced to ensure timely resolution?</p>

Ref	Action	Action Owner	Commencing	RAG	Progress and Impact to date
6.1	<p>Ensure supervision frequency occurs in accordance with local policy.</p> <p>For all case holding workers to have access to regular monthly supportive and reflective supervision and for this to be recorded consistently by Team Managers.</p> <p>Workshops will be provided to ensure that managers are supported to</p>	Children's Management Team	April 2024	A	<p>Through our auditing processes we will see an improvement in supervision completion.</p> <p>Auditing workshops have commenced alongside audit the audit work to ensure consistent benchmarking in respect of "good quality" supervision. Feedback to supervisors and auditors of findings is provided to improve consistency and practice.</p>

	achieve consistent standards of supervision with a focus on providing high quality reflection and ensuring progress on plans for children.				
6.2	A review of the audit tools and thematic audit schedule will be completed to ensure discrete areas for practice improvement are effectively covered in our Quality Assurance Framework.	Childrens Management Team	April 2024		Review has commenced to ensure the impact of work on outcomes for children is known and demonstrates practice improvements.
6.3	Introduction of a quarterly child protection practice panel for multi-agency oversight of child protection plans when children have had plans in place for 15 months or more; or for children subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time.	Lead IRO	May 2024	A	Lead IRO will attend the Safeguarding Children Partnership subgroup in March to propose the practice panel and confirm membership for roll out in May 2024.
6.5	Strategic performance meetings to be introduced to provide effective senior management oversight and practice challenge on discrete areas identified for improvement.	Childrens Management Team and DaiT Manager	March 2024	G	A mechanism is now provided for performance monitoring, practice development planning and timely response planning to any areas of focus.

Ref	Action	Action Owner	Commencing	RAG	Progress and Impact to date
7.1	<p>Children and young people events take place through which they will be supported to express their views, wishes and feelings, and these are considered in the planning and delivery of services.</p> <p>Children placed off-island will be provided with opportunities and support to contribute their views and participate in the Corporate Parenting Board.</p>	Service Manager Children in Care, Service Manager Participation	February 2024	A	<p>Young people are part of childrens Trust event to co-produce 2024 - 2027 Children and Young People Plan.</p> <p>Have your Say events are scheduled to take place throughout the year through school holiday periods which provide mechanisms for feedback into service planning and delivery.</p>

7.2	Preparatory work will be undertaken with care experienced young people so that they are effectively supported to participate in the Corporate Parenting Board.	Service Manager Children in Care Participation leads	February 2024	A	Work is being undertaken in HYPE to encourage and support children and young people's attendance at Corporate Parenting Board.
7.3	Adjustments to Corporate Parenting Board are made with the new chair to make it more accessible for children.	Service Manager Children in Care	January 2024	A	A meeting has taken place with the new chair of the board which looked at the steps required to achieve well-functioning corporate parenting board which fulfils all primary objectives. A review of accessibility of venues has been completed with a plan to move the board to community-based venues which has hybrid facilities.
7.4	There is work being undertaken with councillors to set standards, terms of reference, purpose, and vision for the Corporate Parenting Board.	Service Manager Children in Care, Elected Members	March 2024	A	Meetings have taken place in preparation for the roll out of the revised board.
7.5	A more accessible offer is made available to all care leavers and recorded on their individual "My Life My Future" plan so that children in care and care leavers are helped to understand their rights, entitlements, and responsibilities. Care leavers are well-informed about access to their records, assistance to find	Service Manager Children in Care Team Care Leavers Team	November 2023	A	Accessible versions of the offer are currently being written.

	employment, training, and financial support.				
7.6	Sessions for practitioners on recording the child's voice and reflecting on their experiences to enable workers to understand the impact of children and young people's situations on their lives.	Service Manager Children in Care Care Leavers Team and LIRO	January 2024	A	Sessions have taken place and further sessions are planned throughout the year as part of the Isle of Wight strengths-based approach.

8. Electronic Recording System

What needs to improve?
For Children Services to have a case recording system that supports social work practice and data collection accuracy to enable effective case management, team management oversight and strategic oversight.

What inspectors found:

Workers have been significantly hindered by the inaccurate data produced by the current electronic recording system, which is cumbersome and inefficient and does not support effective social work practice.

Ref	Action What we will do	Action Owner	Due by	RAG	Progress and Impact to date
8.1	Implement a new case electronic management system	Children's Management Team	November 2024	A	The product Mosaic has been procured and a project team has been established to oversee implementation.

9. Workforce and Learning Development

What needs to improve?

Sufficient number of practitioners with the required range of skills and experience to meet children and families needs.

What inspectors found:

At times caseloads were too high. There has been significant pressure on the workforce due to the increase in demand in the MASH, alongside a churn in workers within some teams, but especially in the children's assessment and safeguarding teams. Additional workers and teams are needed to reduce caseloads to the desired level.

Ref	Action	Action Owner	Commencing	RAG	Progress and Impact to date
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9.1	Workforce strategy continues to be delivered to fill vacancies and ensure workforce is at optimum capacity.	Service Director Service Manager Strategic Development	December 2023	A	Increased recruitment of staff in the Child Assessment Safeguarding Teams has been undertaken with a reduction in vacancies.
9.2	A Social Care Academy will be developed this year as an environment through which a framework for ongoing learning and development will be offered for social care practitioners and managers.	Principal Social Worker and Service Director	February 2024	A	Work is underway to prepare for a Social Care Academy on the Isle of Wight in conjunction with Adult Services to be launched in December 2024.
9.3	A service delivery review will take place when the new permanent Service Director has started, to look at the overall service design. Any change to service design will consider service pressure points and staff sufficiency planning.	Service Director	March 2024	A	Interim Service Director will have a full handover with the permanent Service Director to inform the start of the service delivery review. Handover arrangements are in place for March 2024.



Purpose: For Information

Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Topic	SCHOOL ATTAINMENT

Background

1. A report on School Attainment is submitted to the committee on an annual basis, the purpose of the report is to provide the context for statutory assessments and examinations that took place in 2023 against previous years.
2. Two key activities within the Corporate Plan 2021-2025 are to raise standards of attainment at every key stage and to focus on raising standards of attainment for vulnerable groups such as those with special educational needs, those living in circumstances of relative poverty and those open to social care.

Focus for Scrutiny

3. How does the Isle of Wight fair against the national figures?
4. What are the attainment figures across the vulnerable groups?
5. What have been the challenges and pressures to come out of 2023?
6. What are the lessons learned from 2023?
7. What are the goals for school attainment in 2024?

Document(s) Attached

8. Appendix 1 - Isle of Wight Education Update January 2024
9. Appendix 2 - School Attainment Report March 2024.

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Scrutiny Committee Report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Title	SCHOOL ATTAINMENT
Report of	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of attainment across Isle of Wight schools for academic year 2022/23. It also outlines key actions being taken to build on performance and raise attainment across all key stages.
2. Compared to previous academic years some improvements have been noted and there are examples of performance that are superior to national average. However, in other areas outcomes are below national average and considerable work is needed to drive outcomes higher.

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee notes:

3. the outcomes achieved in academic year 2022/23
4. the actions identified to improve outcomes in future years for all children and young people on the Island.

Background

Examples of outcomes at each key stage are as follow:

5. Foundation stage:

- 5.1 At the end of Early Years education, data indicates that the performance of schools on the Isle of Wight has remained strong, with 69% of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) which is a 6% increase on the previous academic year and 2% above the national average.
- 5.2 The focus should be to promote best practice across the Island to ensure that standards and outcomes are consistent across all providers.

6. Primary Stage:

- 6.1 In phonics in Year 1 there has been a 12% increase in the number of pupils working at the expected standard, which whilst 4% below the National average does represent an improvement.
- 6.2 The number of pupils in Year 2 working at the expected standard has increased by over 30%. This outcome is 6% higher than national outcomes.
- 6.3 Pupils achieving the expected standard for reading, writing and maths (RWM) are 7% below national but have improved faster than nationally.
- 6.4 Progress for disadvantage pupils remains a priority. Whilst data indicates a 12% improvement in the number of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in RWM in contrast to a national average decline, outcomes are still 4% below national.
- 6.5 Whilst standards achieved at Key Stage 2 have improved, outcomes at the end of primary remain a key improvement focus across the Island. While the direction of travel is positive, more work must be done to ensure this momentum continues, with the aim being that outcomes are consistently better than national.

7. Secondary Stage:

- 7.1 Attainment in secondary schools continues to improve across several measures, including the Progress 8 score, Basics at 4+ and 5+ and the performance of SEN and disadvantaged students. Whilst the gap is narrowing, outcomes on the Island remain below national average.
- 7.2 Progress data for SEN support students has improved more than twice as much as for the total cohort, being 0.25 and 0.1 respectively.
- 7.3 Progress data for disadvantaged students shows a small improvement (0.03), but less than for the total cohort.
- 7.4 Outcomes at secondary remains a high priority area, and actions include developing the holistic learning experience for children and young people to

improve attendance so that improvements in teaching practice can have the desired impact on individuals.

8. Post 16 Stage:

8.1 Average point score (APS) per entry for A Levels on the Isle of Wight continued to improve in 2023, broadly in line with the national improvement.

8.2 For Applied General Levels, APS decreased on the Island in 2023 compared to an increase nationally in 2023 and this merits further investigation.

8.3 There were insufficient entries to Technical Levels and Technical Certificates in 2023 on the Isle of Wight to provide significant data.

9. Information about the steps being taken to improve outcomes are detailed in the two appendices, where additional information on outcomes is also available. A new education strategy for the Island is being prepared, with the core focus being to improve outcomes for all children and young people. A draft version of the new education strategy will be published in July 2024.

Appendices Attached

10. Appendix 1: IOW Education Update, 30 January 2024

11. Appendix 2: School Education Attainment Panel, February 2024

Background Papers

12. More information on qualification grading approaches can be found at [Exam results 2023: 10 things to know about GCSE, AS and A level grades - The Ofqual blog](#) and [Vocational and technical qualifications grading in 2023 - The Ofqual blog](#)

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ASHLEY WHITTAKER
Strategic Director of Children's Services

CLLR JONATHAN BACON
*Cabinet Member for Children's Services,
Education and Corporate Functions*

BMT

IoW Education Update

30 January 2024

Julia Roberts – IOW School Improvement Manager (Primary)

Mark Kingswood – IOW School Improvement Manager (Secondary)

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Headlines

Good Level of Development (GLD)	2023	2022	2019
Isle of Wight	69%	63%	72%
National	67%	65%	72%
Diff.	+ 2%	-2%	=

Phonics 2023 Outcomes

Working At Expected Standard	2023		2022		2019	
	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 1	Yr 2
Isle of Wight	75%	64.3%	63%	30.7%	78.2%	47.3%
National	79%	58.7%	75%	44.2%	81.9%	55.9%
Diff.	-4%	+5.6	-12%	-13.5	-3.7	-8.6

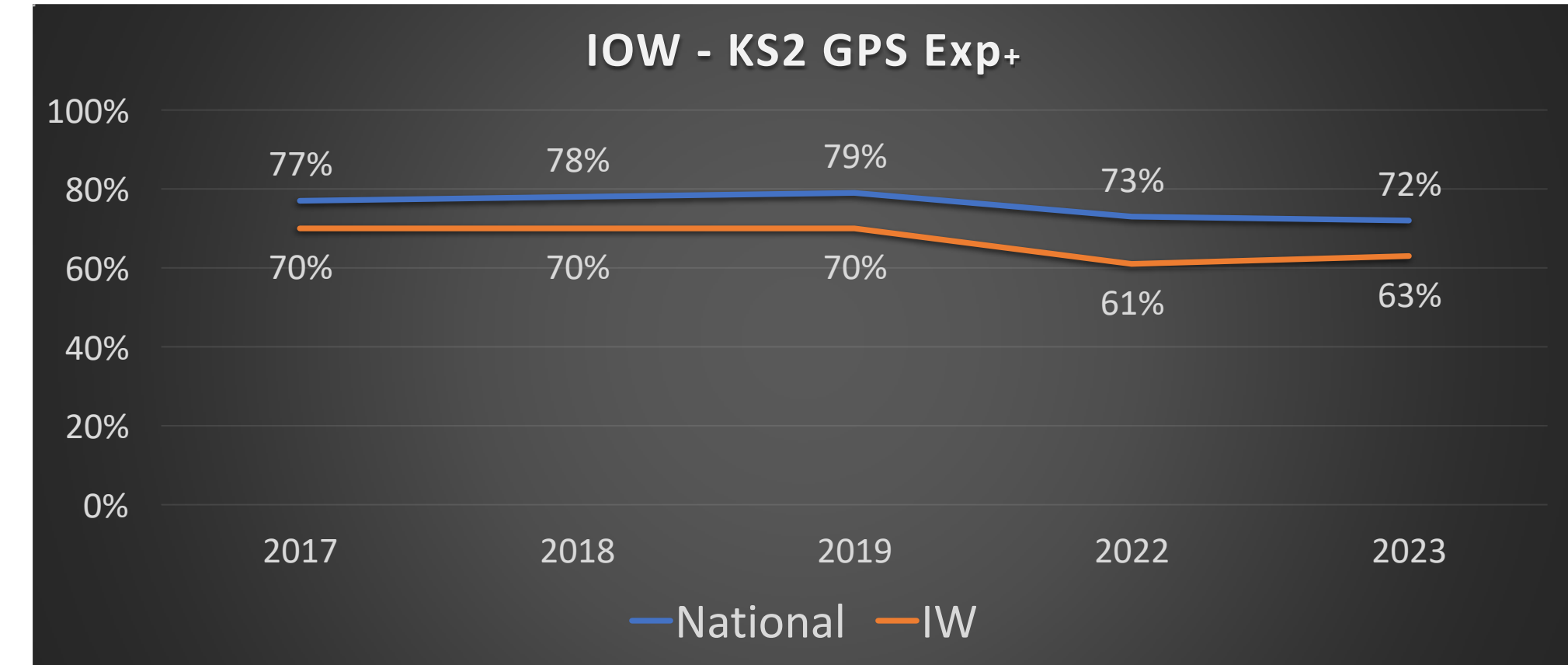
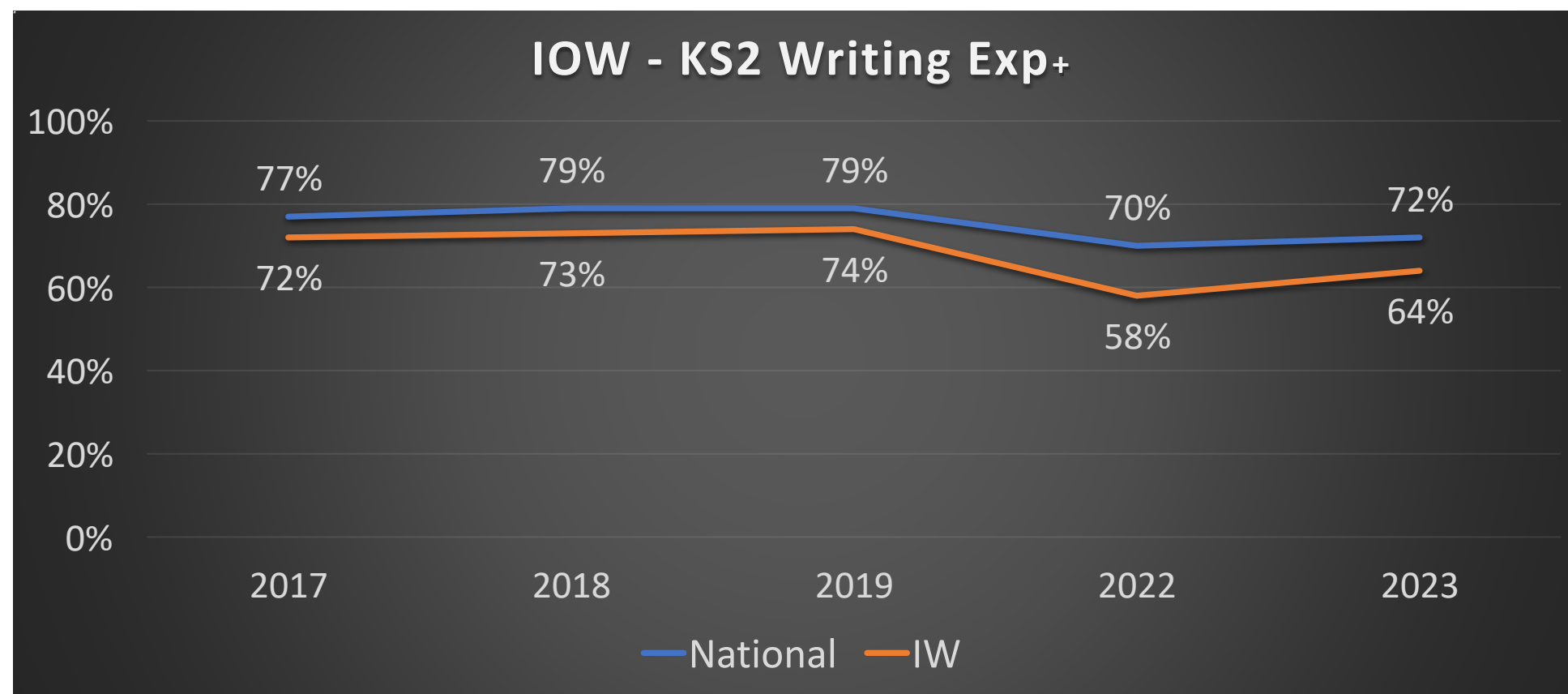
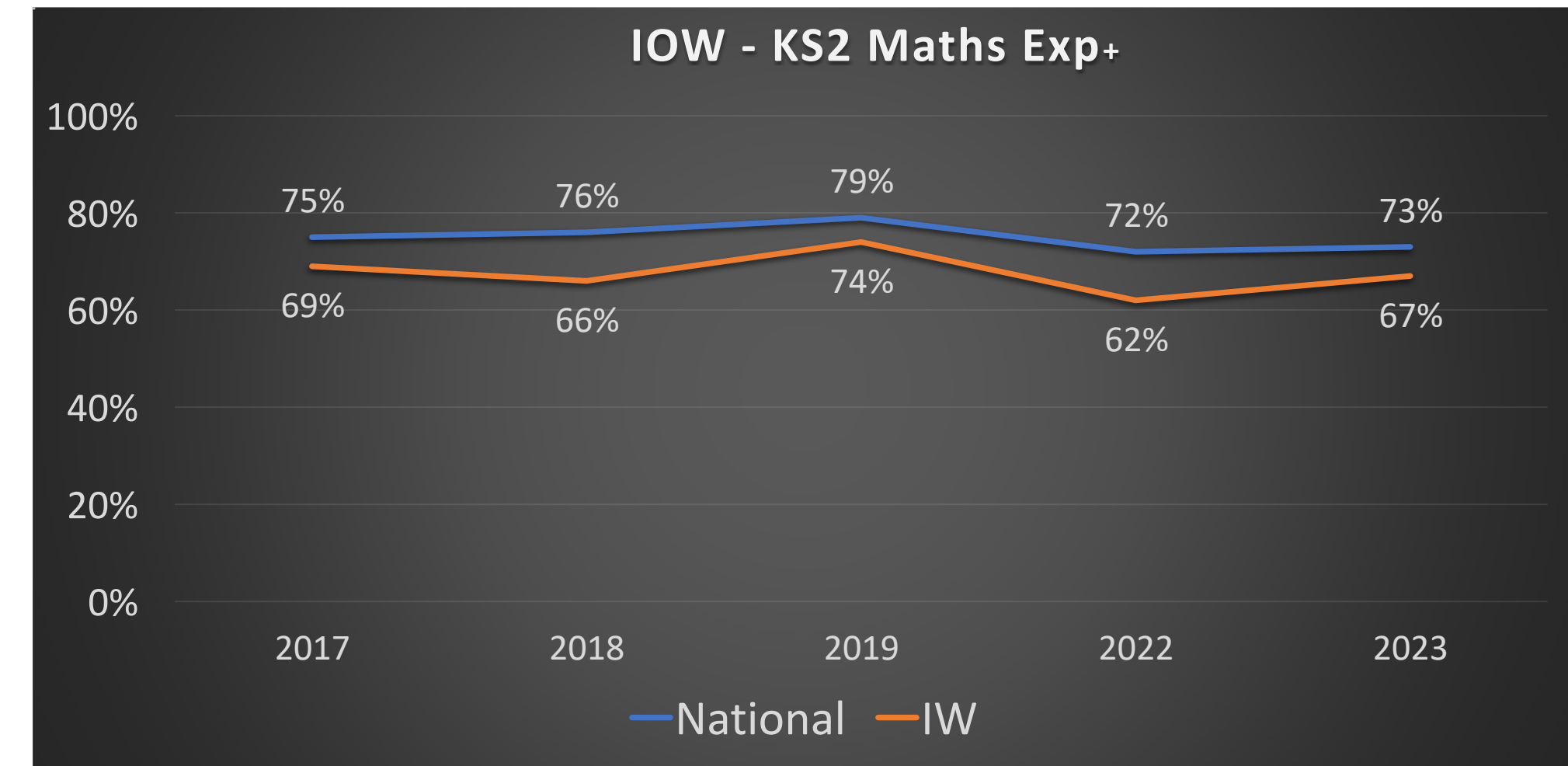
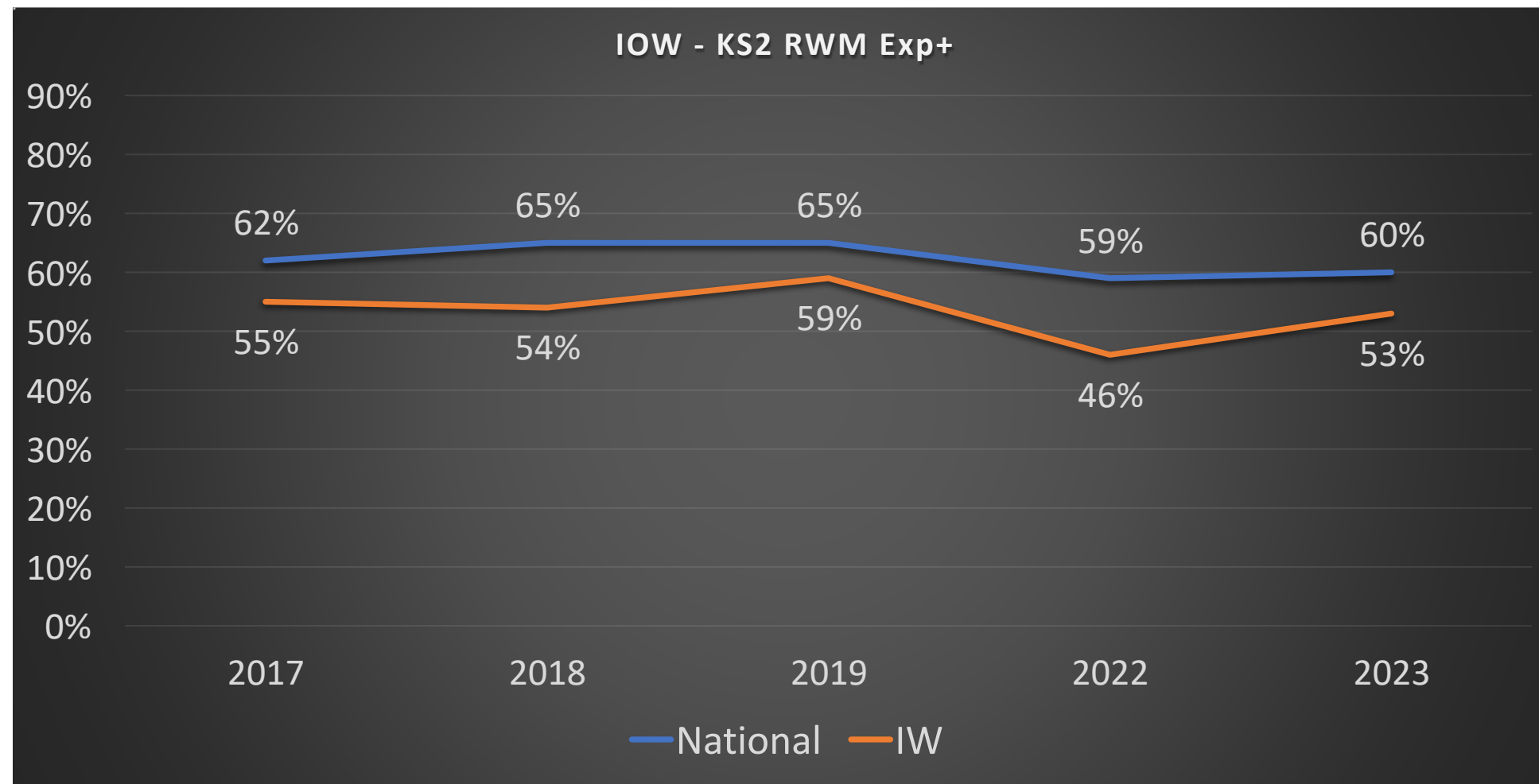
Data source: Keypas/ NEXUS. Provisional

2023 Key Stage 2 Headlines

RWM – EXS+	2023	2022	2019	2018
Isle of Wight	53%	46%	59%	55%
National	60%	59%	65%	64%
Diff.	-7%	-13%	-6%	-9%

Data source: DfE publication: “ks2_regional_local_authority_and_pupil_characteristics_2023_revised”

KS2 Trends over time – subject level



Data source: DfE publication: "ks2_regional_local_authority_and_pupil_characteristics_2023_revised"

Professional Development Offer

- Extensive programme across the academic year
- Informed by school self-evaluation, Ofsted outcomes, national and local priorities
- Liaison with Executive HT group and forming of HT CPD Group
- Courses and programmes delivered by specialists
- Many fully or partially funded by the LA

KS2 Disadvantaged Headlines

RWM – EXS+	2023	2022	2019	2018
Isle of Wight	40%	28%	44%	41%
National	44%	43%	51%	51%
Diff.	-4%	-15%	-7%	-10%

Data source: DfE publication: “ks2_regional_local_authority_and_pupil_characteristics_2019_to_2023_revised”

KS4 2023 outcomes - overall

	Progress 8			5+ En/Ma			4+ En/Ma		
	2023	2019	Diff	2023	2019	Diff	2023	2019	Diff
Isle of Wight	-0.24	-0.34	+0.10	36.2%	33.8%	+2.4%	57.9%	56%	+1.9%
National	-0.03	-0.03	0	45%	43.4	+1.6%	65%	64%	-1%

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- Increases in headline measures on IOW - increases are higher than those nationally
- Testament to work done by schools to embed improvements to curricula and teaching and learning over time and to support students to close gaps in learning
- Raising attainment projects, SEN leadership work, subject specific development work and positive tone of support and challenge for leaders from LA advisers have supported these improvements

KS4 2023 outcomes - SEN students

- Progress 8 score has improved for SEN Support students in 2023, up **0.25** (-0.28 in 2022; -0.53 in 2019)
- En/Ma 9-4 has **improved** for SEN students overall in 2023, up **4.1%** (33.5% in 2022 from 29.4% in 2019)
- There has been strong impact of work done by HIAS with leaders in schools on curriculum and learning for SEN Support students – improvements are recognised in at least one Ofsted report – this work has been school-wide and subject specific
- Adaptive teaching has been a strong focus of general and subject specific HIAS visits
- Schools have embedded this work and leaders have positively embraced innovation and change

KS4 2023 outcomes - Disadvantaged students

- Achievement of disadvantaged students shows an **increase** in several measures in 2023 to in 2019 – 5+ En/Ma up **2.5%** and P8 increased by **0.03**. **English** has increased at 4+ and 5+ and **Maths** at 4+. **EBacc entry** has risen by 5.4%.
- Disadvantaged students are still experiencing the long-term impact of lost learning from the pandemic and their learning and wellbeing remains a priority
- Attendance and inclusion panel meetings and individual meetings with schools continue to focus on supporting disadvantaged students to attend regularly
- HIAS offers a range of opportunities and materials to support schools in Tackling Educational Disadvantage, including training videos, support for curriculum and teaching and learning and a school self-evaluation tool
- The attendance and progress of disadvantaged students and their sense of inclusion in the classroom is a focus of all whole school and subject inspector visits

Actions to support Secondary school improvement in 2023/24

- Changes to format of secondary headteachers' meetings to maximise positive collaboration and sharing of successful practice
- Sharpening focus of deputy headteachers' group to focus on key identified priorities agreed by all schools – Transition and provision in Year 7 and curriculum suitability and flexibility at KS4 (especially for the most vulnerable)
- All subject support to develop further excellent SEND work to date and to focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged students
- Continue to provide high-quality subject network meeting offer
- Forge ever closer links between partners with a stake in improving the lives of CYP around agreed key priorities – e.g. schools and governors, LA professionals (inclusion, attendance etc), FE providers, SEND employment forum, councillors, Island Futures, ICP

Attendance – actions taken to effect further improvement

Ensuring that policies and forms used by schools are the same to ensure that work to improve attendance is consistent and compliant across schools

LA is ensuring it is well-placed to implement Working together to Improve School Attendance guidance, to include:

- termly attendance networks for schools;
- drop-in sessions for families with EIS with Early Help;
- introduce support plans to facilitate work with families whose children have low attendance;
- targeted work with groups of concern e.g. Year 11;
- working with SCP to address educational neglect;
- developing strong working relationships with medical professionals;
- training for schools on communicating with families to improve attendance
- specific work to align curricula at KS4 and support transition at KS2-3

Key Stage 5 – At a glance

- As with GCSEs, pupils taking A level and other post-16 qualifications were awarded teacher assessed grades in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, as with GCSEs exams were taken by students at the end of their post-16 courses of study. In 2023, the DfE announced a return to pre-pandemic grading levels, with the same caveats applied as explained in the previous section for GCSEs. As with GCSE, although a relevant comparison can be made with 2019 outcomes, it must be borne in mind that individual schools and pupils were affected differently by the pandemic. In addition, again as with GCSEs in 2023, across a range of subjects, marks required to attain certain grades were significantly higher than in 2019. Consequently, even these comparisons should be treated with caution.
- APS per entry for **A Levels** on the Isle of Wight continues to improve - improvement is broadly in line with the national improvement.
- APS per entry for **Technical Levels** on the Isle of Wight has increased overall at greater than the national rate comparing 2018 with 2022, with the average grade maintained in 2022 at a Merit plus. There were insufficient entries to Technical Levels in 2023 on the Isle of Wight to provide significant data.
- Despite a decrease in 2023, the APS per entry for **Applied General Levels** on the Isle of Wight remains relatively strong over time. Nevertheless, the APS increased nationally in 2023 and therefore the decrease on the Isle of Wight merits further investigation.
- Technical Certificates are a Level 2 qualification. The APS per entry for **Technical Certificates** on the Isle of Wight has remained strong and had an average grade of a Level 2 Merit in 2022. In 2023, there were not enough entries on the Isle of Wight to provide significant data.

Ofsted Statistics as at January 2023 IoW

75 % of Schools 'Good' or better

- Primaries – 28 good, 9 Requires Improvement (RI)
- 1 all through - 1 Good
- 2 specials - 2 Good
- 1 IoW Learning Centre - Good
- 6 IoW Secondaries – 3 Good, 3 RI
- St Catherine's - Good

36/48 Schools 'Good'

Conclusions and next steps

- In conclusion, although we there has been an improvement attainment in Isle of Wight schools this year, there is a recognition that must remain a key focus across all Key Stages.
- There are positives through the data sets, with individual subjects and schools. These areas should be identified and celebrated, however work is needed to disseminate and embed good practice to secure consistently strong practice across all key stages.
- Attainment for children and young people experiencing vulnerability must also remain a priority area of focus. A number of actions are being taken to strengthen the school system in this respect as highlighted.
- Ensuring that policies and forms used by schools are the same to ensure that work to improve attendance is consistent and compliant across schools.
- Securing strong attendance remains a priority for all schools. The LA is ensuring it is well-placed to implement Working together to Improve School Attendance guidance, with a number of specific workstreams in place to support and sustain this work.

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Isle of Wight
Council

Schools and Education Attainment Support Panel

February 2024

Naomi Carter – Service Director – Education, Inclusion and Access

Dean Prodomo – Service Manager – Education and Post 16

Purpose and Agenda

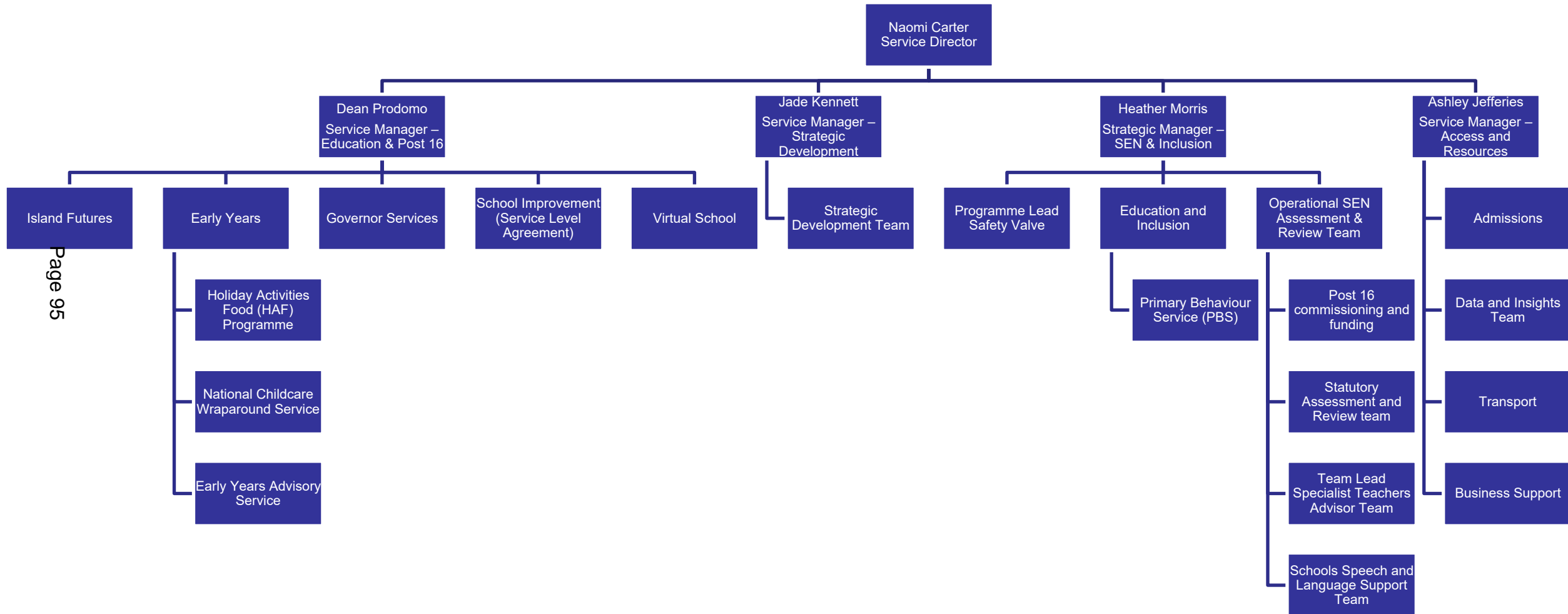
Purpose

- ◆ For sharing information so members are more informed and understand the work of the new department and the current priorities of the department.

Agenda

- ◆ Organisation of new department
- ◆ Key priorities
- ◆ SLA
- ◆ Educational landscape
- ◆ Leadership update
- ◆ Ofsted update
- ◆ Attainment
- ◆ Attendance
- ◆ Safety Valve

Organisational Chart Education, Inclusion & Access



Children's Services - Key Priorities

Education, Inclusion and Access

- Education outcomes
- SEND Sufficiency, Safety Valve, Inspection preparation
- School place planning & financial stability of schools

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Children's Social Care

- Action plan resulting from Youth Justice Service inspection
- Action plan resulting from children's services inspection
- Corporate parenting

Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

Education

- School Improvement Service
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology
- Governor Services

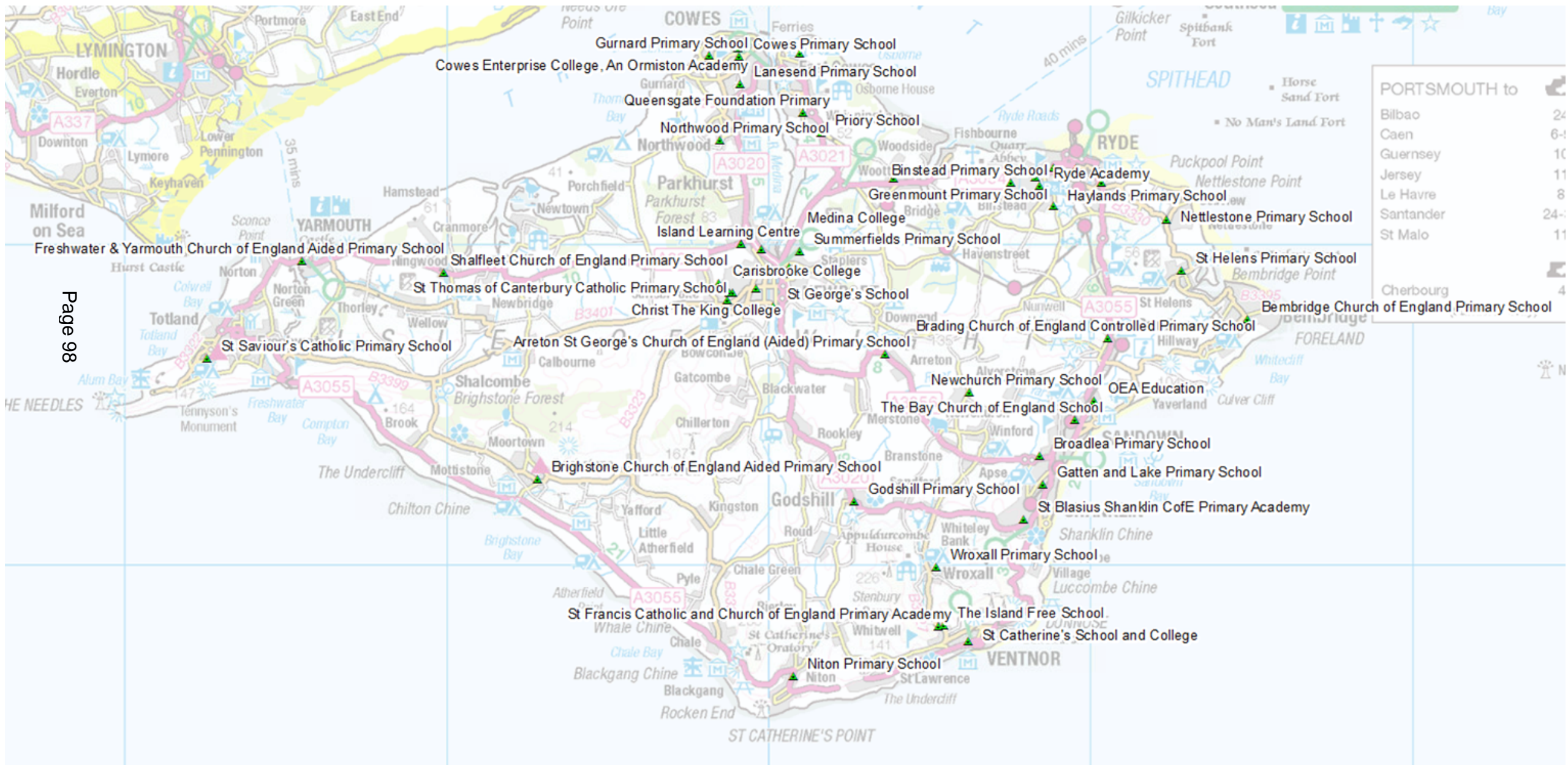
Social Care

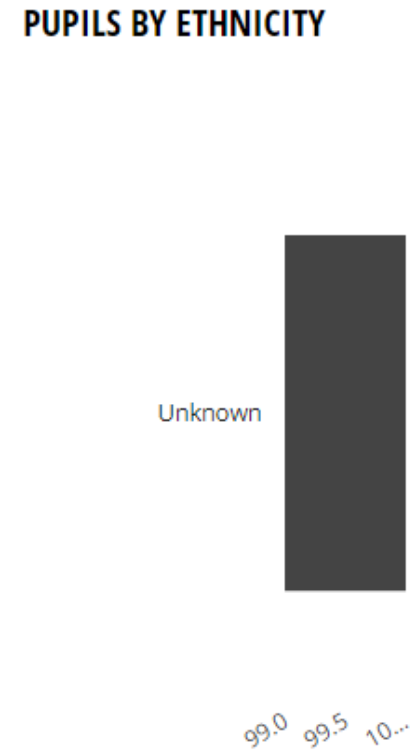
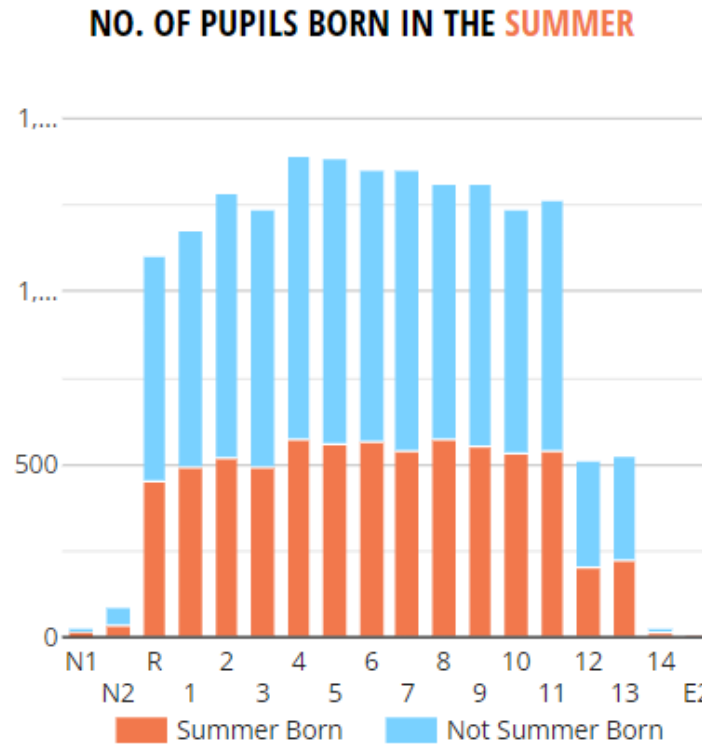
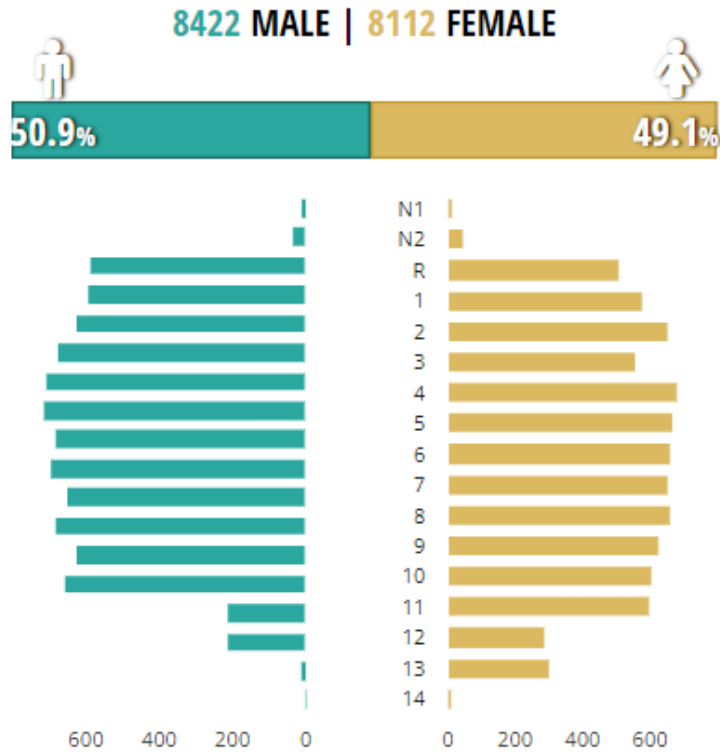
- Childrens Reception Team
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
- Childrens Enquiry Team
- Local Authority Designated Officer
- Out of Hours
- Refugee Services
- Learning and Development

What does this mean?

- HIAS will continue with the LLP process – the annual QA process for schools
- HIAS will continue with CPD offer to schools, including SENCo networks, specific school support
- IOW Education, Inclusion and Access will run headteacher and deputy headteacher networks

Isle of Wight educational landscape





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24.2%

of pupils are eligible for **FREE SCHOOL MEALS**

4.6%

of pupils have **EAL**
(ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE)

LAST ACADEMIC YEAR THERE WAS

91.8% ATTENDANCE

5.7% Authorised absence (297,235)
2.5% Unauthorised absence (132,130)

SEN PUPILS

Key SEN Type	No. of pupils	% of pupils
Non SEN	13073	79.1%
Education, Health and Care Plan	1009	6.1%
SEN Support	2452	14.8%

Autumn census return

Isle of Wight educational landscape

- 🚩 52 educational establishments (not including nursery provision)
- 🚩 47 Primary, Secondary and Special inc PRU)
- 🚩 1 college
- 🚩 2 independent schools
- 🚩 2 independent special schools
- 🚩 Catholic schools – 4
- 🚩 CofE schools – 11
- 🚩 Mixed denomination – 2
- 🚩 6 Federations (Governance Process)

Setting	Academy/ Free School	Maintained	Independent/ non- maintained	TOTAL
College			1	1
Primary Schools	4 (1 - CofE) (1 - CofE & C)	33 (9 – CofE) (4 – Catholic)		37
Secondary Schools	3 (1 – CofE/C)	3		6
Al through		1 (CofE)	2	3
Special Schools		2 (1 Primary) (1 Secondary)	2 (one KS3 only) (one upper KS2 to sixth form)	4
Education Centre (Pupil Referral Unit)		1		1
TOTAL	7	40	5	52

Isle of Wight educational landscape

- 52 educational establishments (not including nursery provision)
- 47 Primary, Secondary and Special inc PRU)
- 1 college
- 2 independent schools
- 2 independent special schools
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Education Centre (Pupil Referral Unit)		1		1
TOTAL	7	40	5	52

Leadership updates

Leadership

- St Saviours – Maggie Sanderson (interim executive head)
- ILC – Chris Toner (interim)
- Greenmount – Rebecca day (executive head)
- Wroxall – Carrie Drake (acting)

Recruitment processes

- Holy Cross
- St Saviours
- Wroxall

General notes on recruitment

- Using our own - Executive Headteachers
- Attracting high quality candidates
- Growing our own
- Leadership development opportunities
- High quality leadership professional development
 - Aspiring leaders
 - Developing current leaders

Ofsted updates

Recent Inspection

- Northwood – (not published)
- Brighstone - (not published)
- Godshill – **Good** from RI
- Christ the King – (not published)

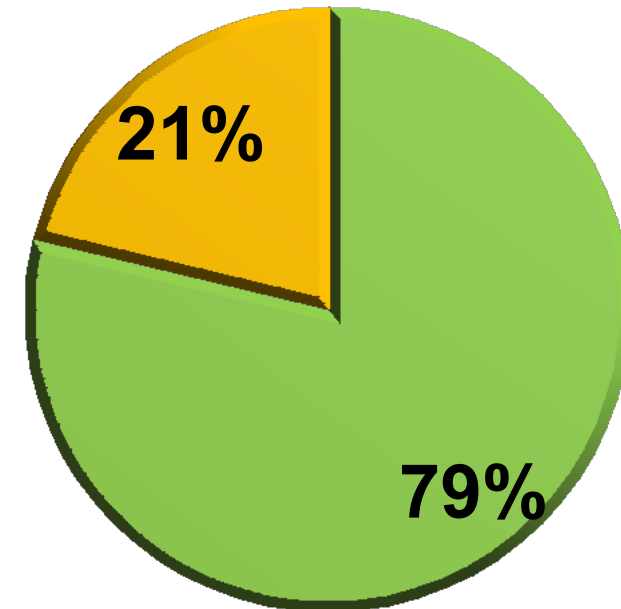
Page 03

Ofsted Updates

- January saw a pause in inspections as Ofsted Inspectors undertook additional training on mental health
- New guidance around pausing an inspection and recognise and responding to signs of distress of school leaders
- Introduction of 'The Big Listen'

IOW SCHOOLS OFSTED OUTCOMES

Good Outstanding RI Inadequate



Ofsted update

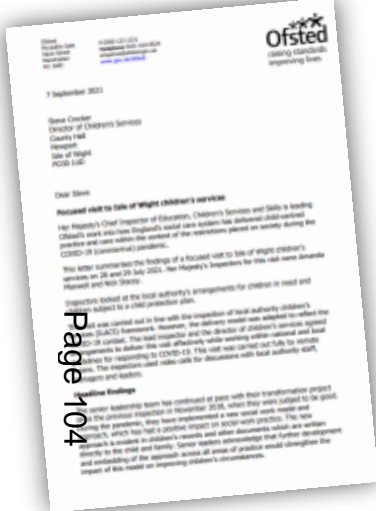
Observations from School Ofsted analysis

- 🚩 Still a need to focus on curriculum and teaching
- 🚩 A need for middle/subject leader development
- 🚩 Along with challenge by middle leaders and from governors

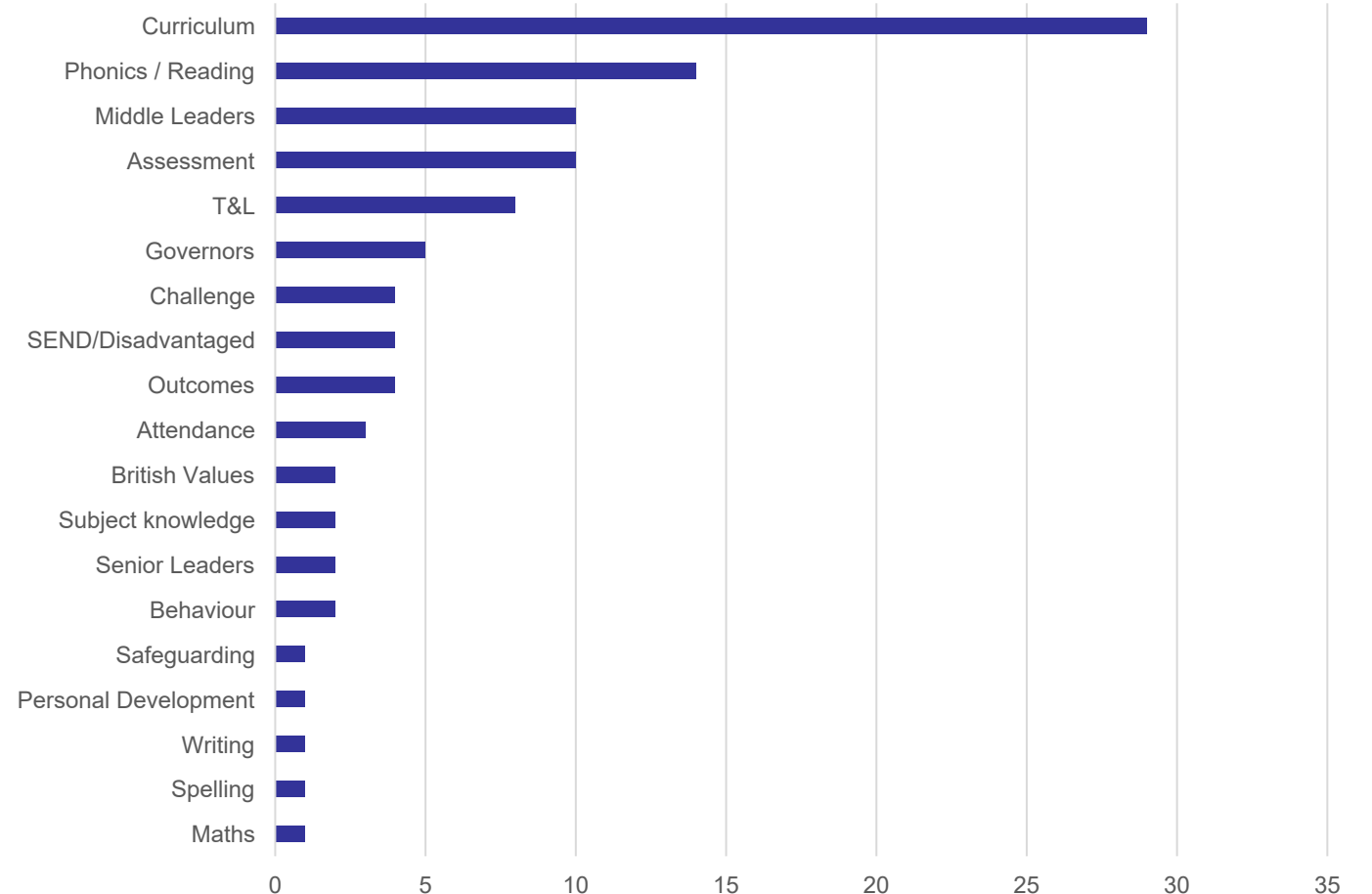
Interestingly no mentions of Early Years?

Behaviour was mentioned twice (once at ILC)

Interestingly outcomes only mentioned in 4 actions



Ofsted recommendations for school across the IOW



Ofsted updates

Good schools in the Ofsted inspection window

- Binstead Primary
- Medina House
- Dover Park Primary
- Newchurch Primary
- Shalfleet Primary
- Summerfields Primary
- Nettlestone Primary
- St Saviour's Catholic

Primary

- Wootton Community Primary School
- Barton Primary School
- Queensgate Foundation Primary
- Gurnard Primary
- Bembridge C of E Primary

Requires Improvement schools due an inspection

- Medina College
- Arreton St Georges
- Hunnyhill Primary
- St Mary's RC Primary
- Lanesend Primary
- Wroxall

• `

Ofsted update

Coroner's report

7. Ruth's employer, Reading Borough Council, clearly felt that Ofsted's decision was wrong and unfair, but did not provide any comment on the draft report, despite asking for the opportunity to do so.

Concerns

1. Reading Borough Council indicated an intention to adopt a much more robust and proactive approach to dealing with Ofsted, particularly where there are concerns about an inspection. This is not in written policy or guidance – which may go some way towards reassuring school leaders that their employer 'has their back' – both now and in future years.
2. Reading Borough Council also did not carry out any form of internal review. I was not made aware of any policy setting out when such an internal review should take place.
3. We heard in evidence that school leaders have received correspondence from Reading Borough Council about what mental health support options are available. I am concerned to know whether there is now written policy or guidance about communicating this, so that this continues to happen in future years.

IOW Children's Services Department will produce guidance on support around Ofsted and our role as a Local Authority

Attainment

Phonics Working At Expected Standard	2023		2022	
	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 1	Yr 2
Isle of Wight	74.8%	64.3%	62.6%	30.8%
National	78.9%	58.8%	75.5%	44.1%
Diff.	-4.1	+5.5	-12.9	-13.3

KS2 RWM – EXS+	2023	2023 Reading	2023 Writing	2023 Maths	2022
Isle of Wight	52% (5% increase on previous year)	69% (+1% on previous year)	64% (+6% on previous year)	67% (+5% on previous year)	47%
England (all state schools)	59% (1% increase on previous year)	73% (-1% on previous year)	71% (+2% on previous year)	73% (+2% on previous year)	58%
Diff.	-7%	-4%	-7%	-6%	-11%

KS4 2023 outcomes									
	Progress 8			5+ En/Ma			4+ En/Ma		
	2023	2019	Diff	2023	2019	Diff	2023	2019	Diff
Isle of Wight	-0.24	-0.34	+0.10	36.2%	33.8%	+2.4%	58%	56%	+2%
National	-0.03	-0.03	0	45%	43.4	+1.6%	65%	64%	-1%

- Improvements in all areas.
- In all measures the IOW is increasing and faster than national.

Attainment

September Guarantee RPA Offers (Source: CCIS DfE Jan 2024)

	*2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
IOW	98.5%	98.3%	98.2%	94.7%	98.3%
National	94.6%	94.5%	95.5%	94.3%	95.0%
SE	92.8%	92.8%	93.2%	90.9%	93.8%

**provisional data*

16-18 Education, Employment and Training (Source: LA Tables DfE Dec 2023)

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
IOW	96.80%	96.20%	96.90%	93.10%	97.40%
National	93.90%	94.00%	94.70%	93.70%	93.90%
SE	91.90%	92.00%	93.60%	92.40%	92.70%

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IOW Yr12 Course Level Breakdown (Source: CCIS DfE Nov 2023)

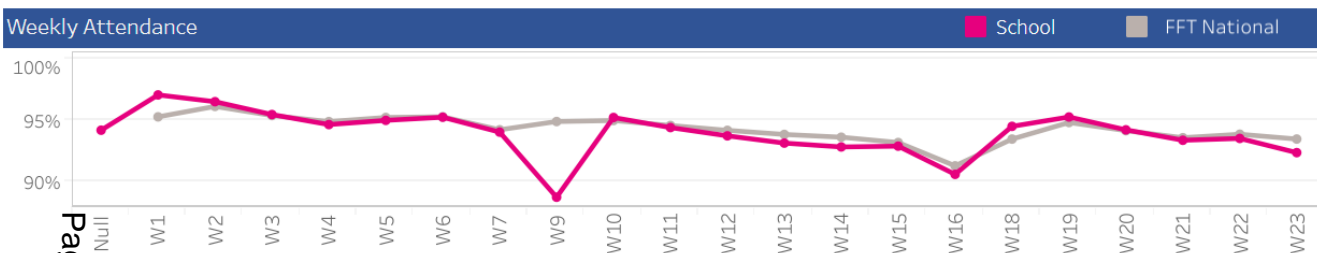
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Level 3 A levels	48.00%	48.00%	50.00%	47.00%	53.00%
Level 3 Technical	12.00%	16.00%	19.00%	14.00%	13.00%
Level 2 GCSE	1.00%	0.00%	1.00%	8.00%	0.00%
Level 2 Technical	19.00%	18.00%	14.00%	14.00%	16.00%
Level 1 Technical	9.00%	5.00%	10.00%	12.00%	9.00%
Other Education	11.00%	13.00%	6.00%	5.00%	10.00%

- IOW above national for September Guarantee
- IOW above national in 16-18 in education, employment and training

Attendance

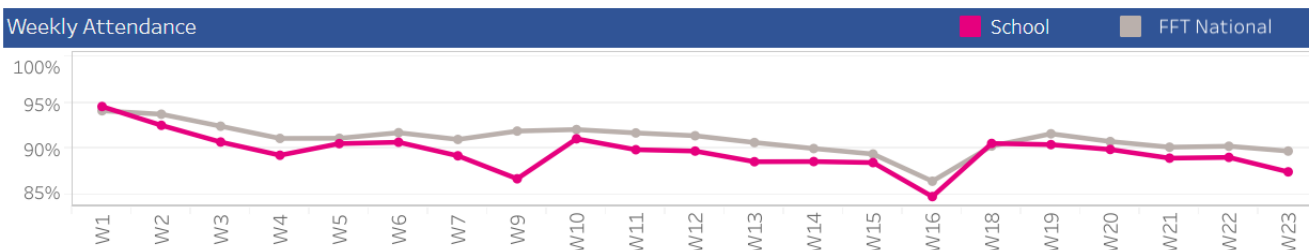
Primary YTD: IoW 94.2%, National 94.3%

All Pupils	Girls	Boys	FSM6	Not FSM6	Persistent absentees
94.2%	94.5%	93.9%	92.2%	94.9%	17.6%



Secondary YTD: IoW 89.9%, National 91.1%

All Pupils	Girls	Boys	FSM6	Not FSM6	Persistent absentees
89.9%	90.0%	89.9%	83.6%	92.1%	30.3%



This data is taken from FFT and is indicative only, it may be subject to change.
Data is correct as of 09 February 2024

	IoW		National	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
All pupils	94.2%	89.9%	94.3%	91.1%
Persistent Absence	18%	30%	17%	26%
Female	94.5%	90.0%	94.5%	90.8%
Male	93.9%	89.9%	94.1%	91.4%
FSM6	92.2%	83.6%	91.8%	85.8%
Not FSM6	94.9%	92.1%	95.2%	93.1%
SENK	92.5%	86.9%	92.4%	86.0%
EHCP	88.2%	85.2%	89.2%	82.7%

This data is taken from FFT and is indicative only, it may be subject to change.

Data is correct as of 09 February 2024

Green indicates IoW is in line with or above national average
Red indicates IoW is below national average

Safety Valve – School Facing Workstreams

- Established Jan 2023, organised around three sub-programmes.
- It aims to provide resources and support to better meet the SEND needs of the children and young people in our education settings.

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Right Support, Right Time

The right support at the right time to meet need effectively.

Scope: Early identification and intervention to meet need at the earlier stages of the SEND pathway.

Improve Outcomes, Control Costs

Maximising strengths based, person centred approaches to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people with an EHCP and control high needs costs.

Scope: When an EHCP is in place.

Continuous Improvement

Improve LA performance against SEND statutory obligations and quality of EHCPs / Annual Reviews and track the delivery of other transformation activity.

Scope: Performance against statutory obligations and improvement activity.

Resources were launched in September 2023. They are designed to provide additional support to help meet the needs of **ALL** children and young people in the classroom and, apart from the deployment of SEN Advisers, the resources are free to access.

Safety Valve - School Facing Offers



Current offers available to schools, which are fully funded...

- Our **Primary Behaviour Service** has been launched!
- Our **IOW SEN Support Toolkit**: [Isle of Wight SEN Support Toolkit : Home \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/SEN-support-toolkit)
- Our **SEN Support Phone Line**: [SEN Support Line Enquiry Form \(office.com\)](https://www.office.com/SEN-support-line-enquiry-form)
- All **Transforming SEND Conference** resources can be found here: [SEN Moodle: All courses \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/SEN-moodle)
- **SEN Matters** was sent out to all IOW schools: [SEN Moodle: All courses \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/SEN-moodle)
- All **e-learning modules** can be found here: [SEN Moodle: All courses \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/SEN-moodle)
- Our **VSEND Tool** has been launched with associated training

Offers available, which are chargeable...

- To book a **SEN Advisor**, email : SENAdvisorBooking@hants.gov.uk

Safety Valve - School Facing Offers

New resources, which will be fully funded...

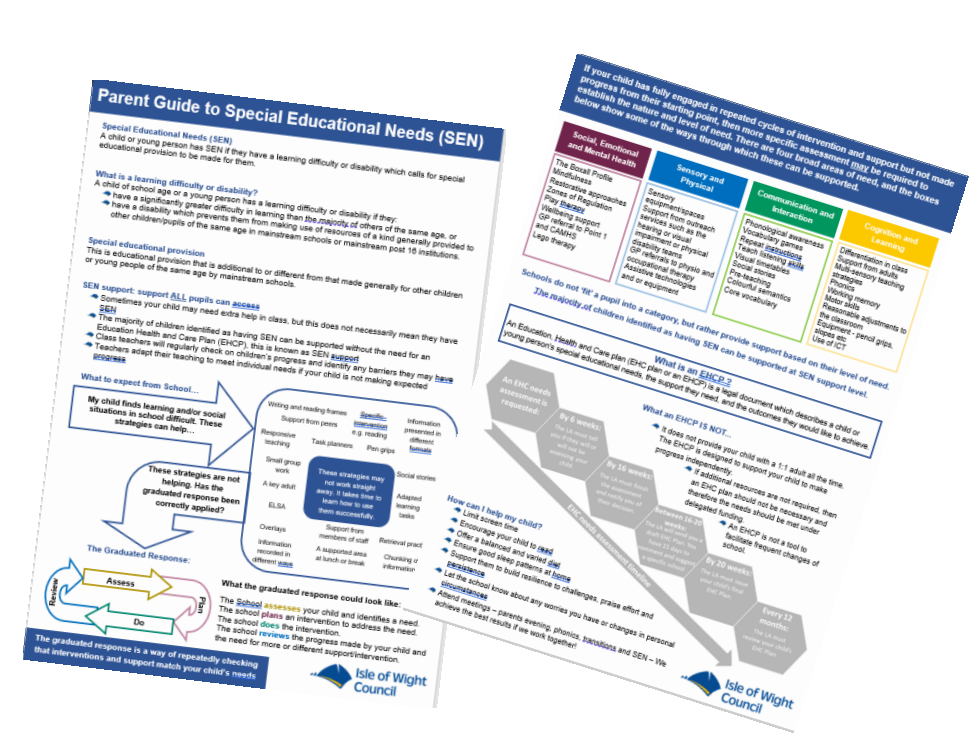
- Our IOW Parent/Carer Guide to SEN coming soon!
- Our IOW SEN Support/Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) we will be working on in the next 12/18 months

- Update out SEN Strategy in the next 12 months
- Update out SEN Sufficiency Strategy in the next 12 months

Other work to support schools and children

- Increase specialist places available on the Island
- Review SEN place funding
- Realigned SENCO Networks to align with VSEND tool
- Review how we organise Resourced Provisions
- Setting up online Resourced Provision networks for teachers in charge/SENCo

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Safety Valve – School Facing Workstreams

“Di was excellent! Our conversation over the phone was really productive in terms of pinpointing areas to focus on with the child we discussed and helping me clarify what to work on with him next. She then followed up with an email with helpful resources, links and a summary of our discussion. I would certainly use this service again.”

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“Absolutely brilliant support from Marie. I was very unsure how to proceed with a medical/epilepsy related issue and she helped signpost me and offer guidance. Thanks ever so much!”

“Excellent service, many thanks - Marie was very helpful”



“Fantastic support! As a fairly new SENCO, it's so useful to have this level of support over the phone as it's a very isolating role. I will definitely be using the service frequently. Thanks Dean!”

“Thank you, Lisa. The follow up email you sent was incredibly helpful, as was the phone call.”

“Super speedy response and great advice, many thanks, love the new service.”

“As always, fantastic support line! Great advice and some guidance given to ensure I am doing the right thing in the event of a staff member being hurt by a child. Thank you SEN team!”

Safety Valve – School Facing Workstreams

The screenshot shows the 'learninghub' interface for 'Transforming SEND'. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'My Learning', 'My Dashboard', 'My Team', 'Find Learning', and 'Reports'. The main content area features a large image of hands playing with wooden blocks, with a blue overlay containing the text 'Transforming SEND'. Below the image is a row of six blue tiles: 'Learning modules', 'SEN support toolkit', 'SEN support line', 'Transforming SEND conferences', 'SEN Matters', and 'Parents Guide to SEN'. A yellow footer bar contains contact information: 'For support contact: learning.development@iow.gov.uk' and '01983 817280'.

- With the partnership coming to an end. We have developed an IOW portal to host all the resources on and are in the process of migrating them over.
- This will ensure we have control over the resources and are not reliant upon Hampshire.
- There are aspects that we will need to continue such as SEN Support phone line

Future School & Education Attainment Panel

Date and Time of Meeting	Notes
26 February 2024, 2pm	Presentation from you/Dean to be presented in the meeting.
1 July 2024, 2pm	<p>Possible future agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Update on Education, Inclusion and Access department➤ Update on Schools➤ Update on Ofsted➤ Update on Leadership➤ Update on Safety Valve implementation

Recap

Purpose

- ◆ For sharing information so members are more informed and understand the work of the new department and the current priorities of the department.

Agenda

- ◆ Organisation of new department
- ◆ Key priorities
- ◆ SLA
- ◆ Educational landscape
- ◆ Leadership update
- ◆ Ofsted update
- ◆ Attainment
- ◆ Attendance
- ◆ Safety Valve

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**Isle of Wight
Council**

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Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Topic	SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME

Background

1. During 2020/21 the Department for Education (DfE) introduced the 'Safety Valve' intervention programme working with authorities with the very highest percentage Dedicated School Grant (DSG) deficits.
2. The programme is designed to help local authorities tackle overspending on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services. If an authority can demonstrate sufficiently reaching lasting sustainability the DfE will consider helping local authorities with additional funding over time to contribute to eliminating the historic deficit.
3. In February 2022, the Isle of Wight Council was invited by the DfE to take part in the 2022/23 programme.
4. The committee are to consider an update on progress made on the Isle of Wight Council's Safety Valve agreement.

Focus for Scrutiny

5. Are the DfE satisfied with progress made under the Safety Valve Programme?
6. Who retains oversight of the Safety Valve Programme now that the Children's Services transition from Hampshire to Isle of Wight Council control has taken place?
7. How is the deficit being monitored and recorded?
8. What adjustments or amendments can be made to the agreement, for example, if costs were to increase?
9. What safeguards are in place to ensure engagement and wider dialogue is taking place with parents?

Document(s) Attached

10. Appendix 1 – Safety Valve Update March 2024

Contact Point: Melanie White, Statutory Scrutiny Officer,
(01983) 821000 ext 8876, e-mail melanie.white@iow.gov.uk



Scrutiny Committee Report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	7 MARCH 2024
Title	SAFETY VALVE AGREEMENT, UPDATE ON PROGRESS
Report of	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Executive Summary

1. In March 2023 the Isle of Wight Council entered a Safety Valve Agreement with the Department for Education covering financial years 2022/23 to 2026/27. This agreement offers the potential for the Council to receive additional funding to meet the costs of meeting its statutory duties relating to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). A key element of the agreement is that the Isle of Wight Council undertakes to reach a positive in-year balance in its Dedicated Schools Grant by the end of 2026-27 and in each subsequent year. The implementation of the agreement is overseen by the Transforming SEND Board.
2. It was reported to the Transforming SEND Board in February 2024 that the Dedicated Schools Grant cumulative position at that time was £2.93 million worse than assumed in the Safety Valve Agreement.
3. It was reported to Schools Forum in January 2024 that for financial year 2024/25, the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant is forecast to have an in-year shortfall of £2.7 million when compared to forecast expenditure for that financial year.
4. It was reported to the Transforming SEND Board in February 2024 that the Dedicated Schools Grant balance at the end of the Safety Valve agreement in financial year 2026/27 is forecast to be £6.15 million worse than that stipulated in the Safety Valve Agreement. This forecast is currently being reconsidered and may change.
5. The main determinant of this forecast is the differential between the costs arising from the delivery of the Council's statutory duties relating to SEND and the amount of money provided within the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant for this purpose. Expenditure is being impacted by the high number of children and young people requiring placements at independent and non-maintained special schools for their needs to be met, or who are educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS), or who are receiving bespoke packages of support funded through discretionary funding.

6. The Council continues to work with partners to implement the actions specified within the Safety Valve agreement, and to bring expenditure closer to the level of allocated funding.
7. A 'statutory override' means that deficits in the Dedicated Schools Grant do not currently need to be included in a council's main revenue budgets and can be kept separate from their wider accounts. This statutory override is due to expire in 2025/26.

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee notes:

8. the significant amount of work being delivered across the local area partnership to improve the long-term financial sustainability of the special educational needs and disabilities system on the Island;
9. the differential between the terms of the Safety Valve Agreement and the actual and forecast Dedicated Schools Grant deficits;
10. the importance of reducing this differential as quickly as possible, and the potential impact on the Council's wider financial position if this is not achieved.

Background

11. During 2020/21 financial year, the Department for Education (DfE) introduced the 'Safety Valve' intervention programme working with those authorities with the very highest relative Dedicated School Grant deficits.
12. If a local authority with a Safety Valve Agreement continues to demonstrate that it can reach an in year balanced budget by the final year of the agreement, the department will assist the local authority to eliminate the historic cumulative deficit, by providing additional funding in stages across the length of the agreement.
13. In February 2023, the Isle of Wight Council reached an agreement with the DfE covering the financial years from 2022-23 to 2026-27. This agreement provided the opportunity to receive up to £12.69 million of addition funding, subject to the adherence to certain performance criteria. This funding is paid in instalments over the five-year period. All funding available so far, totalling £6.6 million, has been received or the DfE has confirmed that it will be paid. Payment of the remaining amounts, totalling £6.09 million, are subject to future agreement with the DfE.
14. As part of the agreement, the Council agreed to implement the Dedicated Schools Grant management plan submitted to the DfE through the Safety Valve process. These commitments include to:
 - 14.1 clarify ordinarily available provision through dissemination of SEN support guidance and training to headteachers and SENCOs;
 - 14.2 improve quality of education health care plan annual reviews through training, greater engagement and improved processing;
 - 14.3 ensure more robust oversight of decision making during the assessment and co-production of education health and care plans;

- 14.4 increase maintained/academy specialist placements on the Isle of Wight, minimising the need for more expensive placements;
 - 14.5 create an early intervention 'Primary Behaviour Service' to replace the primary provision at the Pupil Referral Unit, to reduce the number of permanent exclusions and meet needs earlier;
 - 14.6 improve the post-16 offer, encouraging take up of supported internships and supported apprenticeships, improving preparation for adulthood outcomes, and reducing demand for High Needs Block funds;
 - 14.7 review the governance of the programme board set up to deliver the agreement, with the intention to include a reference group which will include stakeholders, partners, and children and young people, to help inform planning in the local area.
15. Expanded in February 2023 to deliver the Safety Valve Agreement, the Transforming SEND programme is organised via three sub-programmes:
- 15.1 Right Support. Right Time. The right support at the right time to meet need effectively;
 - 15.2 Improve Outcomes, Control Costs. Maximising strengths based, person centred approaches to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people with an education health and care plan and control high needs costs;
 - 15.3 Continuous Improvement. Improve local authority performance against SEND statutory obligations and quality of education health and care plans and annual reviews and track the delivery of other transformation activity.
16. The Transforming SEND programme has facilitated delivery of:
- 16.1 a restructure of the statutory assessment and review service in summer 2023, ensuring the service can meet incoming demand, operate efficiently and effectively within its available budget, while meeting its statutory duties;
 - 16.2 a process improvement review of the education health and care plan and annual reviews processes in late 2023, ensuring that applications for an education health care plan are processed within statutory timescales and phase transfers and annual reviews are carried out in a timely manner;
 - 16.3 a successful pilot of 'Valuing SEND' in Summer 2023, a tool designed to provide a mechanism for school leaders, SENCOs and staff to support their understanding of the threshold for an education health and care plan, providing support without the need to escalate to an education health and care plan, where possible. Following the success of the pilot, the tool is now being made available to all mainstream schools on the Island by April 2024;
 - 16.4 school-Wide Advocate for Neurodiversity (SWAN) training in late 2023, designed to increase confidence in school staff to support neuro-divergent children and young people, promoting increased education inclusivity;
 - 16.5 launch of a Primary Behaviour Service for the Island in September 2023, enabling a wider range of strategies to meet the needs of children exhibiting behaviours that challenge. It is anticipated that this will lead to fewer permanent exclusions and improved inclusion in mainstream schools.
17. The Transforming SEND programme was formally launched to schools on 24 November 2023 with an in-person event. The conference provided detail on the various

workstreams within the programme, setting a clear and shared vision for our priorities focussed on children and young people with SEND on the Island.

18. The new Children's Services, Education, Inclusion & Access leadership team are working to develop a new holistic education strategy for the Island. This will include a range of strategies that will be co-produced with local area partners, describing our vision for delivering sustained improvement in the provision available to children and young people including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
19. One of the areas that is not progressing as originally planned is the work to improve the post-16 offer, encouraging the take up of supported internships and supported apprenticeships, improving preparation for adulthood outcomes, and reducing demand on High Needs Block funds. This work specifically relates to the establishment of a Preparing for Adulthood Employability hub and spoke model, which was the subject of a capital bid to the Department for Education for investment. Following the unsuccessful capital bid, the Council has scaled down its ambitions for this workstream, removing the 'spokes' element of the Employability Hubs and relying on the Isle of Wight College as the central hub.
20. Another area of work that has not progressed as planned is the work to increase maintained/academy specialist placements on the Isle of Wight, developing appropriate provision whilst supporting the efficient use of local authority resource. This work specifically relates to the new free school build, which has been subjected to an at least 12-month delay due to the lack of an academy sponsor being identified through the DfE process. The local authority is exploring alternative options.

Background Papers

21. [Safety Valve Agreement between the DfE and the Isle of Wight](#)

Contact Point: Heather Morris, Strategic Manager for SEND and Inclusion, e-mail Heather.Morris@jow.gov.uk

ASHLEY WHITTAKER
Strategic Director of Children's Services

CLLR JONATHAN BACON
*Cabinet Member for Children's Services,
Education and Corporate Functions*

Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills Workplan 2022-25

The committee assists Cabinet in the development and implementation of key plans, policies and activities set out in the Corporate Plan relating to the delivery of relevant services, including:

Children's Services
(including safeguarding)

Corporate Parenting

Special Educational Needs
and/or Disabilities

Early Help

Education

Apprenticeships

Adult Learning

Date	Agenda Items	Description & Background	Lead Officer/Cabinet Member
7 March 2024	Children's Services Transition	To review progress of the transition and to receive an action plan, to cover the next twelve months (to include place planning), in bringing Children's Services under the Councils control	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Children's Service Ofsted Report	To review the outcome of the Ofsted inspection and action plan on where improvements can be made	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	School Attainment	To consider the annual report on school attainment	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Safety Valve - Update on Progress	To review the progress on implementation of the Safety Valve programme	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
20 May 2024 - INFORMAL	Essential Skills	To hear what is being done to target the 25.5% of adults on the Island that are lacking an essential skill	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
6 June 2024	Performance, Budget & Children's Services Transition	To consider current performance trends, how the budget for 2024/25 is impacting services and to review progress of the Children's Services transition	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions

	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-25	To review Early Years childcare sufficiency on the Isle of Wight.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Children's Health & Wellbeing	To explore, with Children's Services, NHS and Public Health, what actions can actively be done to improve children's health and wellbeing to positively impact upon attendance and attainment.	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Housing, Public Health and Homelessness Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Fostering & Adoption Annual Reports	To consider the annual reports	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Children with Disabilities	To review the expansion of services on the Island for Children with Disabilities	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
11 July 2024 - INFORMAL	Family Reunification	To hear the IWCs approach to family reunification and to review what policy is in place	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
5 September 2024	Annual Complaints Report – Children's Social Work	To consider the annual report in accordance with best practice advice from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to ensure that lessons learnt are being implemented	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Children's Services	To monitor the progress of the transition arrangements for the post-Hampshire Partnership	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Social Worker Recruitment & Retention	To consider steps being taken to assist in the recruitment and retention of social workers within Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	School Attendance & Exclusions	To consider the latest position on attendance and exclusions.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
10 October 2024 - INFORMAL	SEN Direction	To receive an update on progress following the informal meeting that took place in February	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions

5 December 2024	Performance & Budget	To consider current performance trends, how the budget for 2024/25 is impacting services and to review progress of the Children's Services transition	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Mentoring in Schools	To review the progress of the mentoring programme developed by OUS Hampshire & Isle of Wight and how it has progressed on the Island	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	IW Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report	To consider the annual report	Chairman of the Board
	SACRE Annual Report	To consider the work of the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Children in Care Annual Report	To receive the annual Children in Care report that links into an update from the Corporate Parenting Board.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
6 March 2025	Children's Services Transition	To review progress of the transition and to receive an action plan, to cover the next twelve months (to include place planning), in bringing Children's Services under the Councils control	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Safety Valve - Update on Progress	To review the progress of implementation of the Safety Valve programme	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	School Attainment	To consider the annual report on attainment	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions
	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025-26	To review Early Years childcare sufficiency on the Isle of Wight.	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions

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Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education & Skills Scrutiny Committee - Progress on Actions & Outcomes

Meeting Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Update	Actioned
Outstanding Actions				
7 December 2023	Annual Children in Care Report It was requested that the committee receive a list of upcoming Children in Care events in order to attend.	Scrutiny Officer	Currently waiting for a list to be able to circulate to the committee	
Actions Completed (Since Last Meeting)				

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