

Report	Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Children's Services' Partnership Review December 2020
Title	Review of the Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Children's Services' Partnership December 2020
Author	Steve Crocker, Director of Children's Services

1. Introduction

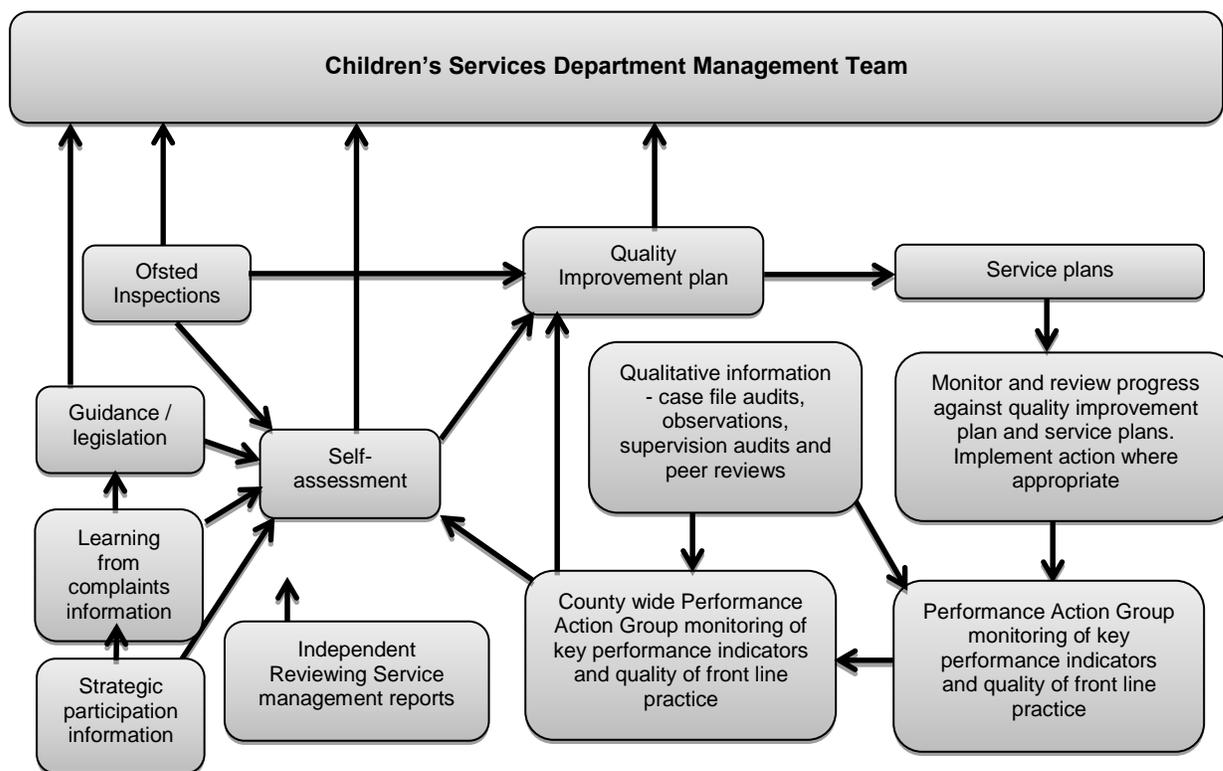
- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the progress of the partnership of Children's Services between Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Isle of Wight Council (IWC). The first part of the report collates the improvements of children's social care and the second part collates the improvements across the Isle of Wight family of schools and other related services.
- 1.2 This is a descriptive update report designed to provide an overview of the evidence of improvement and to identify areas of practice and management where further progress and improvements are required. By bringing this in to one document, we aim to tell the improvement journey. Throughout the report there is an implicit story which is about the benefits to both authorities. The Isle of Wight gain access to a wide range of resource, knowledge and skill which they would not otherwise be able to access, because of the size and scale of Hampshire. For example, the Isle of Wight on its own might not be able to support a specialist Maths adviser for schools, but now they can access that support through Hampshire even if that equates to only 10% of that adviser's time. However, there is also a benefit to Hampshire in the arrangement that is acknowledged by its professional leadership and which has been externally validated by Ofsted in several of its inspections of services in Hampshire; specifically, the benefit is that professionals in Hampshire are challenged and stretched by the improvement work on the Isle of Wight which, in turn, enables them to be better leaders and practitioners across both authorities whilst bringing a specific and tangible benefit to Hampshire. Whilst this report focuses on continued improvement on the Island, I want to clearly acknowledge this mutual benefit.
- 1.3 The original partnership agreement had been in place since 2013, through a statutory direction by the Secretary of State for Education. The statutory direction was removed in June 2018. Hampshire County Council and the Isle of Wight Council formally agreed at this time to continue with the partnership for a period of a further five years recognising the achievements and transformation of services under the arrangement.

2. Children's social care

- 2.1 Building on improvements in policy, practice, management oversight and workforce development highlighted in previous annual reviews, the past year has seen a continued focus on improving the consistency of performance and quality of practice across the service and in supporting our staff.
- 2.2 The service management structure ensures sufficient capacity is available at operational and strategic levels and clear lines of management accountability for all teams are in place. Robust management oversight has led to further improvements in consistency, performance and quality across teams. A comprehensive workforce development offer is in place for staff within the service, based on regularly updated needs assessments. This has enhanced the quality in social work practice, evidence-based interventions and management support and supervision. Children's social care have continued to focus on 'growing our own' with new appointments at assistant team manager and manager level from within our own staffing structure on the Isle of Wight. This evidences the further strengthening skill set of our staff on the Island.
- 2.3 Isle of Wight children's social care services were inspected by Ofsted in November 2018. The inspection was under the new Ofsted Framework introduced in January 2018 and amended in March 2019. The findings were published in January 2019. These findings were:
- The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families is **good**.
 - The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection is **good**.
 - The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers is **good**.
 - Overall effectiveness is **good**.
- 2.4 Ofsted reported that services for children in the Isle of Wight had significantly improved since the single inspection in 2014. They reported that the strategic partnership between the Isle of Wight Council and Hampshire County Council has brought stable and consistent leadership, increased resilience and ensured a firm focus on continual improvement. Ofsted noted that the Island location brings unique challenges and opportunities that leaders have understood and responded to well, and they have worked purposefully to improve services for children and to create a sustainable service. Of particular note was the comment within the report that *'Children's lived experience is at the centre of social work practice on the Island'*.

3. Performance and Quality assurance

- 3.1 In early 2018, a revised *Quality Matters - Improvement Framework* was developed and implemented across the children's and families branch of Children's Services. The framework sets out the performance management and quality assurance arrangements for children's social care. To be effective and sustainable; quality assurance, performance and continuous improvement needs to be a systems-wide approach, embedded in culture and integrated in practice. The diagram below details the complexity of performance and quality assurance activity for the successful oversight and continuous improvement of well performing children's social care services.



3.3 Children's social care has a quality improvement plan which brings together all the actions required to deliver improved performance and practice based on recommendations from Ofsted, peer reviews, and internal and multi-agency quality assurance. This is update and monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure that actions are completed, and the impact is monitored. Ofsted stated that,

'A comprehensive quality assurance programme, combined with the rigorous use of performance information, enables leaders to maintain effective oversight of practice. Performance meetings take place in every part and level of the service. Regular auditing by managers and senior leaders, alongside social workers, provides helpful opportunities for reflection and learning.' ILACS, Ofsted November 2019.

4. Early Help

4.1 Children's Services continue to lead on the co-ordination of the early help offer to children and families across the Island. The council commissions Barnardo's to provide part of the Island's early help offer through local family centres. Early help prevents issues in families escalating above the threshold for children's social care intervention and so plays a key role in helping to manage demand on children's social care, youth offending and health services.

4.2 Three hundred and forty four early help assessments and plans were completed in 2019/20. The most common presenting factors in early help assessments have been consistent over the past two years-child's behaviour at home, mental health concerns for the child or adult and relationship difficulties. Twenty two percent of early help cases involve domestic abuse as factor. In 2019/20, the family centres delivered and/or hosted 4,859 sessions/activities for children and families, (5,199 parents/carers and children benefitted from these sessions).

Evidence-based parenting programmes such as Five to Thrive, Incredible Years, Family Links, New Forest ADHD, talking teens, Triple P and Cygnet for parents/carers of children with ASD were delivered across the centres.

5. MASH - Contacts and Referrals

- 5.1 The partnership arrangements with regards to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), based in Hampshire, continues to deliver robust initial screening and triage of safeguarding contacts and referrals. In 2019/20, an average of 1,500 Isle of Wight contacts per month came through to MASH. During 2019/20, of the contacts referred to MASH in 2019/20, 46% lead to the provision of a social care service (either a child and family assessment or a child protection investigation). Referrals that do not meet the threshold for social care intervention are either transferred to early help services or advice and information is provided.

Social workers and managers in the children's reception team (CRT) and the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) make timely and appropriate decisions about levels of need when children are first referred to the service. The response by the MASH to safeguarding concerns about children is prompt and effective. ILACS, Ofsted November 2019.

- 5.2 The rate of child protection investigations (Section 47 investigations) for 2019/20 was 133.34 per 10,000 0-17-year-old population, which was a significant reduction from 222.30 per 10,000 in 2018/19. The percentage of initial child protection conferences held within timescales remained high at 83%, which was significantly better than the South East and statistical neighbour averages for 2018/19.

6. Children in Need and Children subject to Child Protection Planning (CPP)

- 6.1 Children in need are defined in law as children who are aged under 18 and:
- need local authority services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development
 - need local authority service to prevent significant or further harm to health or development
 - are disabled
- 6.2 During 2019/20, 3,178 child and family assessments were undertaken by children social care of which 63% were first assessments. Whilst demand has remained high, the timeliness of completion of assessments provides a very positive picture at 92%. This was higher than most other local authorities in the region.

The number of children in need has incrementally decreased over the past four years, however, the rate (per 10,000) was still higher in the Isle of Wight compared to the South East and statistical neighbor average, reflecting the greater levels of need. All cases stepped down from child protection planning currently transition to child in need planning to ensure that support and changes are sustained. We believe that this approach has contributed to a reduction in the number of repeat child protection plans.

- 6.4 The numbers of children subject to child protection planning has continued to incrementally decrease. Provisional data for 2019/20 was an IOW rate of 48 per 10, compared to 66 per

10,000 in 2018/19. This reflects the strength of work at the child in need level, reducing the numbers of cases that escalate.

- 6.6 The table below provides a summary of the improvements in the child protection planning process, which remains robust. Please note figures of 2019-20 remain provisional:

Child Protection Plans (CPP) and visits	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
No of children on CPP	214	199	193	165	126
Neglect	123 (57%)	144 (72%)	112 (58%)	100 (61%)	99 (77.95%)
Physical	16 (7%)	9 (5%)	16 (8%)	6 (4%)	4 (3.15%)
Sexual	17 (8%)	18 (9%)	25 (13%)	10 (6%)	8 (6.30%)
Emotional	58 (27%)	28 (14%)	40 (21%)	49 (30%)	16 (12.60%)
CPPs ending after 2 or more years	15	9	13	12	19
CPs lasting 2 or more years	4 (1.9%)	7 (4%)	2 (1%)	3 (2%)	2 (1.5%)
Visits made in accordance with CPP - 14 days	67.81%	79.35%	70.70%	83.90%	81.8%

7. Children with Disabilities

- 7.1 The number of children open to the Children with disabilities team decreased in 2019/20 from 219 to 188. Of these, 1% were subject to child protection planning and 15% were looked after children (including a small number who are receiving respite overnight support but still live at home with their families most of the time). The team deliver social work co-ordinated support to children and families, including packages of care based on assessed needs. Whilst the Ofsted inspection in 2018 identified areas of strength within this service, such as regular visiting, child in need meetings and interventions; the need for a small number of assessments to be updated more regularly was highlighted. This has been addressed by the service and all assessments are now up to date, with effective tracking in place to ensure this is maintained.

8. Children in Care and Care leavers

- 8.1 With regards to looked after children, the number has increased by 21 in 2019/20. Whilst 50% of placements are with in-house foster carers, the need to use external foster care and residential provision remains, with 18% of placements with external foster carers and 4% residential.
- 8.3 Nationally, the picture of demand continues to outstrip the supply of placements for children in care, and the cost of placements are rising significantly. A recent Local Government Association report noted that councils had overspent on children's social care by £800m in

2018/19 as demand and costs rise (<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/childrens-care-crisis-councils-forced-overspend-almost-ps800m-childrens-social-care>). Predominantly these increased costs are associated with the cost of placements for children in care.

8.5 The Isle of Wight has 231 of care leavers. The team are in touch with 95% of the care leavers aged between 19-21. The 2019/20 figure for the proportion of care leavers who were in education, employment and training was 64% compared to a 2018/19 South East average of 53%.

9. Fostering and Adoption-

9.1 At the end of December 2019 there were 91 registered foster carers in the Isle of Wight. Of these:

- 52 were general foster carers
- 31 were friends and family or connected person
- 1 is a specialist respite carer
- supported lodgings carers.
- Connected carers in assessment with children in placement.

9.2 There is a very committed foster carer community across the Isle of Wight that engage with the relevant social care teams and works continuously to improve the service and outcomes for cared for children.

9.3 A comprehensive training pathway is in place with a variety of face to face and online learning opportunities to build on foster carers knowledge and skills. Educational psychologists are delivering “Cool, Calm and Connected”, “Attachment” and “Attachment and the Effects of Trauma” courses following feedback back carers, particularly around adolescents. Foster carers are also able to access wider workforce development opportunities and conferences through the local safeguarding children’s partnership.

9.4 The marketing and recruitment of foster carers has now separated from Adoption due to the implementation of the Regional Adoption Agency. A revised fostering marketing strategy is being implemented to drive up the capacity of in house fostering and to increase placement choice.

9.5 Nine children have been adopted over the last year to March 2020. Of these the average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is 395 days still within the government target of 426 days.

10. Elected member involvement and scrutiny

10.1 There is good evidence that elected member involvement and scrutiny has further improved. The Children’s Policy and Scrutiny Committee meet quarterly with regular reviews of performance and quality data, reports and briefings on key developments within the service. A clear work plan is in place. Attendance by members at the committee is good and separate briefings are regularly provided by Children’s Service on new and emerging risks, local and national developments.

10.2 The Corporate Parenting Board has had a significant impact on improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers, examples of which include the Isle of Wight Council’s

decision to exempt care experienced young people aged between 18-25 from Council tax and the commissioning of 'Pathways to Independence' accommodation for young people.

11. Challenges

11.1 The key challenges for the service are aligned with national challenges experienced by Children's Services departments across the country, and particularly those in coastal communities these include;

- Wider societal determinants linked to poverty, insecure employment/low wages creating greater demand (highly likely to increase following the Covid-19 crisis)
- New and greater risks to children and young people such as County Lines/Child Sexual Exploitation/Child Criminal Exploitation/online abuse
- More care leavers as a result of the increase in the number of children looked after and extended care leaver duties to age 25
- Additional new duties from legislation and policy changes
- Recruitment and retention of social workers,

12. Transformation programme

12.1 As part of Children's Services' response to these challenges and following a significant investment by the Isle of Wight Council, a transformation programme is being implemented across the children and families branch over the next two years. It is a radical whole system change, modelled on the highly successful transformation of Children's Services in Hampshire. There is evidence in Hampshire that this strengths-based approach can lead to more children being safely cared for at home, rather than coming into public care. The transformation is built around 5 principles:

- A family service - a system focused on improving outcomes for the child in the context of the family.
- A social work led, integrated, multi-disciplinary service from front door through to specialist services.
- Social workers supported to deliver meaningful interventions based on an underpinning methodology of resilience that creates lasting change
- A service where good practice is free to flourish unfettered by bureaucracy and unnecessary regulatory demands
- Children are supported by and within their own family/community wherever possible. Where children do come into care longer term their experience will be life changing for the better.

13. Response to Covid 19

13.1 The data above all refers to 2019/20 because the data in 2020-21 so far has been skewed by the necessary response to Covid. This is regularly reported elsewhere and is not the purpose of this report other than to note that the response from Children's Services and schools' staff has been excellent with staff going above and beyond our expectations in ensuring that the needs of children have been met despite the pandemic.

As part of our contingency planning we developed a three-phased approach, with each phase based on having fewer staff available to work should the situation worsen. To contextualise this, we are 'business as usual but doing it differently'. Importantly, all of our statutory timescales for visits and meetings remain the same albeit we are using technology to ensure we see children and families through digital means – WhatsApp, Teams and a number of other similar approaches. The service is fully operational, and we continue to operate as near to normal as we can.

Face to face visits continue to be undertaken, where we know our staff can safely socially distance themselves or with the use of PPE. This is usually in relation to urgent child protection work or transporting children.

There is a strong drive from Government for all vulnerable children and particularly those with a social worker, to be in school. We are working closely with our Education & Inclusion colleagues and our schools to ensure attendance at school increases. Where a child known to children's social care is not in school, we are undertaking a risk assessment and taking what steps we can to promote their attendance.

- 13.2 Over 90% of our child protection conferences and other statutory reviews have continued to occur on time, and where there is any delay, these are for understandable and unavoidable reasons. Multi agency work across Hampshire/ IOW remains strong with strong frontline links between children's social care and the police in particular.
- 13.3 Demand is continuing to rise and by mid-May was back to 100% of what we would expect to see at this time of the year, and this increased throughout the rest of the year. We have seen a rise in the complexity of work coming into the service, notably in respect of neglect issues and domestic abuse. Children are still coming into care where it is necessary and still leaving care where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- 13.4 The work of the branch has largely been able to continue albeit in a different way, with the wider management team meeting weekly to keep abreast of key issues and to ensure staff and managers felt supported, and we are now preparing for the transition to 'new normal'.

14. Conclusion - children's social care

- 14.1 There is a strong evidence base that the service has significantly improved in all areas. We consider ourselves as being a 'good service' which was affirmed through the ILACS Ofsted inspection in November 2018. We aim, through our transformation programme, to become an outstanding service for the Island's children and families.
- 14.2 We know our strengths and areas for development. The continued scrutiny of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP), elected members, and our ongoing quality assurance processes and critical approach to self-assessment, will continue to drive the required improvements.

15. Early Years and Primary Education

- 15.1 At the outset of the Partnership in 2013, the outcomes for pupils in early years and at the end of primary education were well below national averages. By 2016, attainment in Early Years had improved significantly and reflected secure and sustained improvement. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, taken together, had improved steadily but

there was a stubborn weakness in mathematics that depressed overall standards. Local authority support and challenge focussed particularly on the most poorly performing primary schools. Improving the outcomes in the weakest performing schools is a key element of any system wide improvement.

- 15.2 Standards at the end of the foundation stage, as measured by the proportion of pupils who have reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) have compared favourably with national standards for several years. The IOW has seen dramatic improvements over the last five years in GLD to a point where attainment has been broadly comparable with national average for three consecutive years. This bodes well for further improvements in outcomes at the end of all stages of education.
- 15.3 Improvement in levels of attainment of children at the end of primary education has been a strategic priority since the inception of the partnership between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Standards rise when the quality of leadership and teaching is consistently good. Evaluation through monitoring in schools, especially those where the improvement has been most needed, has indicated that this improvement has been happening. This has been validated by the commentary in Ofsted reports over time.
- 15.4 There was a much-improved picture in 2019 because of the strategies for improvement implemented to address a disappointing dip in performance in 2018. This was a result of previously improved outcomes in schools supported by the LA, declining once support had been withdrawn. Overall, in the government's measure of the proportion of children achieving Age-Related Expectations (ARE) or above in reading, writing and mathematics combined, Isle of Wight schools had further improved standards. This is both in relation to previous performance and against the national averages where a significant reduction in the gap is noteworthy, from -11% in 2018 to -6% in 2019. This increase in overall attainment represents the third most improved LA performance from 2018 to 2019 across the Country.
- 15.5 A specific intervention project, funded from the DfE's Strategic School Improvement Fund, with twenty schools to address underperformance in mathematics led to a 15% improvement in the proportion of children reaching Age Related Expectations (ARE) in mathematics. Indeed, it is this significant increase that largely accounts for the overall 8% improvement in the IOW mathematics outcomes.
- 15.6 There are also encouraging improvements in the outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable children in primary education. The proportion of children on SEND support reaching age related expectations has improved and closed the gap with National. Similarly, the proportion of children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) has improved and closed the gap with National averages.
- 15.7 Whilst standards remained 4% below national averages, there has been an encouraging improvement in mathematics attainment that has previously limited improvement in overall outcomes despite gains in reading and writing. In 2020 there were no statutory national assessments in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the only statutory outcomes reported in this document are from 2019. No teacher assessment data was collected by the Department for Education (DfE) for school accountability purposes.

15.8 Nonetheless there has been a relentless drive to embed the improvement seen in 2019 and build longer term sustainability into the quality of leadership and teaching that drives improved standards year on year. To secure further progress there is a three-part strategy. This involves developing a cadre of Island based teachers who can model effective practice in mathematics, drawing upon nationally funded subject knowledge training. There is also a group of schools where the development of wider leadership has been highlighted as a priority. They are engaged in a leadership project where the techniques from the maths intervention project mentioned (paragraph 15.5) are revisited with a focus group of pupils, and then disseminated more widely through other subjects and year groups. This involves school improvement experts working with the leaders who are driving this in their schools, to develop and hone their leadership practice. More widely, there is also a programme of termly visits to all schools that focus on key actions of the school improvement cycle at the appropriate points in the year. Groups of schools are meeting with Local Authority officers between these visits to further share good practice and thinking. This structured approach is linked to the school improvement cycle that regularly reviews pupil performance and plans action to address any weaknesses.

15.9 The monitoring of school effectiveness by Ofsted continues to be an important benchmark. Inevitably, there can be fluctuations in percentage figures year to year in a system with a relatively small number of schools. However, the trend over time is positive. Over the lifetime of the previous Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (CIF) from 2016 to 2019, the comparison with National proportions of Good or better schools has improved.

15.10 Trend in the percentage of Good+ early years setting and schools over the four years of the current CIF (2016 → current (Jan 2020))

Change in proportion of good+ schools effectiveness grades in	National change in %	IoW change in %
All	-2 (87 to 85)	+8 (65 to 73)
Early Years Settings	+5 (91 to 96)	+3 (93 to 96)
Primary	= (88 to 88)	+6 (68 to 74)

15.11 Ofsted has suspended its normal inspection timetable since March 2020. There have been monitoring visits by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) that result in published letters that do not contain judgements. These have focused on collecting information to inform Ofsted and the wider public on the impact of COVID and the nature of the responses from educational settings. On the Island, these visits have been positive and have resulted in letters that state what each school is doing to keep its children safe and learning through the period of the pandemic.

15.12 One of the consequences of the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020 and the partial re-opening in June 2020 for primary schools is that there was insufficient time for all children to have been taught the necessary curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics or any of the other subjects. Indeed, in the early lockdown months the expectation was for childcare

rather than continuation of the curriculum, even for children in school. As the year progressed, expectations for a more normal curriculum, whether taught live or remotely, have been clarified and schools have responded positively.

- 15.13 Although in the first lockdown period, the Local Authority officers working with schools shifted their focus to helping leaders navigate through the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the underlying drive to improve outcomes for children remained. At the appropriate time support was realigned to the original stated school improvement priorities, albeit with some differences of approach, many positive, resulting from the realities of pandemic working. Reports from school leaders and Local Authority officers evidence that this had helped schools to navigate the challenges presented by the pandemic and be as effective as possible in helping the children to make the best possible progress in the school year 2019/20 given the circumstances.
- 15.14 In preparation for the new school year and full return to primary education in 2020/21, the school improvement service provided significant support in training and resources for schools. These focused on building a “Recovery” curriculum that emphasised the importance of establishing what children had learned and remembered as a starting point for the Autumn term curriculum. Evidence from remote monitoring and conversations with schools indicates that many children have made excellent progress in remembering and building new knowledge and understanding in the Autumn. This has been trickier for more vulnerable and disadvantaged children who have often required more explicit reminders to close gaps in their understanding, particularly in phonics and sometimes in mathematics. Furthermore, a small minority of children have experienced further disruption through periods of self-isolation during the Autumn. We now enter Lockdown 3 and this will require further recovery work in the Spring and Summer although we might expect more curriculum progress as schools have more robust remote teaching resources in place.

16. Secondary Education

- 16.1 Following the closure of the Isle of Wight Studio School, there are now 6 secondary schools on the Isle of Wight, with one all through school also having a full secondary cohort of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4.

The previous partnership report described the derivation of The Bay all through school and the positive start the new leadership had made. Monitoring visits carried out by local authority officers confirm the school’s judgement that its improvement journey has continued through the period of the pandemic. School leaders continue to be ambitious for all of The Bay’s pupils and continue to make good use of the comprehensive local authority support package to accelerate their improvement.

- 16.2 After a two-year period with a strong Head of School, Christ the King has had an interim leader for a term, an extremely experienced headteacher from a Southampton school, and is now being led by a newly appointed substantive headteacher. An HMI monitoring visit in Spring 2019 confirmed that the school was taking effective action and most recently, an HMI monitoring visit in the Autumn term noted the school’s work in educating children and keeping them safe through the pandemic. Although the monitoring visits currently being carried out by Ofsted are not graded, school staff shared that it was a very positive experience. The executive leadership has remained stable throughout this period and the executive headteacher has reported that the new headteacher has made a positive start.

The new leader will be well inducted through a carefully planned local authority package of support and monitoring, including weekly meetings with the school improvement manager. Christ the King remains on track to be judged as good by the next inspection.

- 16.3 As stated in the previous report, the closure of the studio school, coupled with the changes in establishing The Bay all through school mean that a significant number of surplus places have been removed from the secondary education system. However, surplus places remain and both Medina College and Christ the King are currently looking to reduce their PANs.
- 16.4 Over the three academic years prior to 2019, the percentage of pupils achieving grade 4 in English and mathematics at GCSE on the Isle of Wight increased relative to national, with the proportion of pupils achieving The Basics, grade 4 or better in both English and maths, increasing by 5% so that in 2019, 68% of pupils reached this benchmark. Although not yet in line with the national figure, the attainment 8 figure for the last three years also indicates an upturn relative to a static national picture, and the progress 8 figure has also improved. In 2020, there were no statutory national assessments at Key Stage 4 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 16.5 Ofsted has suspended its normal inspection timetable since March 2020, so there has been no change in the proportion of schools being judged to be good or better since the last report. However, there have been monitoring visits by Her Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) that do not contain judgements. These visits either state that no concerns have been noted, and outline in a letter the work that the school is doing to safely educate their pupils during the pandemic or trigger a full Ofsted Inspection. All three of the Islands’ schools not currently judged to be good have received one of these inspections and report that they have been very positive experiences. No further inspections have resulted from these visits and the published letters reveal comprehensive provision.
- 16.6 Trend in the percentage of Good+ schools over the four years of the current CIF (2016 → current Jan 2020)

Change in proportion of good+ schools overall effectiveness grades in	National change in %	IoW change in %
Secondary	-2 (77 to 75)	+30 (20 to 50)

- 16.7 The secondary school improvement team has continued to provide comprehensive support through the period of the pandemic. Subject leaders have run regular subject network meetings for professionals where they have worked with schools to tailor the recovery curriculum resources produced by their teams to meet the needs of each school. Bespoke work with schools has continued in the areas of leadership and subject development, and monitoring activities have continued as scheduled, albeit needing to be adapted in accordance with the pandemic restrictions in place at the time. Throughout, the secondary senior leadership team has been on hand to provide support and advice to all Isle of Wight headteachers in all aspects of pandemic management and have ensured good links with public health and wider groups of Hampshire heads through webinars, and remote meeting opportunities.

17. Post 16 Education and Skills

- 17.1 As a consequence of the global COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 performance data for post 16 education and training on the Island has not been published. Data reported locally by individual schools and colleges suggests that, based on centre assessed grades, performance improved across all measures. Whilst direct comparison with published performance data, and in particularly advanced level programmes such as A-levels and Tech-levels, is not possible, the Local Authority celebrates the success of all young people who completed their post 16 programmes in 2020, and congratulates them and teaching staff from across the Island's education system.
- 17.2 Published data for 2019 shows that A-level outcomes on the Island were below national averages (in part because of lower average value added). Structural changes have helped set the conditions for sustained improvement. This was to be further supported through investment from the Local Authority in an A-level improvement programme. Having originally hoped to commence in 2019/20, the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic meant that this programme could not start and is unlikely to be able to do so in 2020/21. Future options for supporting further improvement in A-level and other post 16 outcomes will be considered in the coming period.
- 17.3 Participation by young people on the Island, 16-18, remains very high and above national and regional averages on the majority of published measures. This includes performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside support from schools, parents and peers, young people's transition to (and through) their post 16 studies is supported by the Council's Island Futures team, part of the Skills & Participation service, and aligned to Hampshire Futures. The effectiveness of the service is reflected in the Island's 2020 September Guarantee performance (the statutory entitlement of all 16 and 17 year olds to place of learning) which was 98.2% compared with 94.3% nationally. This placed the Island first within the SE region.
- 17.4 As part of the the commitment to support young people's participation in education, employment and training (EET), the council co-funds a schools-based careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) programme and provides qualified Careers Advisers. The majority of schools take up this offer and purchase addition CIAG days. The service holds the national Matrix Standard for quality careers practice (for the first time) and supports schools to develop their own CIAG models. All schools have either completed, or are undertaking, the Quality in Careers Standard (QICS) quality assurance programme. This aims to ensure high quality CIAG is embedded and sustained within a school's curriculum, helping them meet the requirements of the OFSTED inspection framework.
- 17.5 The partnership with Hampshire is adding value and capacity to this area of activity. The Island is a core partner in two ESF-funded participation projects – STEP, which focuses on young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, and the Solent Apprenticeship Hub, which seeks to support a growth in Apprenticeships (all ages). There is also a joint Higher Education participation project with Hampshire, funded through the Office for Student's NCOP programme. As well as local HE events, work in schools and a new HE Prospectus, this initiative has supported the creation of the Island Careers Partnership, a forum for coordinating and developing careers practice across the Island. The programme also co-funded a HE feasibility study for the Island in 2019. This identified the need to

further develop an island based HE offer to meet the needs of the local economy and, as a later phase, attract HE students to the Island. The next phase of this work is due to be taken forward in 2020/21.

- 17.6 Through the strategic partnership with Hampshire, we have also been developing the Island Higher Education and Skills strategy. On the former, a working group made up of employers and providers identified the need to develop further the range of locally available higher skills programme, particularly in those areas that support the Island's economy. It is hoped that this will lead to the development of an Island HE Hub. Also, an Island Skills Plan is to be developed in 2021/22. In part as a response of the impact to the COVID-19 pandemic, the plan will be developed collaboratively with employers and stakeholders on the Island and will aim to set out priority actions that will raise overall skills levels, support economic inclusion and wellbeing, and provide the skills needed to thrive in the future. This will include a focus on digital and the low carbon economy.

18. Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

- 18.1 Partnership work on the IOW is now well established with the SEN service, the Virtual School and the Education Inclusion Service. This takes the form of management support and the impact of this joint work is evident in improving outcomes.
- 18.2 Examples of this were captured in the Ofsted letter to the Local Authority which was written following the November 2019 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection. This inspection looked at how well services for children and young people on the Island were implemented following the Government's SEND reforms, as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. Their letter confirmed that services supporting vulnerable children were improving and that the support offered is making a positive difference for children and young people with SEND across the Island.
- 18.3 Since the Ofsted inspection the timeliness of completing EHCPs has improved and was at 86% at the end of December 2020 which is likely to be well above national averages. Work has taken place to develop co-production with parents through Parents Voice IW and there have been a number of sufficiency initiatives undertaken to develop an Early Years SEN Hub to further support inclusion in early years provision, additional Primary and Secondary Resourced provision to create 16 additional SEN specialist places. Work is also underway with an initiative to develop Post 16 specialist provision through opening an "Employability Hub" and moving the 6th Form at St. George's Special School to a separate site on the school campus. All this has been undertaken at a time when the service has had to adjust to new ways of working to accommodate COVID 19 restrictions.
- 18.4 The virtual school has continued to work in partnership with social care and schools, providing specialist advice to ensure the educational needs of children in care were addressed during the COVID 19 restrictions. This has included ensuring children attended school, wherever possible, supporting transitions and providing training and guidance virtually to designated teachers. The virtual school has worked in collaboration with HIAS to produce transition guidance which focused on how to support the emotional well-being of children during this time. By July 2020, 51.1% of children in care were attending school well above comparable averages nationally. There has been a slight increase in fixed term exclusions for children in care in the Autumn term, 12 in 2020 compared to 8 in 2019 and

the virtual school is continuing to target training, interventions and corporate parent visits to ensure children's wider support needs are met.

- 18.5 Prior to the school lockdown in March 2020 the rate of permanent and fixed term exclusions (FTE) had started to stabilise with levels of both slowly decreasing within the secondary sector. Exclusions at primary level have been consistently in line with or slightly below national data. The impact of schools closing and their ability to access alternative provision has caused some instability during autumn term 2020 and there has been an increase in FTE at Secondary level. 18.2% of exclusions at Secondary provision relate to breaches of health and safety, a new category introduced this academic year in response to Covid restrictions needed to be put in place by schools. The Secondary Behaviour Partnership has continued to work well in supporting schools to manage difficult behaviours and support pupils through alternative placements to break persistent patterns of poor behaviour. The Inclusion Service continues to provide appropriate challenge and support where required.

19. Special Schools and The Island Learning Centre

- 19.1 The two state-funded special schools, Medina House and St George's, provide a good standard of education for those children and young people with more complex, multiple or profound special educational needs that cannot be met in a mainstream setting. Last inspected and judged good by Ofsted in July 2018 and January 2016 respectively, both Medina House and St George's benefit from strong leadership and highly driven staff teams.
- 19.2 Both special schools are full and beyond their capacity, with demand predicted to continue. To this end, St George's has been expanded and capital investment will be provided to create a new sixth form centre within the same site. Medina House was also expanded recently utilising part of the space on the ex-Barton Primary site.
- 19.3 As part of the sufficiency strategy, the IWC is currently creating additional resourced provision. An 8 place provision for primary aged children with social, emotional and mental health needs has been set up at Hunnyhill Primary School. Further resourced provision is being planned at Medina College and Brading Primary, with additional opportunities being explored.
- 19.4 The Island Learning Centre (ILC) is a pupil referral unit offering alternative provision for those permanently excluded, those at risk of exclusion and those too medically unwell or emotional vulnerable to attend their mainstream setting. Large proportions of the children and young people at the centre have multiple vulnerabilities; for example, a third have special educational needs, two fifths are open to social care and broadly the same proportion are eligible for free school meals. Primarily, the ILC should offer short-term provision, with close partnerships with local schools aiming to reintegrate children and young people within their mainstream settings. Like other specialist provision, the ILC has taken pupils beyond its capacity in recent years and demand continues. Judged good by Ofsted in 2018, the ILC currently has additional local authority support for school improvement work. In particular, the local authority will continue working with the ILC to boost leadership capacity beyond the capable headteacher.
- 19.5 The monitoring of school effectiveness by Ofsted continues to be an important benchmark. Inevitably, there can be fluctuations in percentage figures year to year in a system with a relatively small number of schools. However, the trend over time is positive. Over the lifetime

of the previous Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (CIF) from 2016 to 2019, the comparison with National proportions of Good or better schools has improved.

Trend in the percentage of Good+ schools over the four years of the current CIF (2016 → 2019)

Change in proportion of good+ schools' overall effectiveness grades in	National change in %	IoW change in %
Special	-1 (93 to 92)	= (100 to 100)
Ed Centres	-2 (85 to 83)	= (100 to 100)

20. Response to Covid

- 20.1 The general response to Covid has been reported elsewhere. The school improvement team has produced regular advice to schools – another example where the partnership with Hampshire has added capacity. Think pieces around reopening were co-constructed with school leaders and a large number of FAQs created. The school improvement team put in place a system of contacting every headteacher at least weekly to check on emotional well-being, to support and challenge practice around re-opening and to encourage attendance of vulnerable groups. The wider IWC teams have supported this process particularly in relation to HR and finance matters and health and safety.
- 20.2 The school improvement team has worked with colleagues in social care to successfully apply for laptops for those children open to social care without a device at home. They have also worked with secondary headteachers of maintained schools to successfully apply for laptops for disadvantaged pupils in Year 10 currently without a device. Those laptops were delivered during mid-June.
- 20.3 Much support was offered when schools reopened fully for the Autumn term. Due to good preparation, schools on the Island had a much higher percentage attendance than was the case nationally throughout the Autumn term. Advice has also been given to secondary headteachers to support them in the assessment of GCSE grades for students in Year 11.
- 20.4 Currently the school improvement team is supporting schools as they switch to remote learning following the Prime Ministerial announcement on the 4th January 2021. We will ensure robust systems are put in place to ensure the work is of a good quality. The team is also providing a range of guidance around face-to-face provision for vulnerable children of the children of critical workers. Seminars are currently being rolled out to support secondary schools with a new testing regime using the Lateral Flow device.

22. Conclusion for education

- 22.1 There is a strong evidence base that education has significantly improved in all areas. The foundations are now very secure and the conditions right for further improvement.

22.2 We know our strengths and areas for development. The continued scrutiny of elected members, and our ongoing quality assurance processes and critical approach to self-assessment, will continue to drive the required improvements.

23. School Admissions

23.1 At the commencement of the partnership the Isle of Wight admissions team worked closely with colleagues in Hampshire to ensure that all elements of the Admissions Code were interpreted correctly, adhered to and the guidance for parents/guardians was clear, concise and up to date.

23.2 The admissions team co-ordinate school admissions for all schools on the Isle of Wight regardless of status and approximately 4,500 applications are processed each year through in-year and the main admission round for new intake/transfer to secondary.

23.3 The admissions team produce regular advice to schools and parent/guardians and this year, following a contentious admissions appeal, have worked even harder to ensure that all processes that schools need to follow reflect the current guidance. This information is updated annually and sent to schools at the start of the academic year. In September heads conference have invited the team to provide training in the legal context for taking children off roll.

23.4 The reorganisation of schools in the West Wight and the closure of All Saints Primary school placed extra pressure on the admissions team who were also dealing with the 2020 primary admissions round. The process was completed in late March and early April, with National Offer Day 16th April approaching, and with a high percentage of parents getting their desired outcome.

23.5 The admissions team work closely with democratic services to service school admission and transport appeals including preparing and presenting the case for refusal at community and voluntary controlled school appeals. An officer from the admissions team attended appeals training in Hampshire with a recommendation that democratic services use this training provider to train and update their appeals panels. This year legislative change for hearing appeals has led to 'hybrid' hearings with attendees using a mixture of attending in person and electronic ways to ensure the due process.

23.6 The Isle of Wight continue to strive to move towards a paperless service whilst also recognizing that there will always be a minority of parent/guardians who are unable to complete electronic applications. Currently there is a request in with the Isle of Wight applications team to enable reports to extract parent/guardian email addresses so that they can be used for September 2021 offer letters rather than hard copies.

23.7 The tables below show the figures for the main admission round for 2018, 2019 and 2020. They do not include late applications or EHCP's.

Primary	2018	2019	2020
Number of applications	1237	1305	1136
percentage first choice	93	93	96

percentage second choice	4	3	3
percentage third preference	0.4	0.53	0.18
No successful preference	1.94	1.53	1.67

Secondary	2018	2019	2020
Number of applications	1146	1155	1295
percentage first choice	90.67	91.77	89.5
percentage second choice	8.38	5.89	7.23
percentage third preference	0	0.09	1.03
No successful preference	0.95	2.34	2.49

23.8 This meeting of parental preference rate compares very well when compared to other local authorities.

24 School place planning

24.1 School place planning is being carried out in the context of managing published admission numbers (PANs) to in turn manage the high levels of surplus places. In the secondary phase schools, all bar one are own admissions authority schools, have set their admission numbers to match recent intakes; this must be monitored to understand its impact on meeting parental preference and possible impact on home to school transport costs. In the primary phase, following the West Wight School Re-organisation, all school place planning areas were visited. Some discussions have been started to investigate scope for PAN reductions in a number of schools.

25 Home to School Transport

25.1 The service has seen a significant reduction in the number of mainstream children eligible for local authority funded transport. This was directly caused by the DfE agreement for the Island Free School in Ventnor, as before the IFS joined the map, hundreds of children across the South Wight were eligible for transport to Newport schools.

25.2 For children and young people with Special Educational Needs, the numbers transported and the associated costs have risen. Performance monitoring data below shows the baseline number of travelling children against the most recent figures. The drop in eligible secondary age pupils is apparent as is the rise in SEN pupils.

Transport - Primary	114	106
Transport - Secondary	1538	900
Transport - SEN	293	360
Transport - Total	1945	1366

25.3 When the partnership began in 2013, the Home to School Transport (HtST) service was provided from the Passenger Transport group in a client relationship with Children's Services. At the end of 2018 this was moved out of the Environment Department into the direct line management of the Head of Transport. Through the Partnership, transport officer and procurement expertise has been recruited from HCC's transport team. This recruitment has ensured this summer's exercise to re-tender the main bus and coach contract was successful and secured savings for the council.

26. Childcare Sufficiency

26.1 The Childcare Act 2006 gives Local Authorities a key role in shaping the childcare market in their area. Working with Providers from the Private, Voluntary, independent and maintained sectors, the Local Authority looks to create a strong, sustainable and diverse childcare market that meets the needs of parents and, in particular, working parents.

26.2 There are currently 94 Early Years Providers on the Isle of Wight. This consists of 40 pre-schools, 10 pre-schools who are under the umbrella of a school 2-11 provision, one maintained nursery, one nursery provision within an independent school and 42 childminders.

26.3 Population estimates indicate that there c.6,462 children who live on the Isle of Wight that are 0-4 years of age. Of these 1,849 eligible two, three and four year olds access a funded place in an Early Years provision and approximately 461 eligible two, three and four years olds access a non-funded place in an early Years Provision. The Local Authority is not aware of any child who is not able to access an Early Years Provision.

26.4 Over the past 12 months, we have not seen a huge movement in the early years market. Three early years childcare providers have closed and two have opened. Five childminders have de-registered with four new childminders registering.

26.5 The majority of the early years providers on the Island have limited parental fee income and rely on the early year education funding. The key challenge for the Early Years market remains their financial sustainability due to low central Government funding and the early years funding restrictions on which the providers cite (locally and nationally) fails to meet the costs of delivering Early Years childcare. This could result in closure and the inability of the Local Authority to meet its sufficiency duty and will need close monitoring, particularly during the Covid recovery phase.

26.6 Through the Partnership, the Council continue to support and advise pre-schools who have concerns regarding their financial sustainability. The Early Years Team are currently supporting four Pre-schools in relation to their business model and reviewing possible changes to support financial savings for the future.

26.7 The re-organisation of schools in the West Wight area will result in two pre-schools Freshwater Early Years Centre and Yarmouth Little Stars being situated on the same site. The Local Authority continues to work with both pre-schools to ascertain a way forward while ensuring the Local Authorities sufficiency duty is being upheld.

26.8 The out of school sector has been limited from being able to operate during the lockdown and this market has only been able to return to delivery during July. There are 35 holiday provisions which have informed us they will be open during summer 2020. We are uncertain on how many will open in September.

27 Future Challenges related to Covid for the Childcare Sector

27.1 Parental confidence to return to childcare is unknown. Providers are concerned that demand and the way parents take up provision during the Covid19 recovery phase will be different.

27.2 In addition to this, any change to the local economy will affect parent employment and parent's patterns of work may change which may require different patterns of take up and services. If more parents lose employment, then the type of childcare will change too as the provision for working parents may be less. This would affect too the out of school childcare needs.

27.3 The out of school sector is the last part of the childcare market to return to operation. It is uncertain on how they have been affected by the lockdown. We continue to liaise and monitor this and will provide support to this sector as required.

28 Strategic Development and Capital Delivery

28.1 The partnership has led some significant and exciting investments across the school estate. An estimated £17m of investment has been secured through the Priority School Building Programme 2 on top of the new build schemes shown in Table 2 delivered in direct partnership with the DfE. All projects in Tables 1 & 3 have been designed and project managed through the partnership. The detail of individual schemes has been reported elsewhere but the tables below give a high level summary of projects delivered over the past year and those planned for 2021.

Table 1 - Projects delivered during 2020/2021

Scheme	Value	Funding source
St Georges Special School – WC Provision	£100k	SCA
Summerfields Primary School – partial refurbishment and roofing works to the main school building	£450k	SCA
Newchurch Primary – Boiler replacement	£125k	SCA
Barton Primary School – Refurbishment Project including new roof, mechanical and electrical systems, recladding of external building, external DDA improvements etc.	£1.3m	PSBP2
Binstead Primary – Full site refurbishment	£3.25m	PSBP2

Table 2 - Projects delivered in partnership with the DfE through PSBP2 and the Free School programme:

Scheme	Places delivered
Ryde Academy – new build	1500 Places
Christ the King College – new build	1350 Places
Carisbrooke College – new build	600 Places
The Island Free School – new build	625 Places
Oakfield Primary School – new build	240 Places
Queensgate Primary – new build	240 Places
Gurnard Primary – new build	240 Places

Table 3 - Projects underway or proposed for 2020/21:

Scheme	Value	Funding source
Greenmount Primary– Full refurbishment to main school building	£3.01m	PSBP2
Wroxall Primary – new 2 classroom block and full refurbishment to main school building	£2.56m	PSBP2
Brading Primary – partial refurbishment to main school building	£1.69m	PSBP2
Dover Park Primary– Full site refurbishment	£3.16m	PSBP2
Wootton Primary– Full site refurbishment	£2.87	PSBP2
All Saints Primary – New build primary school	Circa £4.5m	PSBP2
St Georges Special School – 6 th Form building	£850k	SEND/SCA
Newchurch Primary School – New heating system	£120k	SCA

Detailed work has taken place with the DfE to deliver the correct investment solution for The Bay CE School – Secondary site. The DfE have appointed their preferred contractor and will now commence work on detailed design and development to finalise the extent, scope and logistics of the proposed scheme. The project remains on target to commence on site in the summer of 2021. Funding for the works is expected to be in the region of £9m

29 Finance

29.1 The current Isle of Wight budgetary provision for the delivery of the strategic partnership with Hampshire County Council is circa £1.3 million per annum. This makes provision for the allocation of an agreed percentage of Hampshire County Council officer time, for work undertaken for the Isle of Wight Council, plus a 15 per cent overhead charge to cover additional administrative costs and travel expenses. It should be noted that a number of the posts for which the Isle of Wight makes a percentage contribution would otherwise require a

more substantial role on the Isle of Wight, thus there are considerable inherent savings in the partnership. An example being the role of the Assistant Director for Education, the Isle of Wight pay for approximately 20% of the postholder's time but if that were not to happen then it is likely that the Island would need to find a fulltime equivalent. There is an additional £550,000 per annum charge for the delivery of other service support activities, outside of the partnership agreement and which could be subject to separate review. These include the social care out of hour's service; school property services and ring fenced school improvement programmes.

- 29.2 Facilitated by the strategic partnership with Hampshire County Council, there have been some £2.4 million savings delivered to the Isle of Wight Council in the delivery of children's services in the period 2017/18 to 2019/20, with a further potential £0.75 million secured for delivery within the current financial year

30 Conclusion

- 30.1 The partnership between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in the delivery of children's services continues to flourish. There continue to be benefits for the Isle of Wight and for Hampshire local authorities.
- 30.2 Members are invited to acknowledge the progress contained in this report.