

2nd November 2020

Agenda Item: 7

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

UPDATE ON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Purpose of the Report

1. To present a six-monthly update on the impact of Nottinghamshire's Improving Educational Opportunities for All (IEOfA) Strategy.

Information

Context

2. Nottinghamshire County Council's IEOfA Strategy (2020) recognises the central role that education plays in breaking down the barriers to social mobility that too many young people face. Disadvantaged children and young people are less likely to achieve their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future emotional and financial security. The IEOfA Strategy sets out Nottinghamshire County Council's long-term commitment to ensuring that the full range of services and partners work coherently with schools and other educational settings to maximise the impact of available resources in further improving the attainment and progress of vulnerable groups of learners.
3. The COVID 19 pandemic which led to the partial closure of schools from March to September 2020 has meant that this report will provide an update on the impact of IEOfA Strategy from October 2019 to March 2020.

Update on impact of IEOfA Strategy (October 2019 - March 2020)

4. Membership of IEOfA Performance Board, which meets termly for accountability purposes, has been changed in line with the new priorities. The Board now includes representatives from an FE college, a specialist College, secondary schools, special schools, primary schools and both universities.
5. Meeting the IEOfA Strategy's aspirational success criteria requires effective partnership working based on a shared moral purpose. Teams are working across the Council with

learning providers, alongside key services and partners and with children, young people and their families.

6. This report will provide an update in relation to the partnership work around:
- improving outcomes in the Early Years
 - developing emotional health and wellbeing
 - improving pathways into adulthood and employment.

Improving outcomes in the Early Years (EY)

7. Nottinghamshire is committed to giving children the best possible start in life and wants to encourage all eligible families to take up their entitlement to a funded place for their 2 year-old. The Council's Early Childhood Services (ECS) identified a complicated application process as a barrier for parents and so put in place innovative arrangements to encourage take up. In July 2019, take up of these places was 75.7%.
8. Working in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has meant that the Council is now provided with a list of eligible children seven times a year, sorted by postcode to ensure anonymity. ECS can then identify low take up areas and issue *Golden Tickets* to eligible parents. Early Years providers in these localities are notified and can target their offer accordingly. The *Golden Tickets* bypass the need for an application and means that children automatically get a funded place. By Spring 2020, take up had increased to 80%.
9. The Council's Public Health department offers a health and development review to all children aged between 2 & 2½ years old. It is at this point when gross and fine motor development is assessed, along with language development. Children requiring additional support to be school ready, or parents needing parenting or mental health support are also identified at this review. Public Health wants to increase the percentage of children in Nottinghamshire who receive this important review. Between July to September 2019, in Nottinghamshire, 84.7% of children received this review.
10. Healthy Family Teams (HFT) work hard to maximise uptake of the 2 to 2½ year development review and deliver care across four levels of need: universal, universal plus, universal partnership plus; and safeguarding depending on a family's needs. Universal families receive a letter outlining the aims of the review and are invited to make an appointment for the review at a time convenient to them. Families that do not get in touch with the service at this stage are instead issued an appointment for their review. Text reminders have recently been introduced to further enhance this. HFT closely track this process to ensure as many children as possible receive their health and development review by age 2½ years, sending further communication as required.
11. There is a comprehensive policy to assess any potential risks where parents choose not to attend health and development reviews. For families who are not assessed as universal, such as a family with additional or safeguarding needs, the service makes every conceivable effort to reach the parent including home visits and liaison with other professionals around the family. Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership safeguarding procedures are always followed where required.

12. At the beginning of 2020, the uptake had increased to 86% which is above both regional and national averages (East Midlands average is 78.3% and England average is 78.5%)
13. At the end of Reception year in school, 4-5 year-old children are assessed as to whether they have achieved the expected level of development. Increasing the number of disadvantaged children who achieve the expected level of development in literacy is a priority in Nottinghamshire, as reading and writing are such important factors when predicting future life chances.
14. County Council teams are working in partnership with Early Years (EY) settings to make these improvements for all children, but particularly for children who are eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
15. The Council's Education Improvement Team (EIS) provides guidance and training on the most effective strategies to improve children's learning and outcomes. They promote the use of specific, evidence-based skills programmes to accelerate progress. 150 Early Years teachers attended the Autumn Term network which had a focus on improving speech, language, communication and reading. 24 EY teachers attended the Autumn Term EY Pupil Premium network which focused on improving disadvantaged boys' reading. Early Childhood Services have trained approximately 90 practitioners who work in 32 settings to become Communication Friendly Spaces and oversee over 200 Language Leads working with EY settings across the County.
16. Training is being offered to settings with Looked After Children (LAC) on becoming "relational based attachment aware" settings and new personal education planning documents are being produced for the new academic year with increased focus on improving outcomes. EY practitioners support Private, Voluntary and Independent settings with LAC attending where necessary.
17. In 2019, 51.1% of children eligible for free school meals gained expected levels in literacy. No statutory assessments took place in 2020 as a result of COVID 19.
18. Additional funding is available for children who have disabilities. This is called Disability Access Funding (DAF) and currently only 38.9% of those eligible take up this supplementary funding. Early Childhood Services have identified the barrier to take up is that funding is not well advertised, so parents are unaware. Also, some parents do not inform the EY providers that their child receives Disability Living Allowance and so the setting cannot encourage application.
19. 300 DAF postcards have been distributed in Autumn Term 2019 and 300 in Spring Term 2020 to parents through EY providers, DWP settings and job centres. Downloadable copies are now also available on the Council's website via Provider Portal.
20. Updated figures regarding take up of this additional funding will be available in the next report in November 2021.
21. It is important that EY children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are accessing full-time school at statutory school age. The Early Years Schools and Families Specialist Service (EYSFSS) is ensuring that schools are supported and challenged to enable children with SEND to access their full educational entitlement. 96% of SEND

children who were known to EYSFSS were accessing full-time education at statutory school age in November 2019.

22. EYSFSS now ensures that data is collected half termly to track the access that children have to their educational entitlement. This necessitates a report on what action plans are in place to remedy non full-time access to entitlement. EYSFSS works very closely with schools to ensure that they are anticipatory of admissions in line with their duties under the Equality Act 2010. EYSFSS has also developed transparent transition protocols for the team and for schools to ensure that a pro-active and systematic approach to supporting schools to be ready is adopted. There is a particular focus on transition to Foundation 2, in recognition of the importance of this transition in contributing to a successful school placement. The EYSFSS is working in partnership with the Fair Access team to ensure consistency in adhering to Council policies on part-time timetables and educational access. An analysis is currently being undertaken of the children who are not accessing their entitlement to ascertain if there is any commonality in needs or any particular challenges facing schools.

Developing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing so they develop independence, self-esteem and the desire to learn

23. The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is working in partnership with the Virtual School (VS) and have delivered intensive training to schools on 'Becoming Relational Schools: Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed.' The training is followed by a year of group supervision. The aim of the project is to develop staff knowledge and understanding and explore how schools can become psychologically and emotionally 'safe' spaces for children to enable them to develop and achieve.
24. In September 2019, there were 16 schools who had received this training. By March 2020, this had increased to 35 schools. The list of schools can be found in **Appendix 1**.
25. The EPS also delivers a five-day training course and subsequent supervision sessions to school teaching assistants so that they become Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs). The ELSA project enables schools to support the positive mental health of their pupils by training ELSAs to deliver bespoke programmes of 1:1 emotional literacy support at school, typically lasting 6-12 weeks. The ELSA project is nationally recognised and there is an ever-increasing body of research to support ELSA work in schools. ELSA builds on the concept of emotional literacy/emotional intelligence as a key protective factor for positive mental health and resilience. ELSA research shows gains in staff confidence to support children experiencing mental health and wellbeing difficulties, as well as positive outcomes for children following individual work with ELSAs at school.
26. In October 2019 there were 194 ELSAs, which increased in March 2020 to 249 trained ELSAs working across the County, within mainstream primary, secondary and special schools. The ELSAs are spread across all districts, with slightly more in Mansfield, Ashfield and Rushcliffe currently.
27. The Council and Notts Healthcare (NHS) were successful in securing national funding to become a Trailblazer site for Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) in the Gedling and Rushcliffe areas. The project has been fully operational from December 2019. A list of schools who can access the service is attached in **Appendix 2**. A further bid for schools in

Ashfield and Mansfield has been successful and work will start in September 2020. The purpose of this team is to improve the mental health and wellbeing of pupils in education. The team offers pupils with mild-moderate mental health needs support via low intensity Cognitive Behaviour Therapy informed interventions. Schools refer in for this free support.

28. Public Health has commissioned resilience programmes to build emotional health and wellbeing for children and young people attending Nottinghamshire primary and secondary schools.
29. Emotional mental health and wellbeing in childhood matters because 75% of mental health problems develop before the age of 18 years, and at ages 11 to 25 years those with mental health and conduct disorders are twice as likely to leave school without qualifications.
30. A whole school approach to resilience building in Nottinghamshire primary and secondary schools was undertaken, as there is evidence that resilience building directly impacts on learning and achievement.
31. Public Health Nottinghamshire has commissioned an independent evaluation of the Resilience Building Programmes to Build Emotional Health and Wellbeing for children and young people attending Nottinghamshire schools delivered by Each Amazing Breath CIC, 'Take 5 at School Programme' and Young Minds 'Academic Resilience Approach'. An interim report was produced in June 2019 and the final report is due in October 2020.
32. In September 2019, 30 schools had taken part in this work and in March 2020 this had increased to 60 schools. The list of schools that have taken part in the resilience building work can be found in **Appendix 3**.

Improving pathways into adulthood and employment

33. The Council's teams are working in partnership with learning providers to increase the number of young people who leave education with better qualifications and skills, thus allowing them to find higher paid, more skilled jobs. Teaching employability skills in schools and colleges to match the needs of local businesses and so support the ambitions of young people is crucial.
34. Teams have been finding new ways of working at locality level to inform further developments in Nottinghamshire. Colleagues from Education and Economic Development led on the Ashfield and Mansfield Skills and Employability Summit which was held in November 2019. This attracted over 100 attendees from businesses, schools, colleges and training providers. They came together to share an ambitious, aspirational vision and forge new working relationships and partnerships. Some of the challenges and potential solutions to improving young people's educational outcomes and opportunities were discussed, as well as the need for young people to be work ready. Over 60 pledges of support were received and "green shoots" of new working partnerships are becoming evident.
35. The Council works in partnership with both universities in Nottingham. Both have strong links with employers of all sizes and provide outreach to schools. In 2018/19, the University of Nottingham worked actively with 20 of the 43 targeted Nottinghamshire primary schools. All secondary schools were offered outreach activity and between 30 and 35 took up this offer. In 2018/19, Nottingham Trent University provided outreach to 15 primary schools, 31

secondary schools, one special school and two post 16 institutions. 36% of the outreach participants from the most disadvantaged areas in Nottinghamshire progressed to university by the age of 19, compared to 15% of school pupils from these neighbourhoods.

36. A Council officer sits on the Governance Board of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Collaborative Outreach Programme (DANCOP). This is part of the Uni Connect Programme (formerly NCOP), funded by the Office for Students (OfS) to work with learners from specific target wards to support learners to make informed decisions about progression to higher education (HE) through providing impartial advice, guidance and support. The work of the programme focuses on learners in year 9 upwards from target wards as identified by the OfS as areas where progression to HE is low, given GCSE attainment. DANCOP has 63 target wards, including 17 in Nottinghamshire. DANCOP has worked hard to build and sustain relationships with target schools and FE colleges since 2017 and can evidence engagement in all but one secondary academy, although this academy did book onto an event in March 2020.

Other Options Considered

37. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

38. To provide the Committee with an update on the impact of Nottinghamshire's Improving Educational Opportunities for All Strategy.

Statutory and Policy Implications

39. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

40. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) Members consider whether there are any actions they require in relation to the issues contained within the report.
- 2) Members agree to receive an update report in the next 12 months, rather than six months due to the current pandemic, and that this be included in the work programme.

Marion Clay

Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Koni Rakhit
Education Improvement Adviser
T: 07921 942443
E: koni.rakhit@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (LW 01/10/20)

41. Children & Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (SAS 02/10/20)

42. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[A Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All – report to Policy Committee on 15th January 2020](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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