



NOTICE OF MEETING

EDUCATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2023 AT 5.00 PM

THE EXECUTIVE MEETING ROOM - THIRD FLOOR, THE GUILDHALL,
PORTSMOUTH

Telephone enquiries to Lisa Gallacher, Local Democracy Officer 02392 834056

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If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

Public health guidance for staff and the public due to Winter coughs, colds and viruses, including Covid-19

- Following the government announcement 'Living with Covid-19' made on 21 February 2022 and the end of universal free testing from 1 April 2022, attendees are no longer required to undertake any asymptomatic/ lateral flow test within 48 hours of the meeting; however, we still encourage attendees to follow the public health precautions we have followed over the last two years to protect themselves and others including vaccination and taking a lateral flow test should they wish.
- We strongly recommend that attendees should be double vaccinated and have received any boosters they are eligible for.
- If unwell we encourage you not to attend the meeting but to stay at home. Updated government guidance from 1 April 2022 advises people with a respiratory infection, a high temperature and who feel unwell, to stay at home and avoid contact with other people, until they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high temperature. From 1 April 2022, anyone with a positive Covid-19 test result is still being advised to follow this guidance for five days, which is the period when you are most infectious.
- We encourage all attendees to wear a face covering while moving around crowded areas of the Guildhall.
- Although not a legal requirement, attendees are strongly encouraged to keep a social distance and take opportunities to prevent the spread of infection by following the 'hands, face, space' and 'catch it, kill it, bin it' advice that protects us from coughs, colds and winter viruses, including Covid-19.
- Hand sanitiser is provided at the entrance and throughout the Guildhall. All attendees are encouraged to make use of hand sanitiser on entry to the Guildhall.
- Those not participating in the meeting and wish to view proceedings are encouraged to do so remotely via the livestream link.

Membership

Councillor Ryan Brent (Chair)

Councillor John Smith

Councillor Tom Coles
Councillor Leo Madden
Councillor Dave Ashmore

Councillor Judith Smyth
Helen Reeder
Catherine Hobbs

Standing Deputies

Councillor Matthew Atkins
Councillor Mark Jeffery

Councillor Abdul Kadir
Councillor Scott Payter-Harris

(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

Please note that the agenda, minutes and non-exempt reports are available to view online on the Portsmouth City Council website: www.portsmouth.gov.uk

A G E N D A

Apologies for absence

Declarations of interest

Minutes of previous meeting - 22 February 2023 (Pages 5 - 18)

RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Exclusion of Press and Public

Exclusion of Press and Public

“That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985, the press and public be excluded for the consideration of the following item on the grounds that the report(s) contain information defined as exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972”.

The public interest in maintaining the exemption must outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.

Under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) England Regulations 2012, regulation 5, the reasons for exemption of the listed item is shown below.

Members of the public may make representation as to why the item should be held in open session. A statement of the Council’s response to representations received will be given at the meeting so that this can

be taken into account when members decide whether or not to deal with the item under exempt business.

(NB The exempt/confidential committee papers on the agenda will contain information which is commercially, legally or personally sensitive and should not be divulged to third parties. Members are reminded of standing order restrictions on the disclosure of exempt information and are invited to return their exempt documentation to the Local Democracy Officer at the conclusion of the meeting for shredding.)

Agenda item 4 - Further information (attendance data) - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Further information requested by the panel - Mike Stoneman

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director Children, Families and Education to give a brief update on the data that was requested at the previous meeting. The information will be to follow.

Review into school attendance - Evidence from Assheton Woodall, Headteacher - The Portsmouth Academy

There will be verbal updates from the Headteachers at the meeting.

Evidence from Anne H-Chapman, Executive Headteacher - ARK Ayrton Primary Academy and ARK Dickens Primary Academy

Evidence from Stewart Vaughan - Headteacher - Priory Secondary School

Members of the public are now permitted to use both audio visual recording devices and social media during this meeting, on the understanding that it neither disrupts the meeting or records those stating explicitly that they do not wish to be recorded. Guidance on the use of devices at meetings open to the public is available on the Council's website and posters on the wall of the meeting's venue.

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Agenda Item 3

EDUCATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel held on Wednesday, 22 February 2023 at 5.00 pm at the Guildhall.

Present

Councillor Ryan Brent (in the Chair)
Councillors Tom Coles
Dave Ashmore
John Smith
Judith Smyth
Claire Haque, Parent Governor

6. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Horton, who had been invited to the meeting as Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education. Apologies were also received from Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement, and Neil Stevenson, Admissions, Exclusions & Re-integration Manager.

The chair welcome Claire Haque, parent governor at Trafalgar school to the meeting and explained that the scrutiny panel can have up to three parent governors on its membership as well as diocese representatives. They would be invited to every panel meeting.

7. Declarations of interest (AI 2)

Councillor Brent declared a personal interest in that he is employed by the City of Portsmouth College.

8. Minutes of previous meeting - 1 February 2023 (AI 3)

Councillor Brent had one slight amendment to page 1 where his declaration should read that he is employed by the **City of** Portsmouth College.

RESOLVED that subject to the above amendment the minutes on 1 February 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

9. Review into school attendance - evidence from Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director Education, PCC (AI 4)

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Children, Families and Education with a responsibility for Education, explained that the Portsmouth Education Partnership Strategy to improve school attendance and reduce exclusions has been updated and builds on work over a number of years and sets out a range of work completed more recently. Since the pandemic, LA link co-ordinators have been attached to all schools to allow the LA to track and monitor vulnerable young people who are not attending school regularly. The

Council has also refreshed the guidance for schools in line with the DfE guidance. He felt the Council were very good on data and the Council has a piece of software called *Studybugs* that gives the authority live data on attendance in all schools and that oversees the national information system to allow officers to pull down daily data which is very helpful, particularly for the link co-ordinators.

Work with schools is taking place to refresh family support plans to help improve attendance for those children. Work around mental health support teams who provide support to all schools in the city, has also taken place which has been useful. Officers are now focussing work on neuro diverse children and there is a Neuro Diverse Multi-disciplinary Team and a profiling tool to try and improve attendance. A key strand of the strategy is relational practice which is about developing relationships with children and high support, high challenge. Trafalgar School have been leading this work and have strong very strong evidence in terms of impact in terms on attendance and suspensions and it was hoped that this would translate into improved attainment.

Officers have been conducting a program of work across the city in waves. Wave 1 was last year where 13 schools took part, Wave 2 is currently taking place, which is a critical part of the strategy in terms of improving attendance.

In terms of data, there are still significant challenges around attendance, particularly at secondary level; primary has seen some improvements over recent years. The pandemic has impacted on this as attendance has started to decline and suspensions and reduced timetables have increased. The authority is monitoring and tracking this very closely and there is a lot of challenge and support going into schools. There is a collective desire from all partners to improve this situation.

Liz Robinson, Head of Inclusion, added the strategy feeds into the Removing Barriers to Inclusion Group who monitor and track the strategy which then feeds into the Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP). Mike added that Portsmouth are one of the Priority Education Investment Areas, there are 24 across the country. This is largely down to attainment progress to give support to improve that. There is a delivery plan which has been submitted and approved by government and attendance is one of the four priorities that has been put forward. There will be additional funding to improve attendance over the next three years which is welcomed.

In response to questions, officers clarified the following:

- There are four tiers of alternative provision. Tier 1 - work on relational practice and culture within schools and behaviour management. Tier 2 - this is what schools will do in house; they offer an alternative curriculum for a short period of time to re-engage a child struggling with attendance to get them back into mainstream classes. Tier 3 - where schools will commission alternative provision from other providers such as the City of Portsmouth College and Motiv8. Tier 4 - the local authority commission places with Flying Bull or the Harbour School. This all goes through the

Inclusion Support Panel and will be short stay before they are reintegrated back into mainstream education.

- The PEP will be responsible for pulling together all the positive success factors. All key partners are included on the PEP and underneath that is the Removing Barriers to Inclusion Group which is a multi-agency group with a range of partners all responsible to help improve attendance.
- There are a range of schools with good and poor attendance and the spread across the city is uneven. There is always a context, and these have to be taken into account. The authority is very transparent with data, Mike advised that in the weekly message to headteachers attendance data, data about suspensions, elective home education and reduced timetables is included. The panel said it would be useful to see this data and Mike undertook to provide this.
- There are some schools where levels of suspensions are too high for example Charter Academy and Castle View Academy; discussions are taking place with them and numbers are coming down. There has been a significant amount of leadership change over the past 3-4 years which can have a negative impact on attendance. It was hoped that once the new headteacher starts in September attendance will start to improve. There are other schools, such as Trafalgar, where the number of suspensions is zero, so there is a significant spread. Attendance is an issue across all schools and nationally attendance has been deteriorating since the pandemic.
- There is no significant difference in attendance between academies and local authority schools. Most secondary schools are now academies apart from Mayfield and St Edmunds who are LA maintained.
- Ms Haque, parent governor at Trafalgar School, said that one of the things they are doing in their governing body is asking teachers to provide case studies to understand the reasons behind poor attendance and how the measures put in place have helped. Mike said he was pleased to hear this.
- In terms of what officers would like to see on the action plan if resources were not an issue, Mike said that the authority used to have a large number of Education Welfare Officers (EWO) and it would be good to have these again. Donald McIntyre, Attendance Team Leader, said that they had a dual role of support and challenge and there was also an element of case work. These posts were removed approximately 10 years ago and there is now only an enforcement team that is largely office based and half the workforce was lost. The enforcement team is very effective, but it meant that the team did lose touch with schools on casework and lot of intelligence was lost. The authority has been trying to re-establish those processes over recent years and it was hoped that through the funding from the DfE some of these roles might be reinstated. Attendance audits take place which look at school processes and a report is produced with recommendations. However, due to the pandemic and being short staffed officers have not been able to complete these over the last two or three years.

10. Evidence from Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement PCC (AI 5)

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Children, Families Education introduced the short paper provided by Debbie Anderson who was unable to attend the meeting.

He explained that every year, usually the first working week in July, transition days take place across the city, where year 6 pupils will go into their secondary school and will spend a minimum of two days there to prepare for their move in September. This allows pupils to become familiar with the school and their new teachers to hopefully allow for a smooth transition. This does vary across secondary schools, most stick to two days; however, Mayfield has previously done a two-week transition period. Pupils also have a chance to see secondary schools during the open days held in the Autumn term.

There is a file about each pupil that gets transferred to their secondary school through the Secured Shared Environment (SSE) but this varies across the city. Some of the schools are within the same Multi Academy Trust (MAT) where the relationships are strong, for schools within different academy trusts the relationships may not be so strong. There was a working party a few years ago which looked at transitions and recommended some transition materials, but this never got any traction, and the materials were never used as intended. This reflects the fragmented landscape of 14 multi academy trusts in the city and he felt it would be good to have a collective system across the city.

In response to questions the following matters were clarified:

- In secondary schools there is a lot of emphasis on getting pupils to their GCSEs in year 11 but KS3 can be an issue and some pupils are not being challenged enough. This would be a point to raise with headteachers at the next meeting. Some children also struggle with the change of having one class teacher to multiple teachers and having to go to lessons rather than staying in one classroom, which can cause anxiety.
- The Family Support Plans is a tool understood by the workforce in city. If any child at any stage is having issues a member of staff can use this to take forward into the secondary school to be followed up to ensure a smooth transition. SENCOs also work together to make sure that information is followed on. Donald McIntyre said that also there is an expectation from the authority that the secondary sector and primary sector should be talking to each other at transition to identify those pupils with that are vulnerable of those who have attendance issues or Family Support Plans in place. The difficulty is that each school and MAT does things in a different way, therefore it is frustrating for the attendance team as these conversations are not always happening. The secondary sector should be having those conversations with the primary sector, identifying those pupils and then putting those plans in place as soon as a pupil starts in year 7.

- With regard to Mayfield having a two-week transition period for year 6 pupils, Mike was unsure if this had helped to improve attendance in year 7 and would need to look at the data and let members know.
- It was felt that the authority may need to be more outcome focussed. Looking at how private schools or schools in other areas manage attendance would be something to ask headteachers. Everything is in place to support the transition including the transfer arrangements and the Family Support Plans for the most vulnerable children. All the mechanisms are in place perhaps was not as strong as it could be and the authority continue to challenge that.
- Officers felt that the number of MATs in the city was a challenge within the system. Most secondary schools in the city have good relationships with their feeder primary schools and there will be a number of meetings with them. It was worth considering however that secondary schools take pupils from lots of different primary schools which can take up a great deal of staff time.
- With regard to the working party and the materials, officers said they could send these to the panel.
- Donald McIntyre said that the authority tries to be proactive however there are not the resources. In terms of intervention, there is strict criteria as to what their intervention rates should be and schools should know what their pathways are for any given pupil. The local authority challenges that and completes a persistent absentee review every half term, which is a huge piece of work. Officers look to see what pathway a pupil is on and give the school recommendations. This data is then given to the Behaviour Attendance Group which is a multi-agency group and link co-ordinators feed into this group. Schools are very clear on the options available to them and if schools are not following those pathways the authority will prompt them.
- Part of the drive to academisation was to support transitions from primary to secondary however as there are 14 MATs in the city the system is very fragmented. The model could still support transitions better if the tools were available to move towards a more rationalised system of academies. The Southsea cluster of academies work well where the secondary schools work closely with the feeder schools. A number of schools will run summer programs although this is limited due to resources.
- Mike did not think that Year 5 taster days to secondary school took place but he would check with Neil Stevenson, Attendance, Exclusions and Re-integration Manager.
- There is a correlation with those schools using effective pathways and attendance and a strong leadership team compared to those who do not.
- The Attendance Team has been under increasing pressure, it has been short staffed for a few years and when the schools returned all the work came back into the enforcement area and there was less time to focus on the looking at support and challenge on attendance. Schools have seen the attendance audits as a supportive mechanism and has given them the chance to reflect.

11. Evidence from Donald McIntyre, Team Leader, Attendance Team (AI 6)

Donald McIntyre explained that there are many variables within the transition process that leads to a lot of inconsistencies within schools. Schools are aware from allocation of the data and where there are persistent absentees. Schools should then be liaising to discuss the identified individuals and focussing on these pupils. Unfortunately there is no one size fits all and there are lots of inconsistencies.

Donald read out some quotes from schools: Secondary schools have said that primary schools are not giving them all the information they need, and then primary schools have said that secondary schools do not seem to want the information they are trying to give to them and there is a lack of pastoral support. These perceptions are perhaps something the panel may want to look into further. Something the authority could look at standardising that transition period to look at what data should be passed between primary and secondary schools so there is no confusion.

Mike added that from talking to his counterparts in other authorities, Portsmouth is one of the best in terms of transitions. There are systems in place which most of the schools do use, there is an agreement that transition days take place on two days in the first working week of July and everyone subscribes to that despite being in different MATs. There is a platform to be able to build on to make further improvements.

The vast majority of pupils are in schools and are engaged, the attendance team probably work with about 5% of pupils with poor attendance. When a pupil starts missing weeks at a time this writes off an academic year which has a knock-on effect to the next academic year and then it can become habitual. Even with all the processes in place this habitual poor attendance can occur.

Claire Haque said that at Trafalgar school staff look at data of pupils in years 5 and 6 and will continue to track their attendance when they start year 7 and if that falls they immediately look at the pathway that is best for them.

In response to questions the following points were clarified:

- With regard to why the attendance team is short staffed, Donald explained that the attendance team has always been working at capacity and when schools re-opened post pandemic their workload massively increased. As a result of the pandemic attendance figures are back to 2015 levels and this has increased work in the team. Some staff had also left creating a 1.75 vacancy which has had a significant impact on the team.
- *Studybugs* can produce heatmaps which look at persistent absentees in relation to deprivation areas, the team then need to act on that information. The Local Authority pay for *Studybugs* and most schools are using this software. There are many advantages of using this as it allows officers to see the live data and enables the authority to challenge schools and also helps the frontline services across the system. For Looked after Children there is also Welfare Call which provides live data on if a child is late for example and therefore allows stakeholders to track vulnerable

children at all times. There is also the Insight Hub which the LA link co-ordinators use which looks at data of vulnerable pupils in terms of family support plans and what social care are doing with them and the attendance team can link into this

- Around 90% of pupils get their first preference of secondary school which is good compared to the national figure. This is largely due to the authority expanding secondary school places to meet demand. The next 4-5 years secondary schools will be full. If pupils do not get their first choice they only have to travel 3-4 miles to school as Portsmouth is a compact city.

12. Evidence from Sarah Christopher, Partnership & School Inclusion Manager, PCC (AI 8)

Sarah Christopher explained that the relational and restorative practice is work they are doing with schools, led by Trafalgar school and supported by the PEP and is about building and maintaining relationships. Children in the schools that are more relational have a huge passion and enthusiasm for the school. Trafalgar school are roughly ten years on this journey and are a beacon and were part of the first 'wave' taking part.

She referred to her paper and said that two more schools have shown an interest in starting the journey and half of schools are actively engaged in saying how do we positively build and maintain relationships between staff, children and families in the school. It is also about working alongside everyone else who is supporting the social, emotional and mental health in schools including mental health support teams, virtual school, EP team, safeguarding partnership who all come together to work on relational practice.

In response to questions Sarah clarified the following:

- Funding has been secured from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) carry forward for the next three years, which was approved by Schools Forum. This will allow officers to work with other schools in the city over the next three years, with a view to make this self-sustaining. It was hoped that all schools would be involved by the end of the three years.

13. Evidence from Tina Henley, Head of Virtual School, PCC (AI 7)

Profile of Yr. 6's in the Virtual School

| Year | No of YP | Gender | SEND | % SEND | OOC | In PCC |
|-------------|----------|--------------------------------|--|--------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Spring 2023 | 15 | Females 6 Males 9 (60%) | EHCP = 2 (SEMH) K - 6 None = 7 | 53% | 1 x IOW | 14 |
| Spring 2022 | 21 | Females 13 (62%) Males 8 | EHCP = 6 (SEMH) K - 5 None = 10 | 52% | 1 x Dorset 8 x Hants 2 x IOW | 10 |

Tina Henley, Head of Virtual School explained that the above table highlights the differences year on year between the virtual school cohorts which is why direct comparison is so challenging. The lived experiences of these young people are vastly different as are their educational journeys, the schools and networks we work with and re-enforces why transition support is so vital.

Transition to secondary school can be a challenge for care experienced children. Transition means change - and change can be uncomfortable and difficult for everyone. However, change is even more stressful for care experienced children because it can trigger deep rooted feelings of insecurity, instability, loss and separation. They have to adapt to a new school setting with different academic structures and expectations as well as changes in social interactions with teachers and peers. For some children they may be ecstatic about leaving primary school and gaining the independence that comes with being a secondary school student. For others, they may be feeling anxious and more than a little scared. Often it is mixture of the two.

Transition also means saying goodbye to the old. Endings must therefore be viewed as an integral part of the transition process, and we must acknowledge the importance of saying goodbye. It is essential that we support them manage the ending of their primary school experience and to help them say goodbye to key adults and peers. This should also include explicitly acknowledging and celebrating the child's primary school achievements and success. It is important for young people to know that they can come back and visit their primary school and that their teacher at primary will be thinking about them and wondering how they are getting on. This is important because some care experienced young people believe that people in their lives simply 'disappear' without reason.

At times of transition parallels may unconsciously be drawn with previous loss of caregivers and relationships. This can give rise to feelings of anxiety, vulnerability and abandonment. These feelings, that so far have been managed well in the safe and very familiar environment of primary school when removed, can lead to the young person demonstrating primitive patterns of behaviour related to survival, and may send the body's regulation system into overdrive, giving rise to toxic levels of stress, that, so far, have not been displayed, or displayed only minimally or infrequently. This can be at school or at home.

It is often noted that the vulnerability of some care experienced children increases over time in secondary school with difficulties being further exacerbated by the onset of adolescence, which can also begin in Year 5/6. For this reason, transitions for care experienced young people need to be managed very carefully - even in those children who seem, on the face of it, to be taking things in their stride, in order that children **can** be successful in the next phase of their education.

What is the 'Transition' package

There is no single transition 'package' that is relevant to all children. A holistic, bespoke and person-centred approach is required which is tailored to

the needs of the individual, with the voice of the child at the very heart. However, in many ways this should be the same as the plan for all children. We know that care experienced children want to be treated in the same way as other children, however, we also know, there are additional factors at play relating to their unique experiences of trauma, separation and loss, which make them especially vulnerable at these times. So, in practical terms this means they should benefit from the same transition preparation as all Year 6 children, but account must be taken of these additional factors, which will need to be responded to in a sensitive and considered manner and incorporated into their holistic transition programme.

Things to consider

Continuity of relationships is vital. Relationships (both old and new) should be a key component of the transition programme. Learning support assistants' working with vulnerable children in the final term of Year 6 and visiting the new school with the young person as their trusted adult is highly significant in this.

Self-efficacy is a significant protective factor in increasing wellbeing and supporting positive mental health. There is widespread evidence that this is negatively impacted by maltreatment and neglect so often key in the lives of young people.

Resilience too has a positive impact on capacity to cope with change. We should therefore be looking at how to develop vulnerable children's resilience well ahead of their transition date.

We know that children who have experienced developmental trauma often have poorer executive functioning skills. These skills help us to control impulses, to plan ahead with a clear aim in mind, to organise ourselves, to work out what we need to do next and to be able to shift from one thing to another as any situation arises. These skills are extremely relevant to the increased level of independent behaviour that we require of children as they move to secondary school, but it is also easy to see how many of children will really struggle with this - through no fault of their own.

The child's voice

The Virtual School ask children what they are most looking forward to and if they are worried about anything.

Most looking forward to:

- Meeting new people
- Clubs event and activities
- Learning new subjects
- Wearing a new uniform

Most worried about:

- Getting lost.
- Bullying (social media, playground and toilets)
- Peer relationships (fitting in, being like, feeling valued)
- New routines and strange environments - Lessons no longer come to them

- Workload - Additional subjects and that dreaded word - Homework
- Feeling tired - Carrying loads of books, walking all day

The school transition programme will discuss these topics areas, some of which will be very practical, as well as some being the more emotional aspects of transition directly relating to relationships, losses, separations and endings.

Key principles of transition planning

- Early planning and good information sharing (both prior to and after transition) which involves all stakeholders. The key people would include:

- Young person - must be at the heart of everything
 - Carer /Parent/Other Family member
 - Education advocate from Virtual School and College
 - Social worker
 - Designated Teachers (DT) from new secondary school and current primary school. Primary school DT has responsibility for liaison with all concerned and coordination of activities and support; this responsibility will be handed over to the secondary School DT in the September of Year 7
 - Teacher in primary school/LSA (Transition key adult)
- Finally - anyone who the child identified as a key person to them.

- Transition support needs to be holistic and consistent
- Support should be individualised – there is no ‘one size fits all’ transition package.

What is the timeline?

The timeline starts in Year 5 and ends usually in the Spring of Year 7, although support may still be required beyond this for some children.

Year 5

Schools and the network working with all children on resilience and self-confidence.

Summer Term PEP (personal education plan) - conversations about identifying school/any specific needs/care plan.

For those with an EHCP - Annual review for planning and thinking about secondary transition and to hold the next annual review early in the next year.

Ensure all stakeholders are aware of the local offer.

Autumn Term Year 6

Carers/Parent - to start visiting local schools/attend open evenings.

Depending on needs - identify a key adult to support transition.

Are additional one-to-one visits to a school required?

Information to be specified as targets in PEP.

Application for Secondary school - deadline end of October.

Good/Outstanding. (Process if applying for a school not Good/outstanding requires agreement with myself and HT either Michelle Sanders Head of LAC or Adam Shepherd - head of family safeguarding - depending on which team the YP is being looked after by).

Spring Term

Bespoke transition visits to the secondary school - out of school hours to include Year 7/8 'buddy' introduced to talk about positive experiences at secondary school.

Have there been other interventions identified as part of the PEP or wider discussions.

Induction/taster days planned.

School to support a pin profile to be prepared - all about me.

Summer Term

Summer term PEP the transition plan (pro forma and consistent for all) and transition pack which the young person takes home with them (e.g., see through pencil case, scientific calculator, pens, post its). All key adults attend this face-to-face meeting including secondary school. This is a wonderful opportunity to share and celebrate successes and for the young person to show pieces of work of which they are proud.

Child pin profile to be shared (all about me) written by the child.

Summer holiday transition planning

Are there any identified needs for the new school ready for September (e.g., medical or other training),

Autumn Term - Year 7

The first day - Buddy system in place to meet and greet on first day plus primary LSA if appropriate.

DT shares appropriate information with subject teachers.

Carers/Parent have a named contact in the secondary school.

In school - Weekly check in with child with chosen key person (FT) - share news from Primary.

Early PEP to ensure transition plan remains appropriate and identify any new needs.

Other tools/strategies to support transition:

- Use a visual schedule. This makes it clear what a child can expect and what is coming up next. It can be helpful to put the activities that are most challenging for the child closer to the beginning of the day when they are less tired.
- Use a visual timer or a visual countdown system/calendar.
- Offer sensory breaks. Sensory activities make positive transition bridges.
- Use a transition object. For some children, having their special blanket, doll, or stuffed animal with them can smooth transitions. This is especially true in the case of a child transitioning from one location to another such as from home to school or from home to preschool. Bringing a small photo album or laminated picture of mom or dad can also be helpful.
- Teach transition songs. Transition songs can be a positive way to help young people using familiar tunes with amended lyrics.
- Social stories and comic strip conversations.

Finally, and given all of this planning and preparation - there is then a 6-week summer holiday during which huge anxieties can build as the time for change draws ever closer.

The foster carer/parent can do the following to support and empower children and further build their confidence and independence over the summer:

1. Encourage them to explore their thoughts and to know that they can talk openly about their feelings, both positive and negative. Talk about what they are looking forward to, and whether they are worried about anything. Keep talking openly and answer any questions they might have and explore any worries and/or possible misunderstandings about starting a new school.
2. Familiarise with the surrounding area and their new school. Walk the route/get the bus/take the train several times and visit local shops.
3. Prepare in advance. Working out what you need for starting secondary school well in advance is a wonderful way of reducing feelings of anxiety. Rather than leave it until the week before the new term starts, pick up what you need throughout the summer. Sort out things like PE kit, your school bag and a travel card if you need one. When it comes time for the first day of secondary school, pack your bag the night before. There is nothing more stressful than running about in the morning trying to find the right shorts for PE while hunting for your school tie!
4. Help develop independence and organisation. Empower and support them to take steps towards independence however big or small, as well as taking on small responsibilities in the home. Build up confidence and independence in preparation for this new and exciting phase.
5. Plan to develop new skills/interests - One of the best things about starting secondary school may be the opportunities it creates. Your primary school might have had one or two clubs or sports teams you could join but at secondary school, usually there are myriad of different clubs for (almost) every interest. Look at the clubs available and choose a couple over the summer that you want to try. It is a positive way of meeting like-minded young people.
6. Ensure key information is shared with the secondary school. If there are changes over the summer, then this needs to be communicated. This will include anything important to the young person - e.g., loss of a pet.
7. Give it time – and keep some reassuring routines in place so there are some consistencies for the young person to enjoy.

In response to questions officers clarified the following:

- There were case studies that could be sent to the panel.
- Project based work after SATS in year 6 does take place but not in all schools. This would be good to challenge headteachers on.
- With regard to attendance audits in schools, part of that process is also to understand what the governors are doing in terms of support and challenge. It was felt that the panel may also want to consider asking governors about what they are doing in their schools to support transitions and how they are supporting and challenging this at their governing board meetings.

Officers said that some other points to ask headteachers would be to reflect on the pressure on children at school and how that pressure increases throughout secondary school. It would also be useful to discuss how headteachers are balancing covering the requirements of the curriculum and

also the importance of play. Also how to support children in year 7 who have low levels of literacy and how the authority can support that when there is not always the time to focus on literacy.

Liz Robinson said that she met a father of two children recently who came from a disadvantaged background with one child who had SEN and required specialist provision. She was talking relationally with him and he advised that his two sons were now living with him and they discussed the difficulties he was facing. In response to a question about the impact of disadvantage on attendance, Liz Robinson confirmed that the negative impact is clear from the data collected. To illustrate this she described how, in a recent example, attendance for a pupil who was living through "adverse childhood experiences" had moved to live with their other parent and attendance had risen from by 20% to 95% since then due to the increase in stability for the child.

The panel thanked all officers present for all the information provided at the meeting and the informative discussion.

The next meeting would be on Wednesday 8 March where three headteachers would be invited to talk about what arrangements are put in place to support transition and ensure good attendance at their schools.

The meeting concluded at 7.00 pm.

Councillor Ryan Brent
Chair

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