

Appendix 1



Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020 - 2023

Year 1: 2020 - 2021
Final Draft

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1. Introduction

This document sets out a proposed three year education strategy for Portsmouth 2020-23.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for all schools. Contributing to the management of the pandemic and managing its impact on children will absorb much of the energy of schools over the coming months, possibly years. This is not a reason to hold back from the development of a clear collective strategy for education in the city, however. More than ever, the city needs strong education leadership with clear individual school and city wide priorities, around which all education leaders focus their efforts. We must do all we can to ensure that the education of children in Portsmouth is not a casualty of the difficult demands of this time.

While the strategy sets the direction for the next three years, it outlines specific actions to be taken over the next 12 months so that there is complete clarity on our focus during this period.

The delivery of the strategy will be done under the auspices of the Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP) recognising the part that all partners of the PEP will play in delivering the nine priorities that are set out in the strategy, and will be overseen by the PEP Strategic Board.

It has been agreed that the Portsmouth Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) Strategic Forum will discontinue and will merge with the PEP Strategic Board to create a single entity. This recognises that two thirds of schools in the city now belong to a MAT with further transfers planned this year, and builds on the strong collaborative working with MATs over the summer to address the challenges posed by the pandemic. MATs have worked with the council and partners to share their processes, practices and expertise, contributed to work in all areas and have also led and chaired Covid-19 workstreams. All are agreed that now is the time to formalise and extend this approach.

The PEP structures that were established three years ago will remain in place but will now be augmented by a number of other groups which have been established to address the challenges created by the pandemic. These structures are set out on page 4.

2. The vision

Our vision is that through working together we can ensure that:

All children and young people make good progress through education which sets high expectations for them, is infused with restorative high support and high challenge and which is supported through leading edge use of digital technology, empowering them to drive their own learning anywhere.

3. Shared values and accountability

The shared values and accountability that were agreed three years ago will remain in place. All members of the Portsmouth Education Partnership are committed to:

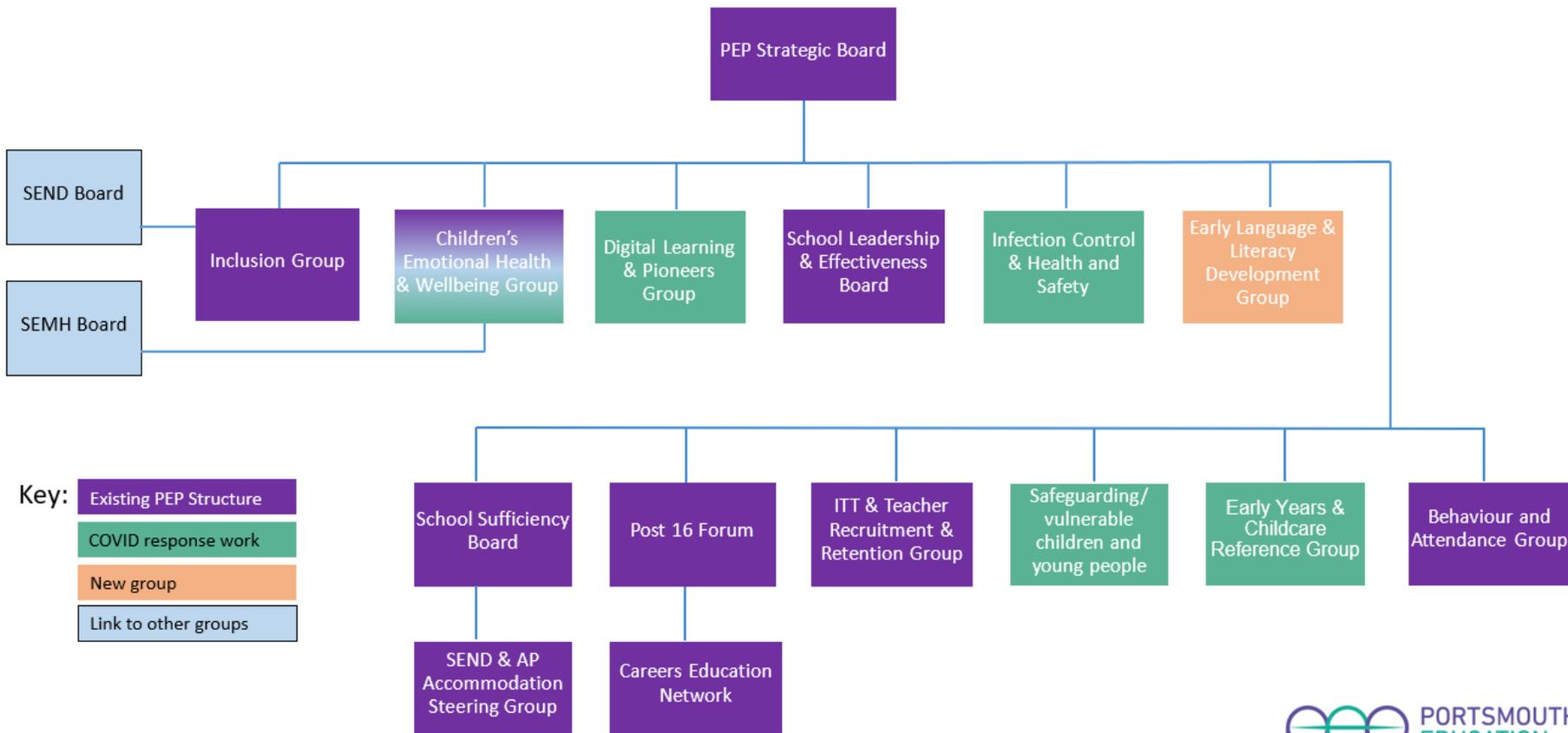
- Shared accountability for improving standards and the educational outcomes and life chances of all children and young people
- Promoting a culture of openness, trust and collaboration
- Putting the interests of children and young people first at all times
- Ensuring no child should fail to reach their educational potential because of disadvantage or vulnerability
- Ensuring no schools, colleges or settings are left isolated
- Ensuring all our joint actions add value, are evidence based and as far as possible are preventative rather than a response to a crisis.

4. Priorities

The 9 priorities that form part of the Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020-23 are set out below with details of the Boards / Groups that will be responsible for their delivery. This strategy document provides a high level summary of the plans that support each priority with cross references and links to other documents and action plans.

No	Priority	Governance
1.	Strong leadership and ambition at all levels within individual schools to improve effectiveness and outcomes for children and young people	School Leadership and Effectiveness Board
2.	Implement a digital learning strategy for the city that supports learning both at school and at home	Digital Learning / Digital Pioneers Group
3.	Improve pupil outcomes in literacy (reading, writing and oral) with a focus on early language development	Early Language and Literacy Development Group
4.	Recruit, retain and grow the best teachers and leaders	ITT, Teacher Recruitment and Retention Group
5.	Ensure all schools have access to clear and up to date infection control and health & safety information and are able to respond appropriately to local Covid-19 outbreaks	Infection Control and Health & Safety Group
6.	Ensure all education settings have robust safeguarding policies, processes and culture in place	Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership
7.	Promote emotional health, wellbeing and resilience in education	Children's Emotional Health & Wellbeing Group
8.	Ensure all pupils regularly attend school	Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG)
9.	Invest in school buildings to create additional school places, focusing on secondary, even more inclusive mainstream schools and a continuum of specialist provision for children with additional needs	School Sufficiency Board

PEP Structure including COVID recovery working groups



Key:

- Existing PEP Structure
- COVID response work
- New group
- Link to other groups



5. Inclusion

A central theme of the previous PEP strategy was inclusion and this will continue to be the case for the 2020-21 strategy - *creating an educational environment that is welcoming to all children and young people and not giving up on any child whatever their circumstances.*

The strategy has strong links with the SEND and SEMH Strategies and these are set out in the relevant priorities, focusing on improving inclusion for all children but with a particular focus on the provision of education for children with SEND and improving outcomes for vulnerable learners including those open to social care and early help and those identified by schools as requiring additional support.

Underpinning the objective of inclusion has been the work around the **Portsmouth Inclusion Education Quality Mark (PIEQM)** through self and peer assessment in order to identify strengths and areas for development in relation to inclusive practice. Linked to this will be the continued offer of support through the **Inclusion Outreach Service** which started in October last year and will be continuing to offer support for schools if they have any concerns about meeting children's additional needs. The outreach support is available to all mainstream schools, delivered by a range of professionals from a partnership of services including MABS, Solent Academies Trust, Children's Therapy Service, and experienced Outreach SENCOs from mainstream schools in the city.

The strategy will also have running through it a commitment to engage with schools and partners to develop and share anti-racism training and resources in response to Black Lives Matter. A dedicated page for these resources has been developed on the PEP website and can be found [here](#).

6. Key performance indicators

A range of key performance indicators will be used to judge the impact of the strategy and each of the nine priorities. They include:

- Ofsted inspections of early years settings, schools and post-16 providers
- Attainment and progress data at all key stages
- School attendance, exclusions, reduced timetables and elective home education
- Post-16 participation and destinations
- Teacher vacancies
- ITT trainees and % finding permanent placements in Portsmouth's schools

Priority 1: strong leadership and ambition at all levels within individual schools to improve effectiveness and outcomes for children and young people



Background

The leadership of schools, both at the most senior level but also at all levels, is critical to effectiveness.

Over the last five years there has been a significant improvement in the Ofsted inspection grades for schools and academies in the city, improving at a faster rate than nationally. 92% of inspected schools in Portsmouth are currently judged by Ofsted to be Good or better.

At the same time while school leaders and teachers in the city work hard and many go the extra mile for children, as Ofsted inspections testify, the city has seen its position in rankings for local authority areas decline across a number of key indicators, to the point where many are significantly out of line with those of comparable areas. This undoubtedly affects the life chances of children in the city.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the cancellation of all end of year assessments and exams there is no published data available in 2020 to determine if the position has improved or worsened. However, whilst the education strategy for 2020-23 and in particular the actions set out for 2020-21, have a somewhat different focus in response to Covid-19, the focus on standards, and in particular attainment and progress measures, should continue given recent trends and the inevitable fact that disadvantaged children will have lost ground to those who are not disadvantaged and this will be most felt in areas like Portsmouth where there are higher levels of deprivation.

Our strategy over the last 3 years to try and improve standards and accelerate progress has been based on a combination of:

- **Support for leadership development** at all levels which to date has focused on: aspiring leadership programmes for groups of teachers preparing for their first leadership role; middle and senior leaders ready for whole school responsibility; development of potential senior leaders who have the talent and commitment to become headteachers within 2-3 years; and programmes for aspiring or existing Executive Headteachers and CEOs of Multi Academy Trusts. There are a range of senior leadership programmes available and a summary of those can be found here: <https://www.teachportsmouth.co.uk/training#cpd>
- A **collaborative school improvement approach** through the Portsmouth Education Partnership, led by the PEP School Improvement Board, in order to generate more locally co-ordinated support for schools and encourage the sharing of resources and best practice. The Partnership has amongst other things overseen the delivery of two major *Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) programmes* focussed on *improving the outcomes for disadvantaged children and pupils on SEN Support in mainstream schools*, further expansion of the *Challenge Partners (CP) Hub*, effective city wide *EYFS, KS1 and KS2 assessment and moderation*, development of a *PEP Performance Dashboard* to help assess strengths and areas of development, development of *subject*

sector networks, publication of a *school support directory* giving details of system leaders and significant support from the *Solent Maths Hub* and *English Hub* particularly in primary schools.

- **Academisation** whereby the majority of schools in the city become part of strong and effective Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) which can act as strong engines for school improvement, bringing in support and challenge from outside the city as well as from within. Two thirds of schools are now part of a MAT.

Overall, the results over the last three years make it clear that this strategy has not yet succeeded despite the best efforts of our strategic leaders. The improvements made in terms of Ofsted judgements have been welcomed and it is hoped that this will translate into improved outcomes but clearly more needs to be done. The lack government funding available for school improvement support has not helped, with the exception of short term SSIF and NLE support for schools requiring improvement.

To drive the effectiveness at individual school level which is critical to the success of this strategy we propose that all schools should be asked to review the attainment and progress of children against the benchmark of attainment and progress by schools elsewhere in the country which have similar pupil profiles. This can never be an exact science but tried and tested comparison tools have existed for some time now, for example through the Fisher Family Trust or the Education Endowment Foundation. Many MATs already apply this approach in their leadership and management of their schools. All schools and academies in Portsmouth now need to use these tools to set a target to achieve, as a minimum, the average level of attainment and progress achieved by similar schools elsewhere and to review their plans so that they are clear what detailed actions will be taken, individually and collectively through the PEP, to achieve those targets.

A key focus of the School Leadership and Effectiveness Board will be to organise peer review of schools' plans, focussing on the schools which are currently not achieving average attainment for their comparison group. All MATs and maintained schools will be asked to commit to contributing to this peer review process. Following peer review the Board will draw up a leadership support programme designed to support schools to achieve the targets, and also advise on where other collective activity is required. This will form part of a consistent expectation around benchmarking and target setting and the importance of external school review, to validate and inform school self-evaluation, in line with principles of high support & high challenge.

Digital learning has a significant potential role to play in helping schools to achieve their targets and is a separate collective priority in this strategy (Priority 2).

The system leadership reforms announced by the Government earlier this year offer another opportunity in terms of what a **Teaching School Hub** can do for the city and future investment by the Government in **National Leaders of Education (NLEs)** and **National Leaders of Governance (NLGs)**.

Key actions for 2020/21

1. Revise the terms of reference and membership of the **PEP School Leadership and Effectiveness Board (previously known as the School Improvement Board)**.
2. Organise a **peer review process for reviewing individual school plans** to achieve target levels of attainment and progress.
3. Draw up a **coordinated leadership support programme** to help individual school leaders at all levels to achieve their targets, building on the leadership programmes that are currently available
4. Review and re-purpose the **subject networks** in order to provide more support for middle leaders to develop subject knowledge, high quality curriculum planning and a clear understanding of the importance of sequencing learning in order to improve the quality of education.
5. **Advise on what collective action would be beneficial to help schools achieve targets**, for example continuing to run the Excellence for Everyone Challenge Partners' programme to **support the progress of disadvantaged pupils**.
6. Develop a programme of support for early years settings and schools in terms of **communication and literacy** (refer to priority 3).
7. Continue to focus on **improving outcomes for pupils in mainstream schools with SEND** and support improvements in the middle leadership of SENCos.
8. Ensure the effective delivery of **moderation at KS1 and KS2** including monitoring the **Year 1 Phonics Screening Check** and the **Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check (MTC)**.

Priority 2: implement a digital learning strategy for the city that supports learning both at school and at home



Background

Home Learning UK's report [Protecting Learning](#) reflects on the experiences of educators, parents and pupils during Covid-19. It credits leaders' determination and passion to protect learning despite not all schools having the digital infrastructure, devices, experience and confidence to shift at speed to remote learning supported by technology, and considers where different schools are on the continuum of adoption.

Covid-19 has brought the potential of digital technology to effectively deliver remote learning to fore, but exploiting its use is not new and discussions were underway early this year before the pandemic about how a city wide approach could be developed which supported learning both in school and at home and which could ultimately drive improved outcomes in terms of attainment and progress.

The DfE published [Realising the potential of technology in education](#) in April 2019, setting out the strategy to 'support the education sector in England to develop and embed technology in a way that cuts workload, fosters efficiencies, supports inclusion and ultimately drives improvements in educational outcomes'. In December 2019 the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) published [Using digital technology to improve learning](#). This guidance report put forward that the question is no longer *whether* technology should have a place in the classroom, but *how* technology can most effectively be integrated in ways which achieve improved outcomes for young people'. Its key message was that to improve learning, technology must be used in a way that informed by effective pedagogy.

In response to the pandemic and the closure of schools and as part of the arrangements that were put in place through the Portsmouth Education Partnership, a *curriculum, digital and home learning work stream* was established. An early piece of work was to establish some principles for protecting learning for all pupils and what schools would do to support this and advice for parents to support their child's learning whilst not at school [HERE](#)

Towards the end of June 2020 a comprehensive baseline survey was undertaken to establish what schools were offering in the way of home learning, what was going well and where the problems or barriers might be and to understand schools' experience of using digital technology to support home learning. The summary report can be found [here](#). A key finding from the survey was variability and the different stages schools were at with home learning and the application of digital technology to support both home learning and learning in school. Other key findings included: *access to devices and internet* was variable affecting disadvantage pupils the most; the *CPD offer* to support digital learning was still in its infancy; *assessment and feedback* was variable; *parental involvement and engagement* increased significantly; a wide range of *software or websites* were being used to support home learning but the *monitoring and quality assurance* of home learning was mixed; almost all schools had run sessions on *online safety*.

There appeared to be two natural groups of schools emerging in the short to medium term: those who are well on their way with digital learning and could be used as a digital pioneer or strategy group to drive the agenda forward; and those interested but still at an early point and needing support and who could benefit from the Ed Tech Programme.

Key actions for 2020/21:

1. **Establish a strategy group of school leaders / pioneers** who can agree and drive forward a digital learning strategy for the city under the 'Imagine Portsmouth' banner and begin to showcase digital delivery. This will be a continuation of the curriculum, digital and home learning work stream but with an expanded membership to include more pioneer schools.
2. **Develop, in consultation with schools, MATs, and other partners a three year digital learning strategy for Portsmouth** with clear expectations about the way in which secondary, primary, infant, junior and special schools will increase their use of technology to enhance learning over the three years.
3. **Support schools to effectively exploit the potential of digital learning both in school and at home.** This will include a high quality CPD offer (incorporating safeguarding and a focus on assessment and feedback) technical support and a series of events and workshops to promote digital learning and showcase local good practice and membership of the Ed Tech Programme.
4. **Ensure all schools have in place by the end of September 2020 contingency arrangements for remote education** which meet the expectations set out in the DFE guidance in the event of a local outbreak in a school or a local lockdown in a community.
5. **Significantly reduce the number of children with no access to either appropriate devices or to the internet.** In the short to medium term this will include the distribution of devices through a number of avenues including nationally funded government schemes and local schemes through Shaping Portsmouth, LA Emergency Grant and the HIVE.
6. **Upskill parents and pupils** in order to support home learning and a blended offer of digital and non-digital and support schools to build and develop better relationships with parents about their child's learning.
7. Ensure schools have the information they need to make informed decisions about the most **suitable apps to support home learning** and the **leasing and purchase options to provide additional devices to pupils**, including 1:1 subscription models.
8. Develop and establish **support networks** across the city which encourage and support the implementation of digital learning e.g. IT managers in schools.
9. Promote to schools the **digital apprenticeship programme** that is available through Portsmouth College.

Priority 3: improving pupil outcomes in literacy (reading, writing and oral) with a focus on early language development



Background

Improving early communication, language and literacy development is a key priority for the city. We know that by the age of four, a child from a disadvantaged background has heard 30 million fewer words compared to their more advantaged peers. We know that a child with a poor vocabulary when they are five is more than twice as likely to be unemployed in their thirties and one and a half times more likely to have mental health problems compared to a child with a good vocabulary.

Some of the most disadvantaged children in Portsmouth start school months behind their peers and the gap can grow through their school years. As a result of Covid-19 the likelihood is that disadvantaged children in Portsmouth will have lost more ground in their language development, exacerbating the situation.

Our performance through EYFS and KS1 and KS2 underlines the issue, the latest figures for which are from 2019 due to the cancellation of all assessments and exams in 2020 as a result of Covid-19.

Literacy related outcomes for 2019 EYFS - KS2

Key performance indicator	% achieving expected standard	Gap to national (% points)	LA ranking
EYFS GLD	70%	2%	
EY goals: listening & attention	87%	+1%	
EY goals: understanding	86%	0%	
EY goals: speaking	85%	0%	
Phonics Year 1	79%	3%	141
KS1 Reading	74%	1%	99
KS1 Writing	66%	3%	130
KS2 Reading	66%	7%	148
KS2 Writing	75%	3%	131

In **Early Years** there has been a collaborative effort across the city to develop a cohesive communication and language strategy which is helpfully summarised on the co-produced **early language on a page**: <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/sch-portsmouth-early-language-plan-on-a-page.pdf>

Other work has included the 'Read with Me' project - a collaborative initiative bringing together the School Library Service, public libraries, EY settings, Yr R practitioners and parents. The development of communication and language skills underpins this project, but we also seek to foster a love of reading and focus on literacy skills in this project. The roll out of 'Read with Me' was hampered by Covid-19, but the intention is to continue this work and be able to monitor and track outcomes of children participating in the 2021 model. The recent launch of '50 things to do before you're 5 in Portsmouth' initiative will help to secure further understanding of the vital importance of all partners working together to promote early language development, making it everyone's business. Again, the Covid pandemic has prevented us from launching '50 things' to the public, but as more local attractions re-open, we are getting closer.

The city has actively supported and promoted the national **Hungry Little Minds campaign** which was launched in 2018 as part of the government's ambition to halve in ten years the proportion of children who finish reception year without the communication, language and literacy skills they need to thrive. The campaign seeks to encourage parents and carers to engage in activities that support their child's early learning and help prepare them for school and beyond.

Schools are strongly encouraged to apply to be involved in the **national reception year early language programme for 2020/21** which has been launched to help close the Covid language gap as an additional element in its catch up support programme. The Department for Education will be working with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and other partners to scale-up delivery of the **Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)**; a high-quality, evidence-based, 20-week intervention designed to improve the language skills of reception age pupils. The programme will provide schools with training and resources, helping them deliver one-to-one and small-group support for five-year-olds whose spoken language skills may have suffered as a result of the pandemic. As of September 2020, we have 12 schools who have registered to take part in this programme.

Within the **primary** sector schools have been involved in a **Reading Research Project** in partnership with the Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance, Thornden Research School and the Education Endowment Foundation. School Improvement funding was released to train and deploy SLEs to work with schools on their own bespoke projects based on proven research and principles from the Challenge the Gap and SEN projects already successfully undertaken through SSIF. The nationally recognised Challenge Partners **Excellence for Everyone** programme has enabled schools to access a whole school approach designed to deliver transformational support for disadvantaged pupils and provide quality professional development for school staff. Postponed due to the Covid-19 partial school closures both of these initiatives strongly need to continue to impact upon the life chances of our pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The 100% assessment pass rate of Key Stage 1 and 2 moderators for Writing highlights that our practitioners understand the standards that pupils need to achieve, the focus must be on the delivery of a quality curriculum by highly effective education staff.

At **secondary** we know that literacy is key to learning across all subjects and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life. Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum which should be encouraged. It recognises that literacy skills are both general and subject specific, emphasising the value of supporting teachers in every subject to teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects. This guidance challenges the notion that literacy in secondary school is solely the preserve of English teachers, or literacy coordinators. The emphasis on disciplinary literacy makes clear that every teacher communicates their subject through academic language, and that reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the heart of knowing and doing every subject in secondary school.

Key priorities for 2020/21:

- 1. Improve EYFSP outcomes but with a particular focus on communication and language.** This will include:

- Engagement by schools with the national reception year early language programme for 2020/21.
- Launch of '50 things to do before you're 5' initiative to engage parents in supporting communication and language for their children.
- Regularly refresh and publicise Hungry Little Minds on social media platforms.
- Provide training for early years settings and the reception year with communication and language focus.
- Support the early years workforce and partnerships with health e.g. evaluation and updating of key tools (EL monitoring tool, Language Top Tips for Talking) based on current research and a training programme (e.g. masterclass in language theories).
- Develop programme of shared support for early years settings and linked to reception year practitioners based on communication and language provision leading into improving literacy provision.
- Use of the new Speech and Language resource, which is funded for 2 years and shared between Health and Early Years. The impact of the resource will not be seen in EYFSP outcomes until 2022, as the focus is on support and training for EY settings this year.

2. Continue to **implement Portsmouth's Early Language Plan** which includes:

- Ensuring the **early years workforce** understand early language development and support children to achieve their very best.
- Ensuring that **families** understand the importance of early language development and the vital role they play and take an active interest in supporting children to develop a wide and rich vocabulary.
- Develop a **data-led approach** to the delivery and analysis of the effectiveness of early language programmes across the city.
- **Develop appropriate tools, training and practice sharing** that support schools and early years providers to deliver robust and effective approaches to all children's early language development.
- Work with **health service providers** to ensure they use a range of resources and tools, share key messages about language development with families at every contact and develop mechanisms to share best practice across the health workforce, supporting families at all levels of the Healthy Child Programme.
- Work with **early years providers and schools** to ensure key staff are trained in a way which provides them with a high level of understanding around the acquisition of early language; ensure that the provision has a culture in which early language and communication development is a primary focus and integrated into all activity; and promote engaging and stimulating language rich environments.

3. In our **primary schools** we will focus on supporting schools to deliver the following:

- Develop pupils' **speaking and listening skills** and wider understanding of language development.
- Use a wide range of explicit and implicit approaches including **planning the teaching of vocabulary, modelling and extending children's language and thinking** during interactions and activities such as shared reading.
- Use a balanced and engaging approach to **developing reading, integrating both decoding and comprehension skills**. Both decoding (the ability to translate written words into the sounds of spoken language) and comprehension (the ability to

understand the meaning of the language being read) skills are necessary for confident and competent reading, but neither is sufficient on its own.

- Effectively oversee that schools and early years settings implement a **systematic phonics programme** which explicitly teaches pupils a comprehensive set of letter-sound relationships for reading and sound letter relationships for spelling.
- Teach pupils to use strategies for developing and **monitoring their reading comprehension**. These include: prediction; questioning; clarifying; summarising; and activating and applying prior knowledge.
- Teach pupils to use strategies for planning and **monitoring their writing**. Producing quality writing is a complex process but a number of different strategies are likely to help, depending on the current skills of the writer. These include pre-writing activities, drafting, editing and revising and sharing.
- Promote **fluent written transcription skills** (handwriting, spelling or typing) through encouraging extensive and purposeful practice and explicit teaching. Children must develop fluency in these skills to the point that they have become automated.
- **Collect high quality, up-to-date information about pupils' current capabilities, and adapt teaching accordingly** to focus on exactly what pupils need to progress. This approach is more efficient because effort is spent on the best next step and not wasted by rehearsing skills or content that a child already knows well.

4. In our **secondary schools** we will focus on supporting schools to deliver the following:

- Disciplinary literacy across the curriculum.
- Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject.
- Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts.
- Break down complex writing tasks.
- Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject and provide opportunities for structured talk.
- Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students. This will include the establishment of the **Pompey Literacy Pirates programme** which will deliver an intensive year long after school learning programme for children aged 9 to 13 who are both falling behind in their progress and are disadvantaged, targeting 60 pupils in the Autumn term rising to 120 in the following Spring term.

Priority 4: recruit, retain and grow the best teachers and leaders



Background

The shortage of teachers, particularly in certain subject areas, has been a significant cause for concern in the city for some years, which has intensified as a result of rising pupil numbers and fewer graduates entering the profession. The PEP made this one of its early priorities and established the ITT and Teacher & Retention Group to lead on this work and drive forward **Teach Portsmouth**.

The brand has benefitted from tactical marketing campaigns to increase awareness and communicate changes to the recruitment process during COVID-19. One example of this can be seen in the **your time to teach** campaign which supported initial teacher training providers in the city at a time when the virus had caused uncertainty for recruiting trainee teachers. So far, the impact of COVID-19 on teacher recruitment and retention appears to have been a positive one with schools reporting higher numbers of applicants for teaching and senior leadership posts and initial teaching training providers reporting the same. But the same was true back in 2008 following the financial crisis which led to a surge of new entrants to the profession - within a few years this surge melted away as economic conditions improved.

It is clear therefore that the PEP must maintain the momentum and the work that has formed part of *Teach Portsmouth* branded activities, events and *your time to teach* campaign will need to continue and develop in 2020/21 in order to attract and retain the best teachers and leaders for the city.

While COVID-19 has impacted our ability to deliver face to face events like the **Teach Portsmouth Recruitment Fair**, the PEP continues to adapt what is done in light of declining attendance in recent years. While there is a place for recruitment fairs, the uncertainties around COVID-19 and events has made the Partnership consider digital alternatives including webinars.

Preparations for the **Teach Portsmouth Awards** continue with the focus on generating sponsorship, compiling long service award entries and securing trophies. As a result of COVID-19 the date has been moved to March 2021.

Whilst recruiting new teachers will continue to be a priority, there also needs to be a continuing emphasis on the **retention of teachers**. Before the pandemic one third of teachers in Portsmouth did not stay beyond the fifth year and many left the profession altogether. There is a recognition by the government that unmanageable workloads are a key factor in teachers leaving the profession. The impact of Covid-19 and the return to school for all year groups will inevitably test teachers as they grapple with the new arrangements. And further disruption caused by potential infection outbreaks and the move to blended learning could test teachers further. Whilst recruitment might be on the up we cannot afford to take our eye off the issue of retention, teacher's wellbeing and continuous professional development.

Initial Teaching Training (ITT) is being reviewed. Currently ITT is undertaken either via a higher education institute led route or school-led route. School-led routes include salaried options (School Direct or Teach First) or fee based options (School Direct or School Centred ITT). The proportion of teachers entering the profession via the school-led route continues to rise. The PEP wants to build on the supply of ITT routes and to continue to reach out to other audiences including the armed forces and uniformed services. The city is fortunate to have a range of providers who have been judged to be outstanding by Ofsted.

We also need to recognise the intense pressure senior leaders are under as a result of Covid-19 and the additional responsibilities and workload that has been placed on our senior leaders. Their emotional health and wellbeing will be of paramount importance and the early work done last year to consider how we can better support senior leaders in Portsmouth will continue in 2020/21.

Key actions 2020/21

1. Launch **monthly e-newsletter** for *Teach Portsmouth* and increase sign up.
2. Continue to run **tactical marketing campaigns** aimed at boosting teacher recruitment and retention.
3. Increase engagement and reach across all digital platforms through **content marketing strategy**.
4. Deliver the **annual teacher recruitment fair** digitally.
5. Deliver the **annual Teach Portsmouth Awards** in March 2021.
6. Develop **virtual events including webinars, Q&As and other interactive solutions** that complement traditional face to face events once social distancing is lowered.
7. Undertake a **teacher recruitment survey** across all schools in order to inform future work.

Priority 5: ensure all schools have access to clear and up to date infection control and health and safety information and are able to respond appropriately to local Covid-19 outbreaks

Background

In these unprecedented times the successful implementation of the Portsmouth Education Strategy in 2020/21 will very much depend on how local areas and schools manage the risk of infection to ensure outbreaks are minimised in order to avoid significant disruption to children and young people's education in the city.

The importance of infection control and the need for clear and up to date infection control and health and safety information to schools and partners was recognised soon after the national lockdown in March 2020 and an infection and health & safety group was swiftly established, chaired by the Director of Public Health, reporting into the Covid-19 Working Group.

The group was established to ensure:

- all stakeholders (headteachers, teachers, pupils, local authority officers) have clear and consistent information on how to minimise the risk of infection in schools and what to do in the event of a possible or confirmed case in a school
- information is conveyed in such a way that it builds trust and confidence in the way that schools are handling potential outbreaks, making it more likely that advice on infection control, including self-isolation where necessary, is closely followed.

During the summer term the group responded to the frequently changing DfE guidance and health information by producing checklist and FAQs with practical advice and guidance to help schools to open to a larger group of children from June 2020 and to plan for the full re-opening of schools in September 2020. Local outbreak plans have been developed and shared with key partners. These are supported by a communications package which will ensure that schools are able to give consistent messages to all parents which reinforce key messages about recognising and responding to possible or confirmed cases of Covid-19.

The infection control and health & safety group will continue to operate in 2020/21 supporting schools to adhere to the latest guidance on infection control, manage any local outbreaks and minimise further disruption to children's learning due to possible school closures or bubbles / year groups having to go home to self-isolate.

Everyone has a part to play in managing infection control including:

- **The school** is the principle point of contact for children and families in the local school community and headteachers will use their discretion in terms of implementation. Schools plans for infection control will be based on national advice and guidance and will include agreed approaches in Portsmouth to support infection control.
- **Public Health** will be the key source of advice and support and should be notified of all possible or confirmed cases. Where a case has been confirmed Public Health will be able to advise on the risk assessment and the impact on the school in terms of self-isolation.

- **The council** will provide information, support and advice in relation to communications. In particular the council's communications team will take a lead on assisting with all Covid-19 related media enquiries and confirming and providing factual information about the total number of confirmed cases in Portsmouth schools, including the number of classes/ bubbles that are currently closed so that pupils can self-isolation
- **Parents and carers** have a vital role to play in keeping school safe in terms of encouraging their child(ren) to follow the rules around basic hygiene and to look out for any signs of coronavirus symptoms and following the prescribed steps if their child shows symptoms.

Key priorities for 2020/21

1. Provide comprehensive **step by step guidance for schools** on minimising the risk of transmission in schools and enabling schools to respond appropriately to possible cases of Covid-19. This will include the use of checklists, frequently asked questions (FAQs) and advice on risk assessments. The guidance will be regularly updated to take into account any changes to national guidance and the rate of infection in the city.
2. Extend the above guidance and tailor it to **support parents & carers, council staff and all professionals and front line workers who work with families and schools.**
3. Provide a **weekly Covid-19 intelligence summary** about Covid-19 infection rates in the city.
4. Support schools with the **sourcing of personal and protective equipment (PPE)** and delivery of a basic package of PPE including masks, gloves, aprons, soap and hand sanitizer, with ongoing support and replenishment of supplies as required. This is in addition to the package of support provided by the government at the start of the Autumn term.
5. Ensure there is a robust and clearly communicated **local outbreak plan** for possible or confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the school community.
6. Work with HR and health and safety colleagues to ensure LA maintained schools meet all of their **statutory responsibilities for health and safety** as an employer and a provider of services.
7. **Link to the Portsmouth Health Protection Board** so that sharing from Portsmouth schools can be shared with other partners and vice versa.

Priority 6: ensure all education settings have robust safeguarding policies, processes and culture in place



Background

In the last 18 months two mainstream schools have been judged by Ofsted to be inadequate due to concerns about safeguarding policies, processes and culture. Other inspections have also identified some weaknesses but were not sufficient enough to lead to an inadequate rating as action could be taken on the day(s) of the inspection to resolve any outstanding concerns. Evidence has also emerged from a review of completed Safeguarding and Early Help Compact Audits that some of the judgements made against the standards have been too generous and more rigour is required. Added to this has been the impact of Covid-19 with the vast majority of children being educated at home during the lockdown. Also, there is a strong likelihood of further disruption during the course of 2020/21 and more children having to be educated at home or receive a blended learning offer.

Schools in England are inspected and judged by Ofsted on the effectiveness of their safeguarding arrangements. Schools need to demonstrate that they are meeting their statutory responsibilities (in line with DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education documentation and Ofsted 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings') and that school staff are exercising their professional judgement in keeping children and learners safe.

Areas of concern identified recently in Portsmouth as a result of an Ofsted inspection have included:

- Gaps in the Single Central Record
- Processes for recording and sharing safeguarding concerns and subsequent follow up and / or referral to MASH
- Lack of understanding about the local safeguarding thresholds and escalation processes
- Gaps in safeguarding training for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), staff and governors
- Gaps in safer recruitment training for school staff and governors involved in recruitment
- Robustness and quality of behaviour management policies
- Staff understanding and awareness of areas of safeguarding such as Prevent and FGM
- How well the school works with external agencies regarding safeguarding concerns
- Recording of safeguarding incidents - timeliness, security, follow up and escalation
- How well the school understands the vulnerability of children who are missing education.

Clearly more needs to be done to support schools and ensure the lessons from the last 18 months are learnt. Through the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership (PSCP), schools already have access to a wealth of information, resources and training. This includes:

- The Portsmouth DSL Network is in place to support DSLs in schools to share best practice, seek support from other DSLs and be informed of local developments. Through

the PSCP, training is provided for DSLs. In 2020/21 the traditional managers and DSL 1 day training course has been broken down into short Masterclasses to enable DSLs and managers to update and refresh on the areas which they see are critical for their own development.

- PSCP Thresholds document to guide decision making when determining the level of need or risk relating to a child.
- How to make an effective contact into the Portsmouth MASH using the Inter-agency Contact Form (IACF).
- Processes for stepping up and stepping down through tiers.
- Early Help Assessments to help identify, at the earliest opportunity, a child, young person's or family's additional needs, which are not being fully met by the existing services and to support the provision of timely and coordinated support to meet those needs.
- Support and processes for Multi-Disciplinary Working, Team Around the Child/Family (TAC or TAF) and Team Around the Worker (TAW).
- Portsmouth Safeguarding and Early Help Compact Audit tool which sets out 12 standards for effective early help and safeguarding practice so that agencies and schools can self-assess against them in order to identify areas of good practice and areas where improvement is needed and the extent to which safeguarding children is embedded within the school. This framework is used for a formal city-wide audit of all services in the city every two years.
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) liaison, role and understanding the notification process.

Key priorities for 2020/21

1. Ensure all schools complete the **Portsmouth Safeguarding and Early Help Compact Audit tool** every two years, a sample of which will be reviewed by the PSCP to ensure completed audits are robust and realistic.
2. **Raise the profile of safeguarding and the support available to schools** through the regular LA / Headteacher briefings, Multi Academy Trust briefings, PEP bulletin, etc - signposting to the PSCP website. To include a full update of all safeguarding One Minute Guides.
3. Ensure every school in the city has a **dedicated safeguarding email** (safeguarding@....) to improve the communication between PSCP and schools and to support Project Encompass.
4. Continue to provide **support for schools that are currently judged to be inadequate by Ofsted** due to safeguarding concerns alongside checks with schools that are due an inspection in 2020/21.
5. PSCP to deliver a series of **Masterclasses for school DSLs** to cover the specific safeguarding practice areas (to replace the previous one day DSL training course). This will be in addition to the foundation safeguarding courses that are provided in Early Help, Child Protection, Safeguarding Supervision etc. Masterclasses for DSLs will cover: understanding the national and local picture; escalation; Portsmouth safeguarding thresholds and Portsmouth MASH.

6. Encourage schools to use the **DSL CPD document** which has been designed for recording formal and informal safeguarding training. Together with training certificates this can support and facilitate effective logging of all safeguarding learning in readiness for an Ofsted inspection.
7. **Working with MASH to develop masterclass topics** in order to improve contacts into MASH.
8. Develop and deliver a **LADO workshop / Masterclass**.
9. Raise the profile of **online safety issues**, resources and information available to improve the practice of schools with regard to safeguarding during online/digital learning (links to priority 2).
10. Support **Governors** to be better informed regarding safer recruitment and their responsibility and accountability with regard to safeguarding.
11. Develop the **LA Link Co-ordinator system** ensuring all schools are aware of their pupils at risk of harm or in receipt of early help. Ensuring schools have a regular conversation with the LA to unblock any operational barriers to effective joint working to protect children.
12. Extend the **Team Around the School pilot** to enable clarity of service delivery and developmental support to improve the response to children with SEMH and safeguarding needs.

Priority 7: promote emotional health, wellbeing and resilience in education

Background

Meeting the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children and young people is crucial, not least in order for them to learn effectively. We believe that the wellbeing of pupils and staff, including that of our school teachers and leaders, needs to be at the heart of all that schools and other education settings do.

This work forms part of the *Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Strategy* ([link here](#)) for children and young people 2020 - 2023. This has a clear-shared intention to adopt a whole system approach to developing and transforming the support for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Fundamental to this approach is the importance of partnership working and that social and emotional mental health becomes 'everyone's business' in the same way as safeguarding has become 'everyone's business' across Portsmouth.

Portsmouth's *strategy for improving wellbeing and resilience in education* continues to strengthen the partnership across services and between services and education settings. This work focuses on three areas:

- To improve access to services including direct work with young people and advice and training and consultation for professionals.
- To provide a central source of information
- To develop self-help and peer support

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted just how important this endeavour is and in recognition of this a sub group of the PEP Inclusion Group, **Children's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Group**, has intensified its efforts over the course of the summer term in 2020 to support the return to school for all year groups in the Autumn and ensure there is appropriate ongoing support in order to meet the anticipated increase in demand for support.

New or increased anticipated needs as a result of Covid-19 are likely to include:

- Separation anxiety
- Anxiety of release from lockdown/virus fears
- Isolation from peers and loss of routine
- Trauma experienced in lockdown
- Self-harm
- Increase in complexity of cases presenting to CAMHS
- Anxiety about future exams and coursework
- Bereavement and loss
- Anxiety with transition
- Sleep hygiene
- Potential rise in eating difficulties
- Later identification of emerging needs
- Increasing incidence of adverse events such as domestic abuse and child abuse

The PEP has produced a local package of resources ([available here](#)) to offer schools and other education settings guidance and support to manage some of the challenges that staff, pupils and parents may face in terms of emotional health and wellbeing. To further support

this there is a dedicated page on the PEP website:

<https://www.portsmoutheducationpartnership.co.uk/covid-19-wellbeing-and-support-from-partners/>

Action taken in 2020/21 to support schools will link in to the support that is being made available by the government through the national *Wellbeing for Education Return*; a core pack of training resources that will be made available during the Autumn term 2020 which through the PEP we will tailor and deliver locally to reflect local circumstances.

The establishment of **Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)** in the city to support schools is a key element of this work. Following the successful bid to fund a third team we can now look forward to having city wide coverage with all schools being supported. MHSTs will provide extra capacity for early intervention and ongoing help within a school setting.

The Mental Health Support Teams will:

- Deliver evidence-based interventions for mild to moderate needs
- Support senior mental health leads in education settings to develop and introduce whole-school or whole-college approaches
- Providing timely advice to staff and liaising with external specialist services so that children and young people can get the right support and remain in education.

The **Portsmouth Inclusive Education Quality Mark (PIEQM)** will support this work through self and peer assessment to identify strengths and areas for development in relation to inclusive practice.

Key actions for 2020/21:

1. Publish a **Welcome Back to School Wellbeing Support** package for schools.
2. Implement the **Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)** offer and extend to all schools.
3. Recruit, train and put in place support for **Youth Mental Health Ambassadors** (across all our secondary schools) to work alongside MHSTs.
4. Through the national *Wellbeing for Education Return*, develop and deliver a package of training and support, tailored to local needs, that meets the needs of
 - a. School Leaders
 - b. Staff providing SEMH interventions and support
 - c. All school staff.
5. Review and publish Portsmouth's **anti-bullying guidance for schools & colleges and our trans inclusion toolkit for schools.**
6. Commission, mobilise and promote a **Digital Mental Health Service.**

Priority 8: ensure all pupils regularly attend school



Background

In recent years the city has seen improvements in both school attendance and exclusion rates. In 2019 overall absence and persistent absence in primary schools was reduced and is below that of our statistical neighbours whilst overall absence in secondary schools improved but remains above our statistical neighbours. Fixed period exclusions for primary schools has also improved and is below that of most of our statistical neighbours, however, in secondary the rate has increased in line with national increases. Permanent exclusions across our schools remain very low and well below the national rate.

However, the fact remains that Portsmouth's pupils do not attend school as regularly as their peers nationally and there is therefore still considerably more work to do to improve school attendance. We know that by not attending school regularly children and young people are leaving themselves vulnerable to risks which can reduce their life chances. For our most vulnerable young people school will be the only safe and consistent part of their lives. Away from the safety and security of school, young people are more at risk of abuse and exploitation, taking part in criminal activity and missing out on support for special educational needs and mental health problems.

A school attendance action plan is currently in place ([add link](#)), the implementation of which is monitored by the PEP Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG).

A high profile school attendance campaign *Miss School Miss Out* was launched in 2019 to support this work. This campaign is on hold whilst partners focus on welcoming children back to school following the closure of schools in 2020 due to the pandemic. The council has agreed with Headteachers that the enforcement of school attendance through penalty notices would be an unlikely course of action until at least the October half term 2020.

Whilst schools have remained partially open during the pandemic providing care for key worker children and vulnerable learners and from 1st June and 15th June providing care for Years R, 1 & 6 and Years 10 & 12 respectively, the fact is that the vast majority of children and young people have not attended school or college since March 2020.

The government is expecting all children and young people to return to school and college full-time in September 2020. The focus therefore has been on welcoming children and young people back to school, reassuring parents and carers that schools have been made as safe as possible and that the risk of infection in school is very low, and targeting those children who are at risk of not returning to school. Details are set out in the key actions below but include: a *Welcome Back to School* campaign (temporarily replacing the *Miss School Miss Out* campaign); Welcome Back Plans for those pupils who require additional support; and wellbeing support to schools (refer to Priority 8).

During the pandemic, systems have been established with schools to **track vulnerable children** and respond to a wide range of issues impacting on families as a result of the lockdown, including RAG-rated child level data on spreadsheets, **LA Link Co-ordinators**

attached to schools and colleges and the Children's Hub. These systems are being adjusted to focus on returning children to school safely¹.

In addition to the above, there will be a continued focus during 2020/21 on a number of areas that impact on school attendance. This includes work to reduce:

- **Permanent and fixed period exclusions** through the effective use of alternative provision (in house and externally commissioned) and use of alternative exclusions (where COVID plans allow)
- **Reduced timetables that go beyond 6 weeks without a clear plan** in place for returning a pupil back to full time education. The reasons for reduced timetables should be: exceptional and limited; short term; require parental consent; Early Help Assessments should be considered; and all exclusions should be accurately recorded on the attendance register
- **Elective Home Education (EHE)** adhering to the principles of the EHE protocol that was agreed with Headteachers in 2019 ([insert link](#)). The concern for 2020/21 is that as a result of the pandemic, and with so many children being educated at home, that parents may want to continue with home education. However, without the support of the school it is clear that many parents will not be able to provide suitable education.

Key actions for 2020/21:

1. **Launch and implementation of the Welcome Back to School campaign** including a tool kit for schools and materials for partner organisations and all professionals who are working with families.
2. **Application of Welcome Back Plans** (short term plans of less than 6 weeks) which schools will use to support a return to school for those pupils (and their families) that require additional support to get them back into school, co-produced and agreed with all professionals involved, and reviewed weekly.
3. **Continue to deploy LA Link Co-ordinators** building on the success of the summer term, working with schools to identify and support those children who are most likely to struggle to return successfully in September (over 600 children have been identified of which approx. 240 are open to local authority safeguarding services). 3 permanent LA Link Co-ordinators will be employed from November 2020 to continue with this work.
4. **Helping parents meet their responsibilities to ensure children attend school regularly** through effective communication / information, advice and guidance, pastoral support, intervention through Early Help and MABS where appropriate and punitive sanctions as authorised by Headteachers.
5. Ensuring **schools are supported and challenged and there is effective leadership and management of school attendance** in place, through the termly monitoring of school attendance data by BAG, half termly Persistent Absence Reviews and audits where appropriate, ensuring schools are aware of and access appropriate medical provision, focus on reduced timetables that exceed 6 weeks.

¹ The Children's Hub has effectively been stood down pending any future local or national lockdown

6. **Working with partners to provide additional needs based support that contribute to improvements in attendance**, running termly school attendance network meetings and continuing to make school attendance everyone's business including health workers, social workers, school nurses, Early Help family workers, CAHMS, GPs, etc
7. Continuing to give a **high profile to key attendance messages** that will include the Welcome Back to School campaign during the summer and Autumn term and the re-launch of Miss School Miss Out during 2020/21.
8. Continued **focus on chronic absence (below 50%)**, sharing information with Missing Exploited and Trafficked (MET) group and Early Help, encouraging schools to complete an Early Help Assessment and have a Lead Professional in place, working with Early Help and / or contacting MASH where school interventions and previous legal sanctions have failed.
9. **Implement the EHE protocol** and address any increase in EHE as a result of the pandemic and parents wishing to continue to educate their children at home.

Priority 9: invest in school buildings to create additional school places, focusing on secondary, even more inclusive mainstream schools and a continuum of specialist provision for children with additional needs

Background

Ensuring there are sufficient school places in Portsmouth is the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority (LA) but its ability to secure this is reliant on strong collaborative arrangements with schools and Multi Academy Trusts. Through the Portsmouth Education Partnership the city has a strong and stable culture of collaboration which has enabled the LA to ensure there are sufficient school places across the city whilst at the same time improving existing accommodation.

Between 2012 and 2017 the focus has been on expanding primary school places in response to the unprecedented rise in demand fuelled by rising birth rates, inward migration, reductions in the number of children accessing education outside of Portsmouth or accessing independent education and the impact of regeneration schemes and housing developments. In response 1600 additional primary school places have been created since 2012. The birth rate is now falling and as a result surplus capacity is now a feature in Year R and is becoming so in Year 3. A summary of the latest position for primary is given below:

- **Year R** forecasts currently show a total pupil number of 2363 which equates to 5.5% surplus capacity at Year R. With the decrease in birth rate and the decrease in in-migration combined with the number of pupils attending out of city schools and independent schools and in line with ONS population projection figures, a further reduction is forecast year on year until 2023/24 at which point there will be 11.5% surplus capacity in Year R.
- **Year 3** pupil numbers are due to peak in 2020/21 with 2424 pupils which will give a surplus capacity of 2.3%. The pupil number is then forecast to reduce and by 2023/24 there will be a surplus of 6.8% at Year 3.

In recent years the focus has switched to expanding secondary school places including three major expansion schemes at Admiral Lord Nelson School, Charter Academy and The Portsmouth Academy with two smaller schemes at St. Edmund's School and Trafalgar School, which are creating an additional 940 places. All five schemes will be completed by September 2020. Our pupil forecasts show that additional capacity will be needed from 2023 to meet the forecast demand until a surplus capacity becomes available again by 2025. A summary of the position at Year 7 is given below:

- **Year 7** numbers are forecast to rise dramatically, following the large rise in primary pupil numbers. Year 7 numbers are due to increase year on year until they peak in 2024/25 at 2239.

Places for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is a far more complex issue and a very challenging one due to limited capital funding with no obvious source of funding from the government as is the case for basic need funding which covers primary and secondary school places. An increase in special school places also has implications for revenue funding and increasing pressure on the High Needs Block of the

Dedicated Schools Grant. The issue is complicated further by the diverse range of needs, the increasing complexity of need and the fact that our existing specials schools and inclusion centres are largely full with limited space for significant expansion.

In light of the above, a SEND and AP (Alternative Provision) phase 2 review is currently being undertaken and will report later in the year which will in turn inform the development of a 3-5 year SEND accommodation strategy.

In the short term works are underway at Redwood Park Academy and Cliffdale Primary Academy to deliver places and improvements to the accommodation; a special free school supporting children with Autism and challenging behaviour will open in September 2022 in Wymering; and a further expansion of Cliffdale Primary is planned using the space that will be left following the re-location of the family contact centre to a new location and bespoke accommodation in Cosham.

Key actions for 2020/21:

1. Complete the building works for the **secondary sufficiency schemes** at: Admiral Lord Nelson School; Charter Academy; The Portsmouth Academy; St. Edmund's School and Trafalgar School - all by Sept 2020.
2. Complete the building works at **Redwood Park Academy and Cliffdale Primary Academy** in order to deliver the special school places that are needed for Sept 2020.
3. Complete the **SEND and AP Accommodation Review (phase 2)** and prepare a 3-5 year strategy which sets out the vision and model for future special school and AP places in the city.
4. Continue to work with the ESFA and Delta Education Trust to ensure the **special free school for autism** is built and on course for Sept 2022 completion.
5. **Re-locate the Battenburg Family Contact Centre to a new bespoke facility in Cosham** and undertake a feasibility study to determine how the vacant space will be used to support the **expansion of Cliffdale Primary Academy**.
6. Continue to work with the ESFA to ensure the **rebuild of Mayfield School** is on course for completion by July 2021.
7. **Refresh all pupil forecasts and school organisation and place strategy documents** and submit the annual SCAP (school capacity) return to the DfE.