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Title of meeting:	Education Advisory Board
Subject:	Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020 - 2023: update on progress in Year 1 (from September 2020)
Date of meeting:	8 th February 2021
Report by:	Priority leads and chairs of PEP sub groups
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by

- 1.1 Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Education

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to provide a summary of the progress that has so far been made in Year 1 in respect of the nine priorities that are contained within the Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020 - 2023.

3. Summary of progress against each of the nine priorities

3.1 Priority 1: strong leadership and ambition at all levels to improve effectiveness and outcomes

- The previous PEP School Improvement Board has been re-purposed as the School Leadership and Effectiveness Board (SLEB), with a revised terms of reference and membership. Membership is largely made up of senior school leaders from both Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) and LA maintained schools. The Board has met on two occasions and half-termly meetings have been scheduled for the remainder of this academic year.
- A key priority of the Board is to drive the effectiveness at individual school level which is critical to the success of this strategy by asking all schools 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.
- To support this, work has already started by the Head of School Improvement & Early Years working closely with the Chair and Vice-Chair plus some other members of the Board to establish a scoping exercise to gather information on the process that MATs and LA

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maintained schools use to set targets including family benchmarking tools and how leadership practice translates this into high support and high challenge in order to achieve the aspirational outcomes that we all desire. The aim is that best practice processes can be shared across the PEP and that common principles can be signed up to across the city to ensure both consistency and rigour.

- Aside from target setting, there is an agreed ambition that school leaders across the PEP can work together in smaller groups to add value, support and learn from individual school and MAT practice which evaluate the implementation of school plans and processes.
- In terms of leadership at all levels, middle and subject leaders are being developed through regular network meetings. This is supported by the Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance, the Solent Maths Hub, Portsmouth Music Hub, University of Portsmouth (MFL) and Hampshire LA Advisers (R.E. and History). The PEP & Inclusion Manager has oversight of network leads and is monitoring dates and progress of network meetings.
- To integrate the work of the Inclusion and the School Improvement Services, it has been agreed that SEND should be an agenda item on each of the subject leader network meetings, so that there is an on-going and consistent focus on improving outcomes for pupils with SEND in mainstream schools.
- Obviously, the Covid global pandemic has presented school leaders with certain challenges, not least the need to constantly be reactive and operational rather than strategic. This, along with the cancellation of formal assessments at every key stage in 2020 and 2021 has impacted on the progress of this Priority 1. The aim is to support school leaders by not adding to the pressure that they are under, but to undertake some of this work behind the scenes in order that the agreed and signed-up to consistent processes begin from September 2021

3.2 Priority 2: implement a digital learning strategy

- Never has there been a more urgent need for remote education than during this global pandemic and a third national lockdown, hence the priority around a digital learning strategy for Portsmouth.
- The commissioning of Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT) to work with officers of the local authority has been crucial in ensuring that the best possible education can be provided for children and young people when they need to remain at home as well as developing technological capabilities in our learners and education staff for the future.
- Following the first national lockdown from 23rd March 2020, the quality of practice and provision around remote education has really accelerated. It is true to say that the baseline (June 2020) and report (July 2020) revealed a wide variance across schools in Portsmouth. Notably, this identified a sense of urgency to progress this agenda beginning with a

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workshop and webinar that were held before the end of the 2019/2020 academic year.

- The partnership working with TSAT has enabled all schools in Portsmouth to access webinars, documentation and support from a Digital Development Officer regardless of age/phase or designation. This has been vital in enabling Portsmouth schools to meet government deadlines:
 - remote education plans in place by the end of September 2020;
 - the Temporary Continuity Direction making it a legal obligation from 22nd October 2020 for schools to be able to move immediately to remote education where pupils have to self-isolate;
 - the requirement to publish remote education information for parents on how schools are meeting DfE expectations on school websites by 25th January 2021.
- Supporting parents of children with SEND to understand these challenges and to enable them to raise the challenges that families face have been facilitated through the Shaping Better Futures Together group and a blogpost on the Portsmouth SEND Local Offer website.
- Schools have been provided with much information related to remote education in the weekly communications from the LA to all school leaders (e.g. government expectations, example documentations, opportunities to access resources, support and guidance). This has enabled them to meet deadlines, respond to the Coronavirus pandemic developments and advance in their remote education capabilities.
- An example of the acceleration of digital education is in prevalence of a whole new range of terminology in this area (remote, blended, synchronous/asynchronous, flipped, hybrid).
- Groups to support the advancement of this Education Strategy include the Digital Drivers (Learning) Group which is driving forward the digital education across the city and oversees the Digital Pioneers and Digital Donation Groups. The work of the Curriculum and Remote Learning Group is currently integrated within each of these, as it is not possible to separate it out at this stage.
- LA maintained schools have submitted remote education plans to the LA to ensure that deadlines and DfE expectations have been met and the Head of School Improvement and Early Years has been instrumental in providing quality assurance and feedback.
- Ofsted remote inspections of schools this term start from 25th January 2021, with a particular focus on how well children and learners are being educated remotely.

3.3 Priority 3: improve outcomes in literacy with a focus on early language development

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- The PEP **Early Language and Literacy Group** has been set up with a wide ranging membership including schools, colleges and early years settings, Portsmouth University, Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance, LA officers, health, libraries and charity organisations. The first meeting took place on 13th November 2020 and three workstreams have been established:
 - Review and relaunch the Early Years Language 'Plan on a Page'
 - Further develop Reading programmes across the city
 - Enhance literacy skills particularly focusing on transition points
- The pandemic has presented real challenges in moving this priority forward as schools, colleges and settings have had to deal with an ever-changing situation, health and safety requirements, staffing issues and the problems that Covid related illness and self-isolation have presented. This, along with the cancellation of formal assessments at every key stage in 2020 and 2021 has impacted on the progress of Priority 3.
- In spite of this, one significant major initiative has been introduced. A bid of £25,000 was secured through a literacy twinning project with Hastings Opportunity Area. Ten KS2 schools have been fully funded to take part in a project 'Reading for Purpose and Pleasure' undertaking training delivered by the high-performing Hackney Learning Trust on their **Destination Reader** programme. Even with the complications of the second week in the third national lockdown, nine of these schools participated on a whole day online training conference. Principles and resources have been shared and the next training day will cover work explanation on how this pedagogy can be implemented within the classroom.
- Another successful strand which is progressing is the work of '**Pompey Pirates**' through the charity organisation the Literacy Hubs. Their work is focused on closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. Although hindered by the need to move to virtual sessions, Becca Dean, the project lead, has enabled Yr 6 pupils to publish a book of short stories that they have written, entitled 'The Adventures of Captain Rogers'.
- The **Early Years sector** have faced significant challenges since March 2020 throughout the pandemic, given the way that they are often treated differently to the rest of the education sector. The Head of School Improvement and Early Years has worked with the Early Years team to conduct a first review of the EY Language Plan on a Page. Our EY Advisory Teacher Ella Harbut is now taking a lead on this to ensure that other parties and sectors are involved in the review and agree a final version which is planned to be distributed and publicised widely.
- Some **moderation training events** have been held, particularly for Yr 2 and Yr 6 teachers although in light of the cancellation of KS1 and KS2 SATs, plus the checks for Yr 1 Phonics and Yr 4 Multiplication Tables, training, moderation and monitoring of testing will now need to be revised.

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3.4 Priority 4: Recruit, Retain and Grow the best teachers and Leaders

- The **Teach Portsmouth newsletter** has been published on a monthly basis and now has 295 unique subscribers. The newsletter will be expanding to include a new section on 'Teaching jobs of the month,' promoting vacancies from the PCC jobs portal.
- **Teach Portsmouth continues to adapt campaigns to fit a digital-first approach.** Webinars have become the latest addition to the marketing mix. Our last two webinar have seen over 80 people registered to date across both webinars. A third webinar will focus on retention, in particular CPD and progression opportunities in teaching. The **Teach Portsmouth Awards Live** continues despite a recent date change to 8 July. So far, the Portsmouth community have now nominated over 80 teachers, support teams or leaders in the city for the people's choice award. Nominations are still ongoing
- The **annual teacher recruitment event** is currently on hold due to impact of pandemic and the pressure on schools. A survey aimed at understanding the school requirements will sent out after half term and the ITT RR group will review this at the next meeting.
- The Teach Portsmouth team have been working on a series of **digital events** over the last year. This includes three webinars and a digital awards ceremony. The team are also supporting careers and progression by putting on a series of parents/carer information events. A new hub for webinars has now been introduced on the Teach Portsmouth website. The next webinar: progression on teaching will focus more on a 'retention offer' locally.

3.5 Priority 5: infection control, health and safety 3.2 Priority 2: implement a digital learning strategy

- The key focus has been on collaborative working between schools, education colleagues, public health, and Council health and safety advisors to ensure that schools have received comprehensive step by step guidance on **minimising the risk of transmission in schools** and enabling schools to respond appropriately to possible cases of Covid-19.
- The advice has evolved to respond to the various stages of the pandemic including the initial lockdown, the wider reopening of schools in June 2020, the full reopening of schools in September 2020, and the latest closure to those other than vulnerable children and children of key workers, including frequently asked questions (FAQs) based on the real challenges that head teachers and colleagues in school have faced.
- Since September a focus has been on **local outbreak planning** and ensuring that schools have the support and information that they need to make decisions about who needs to self-isolate, and that this is

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communicated clearly, calmly and confidently to parents to build confidence in the school communities.

- Since December we have been working with schools on the measured introduction of **regular asymptomatic testing** for pupils and, in some instances, staff. Lateral flow testing of staff has now been introduced for staff in primary and secondary settings. Between January and March 2021 we will be working with Southampton University to introduce weekly saliva testing for pupils and staff in all secondary schools.
- **Vaccinations** are now being offered to a small number of education staff who provide 1:1 support to clinically vulnerable pupils in roles similar to those in health and social care e.g. in special schools.

3.6 Priority 6: safeguarding in education settings

- 37 schools completed the **Portsmouth Safeguarding and Early Help Compact Audit** assessment in 2020 and a further 30 are due to complete them in 2021 (these figures include independent schools). Every school who reported an indicator as requires improvement or inadequate submitted an action plan as to how they aimed to improve this
- Every school in the city (with the exception of 2 independent schools and colleges) now has a **dedicated safeguarding email** (safeguarding@....) to improve the communication between PSCP and schools and to support Project Encompass.
- Support has been offered and taken up by UTC Portsmouth (**currently judged inadequate by Ofsted due to safeguarding concerns**) in their improvement journey. Positive engagement is evident through the Portsmouth Compact to ensure that the school meets the requirements set out by Ofsted. PSCP has delivered Safeguarding training to UTC Trustees and staff have accessed the PSCP Multi-agency safeguarding training and DSL Masterclasses. The new DSL at the UTC has written an improvement plan in line with recommendations.
- Throughout the pandemic regular **safeguarding information** has been made available to schools through briefings and other means. Safeguarding has been prioritised in headteacher briefings to ensure robust arrangements are in place to contact all children who are not at school.
- PSCP has an extensive offer of **training and support** to schools, and attendance has been encouraging. This includes:
 - support for Designated Safeguarding leads (DSLs) through Masterclasses
 - Early Help and Child Protection Training for new DSLs or Deputy DSLs.
 - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) workshops

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- ThinkuKnow training accredited by Child Exploitation & Online Protection Command (CEOP). This has been completed by seven schools since September 2020
- PSCP are now monitoring **contacts into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** and have developed masterclass - contacting MASH, in order to improve contacts into MASH
- The **LA Link Co-ordinator** role is now well established with three full-time co-ordinators in post from October 2020. This system ensures all schools are aware of their pupils at risk of harm or in receipt of early help. Schools feedback underlines the value of regular conversations with the LA to unblock any operational barriers to effective joint working to protect children. See also to Priority 8 below.

3.7 Priority 7: emotional health and wellbeing

- **Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)** are still operational and receiving referrals from schools. They are currently working remotely. The offer is bespoke to each school according to their needs.
- **Group work**, including groups for parents are being developed by MHST and will be rolled out shortly. These will be able to capture a number of families at a time, and would hope to capture some of those on the SPA and extended CAMHS waiting lists.
- The **third MHST**, which will extend coverage to all schools from 2022, has been recruited and started their training in January 2021.
- An additional **behaviour specialist role** has been created and recruited to. They will be able to work with children and young people with more complex needs.
- **Youth mental health ambassadors** were due to be recruited in secondary schools during the Autumn Term 2020, but has been delayed due to COVID restrictions.
- **A digital mental health service, Kooth**, has been commissioned and available since 1st January 2021. The provider is raising awareness with schools, colleges and across the children's workforce through workshops publicity.
- Wellbeing of staff, including our senior leaders, as well as that of pupils, has been a high priority this academic year.
- **Whole staff training** has been delivered in 10 settings with six further schools booked for the Spring Term.
- **Headteachers** have been supported by experienced ex heads through 5 wellbeing sessions, these have been attended by at least 17 different headteachers. Seven further sessions for headteachers have been booked throughout the remainder of the academic year and three session for senior leaders.

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- **School staff** have been offered 3 sessions on their own wellbeing with a further four scheduled. These have been attended "live" by staff from 18 different schools (in some cases as a whole school team) with a further 240 views of the recorded sessions.
- In addition, we have scheduled a series of six **action learning sessions** for 5 headteachers / heads of school in LA maintained who are new to post either this term or last and have offered to part fund coaching for any Portsmouth Headteacher.

3.8 Priority 8: ensure all pupils attend school

- **The Welcome Back to School campaign** was launched in the summer of 2020 to address some of the anxieties being experienced by families about the return to school. This campaign supported the hard work of schools and contributed to overall attendance during the Autumn term of over 90%.
- For pupils (and their families) who required additional support to get them back into school, **Welcome Back Plans** (short term plans of less than 6 weeks) were developed between schools and families. This enabled robust monitoring of progress via weekly reviews.
- **A team of LA Link Co-ordinators** have been deployed since the summer term, working with schools to identify and support those children who were most likely to struggle to return to school successfully in September. 3 permanent LA Link Co-ordinators have been recruited from November 2020 to continue with this work. Over 3,000 children are currently being monitored via a PRAG rating system, via weekly or fortnightly calls.
- **An escalation process** has been put in place to support schools to help parents meet their responsibilities to ensure children attend school or another education setting regularly.
- **Support and challenge** for schools to ensure effective leadership and management of school attendance is in place via termly monitoring of school attendance data by the Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG), and half termly monitoring of the attendance of vulnerable groups via the Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children group.
- The **#missschoolmissout media campaign** has been paused due to the current restrictions on school attendance and will be revisited next year.
- **The EHE protocol** has been implemented and there has only been a small increase in the numbers of newly registered Electively Home Educated children as a result of the pandemic (24).

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3.9 Priority 9: school buildings and places

- 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 were all completed as planned by September 2020.
- The building works at **Redwood Park Academy and Cliffdale Primary Academy** required for special school places that are needed for Sept 2020 were completed as planned by September 2020.
- The **SEND and AP Accommodation Review** (phase 2) and a strategy which sets out the vision and model for future special school and AP places in the city has been completed. We are awaiting capital bid approval from the council for the programme of works required.
- Working with the ESFA and Delta Education Trust, the programme for the **special free school for autism** is on target for Sept 2022 completion. The planning application was submitted in January 2021.
- A **new location for the Battenburg Family Contact Centre** has been identified and is currently subject to a feasibility study and appraisal of terms and conditions. It is hoped to have this in place February 2021. This development will free up space on the site of **Cliffdale Primary Academy** and work has commenced on a long term plan for Cliffdale accommodation which is subject to capital funding approval.
- The **rebuild of Mayfield School** is currently on course for completion by July 2021.

4. Cross cutting themes

4.1 The Education Strategy also incorporates three cross cutting themes: inclusion, black lives matter and early years. A brief summary of progress against each of these themes is set out below.

4.2 Inclusion

- **Improving educational outcomes for children on SEN Support** - An action plan has been developed, including:
 - monitoring engagement with remote learning,
 - enhancing the CPD offer for schools in collaboration with school improvement and the teaching school,
 - developing a tool for schools to identify SEND CPD needs building on the SEN Support project and the Profile of Needs (see delivery plan for further details).
- **Inclusion Outreach Service** - new, more flexible, model of service delivery is proving successful e.g. more interventions were delivered in the Autumn term than in the whole of the previous year.

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- **Mainstream Inclusion capital grants** - criteria have been developed to implement grants to support schools adapt their buildings to enable greater inclusion of pupils with SEND (subject to capital funding being agreed).
- **Alternative Provision review** - the review of (internal) AP provision in secondary schools was due to take place last year but had to be delayed due to the pandemic. This is now scheduled for the summer term 2021.
- **Portsmouth Inclusive Education Quality Mark (PIEQM)** - 12 schools have now completed this, although pressures on schools due to the pandemic has resulted in some loss of momentum. We are awaiting the availability of the electronic version (delayed due to pressures on the Comms team) which will make completion of this self-assessment by schools easier. Full completion will also enable schools to achieve the Schools of Sanctuary accreditation.
- **Clarity about the continuation of the Turnaround model of working** - at the last SEND Board it was reported that the evaluation of this work had been very positive but that the funding for the project had come to an end and that the 3 staff involved are now part of the Early Help and Prevention Service. Work is now starting to examine how this project could be continued and a report will be going to the Schools Forum later in the year setting out a proposed way forward.

4.3 **Black Lives Matter and Anti-Racism**

- The principles for this group have been agreed as:
 - Review the learning resources currently available to support the teaching of themes relating to BAME communities, their contributions and experiences, and the teaching of the histories of the UK and the world
 - Share the development, practice and learning of settings, schools and colleges in working toward a more inclusive (decolonised) curriculum
 - Promote longer-term, transformational institutional change
 - Develop professional learning for education leaders and staff to promote and support this work in settings, schools and colleges
 - Establish a supportive network for BAME staff working in education in Portsmouth
 - Provide regular updates on the work of the group and the impact it is having on individuals, education settings and overall outcomes in the city.
- Work is underway on the initial priorities of:
 - Establishing a network for BAME staff working in education settings. This is intended to be a safe and supportive forum led

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by the membership and linked with the PCC BAME staff group. Headteachers have been asked to make staff aware of this and an initial meeting will take place this term.

- Wider engagement across the city including via councillors to win hearts and minds

4.4 Early Years

- The **Early Years Recover and Reset Group**, with representatives from across the whole of the EY sector in Portsmouth, has continued to meet in order to facilitate discussion, gather views and shape future work.
- EYFS Managers in **school clusters** meet termly to discuss national and local issues and share best practice.
- **Early Adopters Cluster** - newly formed group created to support EYFS leads who are part of the EA programme, trialling the new statutory EYFS and EYFSP.
- Regular updates sent to all EY providers on best practice in home learning offers, linked in to national resources such as Hungry Little Minds and Tiny Happy People.
- **Parents as Partners virtual training** delivered in August 2020 to support practitioners to develop their own home learning environment offer.
- **Early language Plan on a Page sub group** established as part of the PEP Early Language and Literacy Development Group.
- Robust **infection control procedures** in place in early years settings and regular updates given to providers in bulletins. PEP Infection Control Group updates are also shared with providers.
- Early Years is open to all children and we have seen a **significant increase in Covid-19 positive cases** amongst staff and parents and to a lesser extent in children. This has caused many settings to close for a period of self-isolation or close bubbles within their settings.
- **Lateral flow testing** is now being made available to staff in early years settings through the council ahead of community testing which will be made available to all providers in the next few weeks
- Full day care settings which predominantly support working parents are reporting high attendance, but smaller pre-schools and nurseries have very few children attending during this third lockdown. Childminders remain steady and continue to support critical worker and vulnerable school children before and after school.
- The Early Years Service is tracking the number of **vulnerable children** attending each week which informs the weekly DfE data request. Providers also do this on an individual basis and have robust procedures in place if they have serious concerns.

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- **Emotional health and wellbeing** - there was an initial concern that children would struggle to settle back in to settings after long absences due to the first lockdown. Whilst there are some children who have struggled with the disruption over the past few months, the general feedback is that children are very happy to be with their providers and have settled back well after prolonged absences or school holidays.
- **Sufficiency** - over the past few months we have seen four settings close who were no longer able to be financially viable.
- The council were able to give **Covid Grants** to all providers in order to help their sufficiency during the pandemic. £2,700 for Nurseries and £500 for childminders. A further allocation is due to be made later this term subject to available funding with the Early Years Block of the DSG.
- There are concerns about the **loss of private income** during Covid related closures where staff and children have had to self-isolate. This may lead to bigger sufficiency problems over the next few months, and the council will continue to have a regular dialogue with all providers to see how they can be supported.

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Signed by Director of Children, Families and Education

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location