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<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Education Advisory Board
<b>Subject:</b>	Support and challenge for LA Maintained Schools
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
<b>Report by:</b>	Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement and Early Years
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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**1. Requested by Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director - Education**

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1 This report sets out how LA Maintained schools have been provided with support and challenge by the council's school improvement service in this academic year to date. This therefore covers the period that saw the full re-opening of schools in the Autumn term and the disruption that was caused during that term due to positive cases and pupils and staff having to self-isolate; and more recently the third national lockdown announced on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 which led to the closure of schools to pupils apart from children of critical workers and vulnerable learners.

**3. Summary of the support and challenge to LA maintained schools**

- 3.1 Support and challenge for LA Maintained schools has built upon the report of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020, which recommended the school improvement prioritisation and support for 2020-2021, delivered by the Head of School Improvement and Early Years.
- 3.2 A key focus of our work in this academic year has been the support and challenge that has been provided to the two LA Maintained schools which currently have less than Good Ofsted judgements for Overall Effectiveness and as a result have received frequent contact from the Head of School Improvement and Early Years. This has been in the form of regular emails, telephone calls, virtual meetings and in-school risk-assessed visits. These two schools have been prioritised for additional support from LA commissioned external consultants, National Leaders of Education, subject specialists (Solent Maths Hub, PCC Lead Moderator, Early Years Advisory teacher). Specifically:

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- a) Both schools have been included in the fully funded Destination Reader Key Stage 2 'Reading for Purpose and Pleasure' project, with two full days of training from Hackney Learning Trust. This was a result of a successful bid to Hastings Local Authority in an Opportunity Area twinning initiative.
  - b) Corpus Christi Catholic Primary and Milton Park Primary both received Ofsted monitoring visits during the Autumn 2020. The head teachers were provided with support in the form of questions and themes that had arisen from other schools' Ofsted experiences earlier in the term. Regular Ofsted updates have been disseminated to the two respective head teachers with opportunities for discussion on action points and evidence of improvement.
  - c) Subsequently, Corpus Christi Catholic Primary received an Ofsted monitoring visit on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021, conducted remotely by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The Head of School Improvement and Early Years supported the head teacher prior to the inspection through a scrutiny of the school's documentation and rehearsal of potential inspection discussions. The official report will be published in due course.
- 3.3 In September 2020 the local authority was successful in securing school to school support for two LA Maintained schools (Corpus Christi and Mayfield). This comprised five days of National Leader of Education (NLE) work for each school through a 'Recovering from Covid' DfE funded opportunity.
- 3.4 Prioritised LA Maintained schools have been able to access external support from educational consultants where they already have pre-established relationships, particularly where face to face work from the summer term 2020 had been cancelled. The Head of School Improvement and Early Years has commissioned this work as it provides support and challenge in areas of school improvement such as quality assuring teaching and learning, co-production and review of school strategic documents, support with monitoring and evaluation and curriculum development.
- 3.5 Other LA Maintained schools have had proportionate contact with the Head of School Improvement and Early Years to discuss current and future priorities, strategic plans, challenges and opportunities to agree support and development. This has included a number of face to face risk-assessed school visits during the autumn term, especially for two new head teachers in the city where they are implementing rapid change, despite the implications of Covid-19.
- 3.6 The local authority brokers additional support from local partners, for example, prioritised LA Maintained schools have had commissioned work undertaken by our local Lead Moderator and the Assistant Solent Maths Hub Lead for Primary. With specific subject specialist knowledge in English and maths respectively, both have undertaken work scrutiny of pupils' books, supported teachers and

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leaders to make accurately assessed judgements, then challenged to plan next steps in learning which will drive improved pupil progress.

- 3.7 During the autumn term 2020 LA maintained schools submitted strategic plans for school improvement and remote education. These have been reviewed and specific feedback given to our highest prioritised schools. Challenge has occurred through the need to be more specific about success criteria, how impact of actions will be measured and a stronger focus on outcomes. More recently, school plans which provide information for parents about remote education provision have been scrutinised with highly individualised advice and guidance for LA Maintained schools. Where DfE expectations have not been demonstrated in these school plans, leaders have been challenged to review, amend or reframe them.
- 3.8 Work in the summer identified a huge variance in the capability and resources around remote education in schools across the city. LA Maintained schools have been supported through the digital strategy work and the contract that the local authority has with the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, including access to a digital development officer. There has been significant continuing professional development for staff and school leaders in all phases as well as support for accessibility in the support to ensure that more children and young people have access to appropriate digital devices (refer to the update on Year 1 of the Portsmouth Education Strategy priority 2)
- 3.9 Following a successful bid to Hastings Local Authority (see 3.2a above), ten Key Stage 2 LA Maintained schools have been fully funded to participate in the Hackney Learning Trust Destination Reader programme. Schools were selected on the basis of expressed interest, previous Key Stage 2 attainment and progress results in 2019 and current Ofsted grading. Despite the third national lockdown school leaders, lead teachers and class teachers from each of the ten schools have attend two full days of remote training and have access to a wealth of very detailed resources. Feedback from the schools was highly positive and although the problem of implementation to pupils both in-school and at home is obvious, it is clear that schools are keen to get underway in this 'Reading for Purpose and Pleasure' project. Staff and pupil baseline questionnaires which are to be revisited will enable impact to be measured in the absence of national assessments this summer.
- 3.10 Half-termly briefings for LA Maintained schools have included a presentation on PiXL (Partners in Excellence), an organisation born out of the school improvement programme, London Challenge in 2004. It is a network of over 3,000 schools which focus on raising standards and self-esteem, improving life chances and broadening progression routes for all. Whilst there is an element of rigorous assessment, it also includes an extensive range of up to date resources, conferences and advisory support. The philosophy and approaches

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of PiXL align with the Portsmouth Education Strategy priority 1 and the work of the PEP School Leadership and Effectiveness Board.

- 3.11 Following the cancellation of the 2021 primary national curriculum assessments (key stage 1, key stage 2, year 1 phonics screening check and year 4 multiplication tables check), the moderation and assessment training and activities that had been planned have been re-purposed to ensure that schools are further supported in making accurate assessment judgements, particularly for year 2 and year 6 teachers. Trained moderators will use new assessment guidance to support schools and offer non-statutory moderation visits in June. This will be supplemented with crucial transition training for year 2 and year 3 teachers, and year 6 and year 7 teachers.
  
- 3.12 LA Maintained school head teachers new to post are supported through a local authority Induction Briefing and by being assigned a local peer colleague head teacher as a buddy/mentor. This is supporting those new to headship and more experienced school leaders who are new to their schools and the local authority. Those head teachers who are new to headship have also been supported through the set up of a small network group, with specific coaching sessions from an experienced coach to enable open and honest dialogue, peer support and a sharing of experiences as they develop through this academic year.
  
- 3.13 Undoubtedly, the Coronavirus global pandemic has presented all school leaders with enormous challenges. LA Maintained school leaders along with those in multi academy trusts have benefited from wellbeing sessions facilitated by the local authority, weekly communications and the swift response of officers to their needs and requests in these unprecedented times. It has been vital that we reinforce open lines of communication with LA Maintained schools to ensure that they are supported to deliver the very best education for our children and young people. Invitation and specific involvement in groups and boards of the Portsmouth Education Partnership during the pandemic has re-established the supportive and collective moral purpose of LA maintained schools in the diverse education landscape across the city.

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Signed by Director of Children, Families and Education

**Appendices:**

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**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:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>