

## THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Education Advisory Board
<b>Subject:</b>	Support and challenge for LA Maintained schools
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2021
<b>Report from:</b>	Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Education
<b>Report by:</b>	Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement & 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 since the previous report was presented to the Education Advisory Board in February 2021. This therefore covers the period that saw the full re-opening of schools from 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and the disruption that was caused during the summer term due to positive cases and pupils and staff having to self-isolate.

### 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 & Early Years and the update provided in February 2021.
- 3.2 A key focus of our work has continued to be the support and challenge provided to the two LA Maintained schools which have less than Good Ofsted judgements for Overall Effectiveness.
- a) On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 **Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School** joined the Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust and ceased to be LA Maintained. However, the LA support and challenge was recognised in the Ofsted remote monitoring inspection of 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021. "*The local authority has monitored recent improvements through visits to the school and frequent conversations with leaders. This has supported leaders in focusing on*

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*improving the school's curriculum and how it is delivered in the current circumstances."* Inspectors found that *"leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances"* which bodes well for the school's first Section 5 Ofsted inspection that it will receive as a legally designated new school.

- b) **Milton Park Primary School** received Ofsted monitoring visits during the Autumn 2020, Spring 2021 and Summer 2021. In June 2021 HMI reported that *"leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school."* The positive report letter also noted that *"the school has benefited from a range of well-targeted support from the local authority and some external consultants"* which testifies to the proportional support and challenge that has been given to the school and its leaders.
- 3.3 Building on the successful school to school support secured for two LA Maintained schools (Corpus Christi and Mayfield), a further opportunity has been proposed for Milton Park. This support comprises five days of National Leader of Education (NLE) work for each school through a 'Recovering from Covid' DfE funded opportunity, with timescales extended due to the pandemic.
- 3.4 Following a successful twinning bid to Hastings Opportunity Area, ten Key Stage 2 LA Maintained schools have been fully funded to participate in the Hackney Learning Trust **Destination Reader** programme. The **'Reading for Purpose and Pleasure'** project has proceeded despite challenges of the pandemic and early impact after two terms for both staff and pupils seems very positive (refer to Appendix 1). As a result, Hastings has invited us to apply for a second year of funding to extend the project. Given the priority to improve literacy standards in Portsmouth, this reading initiative is a key element within the PEP Education Strategy.
- 3.5 In our meeting with the then School Standards Minister Nick Gibb in May 2021, we were challenged to improve the achievements of Portsmouth children in the annual Year 1 **Phonics** Screening Check. Both the Primary National Curriculum and the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework highlight the importance of phonics in developing children's early reading skills. Follow up actions to the meeting have included liaison with our local English Hub, who then put on a webinar specifically for Portsmouth schools. Training, guidance, resources and funding can all be accessed from Springhill English Hub in Southampton and LA Maintained schools who have not previously pursued this support have now been specifically targeted to ensure they maximise their eligibility and entitlement.
- 3.6 A sub-group of the PEP Early language and Literacy Development Group has also been established to promote both the robust teaching of phonics and

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progression in phonics through Year 2 and into Key Stage 2 as this has an effect on skills in reading, writing and spelling. Schools across the PEP, including those that are LA Maintained have been clearly informed about Systematic Synthetic Phonics programmes (SSPs) and the implications if schools choose not to adopt a DfE validated SSP.

- 3.7 The DfE has made it clear that as in 2020 data will not be published at an individual institution level and that any 2021 results are not to be used for any sort of accountability. Whilst all end of KS1 and KS2 assessments were cancelled again in 2021, and the **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile** assessment not mandatory, we have continued to offer **optional moderation sessions organised by our Lead Moderator and the Early Years team** as appropriate, with LA Maintained schools prioritised. This is vital in ensuring teachers make accurate judgements and assessments accurately reflect children's achievements, then are challenged to plan next steps in learning which will drive improved pupil progress.
- 3.8 LA Maintained schools have had proportionate contact with the Head of School Improvement & Early Years to discuss current and future priorities, strategic plans, challenges and opportunities to agree support and development. Support for LA Maintained schools' head teacher and deputy head teacher recruitment has continued to ensure that robust processes are in place to secure the best possible appointments.

New head teachers to headship in LA Maintained schools have been further supported by a **specific coaching group** led by an external consultant and additional contact with the Head of School Improvement & Early Years. This has been particularly important where they are responding to the challenges of Covid-19 alongside the other demands of their school leadership. Feedback at the end of the school year in July 2021 anecdotally illustrates the value of this, such as "*Thank you so much. I couldn't have done it without your ongoing support and guidance. Truly appreciate it.*"

- 3.9 The local authority **brokers additional support from local and regional 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. We have a working relationship with the new HISP (Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth) **Teaching School Hub** and have suggested that our LA Maintained schools use the services of this body to support new Early Career Teachers (ECTs) with their entitlement to the training and development of the new Early Career Framework for teachers within the first two years of their career along with the Appropriate Body designation to assess and verify that ECTs are meeting the Teachers' Standards.

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- 3.10 During the academic year 2020 - 2021 the LA Maintained schools **peer review** process entitled 'Reflective Improvement' has been co-produced. Experienced school leaders have offered to be lead reviewers and all LA Maintained schools except the two converting to academy status in November 2021 have signed up to the process. The scheduling has been planned with school and senior leaders visiting other schools over the year to help reflection and provide an objective view by trusted colleagues to develop school improvement. This aligns to the Portsmouth Education Partnership peer review process.
- 3.11 With a focus on the most vulnerable, the local authority has supported the work of the Literacy Trust local project **Pompey Pirates** and the learning and motivation that disadvantaged children have been supported with by attending this initiative. Whilst it is not solely focused on LA Maintained schools and their pupils, it is undoubtedly a positive resource that is having an impact that will support our drive to improve literacy standards across the city overall moving forwards (refer to Appendix 2). A second hub will be opening in January 2022 in the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard where space has been secured in the National Museum of the Royal Navy.
- 3.12 Half-termly briefings for LA Maintained schools have included training on the peer review process as well as a presentation on Ofsted updates. Having attended the regional Ofsted conference for inspectors, it is a great opportunity to cascade information and enable our schools to prepare for forthcoming inspections. LA Maintained schools are also being offered bespoke **Ofsted training modules** and this has included 'Understanding the Education Inspection Framework' and 'understanding the Ofsted Early Reading Deep Dive'. An understanding of the process will enable our schools to feel more in control when they are inspected and that the process is 'done with' rather than 'done to'.
- 3.13 Undoubtedly, the Coronavirus global pandemic has presented all school leaders with enormous and ongoing 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 continue open lines of communication with LA Maintained schools, that our focus on both high support and high challenge is not forgotten, in order to ensure that they are supported to deliver the very best education for our children and young people.

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Signed by Director of Children, Families and Education

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**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:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Hastings Opportunity Area Final report (July 2021)	
Pompey Pirates Term 3 Impact Report 2021	