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

Title of meeting:	Education Advisory Board
Subject:	Support and Challenge for LA Maintained Schools
Date of meeting:	18 th February 2022
Report by:	Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement and Early Years
Wards affected:	All

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 to the Education Advisory Board in October 2021. This therefore covers the period that has seen continued challenges and disruption due to the significant absences of both staff and pupils because of Covid cases and self-isolation.

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

- 3.1 Support and challenge for LA Maintained schools has built upon previous reports delivered by the Head of School Improvement and Early Years since appointment in September 2020. The service has provided support and challenge in an unprecedented period of our schools operating throughout a global pandemic.
- 3.2 A key focus of our work has continued to be the **support and challenge delivered through training and development**.
- a) **Ofsted** - 6 of our LA Maintained schools were last inspected in 2017 hence are past the four-year period that schools judged 'Good' at their previous inspection would normally be re-inspected within. This period has been extended by up to six terms due to the pandemic. Given that the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) was introduced from September 2019 superseding the Common Inspection Framework, school leaders need to understand this most recent inspection framework and what to expect during an Ofsted inspection, be it a Section 5 or Section 8.

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On Friday 7th January 2022 a training session on Ofsted preparation was held, organised by the Southsea Cluster of schools but with an invite to all LA Maintained schools. 14 of our 18 LA Maintained schools attended this training represented by their headteachers and deputies, with all 6 schools last inspected during 2017 present. The training led by the Head of School Improvement and Early Years covered:

- **Understanding the Education Inspection Framework**
- **Understanding Electronic Evidence Gathering**
- **The Top-Level View Conversation** (between headteacher and lead inspector)

Additionally, individual schools have requested training sessions for their senior leaders and/or staff on any of the above topics or **Understanding the Ofsted Early Reading Deep Dive** which is a crucial element of any Ofsted inspection of a primary school. One session has also been delivered to a Local Governing Board of a LA Maintained school. Over 90% of attendees at the sessions have given the highest satisfaction grading for the content, presentation and resources (notes/handouts).

- b) In order to ensure that teachers make accurate judgements about the standards and assessments accurately reflect children's achievements **moderation and assessment** are vital. In addition to leading training for school leaders, training for teachers new to Year 2 and Year 6, and for moderators who will be going out to schools to conduct moderation visits, our lead moderator is working with a small cluster of LA Maintained schools in the north of the city. These schools are somewhat isolated, with their most local neighbours being part of Multi Academy Trusts. Our lead moderator has initially set up this working group then supported them to look at pupils' work making standardised judgements then challenging them to plan next steps in learning which will drive improved pupil progress. This is not a one-off but part of an on-going process leading up to Key Stage 1 and 2 SATs in the summer term.
- 3.3 Building on the successful school to school networks that have always existed across the city, our co-produced **LA Maintained schools' peer review process 'Reflective Improvement'** is now being implemented. Copnor Primary School hosted the first peer review in November 2021 and Bramble Infant and Nursery the second in January 2022. Both headteachers have provided very positive verbal feedback in the opportunity to have trusted peer colleagues conducting an objective review of their schools with senior school leaders themselves involved. Unfortunately, the peer review at Mayfield had to be rescheduled due to the school's Ofsted inspection and those at St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary and Portsdown Primary due to staff absence from

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Covid. The next two at Fernhurst Junior and Devonshire Infant are proceeding as planned.

- 3.4 **Reading** in Key Stage 2 continues to be progressed through the Hackney Learning Trust **Destination Reader** programme. The 'Reading for Purpose and Pleasure' project has been extended to another eight Key Stage 2 schools and two secondary Year 7 cohorts. The support group network led by Sarah Hilditch, PCC School Improvement Adviser, enables teachers to share practice and resources. This has also been supported by the Schools' Library Service who have purchased multiple copies of high-quality texts for schools to borrow, thus easing the financial strain.
- 3.5 Building on the amazing Michael Morpurgo 'Boy Giant' webinar and reading opportunity for Yr 6s across the city last year, the Library Service are looking to hold another **Big Read** event. They have secured Ross Welford's 'When we Got Lost in Dreamland' and will again be able to purchase multiple copies at a much reduced rate so Yr 6 children receive their own copy of the book. The PEP Early Language and Literacy Development Group plus local teachers are working on planning activities and learning resources for schools to use with this text and to support transition from Yr 6 to Yr 7.
- 3.6 To support our younger children with reading decoding skills which are assessed at the **Year 1 Phonics Screening Check** the PEP Early Language and Literacy Development Group have recently devised an information overview whereby LA Maintained schools in particular can access strengths and weakness of various validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics programmes (SSPs) to support them before deciding which to purchase and adopt. Where many academy trusts dictate which phonics programme their schools should use, LA Maintained schools have the freedom to make this decision but find that the time and energy involved for staff to undertake this research burdensome. This tool should provide a quick first-stop shop for schools to access and share precious information.
- 3.7 With a focus on the most vulnerable, the **Literacy Trust local project Pompey Pirates** has expanded to a second location within the Historic Dockyard. Working together with the founder and CEO, Becca Dean MBE, we have been able to identify which schools are ideally placed to engage with this initiative ensuring that LA Maintained schools have access to a very positive resource that is having an impact to improve literacy standards.
- 3.8 The Autumn term 2021 saw the introduction of a **termly Education Senior Leadership Team member face to face visit** to each LA Maintained school. The purpose of these visits is to strengthen the relationship with, and knowledge we have, of the schools that we are particularly responsible for. Without a fixed agenda as such, school leaders were able to talk freely, share

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concerns and successes, whilst leaving officers with follow-up actions related to either Inclusion, Sufficiency and Resources or School Improvement and Early Years. Headteachers have welcomed these visits and noted that this close relationship with local authority officers is even more important for support and challenge since the educational landscape has changed to include now 14 Multi Academy Trusts across the city.

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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