

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 June 2023

Title: Update: Quality of Schools' Recovery Post Covid-19	
Report of the Commissioning Director Education	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: No
Report Author: Jill Baker - Interim Head of School Performance and Partnerships	Contact Details: E-mail: jill.baker@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Director: Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director Education	
Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Elaine Allegretti, Strategic Director, Children's and Adults	
Summary <p>During the Covid-19 pandemic, schools closed with pupils learning online. Even on their return to school, schools opened and closed, sometimes partially, creating more disruption in the education of our children and young people. Disadvantaged children and young people were particularly affected by the pandemic. The challenges post-pandemic to support our pupils were unknown territory for schools. The gaps in curriculum learning were relatively easy to identify and rectify; however, the impact on the wellbeing of our pupils and staff, mental health in particular, is ongoing. Schools are still in recovery mode and will probably be so for many years to come.</p>	
Recommendation(s) <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Note the challenges schools face and their successes; and(ii) Use their role to ensure schools can continue to support our children and young people in recovering from impacts of the pandemic.	
Reason(s) <p>The lives of a whole generation of children and young people were disrupted by the pandemic. It is critical that all support schools in their efforts to rebuild the confidence and wellbeing of our children and young people. This work supports the Council's aim of no one left behind. It supports the corporate priorities of supporting residents to live healthier, happier, independent lives and to prosper from good education, skills development and secure employment.</p>	

1. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Kofi Adu, Group Finance Manager

- 1.1 During Covid-19, schools were financially supported by the Local Authority and Central Government to ensure continuity of teaching and learning, especially for the most vulnerable pupils.
- 1.2 Schools continued to receive their core funding allocations. This happened regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure and this ensured schools were able to pay staff and meet other regular financial commitments.
- 1.3 The Local Authority also continued to pay top-up and other high needs funding to schools. This ensured that the employment and payment of staff supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) continued.
- 1.4 In addition to passporting core funding to schools during Covid-19, the following additional financial support was provided to schools:
 - COVID-19 catch up premium and Digital Education Platforms;
 - Tutoring fund for disadvantaged pupils;
 - Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for staff who were furloughed by the school; and
 - Funding for exceptional costs incurred by schools relating to premises costs, cleaning costs and Free School Meals.

2. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Nicola Monerville, Principal Solicitor, Safeguarding

- 2.1 The Corona Virus Act 2020 expired two years after it was passed (on 25 March 2022).
- 2.2 Schools must have regard to the:
 - Education Act 1996, S.19 which places a duty of local authorities to provide education to children of school age.
 - S.175 of The Education Act 2002 sets out the safeguarding duty of state schools.
 - The Equality Act 2010: Providing protection from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability, sex, race and sexual orientation.
 - The Children and Families Act 2014: This legislation introduced Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to help get education, health care and social care services working together more effectively to meet young people's needs.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- The Prince's Trust Class of Covid: Report 2022
https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/Document_TheClassofCovid_Report.pdf

List of appendices:

- Appendix 1: 'Update: Quality of schools' recovery post Covid-19 – a mixed picture' Presentation