

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 July 2024

Title: Update on Quality of schools' recovery post Covid 19	
Report of the Commissioning Director Education	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: No
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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 was 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. This is the third report to OSC on this topic.</p> <p>A presentation (Appendix 1) will be given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</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 prospering from good education, skills development and secure employment.</p>	

1. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Kofi Adu (Group Finance Manager)

- 1.1 During Covid, 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, the following additional financial support was provided to schools:
 - COVID 19 catch up premium and Digital Education Platforms;
 - Recovery premium grant;
 - Tutoring fund for disadvantaged pupils;
 - (CJRS) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for staff who were furloughed by the school;
 - Funding for exceptional costs incurred by schools relating to premises cost, cleaning costs and Free school Meals; and
 - The Local Authority has also been supporting schools financially with a rolling exceptional one-off payments of not less than £1.6m per annum for the past 3 years to enable schools to manage the increasing cost of dealing with complex cases of pupils with Special Education Needs since Covid.

2. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Nicola Monerville, Principal Solicitor

- 2.1 This report asks the Committee to note the challenges schools face and their successes and to also use their role to ensure schools can continue to support our children and young people in recovering from impacts of the pandemic.
- 2.2 There are several pieces of legislation which promote Local Authority responsibilities in education including, but not limited to s. 19 of the Education Act 1996 which places a duty on Local Authorities to provide education to children of school age.
- 2.3 S.175 of The Education Act 2002 Act sets out the safeguarding duty of state schools.
- 2.4 The Equality Act 2010 – Providing protection from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, such as disability, sex, race and sexual orientation.

2.5 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

Joseph Rowntree report:

[The impact of hardship on primary schools and primary and community healthcare | Joseph Rowntree Foundation \(jrf.org.uk\)](#)

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Presentation on Update on Quality of schools’ recovery post Covid 19