



# Portsmouth Education Partnership Education Strategy 2020 - 2023

Year 2: 2021 - 2022

Final Draft V10

## 1. Introduction

This document sets out Year 2 of a three year PEP Education Strategy for Portsmouth 2020-23.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for all education settings. Contributing to the management of the pandemic and managing its impact on children has absorbed much of the energy of education settings over the last year and a half and will continue to do so in 2021/22, but we hope with far less impact. This is not a reason to hold back from the development of a clear collective strategy for education in the city, however. More than ever, the city needs strong education leadership with clear individual school/settings and city wide priorities, around which all education leaders focus their efforts. We must do all we can to ensure that the education of children in Portsmouth is not a casualty of the difficult demands of this time.

While the strategy sets the direction until 2023, it outlines specific actions to be taken in Year 2 of the strategy, 2021 - 2022, so that there is complete clarity on our focus during this period.

The delivery of the strategy will be done under the auspices of the Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP) recognising the part that all partners of the PEP will play in delivering the ten priorities that are set out in the strategy, and will be overseen by the PEP Strategic Board.

The PEP structures that were established four years ago have been augmented by a number of other groups that were established to address the challenges created by the pandemic. These structures are set out on page 5.

## 2. The vision

Our vision is that through working together we can ensure that:

*All children and young people make good progress through education which sets high expectations for them, is infused with restorative high support and high challenge and which is supported through leading edge use of digital technology, empowering them to drive their own learning anywhere.*

## 3. Shared values and accountability

The shared values and accountability that were agreed four years ago will remain in place. All members of the Portsmouth Education Partnership are committed to:

- Shared accountability for improving standards and the educational outcomes and life chances of all children and young people
- Promoting a culture of openness, trust and collaboration
- Putting the interests of children and young people first at all times
- Ensuring no child should fail to reach their educational potential because of disadvantage or vulnerability
- Ensuring no education settings are left isolated

- Ensuring all our joint actions add value, are evidence based and as far as possible are preventative rather than a response to a crisis.

#### 4. Priorities

The 10 priorities that form part of the PEP Education Strategy 2020-23 are set out below with details of the Boards / Groups that will be responsible for their delivery. This strategy document provides a high level summary of the plans that support each priority with cross references and links to other documents and action plans.

Whilst all 10 priorities remain important and will be implemented in 2021/22, the PEP Strategic Board has agreed to make a commitment to focus on four key areas in Year 2 which were felt to be the most critical and where most impact would be felt. These will be regularly reviewed at Board meetings. The four priorities are:

- a) **Digital learning strategy** (priority 2)- the links to the highlight report and the digital strategy which were recently presented at the PEP Strategic Board are given below. This sets out the next phase of our ambition to become a digital learning city and to build on the progress that has been made during the pandemic in terms of the application of digital technology to improve learning both in school and at home.

[Digital Learning - highlight report](#)  
[Portsmouth as a Digital City](#)

- b) **Peer review (priority 1)** - following a survey to all schools and academies earlier in the year, the PEP School Leadership and Effectiveness Board have been working on the development of a framework for peer review that all schools can sign up to regardless of designation, whether part of a Multi Academy Trust or LA Maintained. The framework sets out a minimum set of expectations and a 3 stage review process. The link to the highlight report which was recently presented to the PEP Strategic Board is given below.

[Peer Review](#)

- c) **Improving literacy outcomes (priority 3)** - led by the PEP Early Language and Literacy Development Group, the objective is to work collectively to look at how as a city we can improve literacy outcomes for all children and young people regardless of age or phase of learning. A link to the most recent highlight report presented to the PEP Strategic Board is given below. There are 3 workstreams. :

- Relaunch of the Portsmouth Early Language Plan on a Page document, now renamed as the Portsmouth Commitment to Early Language
- developing reading in Portsmouth, including a focus on the importance of the robust teaching of phonics and early reading skills
- improving literacy at transition points for every phase of education

[Early Language and Literacy - highlight report](#)

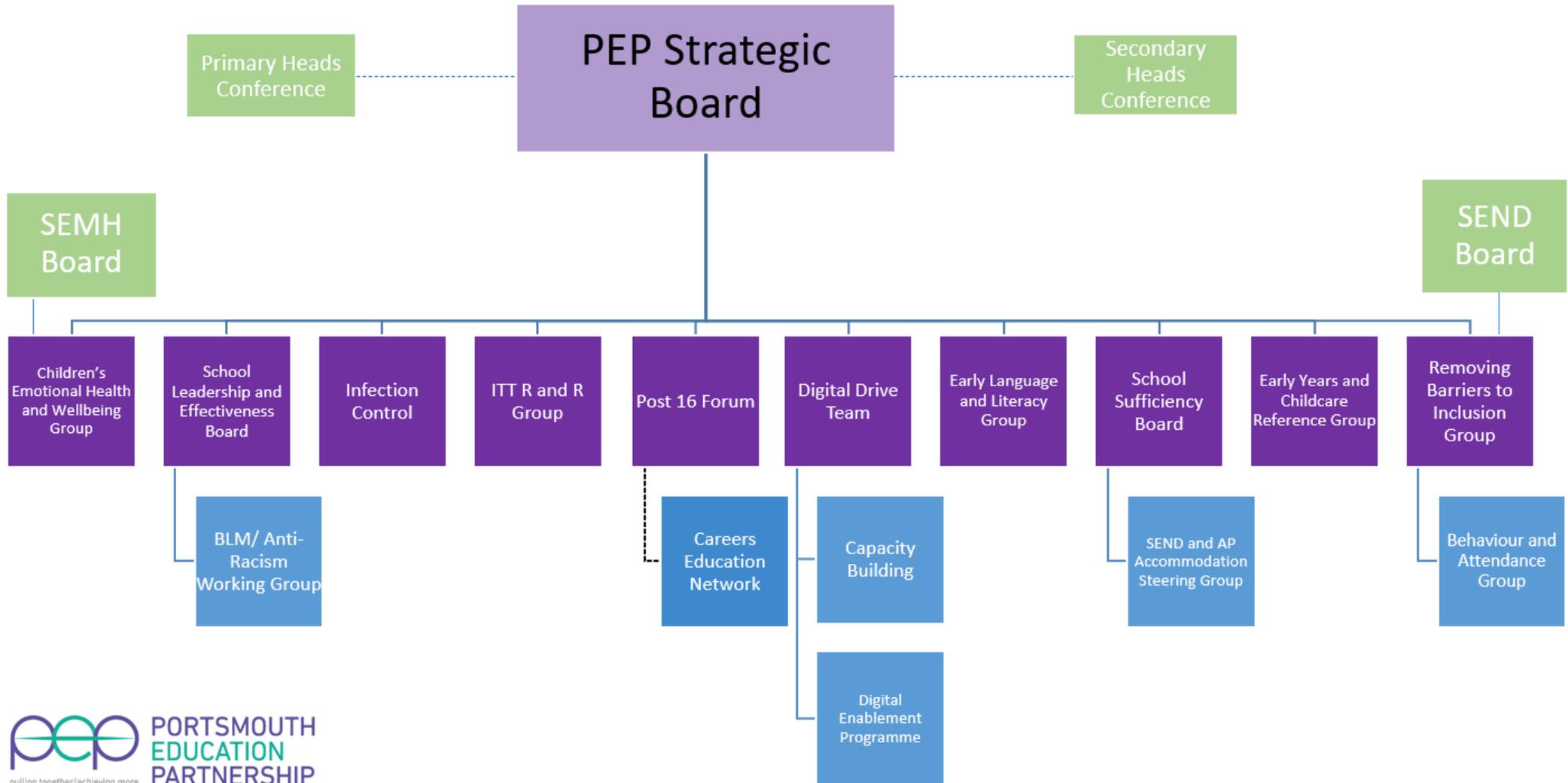
- d) **Improving school attendance and reducing fixed term exclusions (priority 8)** - a link is provided below to a paper that was presented to the PEP Strategic Board and which considers the case for a renewed collective PEP focus on reducing time lost from school through non-attendance, exclusion or reduced/part-time timetables against the background of learning loss through the pandemic, holding ourselves

and each other to account in a restorative and relational *high support: high challenge* way.

[Education Recovery: Attendance and Exclusions](#)

| No  | Priority  | Governance   |
|-----|---|--|
| 1.  | Strong leadership and ambition at all levels within individual schools and education settings to improve effectiveness and outcomes for children and young people                                       | School Leadership and Effectiveness Board              |
| 2.  | Implement a digital learning strategy for the city that supports learning both at school and at home  | Digital Drive Team and sub groups                      |
| 3.  | Improve pupil outcomes in literacy (reading, writing and oral) with a high priority focus on early language development   | Early Language and Literacy Development Group          |
| 4.  | Recruit, retain and grow the best teachers, practitioners and leaders and provide high quality continuing professional development  | ITT, Teacher Recruitment and Retention Group           |
| 5.  | Ensure all schools and education settings have access to clear and up to date infection control and health & safety information and are able to respond appropriately to local Covid-19 outbreaks       | Infection Control and Health & Safety Group            |
| 6.  | Ensure all schools and education settings have robust safeguarding policies, processes and culture in place   | Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership         |
| 7.  | Promote emotional health, wellbeing and resilience in education   | Children's Emotional Health & Wellbeing Group          |
| 8.  | Ensure all pupils regularly attend school   | Inclusion Group / Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG) |
| 9.  | Invest in school buildings to create additional school places, focusing on secondary, even more inclusive mainstream schools and a continuum of specialist provision for children with additional needs | School Sufficiency Board                               |
| 10. | Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) through NEET prevention and re-engagement activities  | Post-16 Forum  |

# PEP Structure September 2021



## 5. Inclusion

A central theme of the previous PEP education strategy was inclusion and this will continue to be the case for the 2020-23 strategy - *creating an educational environment that is welcoming to all children and young people and not giving up on any child whatever their circumstances.*

Inclusion is about ensuring that: there is in place comprehensive Ordinarily Available Provision that meets the educational needs of the majority of children: that any additional needs are identified early and support is put in place, as part of a graduated response, to avoid exclusion and enable children to make progress with their learning; and that children are able to attend their local mainstream school wherever possible

The strategy has strong links with the SEND and SEMH Strategies and these are set out in the relevant priorities, focusing on improving inclusion for all children but with a particular focus on the provision of education for children with SEND / additional needs and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people including children in need, looked after children, children at risk of or already being exploited and/or experiencing the criminal justice system, children receiving targeted early help and other children identified by schools as requiring additional support.

Underpinning the objective of inclusion has been the work around the **Portsmouth Inclusive Education Quality Mark (PIEQM)** through self- assessment and peer moderation in order to identify strengths and areas for development in relation to inclusive practice. Linked to this will be the continued offer of support through the **Inclusion Outreach Service** which has been in operation since 2019 and will be continuing to offer support for schools if they have any concerns about meeting children's additional needs. The outreach support is available to all mainstream schools, delivered by a range of professionals from a partnership of services including Multi-agency Behaviour Service (MABS), Solent Academies Trust, Children's Therapy Service, and experienced Outreach SENCOs from mainstream schools in the city.

The priority in this strategy to improve literacy, with a focus on early language skills, is particularly critical to improving outcomes for many vulnerable groups of children and young people. We know that research has shown the clear links between the ability of children and young people to read well and to express themselves in writing and, especially, orally, to the quality of the relationships they are able to make with adults and peers, their success in education and their long term life chances.

The strategy will also have running through it a commitment to engage with schools, other education settings and partners to develop and share anti-racism training and resources in response to Black Lives Matter. A dedicated page for these resources has been developed on the PEP website and can be found [here](#).

## 6. Early years

Critical to the PEP Education Strategy is a clear understanding of the importance of early years provision and practice upon which future stages of education are built. Well established research continues to emphasise the importance of early childhood education as an essential building block of a child's future success.

Central to early years success has to be the partnerships between families, education, health and other community sectors. A current priority (originating from the 2019 peer review in Portsmouth) is to ensure sector wide responsibility, commitment and understanding of the strategic approach to support early language development and its impact on the outcomes for children and young people. In order to address the issue, this strategy will have a commitment to consider the early years element within each priority, as it is early years that provides a strong base for lifelong learning and learning abilities, including cognitive and social and emotional development.

## **7. Key performance indicators**

A range of key performance indicators will be used to judge the impact of the strategy and each of the nine priorities. They include:

- Ofsted inspections of early years settings, schools and post-16 providers
- Attainment and progress data at all key stages
- School attendance, exclusions, reduced timetables and elective home education
- Post-16 participation and destinations
- Teacher / practitioner vacancies
- ITT trainees and % finding permanent placements in Portsmouth's schools and other education settings

## Priority 1: strong leadership and ambition at all levels within schools and education settings to improve effectiveness and outcomes for children and young people



### Background

The leadership of schools and education settings, both at the most senior level but also at all levels, is critical to effectiveness.

Over the last seven years there has been a significant improvement in the Ofsted inspection grades for schools and academies in the city, improving at a faster rate than nationally. The quality of early years settings in the city as judged by Ofsted is also encouraging. 92% of inspected schools and 98.5% of early years settings in Portsmouth are currently judged by Ofsted to be Good or better.

At the same time while school leaders, teachers and practitioners in the city work hard and many go the extra mile for children, as Ofsted inspections testify, the city has seen its position in rankings for local authority areas decline across a number of key indicators, to the point where many are significantly out of line with those of comparable areas. This undoubtedly affects the life chances of children in the city.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the cancellation of all end of year assessments and exams there is no published data available in 2020 or 2021 to determine if the position has improved or worsened. However, whilst the education strategy for 2020-23 and the actions set out for last year and this year, have a somewhat different focus in response to Covid-19, the focus on standards, and in particular attainment and progress measures, should continue given recent trends and the inevitable fact that disadvantaged children will have lost ground to those who are not disadvantaged and this will be most felt in areas like Portsmouth where there are higher levels of deprivation.

Our strategy over the last 4 years to try and improve standards and accelerate progress has been based on a combination of:

- **Support for leadership development** at all levels which to date has focused on: aspiring leadership programmes for groups of teachers preparing for their first leadership role; middle and senior leaders ready for whole school responsibility; development of potential senior leaders who have the talent and commitment to become headteachers within 2-3 years; and programmes for aspiring or existing Executive Headteachers and CEOs of Multi Academy Trusts.
- A **collaborative school improvement approach** through the Portsmouth Education Partnership, led by the more recently established PEP School Effectiveness and Leadership Board, in order to generate more locally co-ordinated support for schools and encourage the sharing of resources and best practice, with a particular focus on peer review.
- **Academisation** whereby the majority of schools in the city become part of strong and effective Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) which can act as strong engines for school

improvement, bringing in support and challenge from outside the city as well as from within. Two thirds of schools are now part of a MAT.

The last set of results in 2019 made it clear that the strategy has not yet succeeded despite the best efforts of our strategic leaders. The improvements made in terms of Ofsted judgements have been welcomed and it is hoped that this will translate into improved outcomes but clearly more needs to be done. The lack of government funding available for school improvement support has not helped, with the exception of short term SSIF and NLE support for schools requiring improvement and those judged inadequate.

Research suggests that school-led improvement is the most sustainable way to make genuine and bespoke changes in schools. David Hopkins describes this as the 'third age of school improvement'. The PEP peer review process aims to create a community of colleagues and partners who share a common focus linked to school improvement and improving education throughout the city. This is not about a rubber-stamping that school intentions and actions are in operation, as that merely reinforces the status quo, but rather much more sharply focused on improvement. It is the action of continuous incremental improvement that, over time, leads to cumulative and exponential effects.

Addressing our specific local agenda foci is vital. The PEP peer review process allows us to build upon the strategies and elements of our work that seek to embed both inclusive practice and the improvement of attainment and opportunities for all children and young people across the city. Through the PEP peer review process we have the opportunity to look at the evidence and impact of initiatives, such as the PIE QM, restorative practice, curriculum development, use of digital learning (Priority 2 within this strategy), reading and language development programmes, with impartiality but common purpose. Clear and agreed principles, minimum expectations and ways of working have been developed collaboratively to support the complete sign up by all schools across the PEP.

To drive the effectiveness at individual school level which contributes to the collective education standards for Portsmouth, the PEP peer review process recognises that we must also develop outward-facing opportunities e.g. utilising staff and expertise from schools and MATs from both within and beyond the city, scrutinising school improvement plans for actions that are based on evidence-informed research and exploring strategies to achieve ambitious targets that are benchmarked against attainment and progress by schools elsewhere in the country that have similar pupil profiles, such as the comparison tools of the Fisher Family Trust or the Education Endowment Foundation.

The PEP School Leadership and Effectiveness Board will have oversight of the peer review process and outcomes in the form of feedback from the enquiry based 'To what extent ...' themes that review teams explore with recipient schools. This high-level review will enable opportunities for initiating new learning or different CPD, a better understanding of how school leadership can be supported, the wider development of good practice and impactful networks, and where resources and support can be best targeted.

The system leadership reforms announced by the Government earlier this year offer another opportunity in terms of what a **Teaching School Hub** can do for the city and future investment by the Government in **National Leaders of Education (NLEs) and National Leaders of Governance (NLGs)**. A key partner for Portsmouth is the HISP Teaching

School Hub who will be working with the local Salterns MAT to deliver National Professional Qualifications for our established and emerging school leaders.

### **Key actions for 2021/22**

1. Continue the work of the **PEP School Leadership and Effectiveness Board** initiated in the first year of the Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020 - 2023, strengthening partnerships and ensuring a clear focus on outcomes as we emerge to the recovery from the pandemic.
2. Organise the training for, and implementation of the newly established PEP **peer review process** to impact upon ambitious target levels of attainment and progress.
3. Oversee and shape a **coordinated leadership support programme** to help individual school leaders at all levels to achieve their targets, building on current and the new leadership programmes available.
4. Strengthen the support and development for **leaders and managers in early years settings** so that high quality provision provides a firm foundation for good outcomes and secure progress through future stages of education.
5. Continue to organise and assist **subject networks** in the city in order to provide more support for middle leaders to develop subject knowledge, high quality curriculum planning and a clear understanding of the importance of sequencing learning in order to improve the quality of education.
6. **Support the progress of disadvantaged pupils**, with opportunities from the Education Endowment Foundation to focus on priority schools funded through the HISP Research School.
7. Develop a programme of support for early years settings and schools in terms of **communication and literacy** (refer to Priority 3).
8. Continue to focus on **improving outcomes for pupils in mainstream schools with SEND** and support the development of the middle leadership of SENCOs, building on the work of the previous SSIF programme and the PIE QM.
9. Ensure the effective delivery of **moderation at KS1 and KS2** including monitoring the **Year 1 Phonics Screening Check** and the **Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check (MTC)**.

## Priority 2: implement a digital learning strategy for the city that supports learning both at school and at home



### Background

Home Learning UK's report [Protecting Learning](#) reflects on the experiences of educators, parents and pupils during Covid-19. It credits leaders' determination and passion to protect learning despite not all schools having the digital infrastructure, devices, experience and confidence to shift at speed to remote learning supported by technology, and considers where different schools are on the continuum of adoption.

Covid-19 has brought the potential of digital technology to effectively deliver remote learning to fore, but exploiting its use is not new and discussions were underway early this year before the pandemic about how a city wide approach could be developed which supported learning both in school and at home and which could ultimately drive improved outcomes in terms of attainment and progress.

The DfE published [Realising the potential of technology in education](#) in April 2019, setting out the strategy to 'support the education sector in England to develop and embed technology in a way that cuts workload, fosters efficiencies, supports inclusion and ultimately drives improvements in educational outcomes'. In December 2019 the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) published [Using digital technology to improve learning](#). This guidance report put forward that the question is no longer *whether* technology should have a place in the classroom, but *how* technology can most effectively be integrated in ways which achieve improved outcomes for young people'. Its key message was that to improve learning, technology must be used in a way that informed by effective pedagogy.

In response to the pandemic and the closure of schools and as part of the arrangements that were put in place through the Portsmouth Education Partnership, a *curriculum, digital and home learning work stream* was established. An early piece of work was to establish some principles for protecting learning for all pupils and what schools would do to support this and advice for parents to support their child's learning whilst not at school [HERE](#).

Towards the end of June 2020 a comprehensive baseline survey was undertaken to establish what schools were offering in the way of home learning, what was going well and where the problems or barriers might be and to understand schools' experience of using digital technology to support home learning. The summary report can be found [HERE](#). A key finding from the survey was variability and the different stages schools were at with home learning and the application of digital technology to support both home learning and learning in school. Other key findings included: *access to devices and internet* was variable affecting disadvantage pupils the most; the *CPD offer* to support digital learning was still in its infancy; *assessment and feedback* was variable; *parental involvement and engagement* increased significantly; a wide range of *software or websites* were being used to support home learning but the *monitoring and quality assurance* of home learning was mixed; almost all schools had run sessions on *online safety*.

There appeared to be two natural groups of schools emerging in the short to medium term: those who are well on their way with digital learning and could be used as a digital pioneer or strategy group to drive the agenda forward; and those interested but still at an early point and needing support and who could benefit from the Ed Tech Programme.

### **Key actions for 2021/22:**

1. Create a **Digital Drive Team** which brings together the sectors of business, education and the community to shape the digital strategy and provide a link between local employment and education that addresses the digital skills gap and seeks to 'future proof' opportunities for children pioneering the way towards Portsmouth being known as a leading EdTech city.
2. **Develop, in consultation with schools, MATs, and other partners a three year digital learning strategy for Portsmouth** with clear expectations about the way in which secondary, primary, infant, junior and special schools, colleges and early years settings will increase their use of technology to enhance learning over the three years.
3. **Support schools and other education settings to effectively exploit the potential of digital learning both in school and at home.** This will include a high quality CPD offer (incorporating safeguarding and a focus on assessment and feedback) technical support and a series of events and workshops to promote digital learning and showcase local good practice and membership of the Ed Tech Programme.
4. **Ensure all schools retain appropriate contingency arrangements for remote education** which meet the expectations set out in the DFE guidance in the event of a local outbreak in a school or a local lockdown in a community.
5. **Continue to work with schools to reduce the number of children with no access to either appropriate devices or to the internet.** This will include support for schools working to provide all children with a device using parental contributions; or a leasing/purchase option; and working with Shaping Portsmouth and other partners to secure additional new and used devices for use by disadvantaged families at home
6. **Upskill parents and pupils** in order to support home learning and a blended offer of digital and non-digital and support schools and other education settings to build and develop better relationships with parents about their child's learning.
7. Develop and establish **support networks for IT support / IT curriculum managers & subject managers in schools** across the city which encourage and support the implementation of digital learning.
8. Continue the development of the **digital apprenticeship programme** that is available through **Primary Goal** to promote digital champions who can enhance capacity and sustainability, bridging technology and teaching and learning.

### Priority 3: improving pupil outcomes in literacy (reading, writing and oral) with a high priority focus on early language development



#### Background

Improving early communication, language and literacy development is a key priority for the city. We know that by the age of four, a child from a disadvantaged background has heard 30 million fewer words compared to their more advantaged peers. We know that a child with a poor vocabulary when they are five is more than twice as likely to be unemployed in their thirties and one and a half times more likely to have mental health problems compared to a child with a good vocabulary. There is also significant research linking poor speech and language skills to a range of poor outcomes including offending.

Some of the most disadvantaged children in Portsmouth start school months behind their peers and the gap can grow through their school years. As a result of Covid-19 the likelihood is that disadvantaged children in Portsmouth will have lost more ground in their language development, exacerbating the situation.

Our performance through EYFS and KS1 and KS2 underlines the issue, the latest figures for which are from 2019 due to the cancellation of all assessments and exams in 2020 and 2021 as a result of Covid-19.

#### Literacy related outcomes for 2019 EYFS - KS2

| Key performance indicator       | % achieving expected standard | Gap to national (% points) | LA ranking |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| EYFS GLD                        | 70%                           | 2%                         |            |
| EY goals: listening & attention | 87%                           | +1%                        |            |
| EY goals: understanding         | 86%                           | 0%                         |            |
| EY goals: speaking              | 85%                           | 0%                         |            |
| Phonics Year 1                  | 79%                           | 3%                         | 141        |
| KS1 Reading                     | 74%                           | 1%                         | 99         |
| KS1 Writing                     | 66%                           | 3%                         | 130        |
| KS2 Reading                     | 66%                           | 7%                         | 148        |
| KS2 Writing                     | 75%                           | 3%                         | 131        |

In **Early Years** there has been a collaborative effort across the city to develop a cohesive communication and language strategy which is helpfully summarised on the co-produced Portsmouth Commitment to Early Language.

Other work has included continuation of the 'Read with Me' project - a collaborative initiative bringing together the School Library Service, public libraries, EY settings, Yr R practitioners and parents. The development of communication and language skills underpins this project, but we also seek to foster a love of reading and focus on literacy skills in this project. The roll out of 'Read with Me' was hampered by Covid-19 in 2020, but this work was continued in 2021 with a universal approach of identifying 10 key quality and popular texts to be shared in EY settings, accessed over the summer holidays by families and revisited by schools in the early Autumn term 2021. The recent support of the Portsmouth Cultural Education Partnership for the '50 things to do before you're 5 in Portsmouth' initiative will help to secure further understanding of the vital importance of all partners working together

to promote early language development in our own locality, making it everyone's business. Again, the Covid pandemic has prevented us from launching '50 things' to the public as initially planned, but as more local attractions re-open and with additional support, we are getting closer.

The city has actively supported and promoted the national **Hungry Little Minds campaign** which was launched in 2018 as part of the government's ambition to halve in ten years the proportion of children who finish reception year without the communication, language and literacy skills they need to thrive. The campaign seeks to encourage parents and carers to engage in activities that support their child's early learning and help prepare them for school and beyond.

Schools have been strongly encouraged to apply to be involved in the **national reception year early language programme for 2020/21** which was launched and then extended for 2021/2022 to help close the Covid language gap as an additional element in its catch up support programme. The Department for Education is working with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and other partners to scale-up delivery of the **Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)**; a high-quality, evidence-based, 20-week intervention designed to improve the language skills of reception age pupils. The programme provides schools with training and resources, helping them deliver one-to-one and small-group support for five-year-olds whose spoken language skills may have suffered as a result of the pandemic. In 2020/21 we had 12 schools who registered to take part in this programme.

Within the **primary** sector, previously schools have been involved in a **Reading Research Project** in partnership with the Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance, Thornden Research School and the Education Endowment Foundation. Specifically trained and deployed SLEs worked with schools on their own bespoke projects based on proven research and principles from the Challenge the Gap and SEN projects already successfully undertaken through SSIF. In 2020/21 by twinning with Hastings through the Government's social mobility Opportunity Areas Programme 10 Portsmouth KS2 schools were enabled to implement Hackney Learning Trust's **Destination Reader** programme with positive impact on pupil attitudes and progress in reading in spite of lockdowns and the challenges of remote education. This will be extended in 2021/22 with a second tranche of primary schools, continuation of the support DR network group already instigated and a new development into Year 7.

Delayed by Covid, the nationally recognised Challenge Partners **Excellence for Everyone** programme has been completed in 2021 and thus enabled schools to access a whole school approach designed to deliver transformational support for disadvantaged pupils and provide quality professional development for school staff. This has been augmented by the HISP research School **Making the Difference for Disadvantaged Pupils** enabling schools to review their principles and processes of effective implementation. The 100% assessment pass rate of Key Stage 1 and 2 moderators for Writing highlights that our practitioners understand the standards that pupils need to achieve, the focus must be on the delivery of a quality curriculum by highly effective education staff.

At **secondary** we know that literacy is key to learning across all subjects and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life. Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum which should be encouraged. It recognises that literacy skills are both

general and subject specific, emphasising the value of supporting teachers in every subject to teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively in their subjects. This guidance challenges the notion that literacy in secondary school is solely the preserve of English teachers, or literacy coordinators. The emphasis on disciplinary literacy makes clear that every teacher communicates their subject through academic language, and that reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the heart of knowing and doing every subject in secondary school. Secondary literacy is being supported in the city through the active secondary Portsmouth English Network and the innovative **Destination Reader Plus** which extends this primary high quality reading pedagogy programme into Year 7. In 2021/22 this is to be trialled in the secondary sector by two of our schools.

The **PEP Early Language and Literacy Development Group** established in the Autumn of 2020 has completed much work to drive this priority of the Education Strategy forward in spite of the pandemic, culminating in the highly engaging and successful Literacy session of the PEP Summer Education Conference. The group has enabled partners from different age phases and sectors, ranging from education, childcare and inclusion to health and cultural services to align and connect initiatives in a coherent and strategic manner. Partners have contributed to a Portsmouth Approach to Reading document which outlines helpful advice and guidance to schools, settings and colleges. Next steps include exemplification of strands of early language development in Portsmouth, improving the implementation of robust and effective phonics teaching and learning strategies, and developing high expectations and experiences around vocabulary acquisition at transition points.

### **Key priorities for 2021/22:**

#### **1. Improve EYFSP outcomes but with a particular focus on communication and language.** This will include:

- Engagement by schools with the national reception year early language programme for 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- Launch of '50 things to do before you're 5' initiative to engage parents and families in supporting communication and language for their children.
- Regularly refresh and publicise Hungry Little Minds on social media platforms.
- Provide training for early years settings and the reception year with communication and language focus.
- Support the early years workforce and partnerships with health e.g. evaluation and updating of key tools (EL monitoring tool, Language Top Tips for Talking) based on current research and a training programme (e.g. masterclass in language theories).
- Develop programme of shared support for early years settings and linked to reception year practitioners based on communication and language provision leading to improving literacy provision.
- Use of the 'Best Start' Speech and Language resource, which is funded for 2 years and shared between Health and Early Years. The impact of the resource will not be seen in EYFSP outcomes until 2022, as the focus is on support and training for EY settings.

#### **2. Continue to implement the strategic Portsmouth Commitment to Early Language** which includes:

- Ensuring the **early years workforce** understand early language development and support children to achieve their very best.
  - Ensuring that **families** understand the importance of early language development and the vital role they play and take an active interest in supporting children to develop a wide and rich vocabulary.
  - Develop a **data-led approach** to the delivery and analysis of the effectiveness of early language programmes across the city.
  - **Develop appropriate tools, training and practice sharing** that support schools and early years providers to deliver robust and effective approaches to all children's early language development.
  - Work with **health service providers** to ensure they use a range of resources and tools, share key messages about language development with families at every contact and develop mechanisms to share best practice across the health workforce, supporting families at all levels of the Healthy Child Programme.
  - Work with **early years providers and schools** to ensure key staff are trained in a way which provides them with a high level of understanding around the acquisition of early language. Ensure that provision has a culture in which early language and communication development is a primary focus and integrated into all activity and promote engaging and stimulating language rich environments.
3. In our **primary schools** we will focus on supporting schools to deliver the following:
- Develop pupils' **speaking and listening skills** and wider understanding of language development.
  - Use a wide range of explicit and implicit approaches including **planning the teaching of vocabulary, modelling and extending children's language and thinking** during interactions and activities such as shared reading.
  - Use a balanced and engaging approach to **developing reading, integrating both decoding and comprehension skills**. Both decoding (the ability to translate written words into the sounds of spoken language) and comprehension (the ability to understand the meaning of the language being read) skills are necessary for confident and competent reading, but neither is sufficient on its own.
  - Teach pupils to use strategies for developing and **monitoring their reading comprehension**. These include: prediction; questioning; clarifying; summarising; and activating and applying prior knowledge.
  - Effectively oversee that schools and early years settings implement a **systematic phonics programme** which explicitly teaches pupils a comprehensive set of letter-sound relationships for reading and sound letter relationships for spelling with resources that closely match the phonics cumulatively taught.
  - Develop progression in phonics resources and guidance so that Key Stage 2 and 3 practitioners are supported in their subject knowledge and pedagogy in order to improve levels of literacy in Portsmouth children and young people.
  - Teach pupils to use strategies for planning and **monitoring their writing**. Producing quality writing is a complex process but a number of different strategies are likely to help, depending on the current skills of the writer. These include pre-writing activities, drafting, editing and revising and sharing.
  - Promote **fluent written transcription skills** (handwriting, spelling or typing) through encouraging extensive and purposeful practice and explicit teaching. Children must develop fluency in these skills to the point that they have become automated.

- **Collect high quality, up-to-date information about pupils' current capabilities, and adapt teaching accordingly** to focus on exactly what pupils need to progress. This approach is more efficient because effort is spent on the best next step and not wasted by rehearsing skills or content that a child already knows well.
  - Further the **partnership with Hastings** as part of the Government's social mobility Opportunity Areas Programme which can draw down funding to support a **literacy project 'Destination Reader'** as part of a twinning arrangement with Hastings.
4. In our **secondary schools** we will focus on supporting schools to deliver the following:
- Disciplinary literacy across the curriculum.
  - Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject.
  - Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts.
  - Trial the specifically and newly designed Destination Reader Plus programme into year 7.
  - Break down complex writing tasks.
  - Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject and provide opportunities for structured talk.
  - Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students. This will include the continuation and extension of the successful **Pompey Literacy Pirates programme** which delivers an intensive year long after school learning programme for children aged 9 to 13 who are both falling behind in their progress and are disadvantaged.

## Priority 4: recruit, retain and grow the best teachers, practitioners and leaders and provide high quality continuing professional development



### Background

The shortage of teachers, particularly in certain subject areas, has been a significant cause for concern in the city for some years, which has intensified as a result of rising pupil numbers and fewer graduates entering the profession. The PEP made this one of its early priorities and established the ITT and Teacher & Retention Group to lead on this work and drive forward **Teach Portsmouth**.

The brand has benefitted from tactical marketing campaigns to increase awareness and communicate changes to the recruitment process during COVID-19. During 2020/21 the impact of COVID-19 on teacher recruitment and retention appeared to have been a positive one with schools reporting higher numbers of applicants for teaching and senior leadership posts and initial teaching training providers reporting the same. However a report by the Education Policy Institute in June 2021 illustrated very mixed picture for the teaching profession. On the one hand, there is a welcome influx of new recruits and retention improved over the past year. However, those are likely to be fleeting blips and the longer-term trend of declining retention may not yet have been arrested. The same was true back in 2008 following the financial crisis which led to a surge of new entrants to the profession - within a few years this surge melted away as economic conditions improved.

In Teach Portsmouth's annual survey, 55 unique submissions from schools across the city gave their views on recruitment and retention trends locally. While some applicants answered specific questions over others, the data does provide a picture for the year 2019/20 and how COVID-19 has impacted on recruitment and retention. Key highlights include:

- The average number of resignations were 1 per school
- Out of those who resigned, they had a specialism in either core maths, English or modern foreign languages
- Out of those who responded, the primary reason for those leaving were to take up new teaching roles outside of the city.

On a local level, some of the feedback matches national trends around those leaving subject specialisms.

It is clear therefore that the PEP must maintain the momentum and the work that has formed part of *Teach Portsmouth* branded activities, events will need to continue and develop in 2021/22 in order to attract and retain the best teachers and leaders for the city.

While COVID-19 has impacted our ability to deliver face to face events like the **Teach Portsmouth Recruitment Fair**, the PEP continues to adapt what is done in light of declining attendance in recent years. The PEP has delivered a range of professional webinars during 2020/21 and these will continue during 2021/22. The PEP will also consider what face to face recruitment events would be appropriate in 2021/22.

Following the successful Teach Portsmouth celebrates campaign and the digital Teach Portsmouth Awards in July 2021 a face to face event at Portsmouth Guildhall is planned for July 2022.

Whilst recruiting new teachers will continue to be a priority, there also needs to be a continuing emphasis on the **retention of teachers**. Before the pandemic one third of teachers in Portsmouth did not stay beyond the fifth year and many left the profession altogether. There is a recognition by the government that unmanageable workloads are a key factor in teachers leaving the profession. The impact of Covid-19 and the return to school for all year groups will inevitably test teachers as they grapple with the new arrangements. And further disruption caused by potential infection outbreaks and the move to blended learning could test teachers further. Whilst recruitment might be on the up we cannot afford to take our eye off the issue of retention, teacher's wellbeing and continuous professional development.

**Initial Teaching Training (ITT)** is being reviewed. Currently ITT is undertaken either via a higher education institute led route or school-led route. School-led routes include salaried options (School Direct or Teach First) or fee based options (School Direct or School Centred ITT). The proportion of teachers entering the profession via the school-led route continues to rise. The PEP wants to build on the supply of ITT routes and to continue to reach out to other audiences including the armed forces and uniformed services. The city is fortunate to have a range of providers who have been judged to be outstanding by Ofsted.

The launch of the Early Career Framework this September, will provide new teachers with funded entitlement to a structured two year package of professional development this along with the proposed changes to initial teacher training will have an impact on schools and training providers. As the results of the consultation process become clear the PEP will work with schools and teacher training providers to ensure we have a strong offer that benefits Portsmouth.

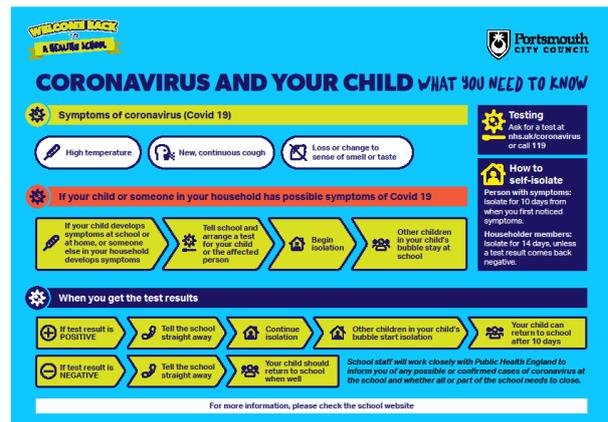
We also need to recognise the intense pressure senior leaders have been under as a result of Covid-19 and the additional responsibilities and workload that has been placed on our senior leaders. Their emotional health and wellbeing will be of paramount importance and the work done last year to consider how we can better support senior leaders in Portsmouth will continue in 2021/22

### **Key actions 2021/22**

1. Support recovery efforts by amplifying/partnering on relevant Portsmouth City Council campaigns such as Aspirations Week
2. Promote the teacher wellbeing offer via the PEP newsletter to support the retention of teachers
3. Support the development and promotion of ITT routes in Portsmouth and deliver a dedicated campaign for the 2022/23 cohort
4. Develop webinar series to focus on teaching specialities (SEN, early years, STEM subjects)

5. Develop a fully accessible website for Teach Portsmouth
6. Review and respond to changes to initial teacher training
7. Develop and implement a campaign to support diversity and inclusion in teacher recruitment

## Priority 5: ensure all schools and education settings have access to clear and up to date infection control and health and safety information and are able to respond appropriately to local Covid-19 outbreaks



### Background

At the impact of the pandemic started to be felt, in March 2020, an infection and health & safety group was swiftly established, chaired by the Director of Public Health, reporting into the Covid-19 Working Group. This group has been an excellent example of the local authority working closely and effectively with schools and other key partners to ensure that:

- all stakeholders (headteachers, teachers, practitioners, pupils, local authority officers) have clear and consistent information on how to minimise the risk of infection in schools and other education settings and what to do in the event of a possible or confirmed case in an education setting
- information is conveyed in such a way that it builds trust and confidence in the way that schools and education settings are handling potential outbreaks, making it more likely that advice on infection control, including self-isolation where necessary, is closely followed.

We hope and expect that, due to the success of the vaccination programme, the 2021/22 school year will see far less disruption due to Covid-19 than the 2020/21. The removal of the requirement for fully vaccinated adults and children aged under 18 to self-isolate if they have been a close contact of a confirmed case should enable the vast majority of staff and pupils to remain in school. Nevertheless, we are mindful that school communities bring together a largely unvaccinated population, and that therefore schools could continue to see significant outbreaks. And, whilst coronavirus is almost always a very mild illness in children, some will be children and families will be anxious about attending school due to Covid-19.

The infection control group will therefore continue to meet during the Autumn Term and then review the situation.

### Key priorities for 2021/22

1. Provide comprehensive **step by step guidance for schools** on minimising the risk of transmission in schools and enabling schools to respond appropriately to possible cases of Covid-19. This will include the use of checklists, frequently asked questions (FAQs), advice on risk assessments and asymptomatic testing. The guidance will be regularly updated to take into account any changes to national guidance and the rate of infection in the city.

2. Extend the above guidance and tailor it to **support other education settings, parents & carers, council staff and all professionals and front line workers who work with families and schools.**
3. Provide a **weekly Covid-19 intelligence summary** about Covid-19 infection rates in the city.
4. **Work with public health to support relevant vaccination programmes**, including the enhanced winter 'flu programme and any extension of the Covid-19 vaccine to additional groups of under 18 year olds.
5. Work with HR and health and safety colleagues to ensure LA maintained schools meet all of their **statutory responsibilities for health and safety** as an employer and a provider of services.
6. **Link to the Portsmouth Health Protection Board** so that sharing from Portsmouth schools can be shared with other partners and vice versa.

## Priority 6: ensure all schools and education settings have robust safeguarding policies, processes and culture in place



### Background

In recent years two mainstream schools were judged by Ofsted to be inadequate due to concerns about safeguarding policies, processes and culture (one has since been re-inspected and is now outstanding). Other inspections have also identified some weaknesses but were not sufficient enough to lead to an inadequate rating as action could be taken on the day(s) of the inspection to resolve any outstanding concerns. Evidence has also emerged from a review of completed Safeguarding and Early Help Compact Audits that some of the judgements made against the standards have been too generous and more rigour is required. Added to this has been the impact of Covid-19 with the vast majority of children being educated at home during the lockdown.

Schools in England are inspected and judged by Ofsted on the effectiveness of their safeguarding arrangements. Schools need to demonstrate that they are meeting their statutory responsibilities (in line with DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education documentation and Ofsted 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings') and that school staff are exercising their professional judgement in keeping children and learners safe.

Areas of concern identified in Portsmouth as a result of an Ofsted inspection have included:

- Gaps in the Single Central Record
- Processes for recording and sharing safeguarding concerns and subsequent follow up and / or referral to MASH
- Lack of understanding about the local safeguarding thresholds and escalation processes
- Gaps in safeguarding training for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), staff and governors
- Gaps in safer recruitment training for school staff and governors involved in recruitment
- Robustness and quality of behaviour management policies
- Staff understanding and awareness of areas of safeguarding such as Prevent and FGM
- How well the school works with external agencies regarding safeguarding concerns
- Recording of safeguarding incidents - timeliness, security, follow up and escalation
- How well the school understands the vulnerability of children who are missing education.

More is being done to support schools and other education settings to ensure the lessons from recent years are learnt. Through the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership (PSCCP), schools and education settings already have access to a wealth of information, resources and training. This includes:

- The Portsmouth DSL Network is in place to support DSLs in schools and education settings to share best practice, seek support from other DSLs and be informed of local developments.
- Through the PSCCP, training is provided for DSLs. In 2020/21 the traditional managers and DSL 1 day training course was broken down into short Masterclasses to enable

DSLs and managers to update and refresh on the areas which they see are critical for their own development.

- PSCP Thresholds document to guide decision making when determining the level of need or risk relating to a child.
- How to make an effective contact into the Portsmouth MASH using the Inter-agency Contact Form (IACF).
- Processes for stepping up and stepping down through tiers.
- Early Help Assessments to help identify, at the earliest opportunity, a child, young person's or family's additional needs, which are not being fully met by the existing services and to support the provision of timely and coordinated support to meet those needs.
- Support and processes for Multi-Disciplinary Working, Team Around the Child/Family (TAC or TAF) and Team Around the Worker (TAW).
- Portsmouth Safeguarding and Early Help Compact Audit tool which sets out 12 standards for effective early help and safeguarding practice so that agencies and schools can self-assess against them in order to identify areas of good practice and areas where improvement is needed and the extent to which safeguarding children is embedded within the school. This framework is used for a formal city-wide audit of all services in the city every two years.
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) liaison, role and understanding the notification process.
- The **LA Link Co-ordinator system** was established in 2020 to ensure all schools are aware of their pupils at risk of harm or in receipt of early help. This system has been made permanent ensuring schools have a regular conversation with the LA to unblock any operational barriers to effective joint working to protect children.

### Key priorities for 2021/22

1. Ensure all schools and education settings complete the **Portsmouth Safeguarding and Early Help Compact Audit tool** every two years, which will be reviewed by the PSCP with the Education Department to ensure completed audits are robust and realistic.
2. **Raise the profile of safeguarding and the support available to schools and education settings** through the regular LA / Headteacher briefings, Multi Academy Trust briefings, PEP bulletin, etc - signposting to the PSCP website. To include a full update of all safeguarding One Minute Guides.
3. Ensure every school in the city has a **dedicated safeguarding email** (safeguarding@...) to improve the communication between PSCP and schools and to support Project Encompass.
4. Continue to provide **support for schools that are currently judged to be inadequate by Ofsted** due to safeguarding concerns alongside checks with schools that are due an inspection in 2020/21.
5. PSCP to deliver a series of **Masterclasses for school DSLs** to cover the specific safeguarding practice areas (to replace the previous one day DSL training course). This will be in addition to the foundation safeguarding courses that are provided in Early Help, Child Protection, Safeguarding Supervision etc. Masterclasses for DSLs will

cover: understanding the national and local picture; escalation; Portsmouth safeguarding thresholds and Portsmouth MASH.

6. Encourage schools and other education settings to use the **DSL CPD document** which has been designed for recording formal and informal safeguarding training. Together with training certificates this can support and facilitate effective logging of all safeguarding learning in readiness for an Ofsted inspection.
7. **Working with MASH to develop masterclass topics** in order to improve contacts into MASH.
8. Deliver a **LADO Masterclass**.
9. Raise the profile of **online safety issues**, through dissemination of the Lurking Trolls for primary schools, and Cyber Ambassadors for secondary schools, and CEOP training for staff. A range of resources and information available to improve the practice of schools and education settings with regard to safeguarding during online/digital learning available on the PSCP website (links to priority 2).
10. Support **Governors** to be better informed regarding safer recruitment and their responsibility and accountability with regard to safeguarding.
11. Develop the **LA Link Co-ordinator system** ensuring all schools are aware of their pupils at risk of harm or in receipt of early help. Ensuring schools have a regular conversation with the LA to unblock any operational barriers to effective joint working to protect children.

## Priority 7: promote emotional health, wellbeing and resilience in education



### Background

Meeting the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children and young people is crucial, not least in order for them to learn effectively. We believe that the wellbeing of pupils and staff, including that of our school teachers, practitioners and leaders, needs to be at the heart of all that schools and other education settings do.

This work forms part of the [Social Emotional Mental Health \(SEMH\) Strategy for children and young people 2020 - 2023](#) , which has a clear, shared intention to adopt a whole system approach to developing and transforming the support for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Fundamental to this approach is the importance of partnership working and restorative approaches, such that social and emotional mental health becomes 'everyone's business' in the same way as safeguarding has become 'everyone's business' across Portsmouth.

Portsmouth's *strategy for improving wellbeing and resilience in education* continues to strengthen the partnership across services and between services and education settings. This work focuses on three areas:

- To improve access to services including direct work with young people and advice and training and consultation for professionals.
- To provide a central source of information
- To develop self-help and peer support

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the importance of emotional health and wellbeing of the whole school community. A package of support including training and resources, was made available to schools by the PEP throughout 2020/21. There has been a strong focus on support for leaders and staff, in order to better equip them to support their pupils. This has included:

- Online and face to face training for staff delivered by a local team
- Coaching sessions for head teachers
- Staff wellbeing sessions
- Training to support Loss and Bereavement
- A resource pack (available in hard and electronic copy) for young people (the Little Blue Book of Sunshine)
- A local package of resources ([available here](#)) to offer schools and other education settings guidance and support to manage some of the challenges that staff, pupils and parents may face in terms of emotional health and wellbeing.

For ongoing reference, there is a dedicated page on the [PEP website](#).

Resources for the above activities have been made available through the government's *Wellbeing for Education Return Grant*, this funding is continuing into 2021/22. Schools have

been surveyed to evaluate the impact of the activity in 2020/21 and to inform planning for 2021/22

All schools in Portsmouth now have access to **Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)** which provide extra capacity for early intervention and ongoing help within a school setting. The offer is in development. The MHSTs are keen to provide a bespoke offer that meets the needs of each school. Workshops held in the spring 2021 clarified the role of MHSTs and the support they can provide, with local schools providing examples of excellent practice.

A digital mental health service **Kooth** has been commissioned and is available to all young people in the city.

The **Portsmouth Inclusive Education Quality Mark (PIEQM)** will support this work through self and peer assessment to identify strengths and areas for development in relation to inclusive practice.

#### **Key actions for 2021/22:**

1. Produce guidance to clarify the SEMH pathways and thresholds for support and services to increase understanding of the offer.
2. Embed **Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)** across all schools.
3. Develop and embed **Youth Mental Health Ambassadors** (across all our secondary schools) to work alongside MHSTs.
4. Deliver an ongoing package of training and support that meets the needs of
  - a. School Leaders
  - b. Staff providing SEMH interventions and support
  - c. All school staff.
5. Review and publish Portsmouth's **anti-bullying guidance for schools & colleges and our trans inclusion toolkit for schools.**
6. Pilot, evaluate and publish Anti-Racism guidance and training for schools, colleges and settings

## Priority 8: ensure all pupils regularly attend school



### Background

In recent years the city has seen improvements in both school attendance and exclusion rates. In 2019 overall absence and persistent absence in primary schools was reduced and is below that of our statistical neighbours whilst overall absence in secondary schools improved but remains above our statistical neighbours. Fixed period exclusions for primary schools has also improved and is below that of most of our statistical neighbours, however, in secondary the rate has increased in line with national increases. Permanent exclusions across our schools remain very low and well below the national rate.

However, the fact remains that Portsmouth's pupils do not attend school as regularly as their peers nationally and there is therefore still considerably more work to do to improve school attendance. We know that by not attending school regularly children and young people are leaving themselves vulnerable to risks which can reduce their life chances. For our most vulnerable young people school will be the only safe and consistent part of their lives. Away from the safety and security of school, young people are more at risk of abuse and exploitation, taking part in criminal activity and missing out on support for special educational needs and mental health problems.

A school attendance action plan is currently in place, the implementation of which is monitored by the PEP Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG).

A high profile school attendance media campaign *Miss School Miss Out* was launched in 2019 to support this work. Media activity in 2020 focused on welcoming children back to school, following the closures of schools to most pupils due to the pandemic.

Details are set out in the key actions below but included: a *Welcome Back* to School campaign (temporarily replacing the *Miss School Miss Out* campaign); Welcome Back Plans for those pupils who require additional support; and wellbeing support to schools (refer to Priority 8).

During the pandemic, systems were established with schools to **track vulnerable children** and respond to a wide range of issues impacting on families as a result of the lockdown, including RAG-rated child level data on spreadsheets, **LA Link Co-ordinators** attached to schools and colleges and the Children's Hub. These systems have now been adjusted to focus on children who are chronic non-attenders, with attendance below 50%<sup>1</sup>. The vulnerable children tracking team has now been established as a permanent team, with additional funding and recruitment to 3 dedicated Link Co-ordinator posts, due to the positive impact of this work.

In addition to the above, there will be a continued focus during 2021/22 on a number of areas that impact on school attendance. This includes work to reduce:

- **Permanent and fixed period exclusions** through the relaunch of restorative practice in schools, the effective use of alternative provision (in house and externally commissioned) and use of alternative exclusions (where COVID plans allow)
- **Reduced timetables that go beyond 6 weeks without a clear plan** in place for returning a pupil back to full time education. The reasons for reduced timetables should be: exceptional and limited; short term; require parental consent; Early Help Assessments should be considered; and all exclusions should be accurately recorded on the attendance register
- **Elective Home Education (EHE)** adhering to the principles of the EHE protocol that was agreed with Headteachers in 2019. The concern for 2021/22 is that as a result of the pandemic, and with so many children having been educated at home, that parents may want to continue with home education. However, without the support of the school it is clear that many parents will not be able to provide suitable education.

### **Key actions for 2021/22:**

1. **Relaunch of restorative practice in schools but on the basis of a whole-school approach**, to be jointly led by key schools where progress has already been made in this area, supported by L30 (national training provider). 17 schools have requested that they are included in phase 1 of this programme.
2. **Relaunch of the #missschoolmissout attendance media campaign** including social media messaging, resources for schools and materials for partner organisations and all professionals who are working with families.
3. **Continue to deploy LA Link Co-ordinators** building on the success of the previous academic year, working with schools to identify and support those children who have struggled to return to school successfully, following the partial closure of schools due to the pandemic. 3 dedicated, permanent LA Link Co-ordinators have been employed since November 2020 to deliver this support to schools.
4. **Helping parents meet their responsibilities to ensure children attend school or another education setting regularly** through effective communication / information, advice and guidance, pastoral support, intervention through Early Help and MABS where appropriate and punitive sanctions as authorised by Headteachers.
5. Ensuring **schools are supported and challenged and there is effective leadership and management of school attendance** in place, through the termly monitoring of school attendance data by BAG, half termly Persistent Absence Reviews and audits where appropriate, ensuring schools are aware of and access appropriate medical provision, focus on reduced timetables that exceed 6 weeks.
6. **Working with partners to provide additional needs based support that contributes to improvements in attendance**, running termly school attendance network meetings and continuing to make school attendance everyone's business including health workers, social workers, school nurses, Early Help family workers, CAHMS, GPs, etc
7. Continued **focus on chronic absence (below 50%)**, sharing information with Missing Exploited and Trafficked (MET) group and Early Help, encouraging schools to complete an Early Help Assessment and have a Lead Professional in place, working with Early

Help and / or contacting MASH where school interventions and previous legal sanctions have failed.

8. **Implement the EHE protocol** and address any increase in EHE as a result of the pandemic and parents wishing to continue to educate their children at home.

**Priority 9: invest in school buildings to create additional school places, focusing on secondary, even more inclusive mainstream schools and a continuum of specialist provision for children with additional needs**



## Background

Ensuring there are sufficient school places in Portsmouth is the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority (LA), but its ability to secure this is reliant on strong collaborative arrangements with schools and Multi Academy Trusts. Through the Portsmouth Education Partnership the city has a strong and stable culture of collaboration which has enabled the LA to ensure there are sufficient school places across the city whilst at the same time improve existing accommodation.

Between 2012 and 2017 the focus had been on expanding **primary school places** in response to the unprecedented rise in demand fuelled by rising birth rates, inward migration, reductions in the number of children accessing education outside of Portsmouth or accessing independent education and the impact of regeneration schemes and housing developments. In response 1,600 additional primary school places have been created since 2012. The birth rate is now falling and as a result surplus capacity is now a feature in Year R and is becoming so in Year 3. A summary of the latest position for primary is given below:

- **Year R** pupil numbers rose dramatically from 2011 but peaked in 2017 with 2,461 pupils. With the decrease in both birth rate and in migration combined with the number of pupils attending out of city schools, numbers have since declined and the forecasts for 2021 show 2,124 pupils starting school which provides 15.2% surplus capacity in the City as a whole. A further reduction is forecast year on year until 2023/24 at which point there will be 18.2% surplus capacity at Year R.
- **Year 3** pupil numbers peaked in 2020/21 with 2,363 pupils, providing a surplus capacity of 5.3%. The pupil number is then forecast to reduce and by 2025/26 there will be a surplus of 14.9% at Year 3.

In recent years the focus has switched to expanding **secondary school places** including three major expansion schemes at Admiral Lord Nelson School, Charter Academy and The Portsmouth Academy with two smaller schemes at St Edmund's School and Trafalgar School, which are creating an additional 940 places. All five schemes were completed as planned by September 2020. A summary of the position at Year 7 is given below:

- **Year 7** numbers are due to increase year on year until they peak in 2024/25 at 2,121. Secondary capacity has been increased in the last two years through the expansion of existing schools and there are 2214 Year 7 places available for September 2021 (surplus of 6.1%). At the forecast peak in Year 7 pupil numbers, the surplus capacity for the City as a whole will be 4.2%. Without major development impact and in line with the forecast reduction in primary numbers, secondary numbers will begin to fall again at this point.

Places for pupils with **special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)** is a far more complex issue and a very challenging one due to limited capital funding with no obvious source of funding from the government as is the case for basic need funding which covers primary and secondary school places. An increase in special school places also has implications for revenue funding and pressure on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The issue is complicated further by the diverse range of needs, the increasing complexity of need and the fact that our existing specials schools and inclusion centres are largely full with limited space for significant expansion.

In light of the above, a SEND and AP (Alternative Provision) phase 2 review was undertaken which informed the development of a 3-5 year SEND accommodation strategy.

In the short term: works have been completed at Redwood Park Academy and Cliffdale Primary Academy to deliver places and improvements to the accommodation; a special free school supporting children with Autism and challenging behaviour is planned to open in September 2022 in Wymering; and a further expansion of Cliffdale Primary is planned using the space that will be left following the re-location of the family contact centre to a new location and bespoke accommodation in Paulsgrove.

#### **Key actions for 2021/22:**

1. Continue to **monitor school sufficiency** for primary, secondary and special school places.
2. Plan and deliver the **3 - 5 year SEND and AP Strategic Accommodation strategy** (phase 2) to address the sufficiency of special and AP school places in the city, including further development of the SEND pupil forecasting methodology.
3. Continue to work with the ESFA and Delta Education Trust to ensure the **special free school for autism** at Wymering is built and on course for Sept 2022 completion.
4. **Re-locate the Battenburg Family Contact Centre to a new bespoke facility in Paulsgrove** and undertake a feasibility study to determine how the vacant space will be used to support the **expansion of Cliffdale Primary Academy**.
5. **Refresh all pupil forecasts and school organisation and place strategy documents** and submit the annual SCAP (school capacity) return to the DfE, taking into consideration the impact of both Brexit and the pandemic.
6. Deliver the **annual programme of urgent condition projects** under the council's school modernisation programme for LA maintained schools.
7. In preparation for the future Lennox Point development, continue to consider replacement sites for the **relocation of Harbour Tipner and Harbour Stamshaw**.
8. Consult and apply for a **disposal of surplus school playing field land on the former King Richard School site**.

**Priority 10: Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) through NEET prevention and re-engagement activities**



## Background

Local authorities have broad duties to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education or training. Specifically these are to:

- Secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained. To fulfil this, local authorities need to have a strategic overview of the provision available in their area and to identify and resolve gaps in provision.
- Make available to all young people aged 13 to 19 and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training.

Tracking young people's participation is a key element of these duties. Local authorities are required to collect information about young people so that those who are not participating, or are NEET, can be identified and given support to re-engage. Since 2017, local authorities have been required to track and report on years 12 and 13.

The DfE monitors the participation of young people in employment, education or training in all local authority areas. This data is supplied by each local authority, all of whom have a statutory duty to do so on a monthly basis. The overall performance measure used is a combined average figure of young people who are NEET and unknown over a three month period. Reporting includes a combined figure for young people who are NEET or unknown to the local authority. This change was made after a number of local authorities reported low NEETs whilst having a high number of unknowns.

As a city we have made some significant improvements over the past 8 years. In 2013 NEET and unknown figures were significantly higher than the national average with NEETs at 7.7% and unknowns at 18.7%. To address this the council worked with schools and post-16 providers to improve progression outcomes for young people aged 16 to 18.

A key part of this work was the **Youth NEET Prevention Programme** which was launched in 2014. This partnership programme was initially funded by local colleges and the council. The pilot programme offered support to 108 year 11s who were considered at risk of not progressing to post-16 education. A Progression Adviser worked with the young people during the spring term of year 11 through to post-16 enrolment. During the autumn term advisers were based in the colleges to support these young people and other Portsmouth students who were at risk of becoming NEET. The project had a positive impact on the NEET figures and this combined with close and collaborative work with the Data Team brought the unknowns down to 3.8% and the NEETs in line with the national averages at 4.8%.

The work of the council's Data Team in collaboration with schools and colleges has been instrumental in reducing the number of unknowns. There are robust data sharing agreements in place with colleges and at the end of 2016 the figures for unknowns and NEETs were 1.1% and 3.8% respectively.

Since 2017 the NEET score card has reported data for a three month average.

**Table 1: three month average 2017 - 2021**

|                 | <b>2017<br/>(Dec 2016 -<br/>Feb 2017 3<br/>months<br/>average)</b> | <b>2018<br/>(Dec 2017 -<br/>Feb 2018 3<br/>months<br/>average)</b> | <b>2019<br/>(Dec 2018 -<br/>Feb 2019 3<br/>months<br/>average)</b> | <b>2020<br/>(Dec 2019 -<br/>Feb 2020 3<br/>months<br/>average)</b> | <b>2021<br/>(Dec 2020 -<br/>Feb 2021 3<br/>months<br/>average)</b> |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>NEET</b>     | 3.8%   | 3.7%   | 3.8%   | 4.2%   | 4.4%   |
| <b>Unknowns</b> | 1.1%   | 1.6%   | 1.1%   | 0.8%   | 1.1%   |
| <b>Combined</b> | 4.9%   | 5.4%   | 4.8%   | 5.0%   | 5.6%   |

The most recent figures for April 2021 however show a concerning trend and it is clear that the pandemic has had a negative impact on the figures. Due the high quality and robust data gathered by the data tracking team we have an accurate picture of the number NEETs and unknowns in Portsmouth. We are aware that some local authorities do not have this level of current information so will have higher numbers of unknowns the majority of whom are likely to be NEET

**Currently, there are a number of programmes that are running in the city to support NEET prevention and re-engagement details of which are set out below:**

- **Youth NEET Prevention Programme** - following the successful pilot project, the programme has continued with ongoing financial contributions from the colleges. Schools now contribute £135 per pupil referred to the programme (this was waived for 2020 due to concerns about the progression of year 11). Further funding has been available via the ESF funded STEP programme although this will cease in 2022. This project is now underfunded and will require a review and a new approach moving forward. A bid has been submitted to the Careers and Enterprise Company for a 3 year project to support progression from year 10 for 60 students. This will be a joint research project with Hampshire, IOW, Portsmouth and the Solent LEP.
- Currently the **STEP programme** also funds support for young people who are NEET to support them to re-engage. Advisers work within the community to support young people to re-engage and progress to education and employment with training. Prior to March 2020 the team used a variety of venues across the city for regular drop-ins for young people who are NEET. Youth Centre premises are now subject to rent for these purposes so we will need to look for alternative options.

- The Southern University Network Programme has grant funded a progression programme for 60 **Uni Connect** students over the past 3 years. We have confirmation that this will continue to for at least one more year and had been held up as an example of good practice.
- The **Virtual School & College** currently funds a 0.5 term time Careers and Progression Adviser. From August 2021 this will move to a full-time post to support both Care Leavers and Looked after Children. This post will be based within the Careers and Progression Team.
- As part of the DWP funding, the **Youth Hub** service is funded for one post to support young people aged 16 to 25 who are claiming universal credit to seek employment. The majority of the referrals are likely to be over 18 so will not support the majority of young people aged 16 to 18.
- Funding from Southern Universities Network (SUN) has supported delivery of a year 11 transition website **Flying Start**. This brand has been used for the post-16 transition programme - Flying Start Live.

#### **Key actions for 2021/22:**

1. **Establish a network of Year 11 progression leads in schools** - Year 11 progression and post-16 destinations are a key responsibility for schools. At the start of the academic year each secondary school will be asked to identify a lead for year 11 progression who will be the link for the school for specific progression issues including resources, group meetings, September Guarantee, updates from post-16 providers and delivery of support from Portsmouth City Council.
2. **Securing suitable provision** - the curriculum review has highlighted the ongoing issue of a lack of roll-on roll off provision. Discussions with other statistical neighbouring authorities, including Coventry, has confirmed that this is vital in re-engaging NEETs. Portsmouth has been impacted by the closure of Catch 22 and the lack of a traineeship offer in the city. Before the second lockdown Fareham College offered a traineeship programme from the Enterprise Centre and this was delivered virtually during lockdown. The council will therefore work with the new City of Portsmouth College and other local providers to improve the provision for young people who are NEET. This work will focus on courses with regular entry points and partnerships with other providers including the Princes Trust, MPCT and training providers. This work will be developed and led by a task and finish group to include providers and potential providers of post-16 provision and re-engagement provision.
3. **Ensure there is proactive support from all professionals who work with young people** to help young people progress and succeed in post-16 education and training and in future employment or further training. This includes professionals from Children's Social Care, Early Help and Edge of Care Service.

4. **Review of the Youth NEET Prevention Programme** - in order to ensure the long term viability of the Youth NEET Prevention Programme we will work with colleges and schools to review the model and programme funding. A proposal will be taken forward to the Post-16 Forum and traded service offer in Autumn 2021.
  
5. **Embed Windmills iCAN programme across schools and colleges in travel to learn area** - for young people creating a meaningful vision for their future can be difficult. The complexity of choices and routes may impact on this. Research also shows that for many young people who have more limited networks e.g. through employment and mentors this will impact on successful planning and progression. In addition to this it is vital that young people's influencers (e.g. parents or carers) are enabled to support them with careers related activity. Funding from the SUN project has enabled the roll out of the Windmills iCAN programme. The programme enables young people to create a meaningful vision for their future, connect with people who can make that a vision a reality and contribute to their progress. The programme is designed to create social capital for young people. During 2021/22 will continue to training mentors and champions in schools and partner organisations to support delivery of the Windmills iCAN career development programme. In addition to this we will support parents/carers to access the programme and work with schools to implement a positive progression programme for year 10/11.