

8 October 2019		ITEM: 8
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Education Support Strategy O&S Report Oct 2019		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director of Education and Skills		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director of Education and Skills		
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

The educational landscape across Thurrock has seen significant change over the last five years. The majority of our schools either have joined Multiple Academy Trusts or have become stand-alone academies in line with national Government policy.

The Education Support Strategy, which has been developed in partnership with our schools, aims to set out how the Local Authority is looking to further imbed our partnership-working ethos to ensure that children and young people can access educational provision that offers a well round and balanced curriculum for all.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 O&S to review and offer feedback on the Education Support Strategy

1.2 O&S to recommend to Cabinet the key priorities set out in the Education Support Strategy to support schools across Thurrock.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Thurrock is a place of opportunity – our place making agenda over the coming year's sets out the need to provide in the region of 32,000 new homes and in the region of 20,000 new jobs.

2.2 The need to ensure that Thurrock has good or better schools to support this exciting agenda has been recognised with the successful bids for three new free schools – one of these being a new special school.

- 2.3 The LA has also undergone some significant changes and we have realigned a number of our services to schools to meet the changing demand. As the majority of our schools have embraced the academisation route we have had to ensure that we have built strong partnerships with the key message of keeping the child or young person central to all decision making processes
- 2.4 Thurrock has remained committed to acting as a critical friend when required and seeking additional funding to support a range of activities within our schools. The Education Support strategy looks to bring together in one place the key work of the LA in providing support and challenge when required.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1.1 The Local Authority in partnership with schools has developed an Education Support Strategy which sets out how we are looking to engage and support schools over the next five years. The strategy is underpinned by our strategic vision which states "all children and young people will enjoy and engage with learning" it recognises the joint responsibilities that the LA and Schools have in ensuring that all children and young people have access to educational pathways that meet individual needs.

The key Education Support priorities for Thurrock Council are:

- 1) Attainment. Raise attainment and close the attainment gaps between key pupil groups, across all key phases and key stages.
- 2) Capacity. See all of our schools as good or outstanding and look at the principle of a minimum of five schools from both primary and secondary phases within single MATs and ensure that we support each MAT to have the greatest capacity for recruitment, retaining highly skills staff across all key phases.
- 3) Inclusion. Secure high quality alternative provision which includes a mainstream offer and implement a vision for SEND that ensures that every child and young person has an equitable access to a great education.
- 4) Employability and Skills. Ensure all children and young people have access to high quality Careers, Information and Guidance which includes bespoke education and skills pathways, working with partners in the public and private sector to unlock opportunity for and meet employment needs for young people.
- 5) Wellbeing and safety. Promote of an inclusive approach to creating improved mental and physical health, as well as lead the fight against anti-social behaviour, violence in all its forms and gang related issues.
- 6) Rigour and partnership. Work in partnership with schools, academies and our Teaching Schools to be the constant critical friend, regularly applying data and information to support and challenge in order to ensure that problems are never a surprise, that our practice stands up to scrutiny and that we are always Ofsted ready.

4. Reason for Recommendation

- 4.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny have a clear and accountable governance responsibility around how we support and work with schools to provide strong educational pathways for all children and young people.

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 5.2 Local Educational Providers

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1 This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:
- create a great place for learning and opportunity

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead of Finance

The role of school support has changed with the academisation programme as a result much of the school improvement work that would have been undertaken by the LA has been devolved to schools. However Thurrock has pro-actively identified additional funding routes to provide a range of targeted services to schools

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)

The Committee is asked to note the report content under the remit of the Committee's terms of reference and powers.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead of Community Development and Equalities

Supporting our children and young people to enjoy schools links to the Council's key strategic priority around learning. The opportunities over the coming years in Thurrock mean that children and young people need to be able to learn and develop the skills that will mean they can engage fully with the regeneration agenda. The Education Support Strategy sets out the Local Authority's vision around how to work in partnership with schools and recognise them as part of the community network of support for residents across the LA.

As this is a new strategy, we have produced an equalities impact assessment to support this work across local communities.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

None

8. Appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Thurrock Council Education Support Strategy 2019-2022

Report Author Details:

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