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**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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To:- All Committee Members

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the next Wednesday, 15th September, 2021 meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the following reports that were marked as 'to follow' on the agenda sent out recently.

Agenda No Item

18. **Education update (Pages 3 - 6)**

Report of FIELD_AUTHOR

To receive and consider the Education Update report.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage'.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive

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TITLE	Education update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 September 2021
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Clear understanding of schools' performance in order to recognise and promote success and ensure robust challenge and support continues to deliver improvement.

RECOMMENDATION

Note how schools are working through the pandemic and implications for formal and statutory processes such as Ofsted Inspection and national performance indicators.

REPORT

During the summer term 2021 schools continued to operate within DfE guidance on pandemic operations and face to face delivery of education for all pupils.

At this point in the pandemic response schools were expected to adhere to strict Covid - 19 mitigation processes. These included operational restrictions including :

- Working with pupils in sustained groups called 'bubbles' to enable effective contact tracing
- Implementing a twice weekly lateral flow testing programme for secondary school age pupils and all staff whether in primary or secondary
- Enhanced cleaning and hygiene factors
- Staggered starts and ends to the school day to minimise pupil and parent contact on site or unnecessary gatherings
- Revised travel arrangements
- Restrictions to off site activities

Additional duties were placed on schools to ensure that they were able to offer and facilitate remote learning for pupils. This continues to be a requirement for schools who must be able to provide remote learning opportunities to any pupils who are unable to attend school as a result of Covid-19. This includes pupils from September who are at home but remain well and are awaiting a PCR test outcome.

From September 1st all restrictions for school operations have been lifted in line with the central government roadmap. This means that schools are now no longer required to implement the majority of the above mitigations, with the exception of the Lateral Flow testing programme for the month of September. The LFT programme continues for pupils and parents during September and will be reviewed by central government at the end of the month.

Despite this removal of requirements many schools are working carefully in partnership with their communities and stakeholders to ensure that positive and trusting relationships are sustained and confidence in provision continues. In practice this means that many of

the above mitigations have been sustained by schools as they have found them to be good practices in general infection control and in effective operational management.

Schools are also being supported to consider how they work with their communities going forward. Support is being provided with understanding how the government C02 monitors can assist in transmission prevention and boroughwide guidance on signs and symptoms of Covid-19 are being shared to support schools and families make informed choices. This work is being undertaken in close liaison with public health colleagues and health and safety.

School leaders continue to be able to attend a weekly leadership drop in and can use this to explore best practice and seek assurance. The first event for the autumn term continued previous high attendance with over 45 attendees. A daily information update continues to complement this.

School Performance Indicators 2021

At the start of the 202/21 academic year, it was anticipated that the full examination and statutory testing cycle would operate as usual during 2021. This however ended in a full removal of all statutory testing processes in Ks1 and Ks2 and the switch to Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for GCSE and A level students.

The process of awarding TAGs has been a complex operation for schools with a significant increase in workload for practitioners. It should be noted that this process is a different process to that undertaken during the exam period in 2020.

The DfE has confirmed that all performance tables remain suspended and no data from 2021 outcomes will be used to judge school performance. This means that there will be no Analyse School Performance (ASP) reports issued by the DfE and no local statistics for 2021 will be available again this year. Ofsted will be using 2019 published data as the start point for any future judgement-based inspection activities.

Ofsted processes:

From the start of the Spring term 2021 Ofsted changed focus again and undertook remote monitoring visits to schools based on priority order in relation to current Ofsted grades. This started with those schools currently judged to be Inadequate and moved through to schools with Requires Improvement Judgements.

These visits were also non-graded visits and letters were written from HMI undertaking the visits to the schools thereafter which were also posted on the schools websites. The letters indicated if the school was '*continuing to provide an effective education for pupils given the current context*'. The focus of these visits was on remote education reflecting the provision nationally at this time.

Two schools in the borough experienced these virtual visits during the spring term- Gorse Ride Junior and The Forest school, both were judged to be providing an effective education.

The substantive inspection schedule remained paused until September 2021. Section 8 monitoring visits continued during the summer term, these have no power to change a school grading. These visits were risk assessed for onsite visits. During this period one school- The Forest School had a S8 inspection during the summer term which then called forward a S5 full inspection, however, that report is not yet published.

From the start of the autumn term the full inspection programme returns. This will include a re-introduction of inspections for schools previously judged to be Outstanding. Schools in this category were previously exempt from inspection. They will now be subject to routine inspection and the school improvement team have been providing support and guidance to flag the requirements to the group of schools that this applies to within the borough. For some of these schools their last inspection was over ten years ago, in which time there have been significant and multiple changes to inspection frameworks and thereby expectations of evidence for schools to demonstrate to remain outstanding. This is a risk factor that has been highlighted to these schools who continue to strive for the best for their pupils.

The current inspection schedule is behind due to pandemic disruption and the new process outlined this September indicates that schools can expect delays to their inspections of up to six terms, statutory guidance has been updated to reflect this.

General development priorities

In the year ahead work will be continuing in supporting our schools with their pandemic responses and ensuring that all pupils move forward effectively.

In addition workstreams already commenced in relation to Racial Equity in schools, Therapeutic Thinking, Well-Being and Mental Health continue with full programmes of development, training and resources.

Officers will be continuing with supporting and challenging schools. Autumn term virtual visits are booked and support for schools likely to be in an upcoming inspection window has been prioritised.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
N/A

Cross-Council Implications
N/A

Public Sector Equality Duty
Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

List of Background Papers
N/A

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