

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 1st February 2018

Wards: All wards

Subject: Departmental Update Report January 2018

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley, Director of Children, Schools and Families Department

Lead member: Cllr Katy Neep, Cabinet Member for Children Services
Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

Contact officer: Mark Gwynne, Interim Head of Policy, Planning and Performance

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

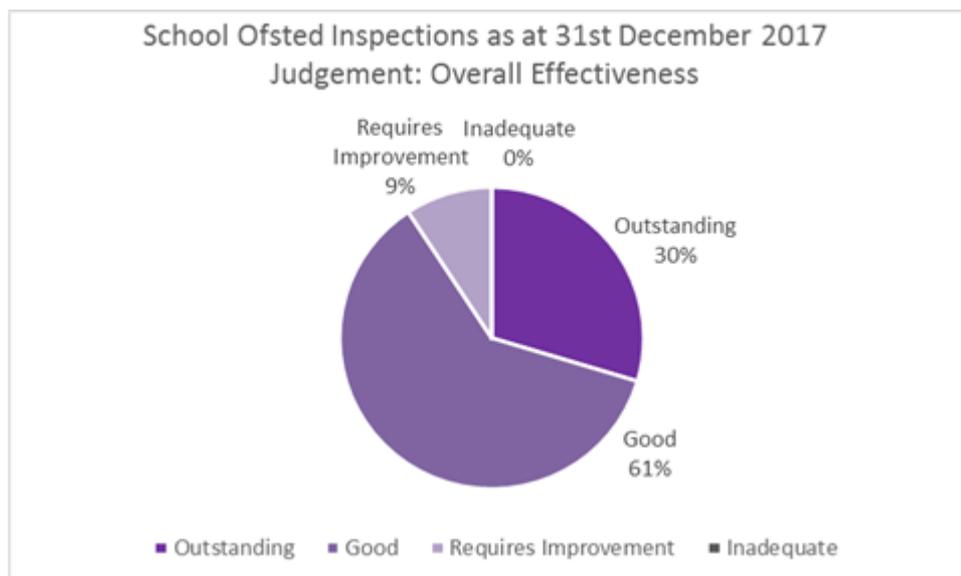
1.1 The report provides members of the panel with information on key developments not covered elsewhere on the agenda and affecting the Children, Schools and Families Department since the panel's last meeting in January 2018.

2 DETAILS

2.1 **Harris Academy Wimbledon** – The two key risks around the ability to provide a clear site at High Path to build the new Harris Wimbledon School, which were outlined at the previous meeting, have passed. The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has decided not to add Merton Hall to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and, following on from this, the Judicial Review claim has been withdrawn. This enables plans to proceed on building the new Harris Wimbledon School, and progress towards its opening for September 2018.

2.2 **School Ofsted Inspections** – Following implementation of the new inspection process for schools, there is now a delay and further inspection required before schools are able to move their ratings up or down. This means that performance of our schools is unlikely to change during the year as it has in previous years. This means that our results for the rest of the year should remain as:

- 100% of secondary schools being rated as “Good” or “Outstanding”
- 91% of all schools now rated as “Good” or better; and
- 93% of our pupils are educated in schools rated as “Good” or better.



- 2.3 **CAFCASS Section 31 Duration** – CAFCASS report on the duration and disposals for each Section 31 care and supervision applicant. Data recently published demonstrates that Merton has moved from worst performing in London, to best performing over the last 5 years with an average duration of 25 weeks for Quarter 2 2017/18 compared to 67 weeks during 2012/13. Over this period we have also managed to ensure that the number of proceedings is considerably lower than many councils with similar levels of deprivation.
- 2.4 **Adoption Scorecards 2014-17** – In March 2016, *Adoption: A Vision for Change* set out the Government’s strategy for adoption. The DfE is currently reviewing how they can make better use of data to drive high performance across the system and how the present Adoption Scorecards can be developed to ensure they provide meaningful data on performance in a regionalised system.
- 2.5 In the meantime, DfE will continue to publish scorecards in their current form with the indicators and thresholds remaining the same. Previously, thresholds have been raised incrementally over a four-year period until they reflected levels set out in statutory guidance: this level has now been reached, so the thresholds will remain the same. This means for 2014-17 the thresholds will continue to be set at 426 days (14 months) for the A1 indicator and 121 days (4 months) for the A2 indicator. Merton performance for the three-year rolling average remains better than the thresholds using the provisional figures currently available.
- 2.6 **Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB)** – the Annual Report is included as a separate item for this meeting and preparation is underway for the joint conference in March continuing the Think Family: No Wrong Door approach, with a specific focus on parental mental health.
- 2.7 **Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC)** – Working together with Croydon County Court, West London Family Court and the Inner London Family Court, the partnership will offer an alternative form of care proceedings for parents and children in those cases where substance misuse is a key factor in the decision to bring proceedings: known as the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC).

- 2.8 Referrals will be made by children's social care and will be agreed internally to ensure referrals meet the criteria for FDAC services. Work on mobilisation is near complete and the service is now live. Merton is leading, across nine boroughs and awarded the contract to the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust who have been working with the Cross Borough Operational Group and the FDAC Board to mobilise. Contracts and Terms & Conditions are being finalised to ensure that the new service is up and running from January 2018.
- 2.9 **Social Impact Bond (SIB)** – The Pan-London Care Impact Partnership involving Merton, Tower Hamlets, Bexley, Newham and Sutton councils has been launched during January to deliver Multi-Systemic and Functional Family Therapy services for councils within the partnership, leveraging in financial resources using a (SIB). The aim of the programme is to keep vulnerable families together and prevent children from being taken into care.
- 2.10 The project is now live and referrals are being identified for this 3 year programme with tracking mechanisms identified to enable case progress to be monitored and evaluation of the overall benefits of the programme to be compiled across the partnership.

3. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 No specific implications from this report.

4. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 No specific implications from this report.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No specific implications from this report

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No specific implications from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 No specific implications from this report.

8. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- 8.1 None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None

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