



Oldham
Council

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Board

Oldham Education Disadvantage and Social Mobility Update:

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor P Jacques, Cabinet Member for Education and Culture

Officer Contact: Andrew Sutherland, Director of Education, Skills & Early Years

Report Author: Tony Shepherd, Head of Learning Service
Ext. 3667

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Purpose of the Report

To provide a summary of the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Education Task and Finish Group on disadvantage.

To provide an update of the work of the Opportunity Area to influence social mobility for disadvantaged children and young people.

Recommendations

To note the report.

To seek an update in 12 months' time on the educational impact of the work being carried out by the Education, Skills and Early Years Service, supported by Opportunity Area funding, to improve social mobility across the community.

1. Background

Overview & Scrutiny Education Task and Finish Group and disadvantage

- 1.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Education Task and Finish Group are interested in local strategies on to reduce disadvantage and the use of the related Pupil Premium. They sought to gain an insight into the associated challenges and opportunities faced by schools and academies, and to consider how the group could assist. Two meetings took place with a selection of head teachers, officers and elected member representatives.
- 1.2 On 20th September, 2017 a round table discussion took place on the theme of 'how to support social mobility and the attainment and wider achievement of disadvantaged children & young people in Oldham'. The elected members present were keen to support the schools, academies and the local authority in whatever way possible to help support the outcome. (see Appendix 1).

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- 1.3 On 21st November, 2018 the Overview & Scrutiny Education Task and Finish Group met again to examine developments in the education of children and young people who are disadvantaged in the borough. At a meeting at the Oldham Sixth Form College, officers presented evidence relating to 2018 educational outcomes and the challenge for 2019 & 2020. This included SEND, the Opportunity Area and its focus on disadvantage. The ensuing discussion reflected on the improvements to provision since the previous meeting and it was agreed that a summary of the work reviewed on the day, including Opportunity Area support, should be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Board (see Appendix 2).

Background to Opportunity Area Support

- 1.4 In autumn 2017 the Department for Education (DfE) identified Oldham as one of twelve Opportunity Areas. Oldham was chosen because the data indicated that children in the borough are less likely to have access to high quality education, employment opportunities and support when they need it than children from similar backgrounds, elsewhere. Oldham ranked as 294th out of 324 districts in the 2016 Social Mobility Index, which compares the chances that a child from a disadvantaged background will do well at school and get a good job in areas across the country. Oldham was ranked 34th out of 326 areas in England, on the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation, which compares areas by using neighbourhood level data on economic, educational, health and social outcomes.
- 1.5 The Opportunity Area programme is a key part of the governmental priority of tackling social mobility and improving opportunities for young people in areas with both poor social mobility and schools that face challenges. The Oldham Opportunity Area is collaborative venture by national and local government, education leaders and teachers, voluntary organisations and employers, to give children and young people across the borough the opportunities and support they deserve. It directs additional resources towards the borough over a 3 year period from 2018-2020.
- 1.6 Following initial data analysis and consultation with Oldham Council, local partners, school leaders, young people and others in early 2017; the three priorities below were agreed for the Opportunity Area:
- Priority 1: Ensure all children are school-ready by the age of five
 - Priority 2: Raising attainment for all, and raising it fastest for disadvantaged pupils
 - Priority 3: All children and young people to be ready for life, learning and work

2. Current Position

Programmes and activities which focus on the 3 social mobility priorities set out above have been in place since early 2018. The most significant activities are

explained below, with descriptions of the target groups and areas in which the local authority seeks most impact.

2.1 Early Years:

- *The Making it REAL* home learning project in early years settings was developed by the National Children's Bureau to improve children's early literacy skills by teaching parents and carers strategies to support learning at home. It is designed for families with children aged three to five years old. The Oldham project is focussed on targeted wards and children, with the aim of increasing the percentage of children achieving a good level of development (GLD) by age five, and in particular for disadvantaged boys. It is funded in 31 schools across 11 wards (Alexandra, Chadderton Central, Chadderton North, Coldhurst, Crompton, Hollinwood, Medlock Vale, Royton North, Shaw, St Mary's and Werneth). To date 1053 home visits have been completed involving 260 enrolled children and 160 siblings. At least 57 practitioners have completed the additional REAL approach to Maths CPD and 19 parents have completed the Sharing REAL with parents training.

Additional programmes include:

- *Making it REAL* literacy home learning project in children's centres (0-2 years)
- Early Literacy Continuous Professional Development project in PVI settings
- Speech, Language and Communication Team to support the early years workforce, parents and professionals

2.2 Schools:

- The best schools in Greater Manchester (GM) have been commissioned to support 24 of our most challenged primary and secondary schools in Oldham with long-term school-to-school activity
 - An 'Improving the performance of disadvantaged boys at age 16' project has taken place in Royton and Crompton Academy, Waterhead Academy, Oasis Academy, Saddleworth School, Newman College, and Co-op Academy Failsworth. Led by Advantage Teaching School, the project focusses on teaching and learning, using evidence-informed strategies to raise attainment standards in core subjects for 180 Year 11 disadvantaged boys
 - A literacy continuous professional development programme has been commissioned from 3 of the best Teaching Schools in GM
 - Four local leaders in Maths Education have been appointed to work across Oldham schools, supported by the Maths Hub and the National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics
 - A leadership development pathway for aspirant and current school leaders is also in place
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2.3 Mental Health and the wider curriculum

- A team of new specialist mental health advisors have developed a cross-Oldham programme of support and guidance for teachers and pupils. This will ensure that school staff have the skills and support they need on mental health. Over 100 schools are engaged with mental health self-assessments and action plans. 92 schools now have a designated mental health senior lead. 130 teachers attended a best practice event in January 2019 and governor awareness training commences in March 2019. There are now in place a number of staff training programmes for over 50 schools. In addition our young people also benefit from an Essential Life Skills programme covering aspects of wider achievement for all Oldham schools. The Oldham Pledge which offers a wider curriculum opportunity is available in 43 schools.

2.4 Summary and recommendation

These programmes are designed to strengthen the capacity of the local educational system across each of the 3 priority areas and it is anticipated that these priorities, which are designed to increase social mobility, will continue to be important beyond the life span of the Opportunity Area in 2020.

It is recommended that the Overview & Scrutiny Education Task and Finish Group maintain their interest in supporting social mobility by seeking an update on progress in 12 months' time.

3. **Links to Corporate Outcomes**

The work described above supports the corporate outcome of thriving communities
