

REPORT TO:	Children, Families and Education Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	06 September 2023
REPORT OF:	Director of Education, Work and Skills
REPORT TITLE:	SCHOOLS STRATEGY

1. Why do we need a Schools Strategy?

- 1.1 There has been much debate in the past decade about the role of local authorities within the school system. We need a strategy which moves past this debate and defines confidently the role of the Local Authority within the Stockport schools system.
- 1.2 We know that the role of the Local Authority has changed over the past decade, as have the challenges we face. In order to be confident in our leadership we must develop a strategy that builds on our many strengths, responds to the national academies programme and addresses the challenges we face.

2. Stockport Council Plan

2.2 Our Council Plan describes the role of Stockport Council in supporting the borough, through the provision and delivery of key services that are essential to everyday life.

2.3 The plan outlines our 4 'big ambitions' that will create opportunities for everyone within the borough: -

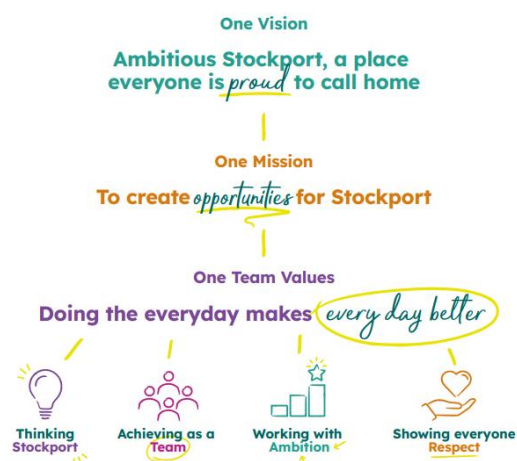
- 1) Investment, regeneration and creating jobs;
- 2) Education, employment and skills;
- 3) Wellbeing in neighbourhoods;
- 4) Delivering for those who most need it.

2.4 An effective schools' strategy is essential to the delivery of our Council Plan. Achieving our ambitions requires the very best schools and colleges in the country with every child included in their success.

Our Mission, Vision and Values

We're Stockport Council

One team on a mission to create opportunities for Stockport. Ambitious Stockport. A place that everyone is proud to call home. We work together with our partners as One Stockport. Our Values define how we work, we always think about Stockport first, achieve as a team, work with ambition and show everyone respect.



3. The National Context

- 3.1 The biggest change to the school system in the last decade has been the rise of academies and multi academy trusts. This is a permanent change to our school system.
- 3.2 The Government's ambition for all schools to be part of a multi academy trust by 2030 was reflected in the White Paper 'Opportunities for all' and the accompanying Schools Bill published in 2022. Though the Schools Bill was withdrawn in December 2022, the Government has reinforced its commitment to many of the objectives underpinned in the Bill.
- 3.3 Under the new school system, local authorities remain at the heart of the education system, championing all children in their area, especially the most vulnerable. Local authorities retain responsibility for: -
- coordinating local services to improve outcomes for children;
 - meeting communities' needs for good school places through planning and securing provision;
 - securing the best outcomes for individual children, especially the most vulnerable, through safeguarding and attendance.
- 3.4 Whilst there are excellent relationships between the Local Authority and our school leaders in Stockport, our ways of working together have not changed significantly since 2010 (and the acceleration of the academies programme). We have no proactive strategy to engage with the national academies agenda and if a Stockport school is rated inadequate and requires sponsorship we have insufficient local options to do this.
- 3.5 In order to affect outcomes for all children, we need a schools strategy which builds on our strengths and embraces the academies agenda.

4. Other challenges

- 4.1 We are rightly proud of the quality of education provided by our schools, colleges, and early years' settings.
- 4.2 However we are facing a number of notable challenges. Our challenges pre-pandemic remain *and* are likely increased, these challenges include: -
- Improving outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and for disadvantaged children across the school system.
 - Ensuring we have sufficient high quality provision and school places for children with SEND.
 - Accelerating the improvement of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes, especially in communication, language and literacy.

- Increasing attendance for all children, especially children with SEND and disadvantaged children.
- Improving the consistency of the quality in secondary schools – only 62% of our secondary schools are currently rated good or better by Ofsted.

4.3 In addition we know that: -

- We are significantly challenged by our Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding settlement.
- We have a backlog of school building condition issues and insufficient funding to meet the need.
- We have 31 one form of entry schools, this is a third of all schools.
- The pressures we face are replicated across our public sector partners, especially in the NHS.
- Stockport's communities are becoming increasingly diverse, and we need to ensure that we understand the needs of our residents and act decisively to address any inequality or discrimination, so Stockport is a welcoming place for everyone to succeed.

5. The Importance of Stockport Family Education, Health and Care

5.1 In order to address the challenges we have outlined above, our integrated model 'Stockport Family', which works together across education, health and care, has never been more important. It is key to responding to and meeting demand. This strategy is proposed both within the model and as a vehicle to extend and further embed our integration.

5.2 Schools are the key universal service for children, and are a vital part of our neighbourhood delivery model. This Schools Strategy is underpinned by the premise that it is through the integration of our offer to children, families and schools, that we can deliver for every child every day. We know there are no simple solutions to the complex challenges we face. Therefore our success will be defined by the strength of our partnerships and the quality of our practice.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the report, the 6 priorities identified and the proposal to provide an annual update on implementation and impact.

APPENDIX ONE

DRAFT STOCKPORT SCHOOLS STRATEGY 2023-2028

Purpose of the Stockport Schools Strategy

Our Schools Strategy provides an opportunity to define, refine and reorganise our thinking and our approach to ensure that we have a school system which is fit for purpose, sustainable, able to respond to the needs of children in our borough and meet the requirements of the current national policy agenda.

There has been much debate in the past decade about the role of local authorities within the school system. This strategy moves past this debate and aims to define confidently the role of the Local Authority within the Stockport schools system.

The strategy is underpinned by an understanding that the role of the Local Authority has changed, as have the challenges we face. In order to be confident in our leadership our strategy responds to the national context and addresses the challenges we face.

It is a shared strategy, with shared borough wide ambitions that can only be delivered through strong partnerships between schools and the Local Authority, between the Local Authority and parents, and, critically, strong partnerships between schools.

The strategy is not an education strategy, but rather focuses on the structural organisation of the Stockport schools system. A wider suite of interlinked educational strategies will follow, with a focus on issues including literacy and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Vision and ambition

Our shared overarching vision is for Stockport to be ‘the best place for all children to grow up happy, healthy, with confidence, ambition and surrounded by love, care, and kindness. We want all children to have the very best start in life and to thrive throughout their growing up and beyond.’ (Stockport Borough Plan)

Our strong partnerships with schools and school leaders have an essential role in helping achieve our overarching vision. Whilst we know that we have many great schools and that children in Stockport achieve well, we also know that there is more we can do.

Our ambition is to have the best schools, early years settings and colleges in the country with every child included in their success.

Our Schools Strategy aims to build on the strengths of our current offer to children. We want to further embed our Stockport Family model within a sustainable and successful local system. We want to build on: -

- The communication, collective action and collaboration that was demonstrated in our response to the Covid 19 pandemic;
- Our successful approach to restorative practice;
- The central role of schools and settings at the heart of our communities;
- Our corporate commitment to a relentless focus on inclusion;
- Our commitment to co-production and to always working with and listening to the voice of children, young people and their families,
- Ongoing work to link support and services to the localities, schools and settings where children live, learn and play;
- Our proven track record of getting things done.

Our Schools Strategy embraces collaboration because we know that: -

- Collaboration between schools is vital to achieving a self-improving school system;
- Collaboration between schools and the Local Authority is crucial if we are to meet the needs of all children;
- Collaboration with parents, carers and families is essential if we are to understand and meet every child's needs
- Enhancing and embedding collaboration as part of our Stockport Family model (education, health and care) is critical to ensuring we have the stability and capacity we need to achieve our ambitions for children and families.

Priorities

The following priorities provide a roadmap to guide our partnership work over the next five years. They are intended to build on our many strengths in order to help us achieve our ambition and ensure our school system is in the strongest possible position to address the challenges we continue to face.

1. We will encourage all schools to be involved in a formal partnership with another school.

A formal partnership can take many forms, for example agreements to share back office functions; shared leadership models (Executive Headteachers); federation and joining a multi-academy trust. Multi-Academy Trust (MATs) are (*perhaps*) the best model for formal collaboration between schools and only a MAT can sponsor a failing school. The purpose of these formal partnerships is to provide the sustainable capacity we need to improve outcomes for all children.

The first focus of our attention should be one form entry primary schools, infant and junior schools, this is to ensure we have a sustainable leadership model for these schools; and secondary schools to ensure we have the leadership capacity required to improve the consistency of the quality of our offer.

2. We will deliver our commitment to the restructure of our delivery services

This will ensure that our services, whether traded or provided without charge, are focused on creating the conditions within which great school leaders can run great schools. We are committed to a school led system which recognises that the capacity and expertise to improve schools exists in our school system and recognises that the accountability for school outcomes lies with school leaders.

3. We will ensure every Stockport school is able to join a local Multi Academy Trust (MAT)

This is essential if we are to ensure that our schools remain rooted in our communities. This will enable us to maximise the community leadership provided by Headteachers. This will require the Local Authority to work closely with its school leaders and Department for Education officials to ensure we have a sufficient network of local MATs which are sustainable and successful. This will include working with our existing MATs to support their growth and establishing, in partnership with school leaders, new MAT capacity.

We *will insist* that all our local MATs are proactive members of our local partnerships and are committed to our Stockport Family model, to delivering on our Borough priorities; and share and embrace our vision and ambition for all children.

4. We will embed our commitment to collaboration with each other, with our partners and with parents, carers and families

This will ensure that through our work together we are committed to every child. To do this we must be clear about what we are trying to achieve and be prepared to hold each other to account for our behaviours and performance. We are agreed that we must set our own standards of performance and we know that bringing about long term improvement requires us all to focus on improving practice and the quality of our leadership. Therefore working with school leaders, parents and carers we will agree what having the 'best schools in the country' means and we will agree how we will deliver on this commitment. Co-production with families will remain central to all we do.

5. We will develop a clear strategic and proactive plan to manage fluctuation in pupil numbers

This will ensure we deliver our commitments to ensuring there are sufficient places in good and improving local inclusive schools at the heart of the community that children and families want to go to. We know that we must increase the quality of provision and *locally* available places for children with SEND.

Our plan must set out bold ambitions for the future education estate, maximising opportunities arising from development, creating quality and viable choice at all

levels and for all needs. Our long-term vision must feature in all the work we do and we must ensure that all partners in the system share our ambition.

We must have critical insights into the challenges the system faces now as well as in the future and our approach must therefore seek to maximise impact, outcomes and value: -

- It must further embed schools in their communities recognising them as anchors and/or hubs;
- It must seek to sustain, underpin, diversify and fully utilise existing schools' capacity. Drawing on the strength and resilience given by the enhanced team around the school (Stockport Family operating model);
- It must recognise that the quality of practice and teaching, the education offer, and school leadership are as important as physical space in terms of parental preference, school place planning and high-quality sufficiency;
- Where capital investment is needed, it must seek out opportunities to combine projects to achieve economies of scale, greater inclusion and better value.

Fundamental to our approach is having a secure understanding of data, enabling it to drive our decisions.

6. Through our Stockport Family model, we will remain focused on delivering the earliest support for all children and families

The Stockport Family integrated model puts children and families at the heart of service delivery with an emphasis on prevention, early help, strengths and asset-based approaches, community capacity building and neighbourhood working. It aims to draw demand upstream giving the greatest potential for meeting needs earlier and resultant reduction in spend.

Services are organised around delivery footprints aligning delivery arrangements for children closer to where they and their families live, and where they learn, play and transition to adulthood. This is fully in line with the expectation of the Integrated Care Systems model and the Neighbourhoods and Prevention approach. It enables children to receive services and support in the locations that make sense to them; providing better continuity of support and enabling the use of data to gain insight for a fuller picture of need and service provision in each locality.

Within each delivery footprint Family Hubs offer a one stop shop for families to access help and support, by bringing together services and support within a local area into a network of connected buildings, services and people.

In addition Team Around the School (TAS) and Team Around the Early Years (TAEY) model will continue to operate, focussing on the importance of continued collaboration with education settings to problem solve and develop the best conditions for children to thrive in and out of school. We will further integrate our TAS model to support children with SEND. The core team will involve social workers, early help, school nursing, as well as services to support inclusion and other relevant professionals. The team will involve close partnership working with other public

sector organisations including housing, the police and the community and voluntary sector.

Governance and Performance

This Schools Strategy supports the delivery of Greater Manchester priorities for children, young people and families and is one of a suite of strategies which support the delivery of the Stockport Children and Young People Plan.

Performance measures relating to educational attainment, attendance and inclusion, and school improvement are included in the Portfolio Performance and Resource Agreement for the Children and Families Portfolio and are closely monitored by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education and the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee.

To deliver these priorities we will work with School Leaders, young people and parents through our established partnerships forums and with our partners through the Stockport Family Partnership Board. We do not propose that any additional working groups or steering groups are established.

An annual report on progress and impact will be prepared by the Director of Education, Work and Skills for the agreement of Stockport Family Partnership Board and subsequently for the consideration at the Children, Families and Education Scrutiny Committee.

APPENDIX TWO

DATA AND PERFORMANCE

Data relating to the following performance measures is reported to the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis

School Readiness

PI Name	Reported	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 Target
Percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development at 2 years old	Annually		84.6%	86.0%
Percentage of children achieving at least the expected level in communication and language skills at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)	Annually		80.4%	81.0%
Percentage of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieving at least the expected level in communication and language skills at the end of EYFS	Annually			maximise
Percentage of children in need achieving at least the expected level in communication and language skills at the end of EYFS	Annually			Maximise
The above measures have been added to the PPRA to reflect the critical importance of language and communication to school readiness, learning and wellbeing. Our target is to be above the national average and within the top 20% nationally. Baseline data and targets for specific cohorts will be included in the PPRR as soon as confirmed.				

Education attainment

PI Name	Reported	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 Target
Children attaining the expected standard at Key Stage 2 in Reading	Annually		77.0%	78.0%
Children attaining the expected standard at Key Stage 2 in Reading – SEN Support	Annually		45.5%	46.0%
Key Stage 2 Attainment – CIN	Annually		49.0%	maximise
Key Stage 2 Attainment – FSM	Annually		58.1%	61.0%
Key Stage 2 Attainment – ethnically diverse	Annually		74.5%	78.0%
The above measures show the percentage of children achieving the expected standard in reading at the end of Key Stage 2. Data will be disaggregated by children in need, children eligible for free school meals and children of ethnically diverse backgrounds. These measures have been added to the PPRA to reflect our focus on reading.				
Our target is for borough-wide performance is to be above the national average overall and within the top 20% nationally and our target for the free school meal cohort reflects the national average for this group. Targets will not be set for the children in need cohort (in relation to all attainment measures) due to the small size of the cohort which means performance is subject to significant fluctuation and the lack of comparator data				
Children achieving 9-5 pass in English and Maths at Key Stage 4	Annually		50.80%	56%
Children achieving 9-5 pass in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 – SEN Support	Annually		25.8%	TBC
Children achieving 9-5 pass in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 – ethnically diverse	Annually			56%

Children achieving 9-5 pass in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 - FSM	Annually		28.6%	34%
Children achieving 9-5 pass in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 – CIN	Annually			Maximise
The above measures show the percentage of children achieving a 9-5 pass in English and Maths at the end of Key Stage 4. As above, data will be disaggregated by children in need, children eligible for free school meals and children of ethnically diverse backgrounds.				
Key Stage 4 Average Attainment 8 score per pupil	Annually		50%	52%
Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 score – SEN Support	Annually		36.6	TBC
Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 score – CIN	Annually		25.10%	Maximise
Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 score – FSM	Annually		38.10%	43%
Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 score – ethnically diverse	Annually			52%
The above measures reflect pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 across a selected set of 8 subjects, again disaggregated by the identified cohorts.				

School Improvement

PI Name	Reported	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 Target
Percentage of early years settings rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted	Bi-annually	95%	98%	98%
Quality of primary school education	Bi-annually	92%	89.4%	90%
Quality of secondary school education	Bi-annually	52%	60.10%	76%
Stockport is already in the top 10% nationally for the percentage of early years settings rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. The target is to maintain our performance				

Attendance and Inclusion

PI Name	Reported	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 Target
Persistent absentees	Annually	11.9%	20.10% (7738) Sept'22	19%
Persistent absentees (SEN Support)	Annually	34.2%	35.7% Sept'22	Minimise
Persistent absentees (CIN)	Annually	33.5%	39.5% (1150) Sept'22	Minimise
Persistent absentees (FSM)	Annually	27.2%	40.7% (3025) Sept'22	35%
Persistent absentees (ethnically diverse)	Annually			19%
The above indicators measure the percentage of pupils who miss more than 10% of their sessions across all schools. Direction of travel targets have been set where the cohort is small, and data is consequently subject to significant fluctuation.				
Fixed term exclusion rate	Annually	4.28%	7.79% (3007) Sept'22	5%
Fixed term exclusions (SEN Support)	Annually	12.06%	19.26% Sept'22	Minimise
Fixed term exclusions – CIN	Annually	25.54%	15.72% (457) Sept'22	Minimise

Fixed term exclusions – FSM	Annually	9.66%	17.75% (1286) Sept'22	Minimise
Fixed term exclusions – ethnically diverse	Annually			5%
<p>A fixed term exclusion refers to a pupil who is excluded from a school but remains on the register of that school because they are expected to return when the exclusion term is complete. Direction of travel targets have been set where the cohort is small and data is consequently subject to significant fluctuation or, in the case of new measures, where accurate baseline information (including comparative data) is not currently available.</p>				