

# Report to the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

6 January 2025

<b>Subject:</b>	Education Services: Priority Education Investment Area Plan
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Childrens' and Education Services Sally Giles
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Assistant Director: Education Services Julie Andrews <a href="mailto:Julie_andrews@sandwell.gov.uk">Julie_andrews@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the information provided within this report.
- 1.2 That the Board considers how developments to date could be sustained in the future.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To provide an update on the Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) programme in schools. What are the recent developments – how will these impact Sandwell schools and young people?
- 2.2 To inform the Board on developments within the different strands of Sandwell's Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) plan and to consider how these could be sustained in the future.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Council Plan?

Growing Up in Sandwell	<p>The PEIA programme links with the Directorate Business plan commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Challenge and support schools to raise standards in all key stages to close the gaps with national.</li><li>▪ Increase the proportion of schools and academies that offer a good or better Quality of Education as rated by Ofsted.</li><li>▪ Ensure that children and young people make good progress throughout their education, with the ambition to reach national standards.</li></ul> <p>The programme aims to bring about rapid improvement in outcomes for pupils across the borough at the end of KS2 and KS4. This will help to enable them to be better prepared for the next stage in their education or employment and enhance their life chances and choices.</p>
------------------------	---

### 4 Context and Key Issues

#### 4.1 Education Investment Areas (EIAs) and Priority Education Investment areas (PEIAs)

- In February 2022, HM Government announced that it would be delivering a package of measures in 55 EIAs to further drive school Improvement in England as part of the levelling up agenda. These were comprised of local authorities where educational outcomes at the end of both key stage 2 (KS2) and key stage 4 (KS4) were the weakest and others containing an Opportunity Area or areas previously identified for additional school improvement support.
- 24 of the EIAs were identified as PEIAs and have been receiving more intensive investment. Sandwell is one of these PEIAs and was allocated £2.9m in Local Needs Funding to support this initiative and deliver the agreed priorities and improvements within the life of the programme.
- A Local Partnership Board was established to work with Sandwell. Membership includes representatives from strong trusts, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), DfE, curriculum hubs, the Local Authority (LA) and local dioceses.

- The role of the Local Partnership Board includes helping to identify the main challenges to improving outcomes for children and young people, identifying a range of interventions to address these challenges, and helping to drive support and activity within the PEIA. The Board has also contributed to the development of Sandwell's Local Needs Delivery Plan and supported the monitoring of progress towards the agreed criteria within it.
- Sandwell's Local Needs Plan focuses on 3 themes:
  - **Attainment in Maths:** Improving the quality of maths provision across targeted schools (£1.20m estimated costing).
  - **Attainment in English:** Improving the teaching of literacy to ensure it is of good quality in all schools to enable learners to access the rest of the English curriculum and other subjects across both primary and secondary phases. (£1.10m estimated costing).
  - **Speech and language:** Development has suffered due to the pandemic, resulting in challenges in learning phonics at early years and KS1, which will have a long-term impact on KS2 attainment. (£0.60m estimated costing). It is anticipated that this strand will include a focus on SEND.

## 5 Current development

### 5.1 Context

- Following a procurement exercise, the Local Partnership Board, in consultation with the DfE, selected delivery partners for each strand of the programme. In accordance, with the funding criteria, the strands are being led by multi-academy trusts or DfE approved providers.
- A digital community platform has been set up for the duration of the project to facilitate collaboration and sharing of best practice, hosted by Shireland Collegiate Multi Academy Trust. Training materials and resources have also been uploaded to the platform for all Sandwell schools to access.
- Delivery partners submit termly impact reports to the Local Partnership Board to support the monitoring process, the most recent submitted in September 2024. However, it should be noted that at the point of submitting this report, data for the academic year 2023/34 has not yet been validated and is therefore not included. This will be available for the final project evaluation.

## 5.1 **KS2 and KS4 English strand**

- The improvement programme for KS2 and KS4 English is being delivered by Shireland Collegiate Multi Academy Trust in collaboration with Whole Education and their 'Words for All' programme. A total of 96 schools are currently participating (74 primary, 18 secondary, and 4 AP/ special).
- The offer to schools includes a range of training, networks and support activities to facilitate the development of reading, writing, oracy and literacy provision in schools across the borough at practitioner level and also the strategic leadership of English as a subject. These are fully funded and at no cost to participating schools.
- Core areas of focus include:
  - Improving whole school delivery of Literacy, and specifically to improve the impact of the Foundation Subjects on Key Stage 2 SAT performance in Reading and Writing.
  - Improving whole school delivery of Literacy, specifically to improve the impact of the Foundation Subjects on GCSE performance in English Language and Literature.
  - Developing the leadership of both Literacy and the curriculum to improve the effectiveness of Literacy strategies across the whole curriculum.
- Delivery partners report that project continues to be well established across most school settings, with 90% of primary schools, 96% of secondary and 71% of other educational setting schools currently being engaged. There has also been considerable collaboration and networking across all educational settings.

## 5.2 **Phonics strand**

- Support for phonics is being delivered by the English Hub and is fully funded. A key aim of this support is to share and develop best practice in relation to the teaching of early language, reading and phonics.
- Currently, there are 12 primary schools accessing this offer. Core elements have included:
  - A 2-Day Audit of provision and practice, leading to a development plan for the school (14 schools).

- Training and sessions to support the development of practice.
- Intensive support days bespoke to identified partner schools delivered by the Hub's literacy specialists who work with the school's reading leader, using the audit report to help make improvements to their reading provision (8 schools).
- Coaching for staff in partner schools to improve their knowledge, skills, and confidence in delivering phonics lessons with their chosen systematic synthetic phonics scheme.
- Funding to purchase resources where Gaps have been identified in provision (£110,629 allocated to date).

### 5.3 **KS2 and KS4 mathematics strand**

- The improvement programme for KS2 and KS4 mathematics is being delivered by the Maths Hub. All training and support activities are fully funded and at no cost to participating schools.
- The offer to schools is underpinned both the Teaching for Mastery programme, and the EEF's Implementation Guidance. Delivery is bespoke to the needs of schools being supported. Within this, schools are supported 'Intensive Support Partners' (ISPs). These are expert school improvement colleagues from the Hub who will work with the leadership team of the school to ensure that the necessary foundations are in place to support that improvement.
- A total of 28 schools are currently receiving targeted support (19 primary and 9 secondary). Core areas of support have included:
  - Maths curriculum and assessment.
  - Maths professional development.
  - Maths pedagogy.
- 10 primary schools received targeted support in 2023 /24, with 6 not requiring support into 2024/25. However, these schools continue to receive support via the Maths hub standard offer. Early unvalidated data indicates that all 10 schools showed an improvement in their end of KS2 SATs results in 2024. The remaining 4 schools will continue to receive intensive targeted support in 2024/25. An additional 9 schools are now receiving intensive support for 2024/25.

## 5.4 Metacognition and self-regulation strand

- The improvement programme for KS2 and KS4 is being delivered by Windsor Multi Academy Trust in collaboration with the Teach Like a Champion (TLAC) team. A total of 20 Sandwell schools were selected as focus schools following an expression of interest process (15 primary and 5 secondary) and 20 in Walsall. All training and support activities are fully funded and at no cost to participating schools in both boroughs.
- The project focuses on implementing evidence-based classroom frameworks for developing student metacognition and self-regulation, impacting on the overall quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum. Core activities have included:
  - Remote and in-person training of school implementation teams to improve metacognition and self-regulation, impacting on student outcomes in KS2 and KS4 in English and maths.
  - Support with accurate diagnosis and evaluation by leaders of teaching and learning and teachers of student metacognition and self-regulation (teacher and student effectiveness).
  - Follow-up visits to schools to develop practice in their settings.
  - The development of UK experts to coach and lead metacognition and self-regulation developments in the focus schools and to provide sustained capacity beyond the life of the project.
- The delivery partner reports that the project met or exceeded all progress measures in the summer term reporting period, including the development and delivery of the 2-day in-person training, 10 remote training modules, 2 video infrastructure support meetings, and multiple Steplab training sessions and follow-up sessions for schools.
- In the same timeframe, the project delivered 3 days of high-impact follow-up visits to 14 schools, with visits to the remaining schools scheduled for November 2024. Of the schools visited, 86% showed strong evidence of implementation, and 43% showed significant improvement after just 3 months of CPL.
- A sample of 14 out of the total of 40 schools was carried out in June 2024. 86% showed strong evidence of implementation, and 43% showed significant improvement after just 3 months of training and development.

## 5.5 SEND strand

- The improvement programme for KS2 and KS4 is being delivered by Victoria Multi Academy Trust in partnership with the Whole Education. All schools have access to a national professional development platform with resources presented by national leads,
- A total of 82 schools are currently participating (56 primary, 19 secondary, and 5 AP/ special). Of these, 19 have been selected as focus schools following (14 primary, 4 secondary and 1 AP /special).
- The project focuses on sustained improved leadership of SEND across Sandwell schools, leading to improved outcomes for SEND learners over time. The full programme is open to all Sandwell schools. In addition, identified focus Schools receive an 'enhanced' programme which includes in-reach/out-reach from Sandwell SEND experts. The 7 key themes within the programme are:
  - Intent: vision and strategy for SEND.
  - Identification: with a focus on effective early identification.
  - Provision mapping: using data effectively to plan interventions.
  - Implementation: inclusive high quality/quality first teaching; curriculum.
  - Impact: outcomes for SEND learners.
  - Effective use of teaching assistants.
  - Working with learners and families.
- To date, all schools have completed a self-evaluation and action plan for SEND Improvement and are in the process of accessing 1:1 meetings with national SEND experts to refine their plans to ensure that they are focused and can demonstrate impact.
- SEND leads are involved in local 'quad' collaborative networks, led by a local coach who facilitates half termly meetings. The focus is on supporting one other to implement action plans and share best practice. The quads are now established and working effectively. This has provided a network of support for schools with an experienced SENCO supporting good practice.
- All focus schools have been partnered with a local expert school which matches their identified individual need. Scoping visits have taken place and feedback and support plans have been submitted. Follow up in-reach and out-reach support which is bespoke to each schools' needs is also on-going.

- Feedback from SENCOs is showing growing confidence to meet the needs of children/young people with SEND at an organisation level and feedback from coaches and quad schools evidences collaborative working developing across the region.
- A network transformation expert is now beginning to work with Sandwell SENCO Network led to plan a sustainable way forward to ensure that these networks remain focused on SEND improvement and continue the school-to-school self-improving model after the project end. There are also plans for the audit to be strengthened with the addition of peer reviews and developing the criteria to include the national audit framework, coproduced via the SENDCo working group.
- This group will also be coproducing the Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) document and the graduated approach for Sandwell, which will lead to a clear understanding of thresholds and expectations across Sandwell and improve consistency of practice.

## **6 Next Steps**

- National funding for the PEIA development programme is in place until the end of the 2024/25 financial year. Beyond this point, the LA will need to consider how development to date could be sustained and how this could continue to be funded and delivered.
- The LA currently has a School Improvement Advisory Team. The team is continuing to develop their offer to schools. This could include some capacity to lead on future development building on that established via the PEIA programme. Consideration should be given as to how this could be achieved, potentially in collaboration with other local partners.
- A key aspect of the success of the PEIA programme to date has been the availability of funding to develop and improve practice. Consideration should therefore be given as to how future funding could be provided and / or accessed to continue this in Sandwell schools.



## 7 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Local Partnership Board PEIA Local Needs Funding (£2.9m) Delivery partners.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	Compliance with Ministerial plans to drive intensive school improvement under the Priority Areas Programme.
<b>Risk:</b>	Close monitoring of progress on key metrics will need to take place to ensure that the expected improvement is achieved and can be evidenced, and that any necessary adjustments are made to the plan to support this.
<b>Equality:</b>	The PEIA programme will address entrenched underperformance, including in literacy and numeracy, in areas with some of the highest rates of disadvantage in the country.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	The speed at which intervention takes place for children and young people who need it will occur faster and be more targeted across the LA, ensuring that they receive the right support sooner.
<b>Social Value:</b>	The programme will support children and young people to progress fairly to further education, training and employment. It will also help to address the impact of the disruption to their studies caused by COVID 19.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	There are no climate change implications in relation to this report.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	The PEIA programme will support the Council's ambition to ensure that Sandwell's care experienced children and young people can access high quality educational provision to enable them to progress to further / higher education, training and employment of their choice.

## 8 Appendices

N/A

## 9 Background Papers

N/A