

Portfolio update

Cllr Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 21 July 2021



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Schools in Birmingham

- 442 schools
- In addition there are 55 independent schools and 10 colleges

Type	LA	Academy	Free	Total
Nursery	27			27
Primary	164	129	2	295
Secondary	18	52	9	79
All Through		5	2	7
Special	20	7		27
PRU / Alternate	1		6	7
Total	230	193	19	442

- Total pupil numbers 213,057

State-funded nursery	2940
State-funded primary	112057
State-funded secondary*	85006
State-funded special school	4457
Pupil referral unit	398
State-funded total	204,858
Independent school	8199
Total	213,057

- Birmingham school population compared to national

School Population Overall	  									
	EAL	FSM	SEN		White	Asian	Black	Mixed	Chinese	Other
Birmingham	40.6	35	17.3		32.6	37.1	12.5	9.3	0.5	7.5
National	19.5	19.9	15.3		72.8	11.4	5.7	6.2	0.5	3.5

Education performance

- The DfE has not published attainment data since the COVID pandemic so the latest available data is available in the [Annual Education Performance Report 2019](#)
- Schools have been working to support pupils to catch up on learning that has been impacted by the pandemic
- This will continue in the upcoming academic year
- Schools have been provided with funding for this purpose from the government - Catch Up Premium

Summer holidays

- The council has used government COVID Local Support Grant funding to provide supermarket vouchers for families eligible for free school meals
- The Holiday Activities and Food programme will be taking place across Birmingham throughout the summer holidays.
- Activities will be taking place at schools and, where schools are not running activities, Birmingham City Council has carefully chosen partners who have significant experience in running activity programmes with food for children aged 5-16
- Children will be able to enjoy all sorts of fun age-related activities including sports and games, arts and crafts, cookery, dance and music together with their friends as well as a meal each day.
- The daily programmes will vary depending on the site and location of each local club.
- Most clubs will run for a minimum of 4 hours a day, Mondays to Fridays.
- More information is available at www.bringitonbrum.co.uk

Schools during the pandemic

- Since March 2020 schools have been operating in extremely challenging circumstances
- Initially open to only the children of critical workers and vulnerable children, schools welcomed more children back in June 2020 and were fully open during the autumn term
- Schools were closed again to most pupils from the start of the spring term until March 2021
- At all points, BCC has supported schools with
 - A comprehensive risk assessment template updated with all government and Public Health guidance
 - Public Health advice on individual schools' circumstances
 - Support where schools had positive cases or outbreaks
- The risk assessment template has been fully updated with the new government guidance announced on 6th July to support schools to plan for the new academic year

Attendance

- Officers have monitored attendance closely throughout the pandemic and daily information has been collated by the DfE
- After the full reopening of schools in March 2021, attendance in Birmingham experienced the same challenges as schools elsewhere in the country/region
- For example attendance on Monday 26th April was:
 - Birmingham 91.5%
 - National 91.6%
 - Core Cities 90.5%
 - West Midlands 91.3%
- More recently, attendance has been impacted by the rising number of cases of the Delta variant in the city with increasing numbers of pupils isolating.
- As at Tuesday 6th July, over 10% of pupils were absent from school for COVID reasons (positive cases or self isolation) compared to 8% nationally.

Attendance

- Throughout the pandemic additional support has been in place for schools and families around attendance.
- The appropriateness of using the legal stages of the council's attendance enforcement process was regularly reviewed during the pandemic.
- Legal action was suspended from the start of the pandemic until the end of the summer term in July 2020, for the first half-term of the autumn term and then again from January 2021 until after May half-term 2021.
- The focus continues to be on early help since the enforcement stages of our attendance processes were reintroduced for the remainder of the summer term.

Children Missing Education

- There is a strong partnership approach – for example the council has a formal protocol which supports work with UK Border Agency staff including at Birmingham Airport focused on cases with established safeguarding concerns.
- Around 20% of CME referrals have at some point been known to the Children's Trust. The CME team work closely with the Trust and prioritise work with vulnerable children.
- There are a higher number of CME referrals received for primary age children than for secondary (63% compared to 37% in the first term of 2020/21).
- Attendees at a recent CME Webinar reflected the focus on primary schools of CME activity.
- The CME figures reflect an increase over the period (aside from the reduction in 2018), with the 2020 figure reflecting the increase in referrals including for those children 'believed to be abroad' resulting from the Covid context.

Elective home education

- All EHE notifications are carefully screened on receipt, with checks made of the Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT)'s databases as well as the Education database.
- Children with identified vulnerabilities, CP and CIN plans, are prioritised
- Identified social workers and family support workers are immediately contacted to share information and ensure a focus on maintaining regular contact and oversight of children.
- Monthly EHE notifications spiked significantly in September 2020 when 407 children were withdrawn from schools for EHE compared to 169 in September 2019.
- Of the 2,445 children bring electively home educated at the end of June 2021, the parents of 297 (12%) have specifically noted Covid19 as the reason for EHE. However, subsequent staff contacts with families indicates that around 50% of families who withdrew their children from schools during the pandemic decided to home educate due to their fears about the spread of the virus.
- To reduce the impact of withdrawing children from school due to Covid anxiety, officers are working closely with health colleagues
- addition, the School Nurse Service is available to parents seeking advice and is actively contacting parents who may be Covid hesitant to allay their fears around their children's school attendance.
- We are in the process of recruiting a one year fixed-term EHE Adviser to support the increase in EHE numbers.

Monthly Elective Home Education notifications received from schools.

Month	2019	2020	2021
June	68	28	25
July	55	17	
August	1	19	
September	169	407	
October	94	158	
November	86	153	
December	55	71	
January	96	118	71
February	89	87	53
March	97	74	119
April	58	42	88
May	71	13	95
TOTAL	939	1187	(451)

Exclusions

- Exclusion rates have reduced this academic year compared to previous years
- Table below shows permanent exclusions as at 5th July 2021 compared with the same date in 2020 and 2019

Phase/Academic Yr	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Primary	99	53	25
Secondary	158	152	108
Special	3	5	3
Total	260	210	136

- Tackling School Exclusions group meets regularly – partnership working across a number of agencies to explore strategies to reduce exclusion rates

Part-time/reduced timetables

- In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time/reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example; where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education or a reduced timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.
- A part-time/reduced timetable that does not have clearly defined objectives, a specified end date, a review process, and/or the consent of parents/carers may be considered an unlawful exclusion by Ofsted.
- Current guidance from Ofsted states that information about children missing from education is essential and all schools should notify the local authority of any part-time education arrangements.
- BCC has recently published new guidance and an online form for schools in cases of pupils being placed on part-time timetables

Part-time/reduced timetables

- Requirement for schools to notify the LA of any child on a part-time/reduced timetable
- BCC guidance and online form – trialled until September
- Staggered formal introduction – Primary/Secondary Schools - September, Special Schools - October
- Any child offered less hours education than their peers
- Integration/reintegration packages - ideally no more than 6 weeks
- For the good of the child not the school
- Consent of parents
- SENAR/Virtual school
- Database monitored, schools contacted by ELIT for advice and support

School budgets

- As at 31st March 2021 the cumulative net school balances for BCC maintained schools is £76.433m.
- The number of maintained schools in deficit has decreased to 28 (11.9% of the total number of maintained schools).
- The cumulative value of deficits has decreased by £2.401m to £6.323m.

Sector	2019/20 LA Maintained Schools 31st March 2020					2020/21 LA Maintained Schools 31st March 2021				
	Total Balance	Surplus Schools		Deficit Schools		Total Balance	Surplus Schools		Deficit Schools	
	£	No	£	No	£	£	No	£	No	£
Nursery	912,599.73	19	2,192,277.65	8	(1,279,677.93)	1,546,557.14	19	2,683,452.34	8	(1,136,895.21)
Primary	32,306,581.91	147	35,436,231.03	22	(3,129,649.11)	48,098,783.59	155	50,342,990.40	14	(2,244,206.80)
Secondary	17,366,533.36	16	17,770,693.72	1	(404,160.37)	21,983,861.62	16	22,091,931.53	1	(108,069.92)
Special	1,017,697.85	14	4,928,159.61	8	(3,910,461.76)	4,803,929.57	17	7,637,284.31	5	(2,833,354.74)
Total Schools	51,603,412.85	196	60,327,362.01	39	(8,723,949.17)	76,433,131.92	207	82,755,658.58	28	(6,322,526.66)

School Forum

- Officers are working with the Clerk and the Chair of Birmingham Schools Forum to review its effectiveness and introduce potential improvements
- A self-assessment is being undertaken using best practice guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- Options for webcasting the meetings are being explored as well as ensuring the public are able to access virtual meetings
- An update will be provided to this committee towards the end of the autumn term 2021.

Relationships, Health and Sex Education

- The government's new relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education curriculum has been compulsory since September 2020
- Responding to calls from primary schools for clear guidance in this area, Birmingham City Council led the development of an RHE curriculum
- This was due to be launched at an in-person event in March 2020 but was instead launched virtually in June 2020
- Four webinars have taken place to support the applied practice of the Birmingham resource with further sessions planned for the autumn term
- A survey of schools will be undertaken in September 2021 to obtain feedback on the Birmingham curriculum with findings presented to this committee

Everyone's Invited

- Earlier this year the Everyone's Invited website urged sexual abuse survivors to share their stories
- Schools across the country, including some from Birmingham, have been listed on the site
- All allegations relating to Birmingham schools are being triaged and will be referred to West Midlands Police and to Birmingham Children's Trust as appropriate.
- Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership recently undertook a survey of Birmingham schools and colleges. Initial feedback from this survey is currently being reviewed.
- Officers from BCC and partners will review this strategy to see if additional action is needed with the named schools or with the individual testimonies themselves
- We may, for example, want to share the list of named schools with partners to see if other intelligence raises further concerns e.g. police, health, Empower-U etc but we evidently need to manage this well with the schools and give them the opportunity to have a direct dialogue local authority officers.

Commonwealth Games

- Steering Group is in place to oversee this work within Education and Skills
- Commonwealth Games learning programme will:
 - support Birmingham's wider strategic aims (i.e work towards becoming a UNICEF Child Friendly City)
 - link the work already focusing on anti-racism and the Birmingham civic history project
 - prioritise opportunities for young people
 - focus on NEET young people

Birmingham Youth Service

- The **Youth Service is an open access service available to all young people**, most of its 15 centres are based in areas of greatest need within the city. Within this open access service, it delivers targeted work to respond to local need. (Youth violence, exploitation, employment, preventing violent extremism, health and well being, sexual health to different groups of young people)
- The **Youth Service offers a broad range of opportunities, experiences and activities relevant to the needs of young people.**
- Youth work is based on a **youth worker building a positive relationship with a young person** which is based on trust and mutual respect and then using that relationship to support and develop the learning experiences and personal development of the young person.

Birmingham Youth Service Offer

Each Youth Centre offers:

- Information, Advice and Support to young people by a qualified youth worker
- A safe place for them to meet friends
- A positive relationship with a “trusted adult” (the youth worker) which is built on honesty, respect and is non-judgemental.
- The Umbrella Scheme – provides sexual health programmes, STI testing and condom distribution.
- Targeted programmes – examples include PVE, youth violence, sexual health, health, activities and employment
- Opportunities for young people to get involved in activities, examples include drama, sports, events, residential experiences.
- Volunteering Opportunities
- Youth Participation – an opportunity for young person’s voice to be heard.
- Intensive support for NEET young people

Youth Participation

- **Youth City Board** are a group of 45 active young people aged 11-18 from across the city. The role of the board is to ensure young people's voices are at the heart of policy and strategy. This is a sub group of the City Board. Aspiring Youth and our elected members of UK Youth Parliament are part of this too.
- **Young people have led on the following in the last 12 months:**
 - "Education During the Pandemic" – the voice of 1100 young people
 - Young peoples Mental Health Survey
 - Members on Public Health Professional Theme Groups
 - Redevelopment and regeneration projects – City Centre/Perry Barr/Druids Heath
 - Youth Covid Champions
 - Commonwealth games – young people operating a small grants awards to other young people
 - Chair the young peoples IAG with WMP

Birmingham Youth Service

- Continued to deliver youth work throughout the pandemic – initially this was virtual, then detached and meeting young people outside. All our centres are now open offering a mix of provision inside and detached work.
- Delivering 14,000 places for the Bring It On Brum (Holiday Activity Fund) to young people in Birmingham during the Summer.
- Delivering A Peer Research and Social Action Programme with young people addressing Youth Violence – this is a Youth Endowment Funded programme.
- Delivering in partnership on behalf of the VRU tackling youth violence.
- The Lighthouse and The Factory are Youth Hubs – working in partnership with DWP to deliver services to young people in the locality.

Portfolio priorities for the new academic year

- School Improvement contract
- Continue to monitor impact of COVID
- CWG Learning Programme, inc History Project
- Child Friendly City
- Streamlining IT systems within Education and Skills
- Preparing for ILACS inspection
- Anti-racism work
- Surplus primary places
- PFI