

Assurance Session – Education, Skills & Culture Portfolio

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

Audit Committee : 26 July 2021



Introduction

School Financial Deficits

- 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 Places (primary)

- Work to address the issue of surplus primary places continues. The focus is on:
 - Keeping schools financially viable
 - Reducing waste (keeping spend per pupil up)
 - Increasing the proportion of pupils in good or outstanding provision
 - Better targeting capital resources
 - Improving the overall condition of the building stock and our school estate
- Cautious approach is required to removing places on a permanent basis due to uncertainty over data
- However, it may be necessary to take out approx 1000 Reception places across the city over a period of time to keep to an overall level of 10% surplus
- A webinar took place with primary schools and officers have been engaging with Primary Forum on this issue.

School places (secondary)

- Significant demographic changes in the city (impact of Brexit, reduction in net migration to the city) mean position has changed
- Officers are revisiting projections based on the demographic changes - likely that fewer additional places than the projected 67 forms of entry will be required in the secondary phase.
- The proposed solutions will change and there is likely to be more focus on temporary solutions (eg bulge classes) rather than more permanent arrangements.
- This is not limited to Birmingham and the DfE is working closely with local authorities across the country on this issue.

IT Infrastructure Limitations

Progress to date includes:

- Establishment of a cross-directorate IT Governance Group
- Agreed Priority list of IT projects
- Process mapping is underway to support progress such as improvements to processes for elective home education and child employment licensing.

Work is ongoing but it is acknowledged that significant progress is still required in this area.

Birmingham Adult Education Service

- BAES met its 2020/21 funding allocation for the Adult Education Budget Grant from the WMCA with a challenging academic year due to the pandemic, thus no Clawback for 2020/21
 - BAES has continued to successfully deliver virtual programmes since September 2020
 - Face to face learning grew significantly in the summer term
 - Reduction in learner fees and other non-public funded programmes in the open market have decreased income streams.
 - Increased costs associated with COVID in service delivery and ways of working for staff have been absorbed by BAES – which is entirely self-funded.
 - Near 10, 000 enrolments in 2020/21 which bears testimony to the commitment and dedication by all staff.
 - BAES has received additional funding from the WMCA for the 2021/22 academic year.
 - This supports BCC and WMCA priorities around an inclusive economic recovery
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School Condition and Compliance

- Priority list of schools where buildings and blocks need to be replaced completely as well a boiler (including distribution system), windows and roof replacement programme required
- COVID has hugely impacted the resources available for this work
- Condition surveys of the maintained estate are now being commissioned through Acivico.

Academy Conversion

- Pressure on schools to enter into staffing restructure prior to academy conversion based on financial forecast

Progress to date includes:

- Improvement in cross-directorate working meaning local authority is not picking up unnecessary costs related to staffing restructures.
- Newly formed project boards comprising of key stakeholders including a cross section of BCC disciplines to support this work.

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

Children Missing Education

- Strong partnership approach
- Around 20% of CME referrals have at some point been known to Birmingham Children's Trust.
- The CME team works closely with the Trust and prioritise work with vulnerable children.
- CME reporting and accounting arrangements have been reviewed.
- Significant temporary support has been put in place to bolster the team and has led to improvements in the team's performance in tracking and monitoring children.

Equalities & Relationship Teaching

- The RSHE toolkit was launched in June 2020
- Due to the impact of the pandemic on children and young people, mental health and wellbeing has been prioritised in the programme.
- BCC continues to deliver Mastering Equality, unconscious Bias and anti-racism work in schools.
- Four webinars have taken place to support the applied practice of the Birmingham RSHE resource
- A survey of schools will be undertaken in September 2021 to gather feedback on the first year.