



Oversight and Governance

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EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday 6 February 2019
2.00 pm
Warspite Room, Council House

Members:

Councillor Mrs Beer, Chair
Councillor Murphy, Vice Chair
Councillors Buchan, Goslin, Mrs Johnson, Samantha Leaves, R Smith, Tuohy and Winter.

Parent Governor Representative:

Mrs Nicky Williams

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

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Tracey Lee

Chief Executive

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by Councillors.

2. Declarations of Interests

Councillors will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 November 2018.

4. Chair's Urgent Business

To receive reports on business which in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

5. The Plymouth Challenge (Pages 9 - 12)

6. School Attendance (Pages 13 - 26)

7. High Cost Placement (Pages 27 - 32)

8. Work Programme (Pages 33 - 36)

9. Tracking Resolutions (Pages 37 - 38)

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 28 November 2018

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Beer, in the Chair.

Councillor Murphy, Vice Chair.

Councillors Buchan, Goslin, Mrs Johnson, R Smith and Winter.

Co-opted Representatives: Mrs Nicky Williams (Parent Governor Representative)

Absent from the meeting: Councillors Sam Leaves and Tuohy.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.45 pm.

Also in attendance: Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) Neelam Bhardwaja (Service Director for Children and Families); Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Judith Harwood (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills), David Bowles (Head of Education) and Amelia Boulter (Democratic Adviser).

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

24. **Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the code of conduct the following declarations of interest were made –

Member	Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Johnson	Minute 28 and 30	Governor at Compton School and a Trustee at Operation Encompass	Personal
Councillor R Smith	Minute 28 and 30	Governor at All Saints Academy	Personal
Councillor Winter	Minute 28 and 30	Governor at Marine Academy Plymouth	Personal
Nicky Williams (Parent Governor Representative)	Minute 28 and 30	Board Member of Plymouth Teaching School Alliance	Personal

25. **Minutes**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting of 19 September 2018 with an amendment to the attendance list to include that Councillor Goslin was present at the meeting.

26. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

27. **Ofsted Update - verbal**

Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Neelam Bhardwaja (Service Director for Children and Families) were present for this item. It was highlighted that –

- (a) the inspection had highlighted the strengths and improvements to be made;
- (b) strengths include -
 - progress made since last inspection in 2014;
 - assessment undertaken had improved;
 - engagement with children and young people;
 - timeliness of assessments.
- (c) areas for improvement include –
 - the recording of supervision;
 - smarter plans to include timescales and accountability for tasks.
- (d) they looked at each service area with a focus on caseloads;
- (e) the virtual school and SEND was also part of the inspection. Ofsted were assured that investment was appropriate and driving forward improved outcomes for children. They also look at the assurance and compliance around the most vulnerable children in education.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- (f) they expect to receive the draft full report within the next 10 days and have 3 days to check for factual accuracies before being published in the public domain;
- (g) there were 284 children currently being home educated, this number fluctuates week by week and had tripled in recent years but this was in line with national trend. They regularly check the quality of education and work closely with parents to ensure that it is appropriate for the child;
- (h) if a child excluded from school and meets the category for the local authority to place then they would not be home schooled because they would look to place the child at another school;

- (i) if a looked after child was subject to a care order then the local authority has the parental responsibility and therefore would not opt for home education.

The Committee noted the verbal update and requested the Ofsted Report to be provided at a future meeting.

28. **Children's Services Business Plans and Budgets**

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Judith Harwood (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills), Neelam Bhardwaja (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families) and David Bowles (Head of Education) were present for this item and referred to the report in the agenda.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- (a) the SEND Strategy covers the needs of the child and within the new framework they had worked with parents on the presentations within different social situations and family life. They did not go into detail within the business plan because the detail is contained within the SEND Strategic Plan;
- (b) this business plan sets out how they work with schools that have the accountability and responsibility on how they respond to Ofsted. They do however work very closely with schools and the business plan would not reflect the changes to the Ofsted framework;
- (c) the Pledges do not exactly match the priorities for the department but sit with in the area that was the best fit;
- (d) the legislation sets out that all local authorities have the duty to be the champion of all children's outcomes irrespective of the schools they attend;
- (e) through Careers SW they have the STEM Ambassador Programme and receive funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and higher education for the next STEPS Programme. Fifteen secondary schools were involved with the LEP and were ensuring that the offer would be available for all young people;
- (f) the extent that early years was represented within the business plan was through attainment outcomes within the early years foundation stage. Early years was not detailed within the business plan and as part of the next refresh would look at the 30 hours provision. Children Centres would sit within commissioning strategies;

- (g) they had not attempted to list all of the statutory functions within the business plan but focused on the priorities. SACRE if included would sit under attainment and raising aspirations;
- (h) the supported placement includes 4 to 5 very young people that they could not find placements for given their complexities of their behaviour. This resulted in the local authority having to create placements and around the clock staff for a period of time at a cost of £980k. One placement was jointly funded with the CCG costing the local authority £50k a week;
- (i) a recently published report on the mental health needs of young people highlighted that 25% of young people under the age of 18 years had the upper end of CAMHS. This group of young people were also evident within the looked after population along with other factors such as the toxic trio of domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health. Also intergenerational issues had impacted on children being kept safe within their own family unit. They were working with early help services with targeted support to prevent these young people coming into the system;
- (j) around 10 years ago Plymouth had one of the fastest falling school enrolments within the country and then 6 years ago had the fastest rising enrolment. They were reviewing secondary spaces to meet the needs of the primary children coming through the system;
- (k) the local authority was supportive of the UTC being developed because of that particular STEM need within the city at that time but to note that there were STEM opportunities within secondary schools;
- (l) they were undertaking a lot of work on a peninsular basis and working with Young Devon to create placements for 16 plus young people. They try were possible to look for in-house, then a local placement but failing that would look further afield;
- (m) children in Plymouth can choose a school in Saltash likewise children in Saltash can choose a school in Plymouth. The law requires each local authority to have sufficient places for children who were resident within that local authority area;
- (n) they were looking at how they work with the family differently to stop repeated child protection plans.

The Committee to receive a report on the work undertaken to reduce child protection plans.

29. **Children, Young People and Families Social Worker recruitment and Social Workers' case loads**

Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Neelam Bhardwaja (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families) were present for this item and referred to the report within the agenda.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- (a) that the team manager would have an awareness of experience, expertise and resilience of each of the social workers within their team. However, they do have staff on long term sick but sickness levels within the service area was well below the target and had been for a sustained period of time. This was reflected by Ofsted who reported that staff morale was high, people felt supported and managers were supportive and visible;
- (b) workload meeting take place weekly and very month they review time taken off in lieu and extra hours of work. Some teams were working their contracted hours but those teams involved in court proceedings could work up to an extra 10 hours. This should not become the norm or expectation and they encourage staff to take the time off for recovery and for manager to have oversight of this;
- (c) the social worker as reported in the local press was an agency worker. The referral and assessment service was not functioning properly which resulted in a reorganisation of the service. They now have a robust system in place to deal with performance issues and there should be records in place on the action taken at that time;
- (d) they were working more proactively with each of the teams so that social workers could undertake the work that needs to be done and that other elements of the role could be undertaken by someone else with the team;
- (e) they commission ACE to undertake the active home visit and if concerns comeback around safeguarding they would send an Inclusion and Welfare Officer to visit the home. There was a provision within the law to work with either social care or the police if a child was at risk of harm but was pleased to report that there were no cases;
- (f) social workers often express which area they wish to specialise in but also request to work within another service area to broaden their experience and expertise;

- (g) they look at the child's journey through the system and management looks at the service area as a whole to manage the pressures across the service area.

The Committee noted the report.

30. **Plymouth Education Board**

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Judith Harwood (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills) and David Bowles (Head of Education) were present for this item and referred to the report included in the agenda.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- (a) Higher Education (HE) had been included on the Board because they are our education partners that work with particular schools. This Board represents all sectors and phases of education and HE bring a different perspective to the discussion;
- (b) Ivybridge Community College is a school of choice for parents within the city because of the good Ofsted rating and specialities in sport. Ivybridge is also part of the WeST MAT which includes primary and secondary schools from Plymouth;
- (b) the Board was set up in September 2017 and throughout the summer term 2017 a working group was set up to establish the Board. 10 years ago and beyond the system was not fragmented because schools were maintained and there were very few academies and schools worked very closely together;
- (c) that a solution nationally was to bring in more MATs but there was a reluctance for MATs to come to the city as well as stand-alone academies entering into a MAT. There were definitely things we could do locally and have a role in developing MATs;
- (d) the Board would have the more strategic conversations and delegates work to the different groups attached to the Board;
- (e) the oracy project was funded by various sources throughout the city and an update on the oracy project can be provided to the Committee;
- (f) Torbridge Primary School has been issued with an Academy order following their recent Ofsted report. Action has been taken action to strengthen governance and to improve various aspects of the school. A recovery programme would be completed by the end of this week and were working closely with the Regional School Commissioner;

- (g) they operate a system where people can opt out but it's about making sure they want to be part of the conversation. All the sectors are represented on the Board and one of the biggest challenges for head teachers is the rotation of their representatives and ensuring that they work on the communications to keep the momentum.

Agreed that the Committee receive an update on the Oracy Project.

31. **Work Programme**

The Committee discussed items for inclusion on the work programme. The Chair highlighted a particular issue around the carrying of weapons and drugs in school. Following a short debate, Members felt that some of the issues raised were outside the remit of this Committee.

The Committee therefore agreed –

1. To add to the work programme bullying including how the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) is delivered across the city.
2. That a briefing paper is provided on number of incidents of weapons and drugs being brought into schools during the last year.

32. **Tracking Resolutions**

The Committee noted the tracking resolutions.

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PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	Plymouth Challenge Update
Committee:	Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	6 February 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member of Children and Young People) Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation)
CMT Member:	Alison Botham (Director of Children's Services)
Author:	David Bowles (Head of Education)
Contact details	Tel: 01752 307149 email: david.bowles@plymouth.gov.uk
Ref:	
Key Decision:	No
Part:	I

Purpose of the report:

The following report has been prepared at the request of the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide members with an update on the Plymouth Challenge.

Corporate Plan

'A Caring Plymouth – 'Improved schools where pupils achieve better outcomes'.

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

Four council employees are involved to varying degrees in helping to co-ordinate and deliver the aims of the Challenge. This commitment is likely to increase as the Challenge embeds across the city.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

None for the purpose of this briefing report.

Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

For the Education and Children’s Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive the report for consideration.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

This is a briefing report only.

Published work / information:

None for the purpose of this report.

Background papers:

None for the purpose of this report.

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Sign off:

Fin	DJN.1 8.19.1 91	Leg	ALT/ 3050 8/28	Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member <u>Judith Harwood</u>													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

Update on the Plymouth Challenge.

In February 2018 a Plymouth Challenge concept developed by the RSC office and the LA was presented to schools. It was well received and detailed action plans are now being formulated with many activities already in implementation along the themes of raising standards, leadership and aspiration. The work isn't directly funded.

Following the first year of planning, the Challenge continues to develop with its three key work streams: raising standards, improving leadership and raising aspirations.

The Raising Aspirations strand:

This strand of work is led by the Local Authority and is essentially, in four parts:

- Improving careers education, advice and guidance
- Developing contact between schools and a number of stakeholders so that a city wide 'conversation' on education becomes a regular feature of the discourse. This includes a communication strand aimed at residents in order to engage them in the conversation and present positive stories about education as well as the challenges
- Increasing the opportunities for employers and partners to support young people
- Reaching into communities to support engagement and opportunities for family learning

A steering group for the raising aspirations strand has been established and is being led by the LA. Terms of Reference have been written and agreed and an action plan is being produced. The communication and careers work started in October 2018.

Regarding the careers element, it has been decided by the steering group that the Raising Aspirations Strand will concentrate on promoting the use of the 'Gatsby Benchmarks' in schools (these are features defining world class career guidance.) A workshop for senior leaders in schools to support the delivery of world class careers education is being organised together with increasing the involvement of employers in the development of the school curriculum. An Enterprise Co-ordinator is in place who will help schools develop their careers offer to pupils and students.

One school is systematically exploring how to raise aspirations amongst disadvantaged pupils and will bring their findings back to the group to help inform the future actions of the group. The steering group is also reaching out to colleagues in other Career Hubs to share their experiences of developing careers education in their schools and academies. It has been agreed that looking beyond the city for good practice is critical.

The communications team in the Council have prepared an offer of training to communication officers in schools as a means of improving the flow of information from schools to the wider community. Advice has already been sent to all schools concerning the effective use of social media and in addition, there is an opportunity for schools to share good news stories as well as useful information with pupils, parents and the wider community through the Council's Facebook page. A calendar of key events have been identified and this will be used to give out and receive information and messages concerning developments and key events e.g. British Science Week, mock exam dates and the dates when school results are published during the summer.

This is work in development and the office of the RSC have dedicated resource to support the coordination of all three strands of the Challenge. This is critical to ensure that resources are used as well as possible and the impact can be measured. The Head Teachers, through the Plymouth Learning Trust, plan to bring forward a costed action plan at the next Plymouth Education Board Meeting (late February) to facilitate the continuing work of the Challenge.

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PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	School Attendance
Committee:	Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	6 February 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member of Children and Young People) Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation)
CMT Member:	Alison Botham (Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Jo Siney (Head of SEND)
Contact details	Tel: 01752 308744 email: jo.siney@plymouth.gov.uk
Ref:	JAH/JS
Key Decision:	No
Part:	I

Purpose of the report:

The following report has been prepared at the request of the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide members with a briefing on School Attendance.

Corporate Plan

This report supports 'A Growing City'. It helps to make sure children and young people benefit from regular education in order to achieve; develop the necessary skills to be productive citizens who can make a sustained contribution to both the society and economy of the city. It will also help to reduce inequalities within the city.

The work reflects our values of co-operation between partners and the recognition that as a society, we are responsible for each other.

The report supports 'A Caring Plymouth – Focus on prevention and early intervention'. The document provides an overview of the support offered to young people where school attendance is a concern in order to take timely steps to resolve and make sure the appropriate support is in place.

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

None for the purpose of this briefing report.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

- **Child Poverty:** Regular attendance at school provides a routine for parent/carers which allows them to take paid employment and reduce the impact of child poverty. It improves children’s potential for future employment, education and training.
 - **Community Safety:** (due regard to preventing crime and disorder): Poor school attendance increases the risk of child exploitation and anti social behavior. It is important to safeguard children who are vulnerable by ensuring children are seen and supported by professionals and families to reduce this risk.
 - **Health and Safety (any health and safety implications):** Regular attendance at school provides oversight and monitoring that identifies when a child is at risk, or vulnerable and in need of support. This identification enables support to be arranged in a timely way.
 - **Risk Management (to identify any risk management issues):** The management of children missing education and concerns arising regarding successful inclusion in school enable both action to be taken to safeguarding the individual child, and take steps to reduce the impact of this for other children. Close working with school and other partners is important to achieve this outcome effectively.
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Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? Not completed for the purpose of this briefing report.

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

For the Education and Children’s Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive the report for consideration.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

This is a briefing report only.

Published work / information:

None for the purpose of this report.

Background papers:

None for the purpose of this report.

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	DJN.1 8.19.1 90	Leg	It/31 964/ 240 1	Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member Judith Harwood													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

Introduction

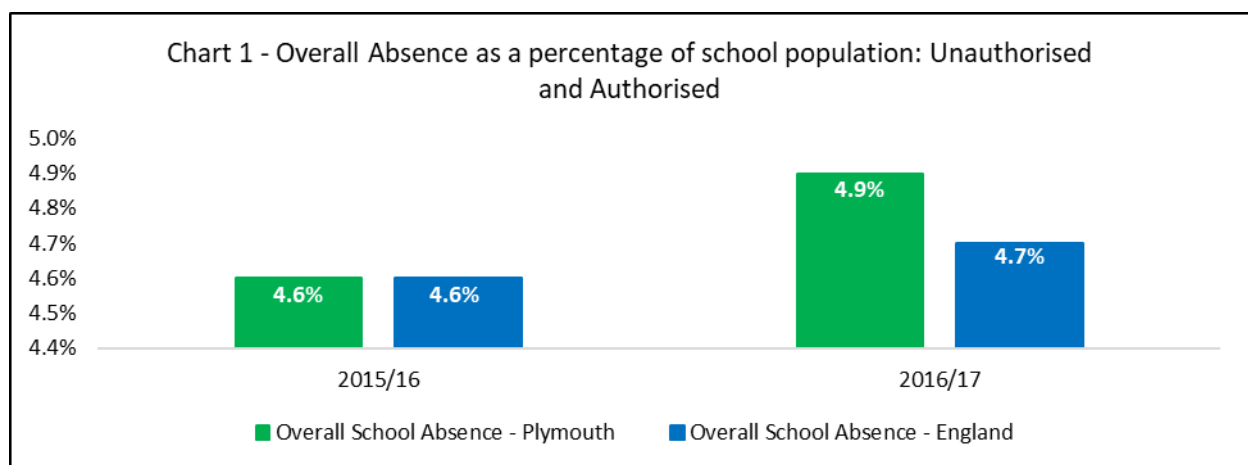
This briefing paper sets out the current position in Plymouth in relation to pupil attendance at school. It considers trends regarding pupil absence from school, areas for concern and plans for improvement. The data relating to pupil absence requires careful monitoring and review due to increasing levels of absence from Plymouth schools. It is important that we continue work to better understand the reasons for increasing levels of absence and review evidence-based approaches available to improve this position for children and young people in Plymouth. Absence ultimately impacts on pupil attainment and outcomes. Understanding and developing robust action plans underpinned by data enables us to uphold and deliver our corporate values.

The data collated by the Education, Participation and Skills department included within this report set out our current position on pupil absence and provides an overview of the data related to persistent (attendance below 90%) and overall absence of pupils in Plymouth.

The paper highlights that overall absence from school is increasing for children and young people in Plymouth. There is an upward trend in persistent absence from school which is a cause for concern in terms of the impact on outcomes for children and young people. The priorities for the City with regard to this issue, and areas for development are held in scope within this paper and are detailed towards the end.

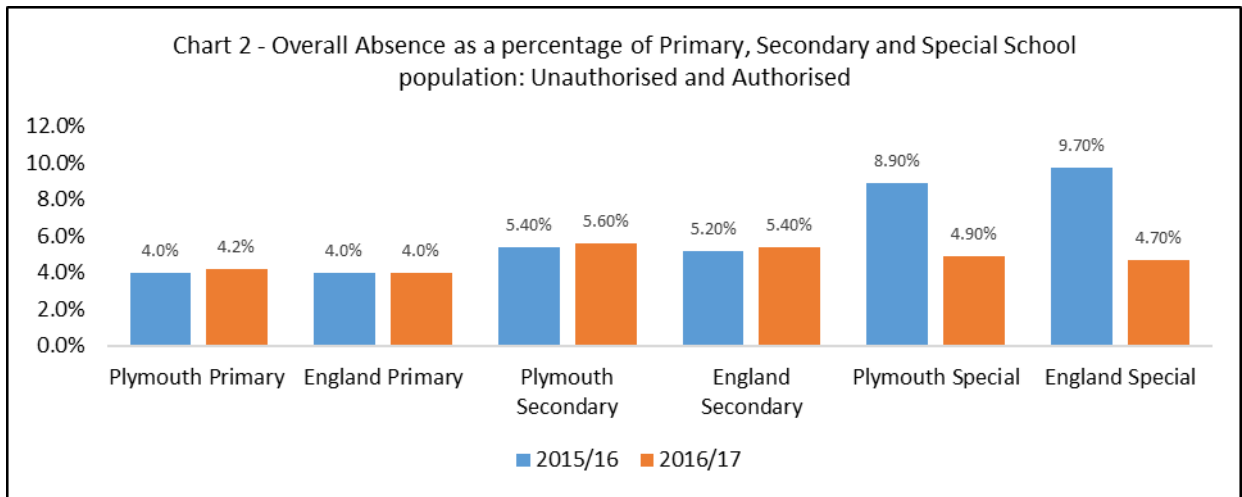
Overall Absence

In 2015/16 the Overall absence rate in Plymouth was on par with the National average (chart 1). By 2016/17, the percentage of overall absence in Plymouth had increased by 0.3 percentage points (pp) which is larger than the national increase (0.1pp).



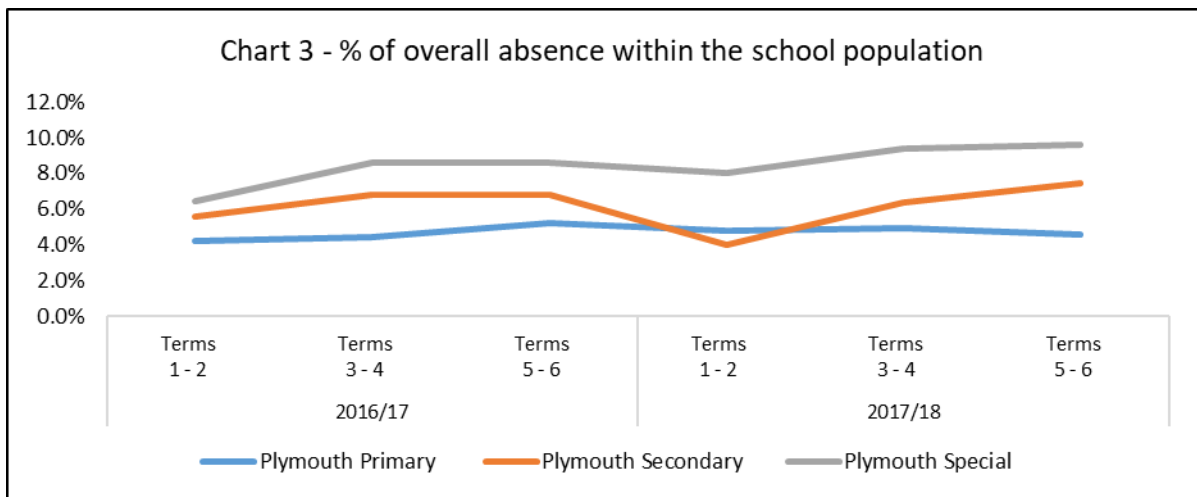
A further breakdown (chart 2) shows that the overall absence rate of:

- Primary pupils was on par with the England average in 2015/16 but increased by 0.2pp in 2016/17;
- Secondary pupils was 0.2pp above the England average. Both Plymouth and the national averages increased by 0.2pp in 2016/17
- Special school pupils was 0.8pp lower than the England Average. In 2016/17 rates across the country dropped and Plymouth became 0.2pp above the England average.



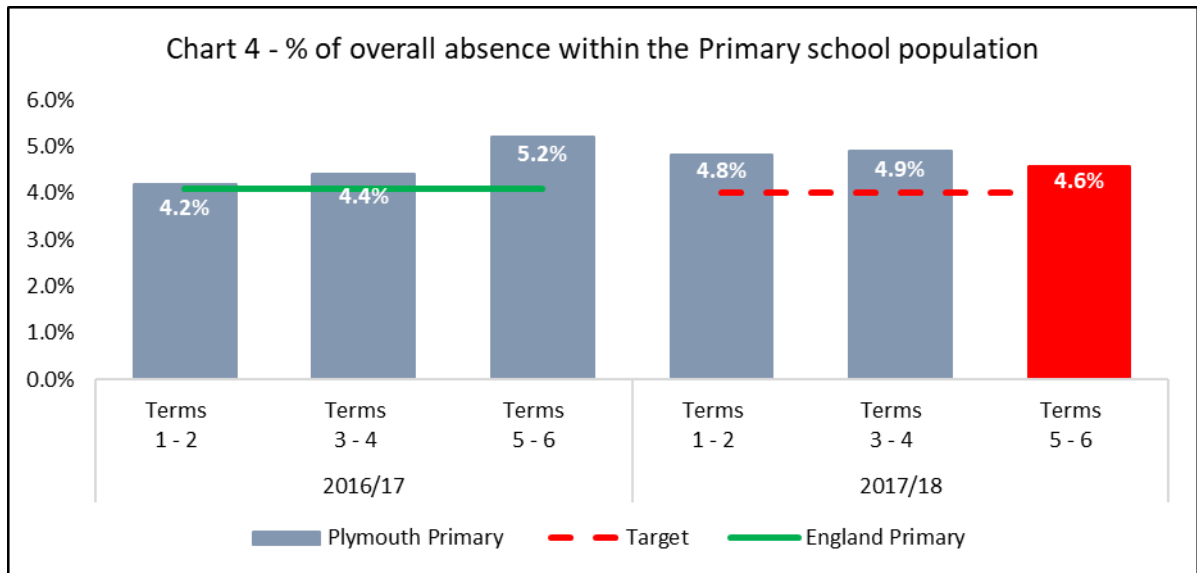
The trends in the overall absence in pupils seen locally in Plymouth do not match the trends seen nationally and is a cause for concern.

A closer look at local data (Chart 3), across two years spanning 2016/17 and 2017/18, shows that increases in overall absence has increased across all school phases. Further analysis will be required to understand the dip in terms 1 and 2 at secondary level.



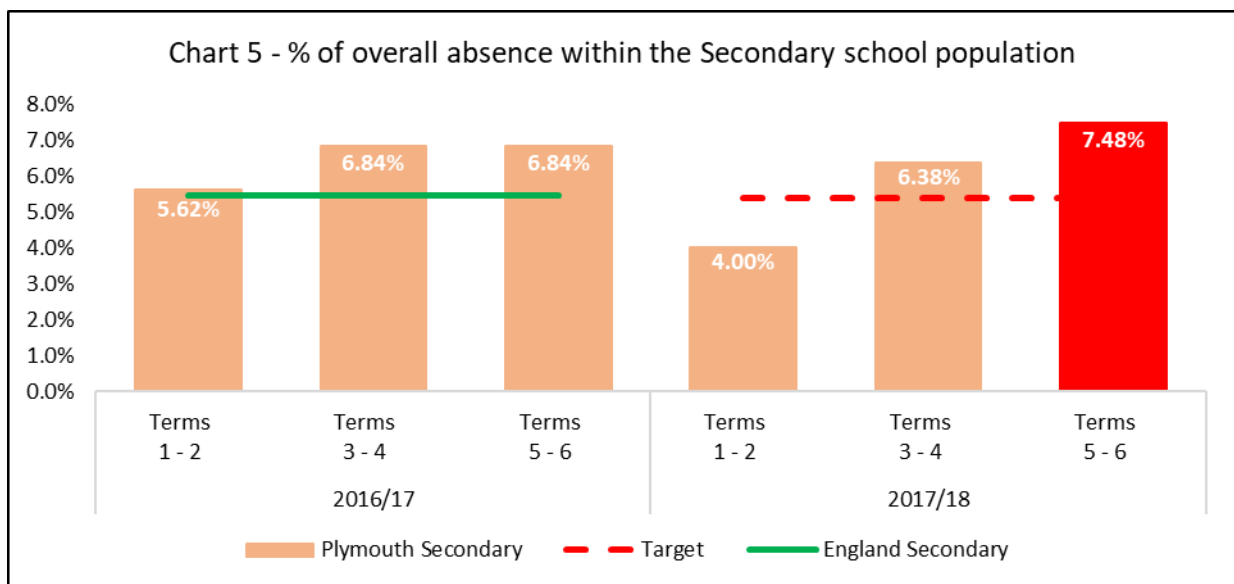
A closer look at **overall absence rates in primary schools** (chart 4) show that whilst increases were seen throughout 2016/17, there is a decreasing trend in 2017/18. A target of 4% had been set for 2017/18. We set this target so that we continue to strive to reduce the % of overall absence of children in Primary schools to reach the current benchmarks. The target for 2018/19 remains at 4% and for 2019/20 is set for 3.8% in order to improve above the current benchmarks by 2019/20.

Currently Plymouth performance does not meet the target set and the national benchmark. Whilst this is a cause for concern our trends are improving.

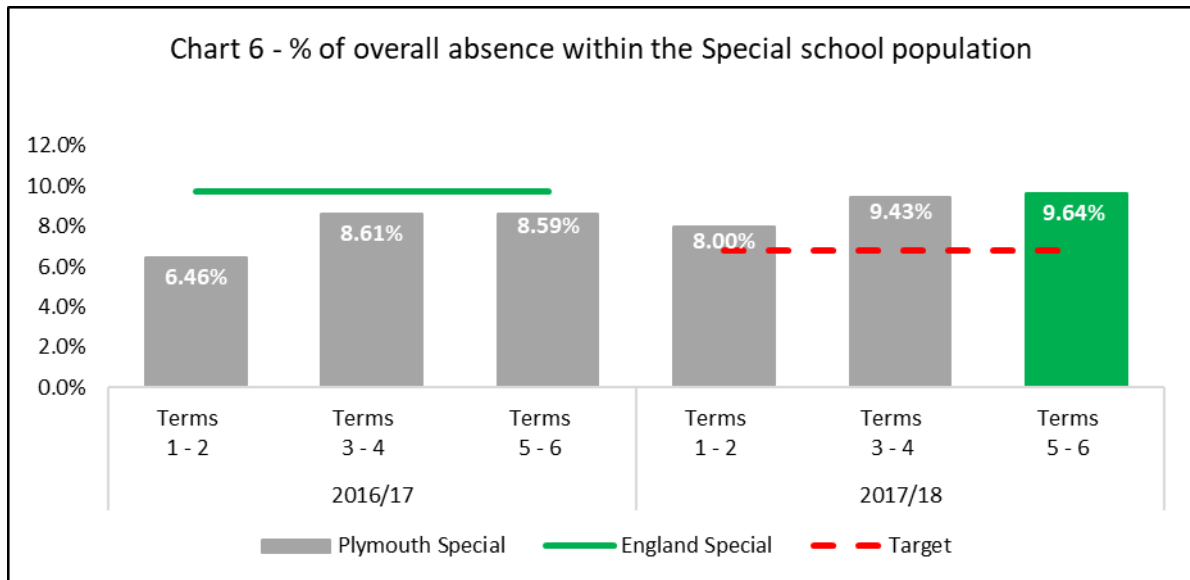


Overall absence rate in secondary schools (Chart 5) show that despite lower levels of overall absences in terms 1 and 2, for both 2016/17 and 2017/18, increases occur throughout the academic year. A target of 5.4% has been set for 2017/18 through to 2019/20. We set this target so that we continue to strive to reduce the % of overall absence of young people in secondary schools.

Currently Plymouth’s performance is not meeting our set target or improving against benchmarks; this is a cause for concern.



Overall absence rate in special schools (Chart 6) show that despite lower levels of overall absences in terms 1 and 2, in both 2016/17 and 2017/18 increases occur throughout the academic year. A target of 6.8% has been set for 2017/18 through to 2019/20. Currently Plymouth exceeds its target but remains below the current national benchmark.

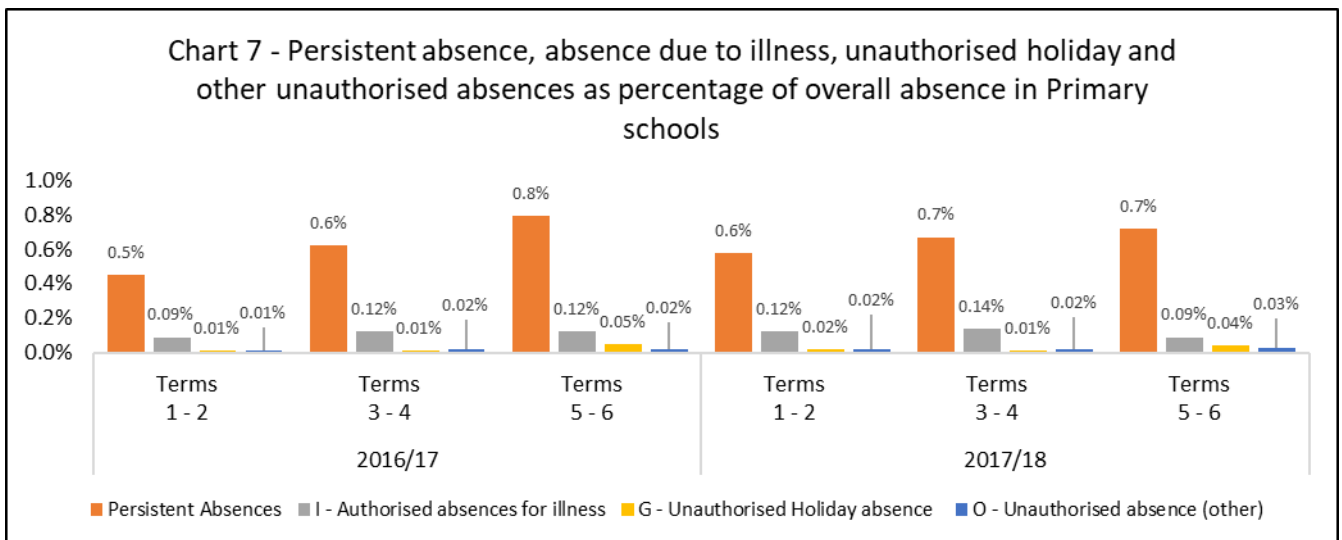


2. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

In order to better understand the causes behind overall absence rates, the Inclusion, Attendance and Welfare Service have been monitoring Persistent Absence (number of pupils with attendance below 90%). Reasons for absence are categorised by schools against a schedule of codes. The three categories that account for the highest percentage of absence are authorised absence for illness, unauthorised absence for holidays and unauthorised absences ‘other’ across all school phases (Chart 7, 8 and 9). These charts show that persistent absence rates and authorised absences for illness remain areas of concern. As a result ‘inadequate pupil attainment linked to different patterns of non-attendance’ is an amber risk within the operational risk register. This is monitored quarterly and reported to the Risk Management Committee.

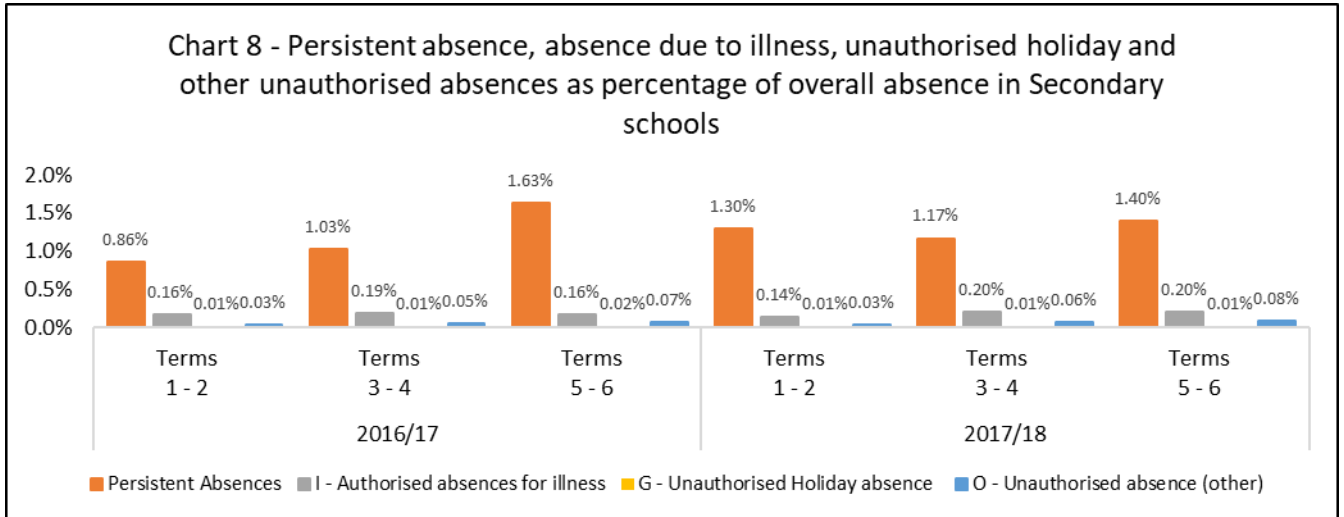
At **Primary school phase**, as a percentage of overall absence:

- Persistent absence increased by 3 percentage points (pp) in 2016/17 and by 1pp in 2017/18. Whilst the trend is an increasing one, the rate of increase is lower in 2017/18.
- Authorised absence for illness increased by 0.3pp in 2016/17 but decreased by 0.3pp in 2017/18



At **Secondary school phase**, as a percentage of overall absence:

- Persistent absence increased by 0.8 percentage points (pp) in 2016/17 and by 0.1pp in 2017/18. Whilst the trend remains an increasing one, the rate of increase is lower in 2017/18.
- Authorised absence for illness peaked in the spring term. This declined in 2016/17 but remained at the same levels in 2017/18.



At **Special school phase**, as a percentage of overall absence:

- In 2016/17 persistent absence peaked in the spring term but the overall increase was 0.7 percentage points (pp). In 2017/18 persistent absence had a lower rate of increase (0.5pp) but overall remains higher than the previous year.
- Authorised absence for illness peak in the spring term. This declined in 2016/17 by 0.09pp. These trends were not seen in 2017/18; an increase by 0.09pp occurred and was 0.05pp higher than the end of the academic year than the previous year.

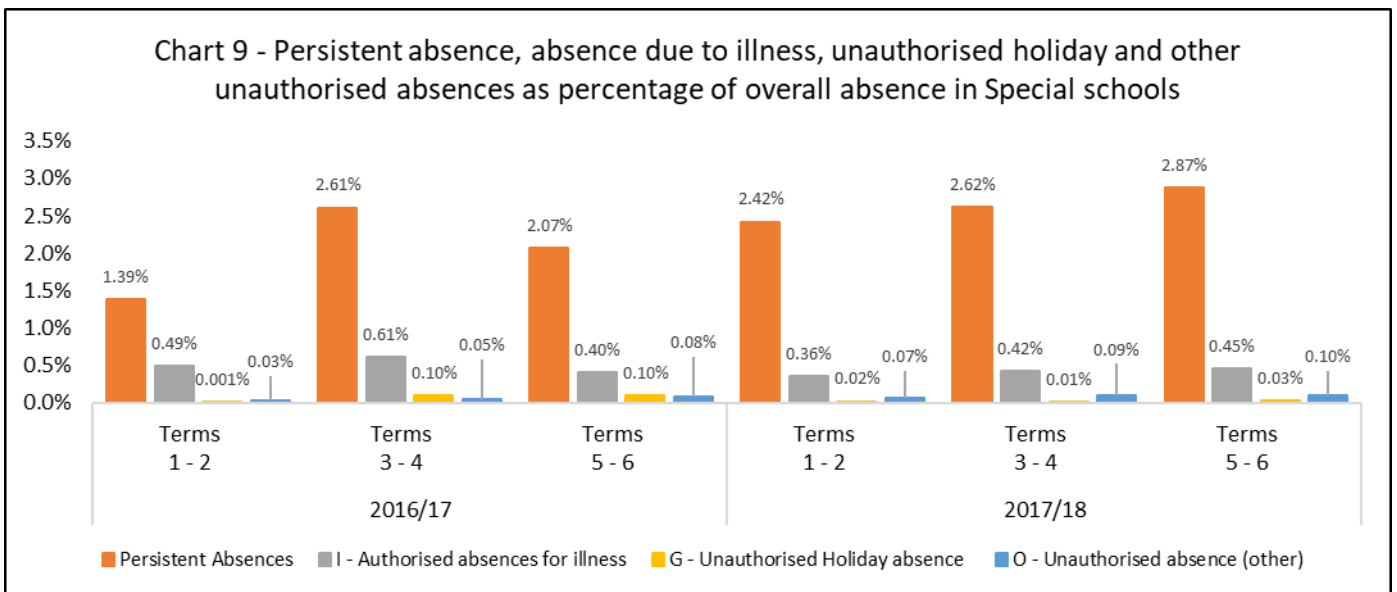
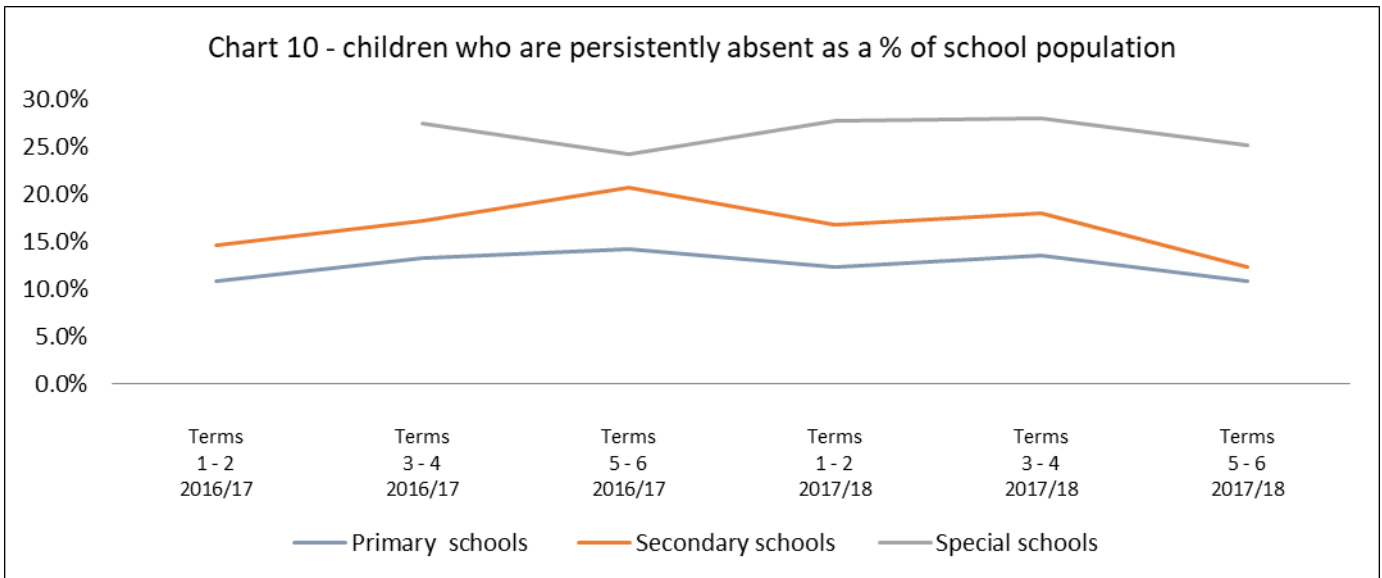


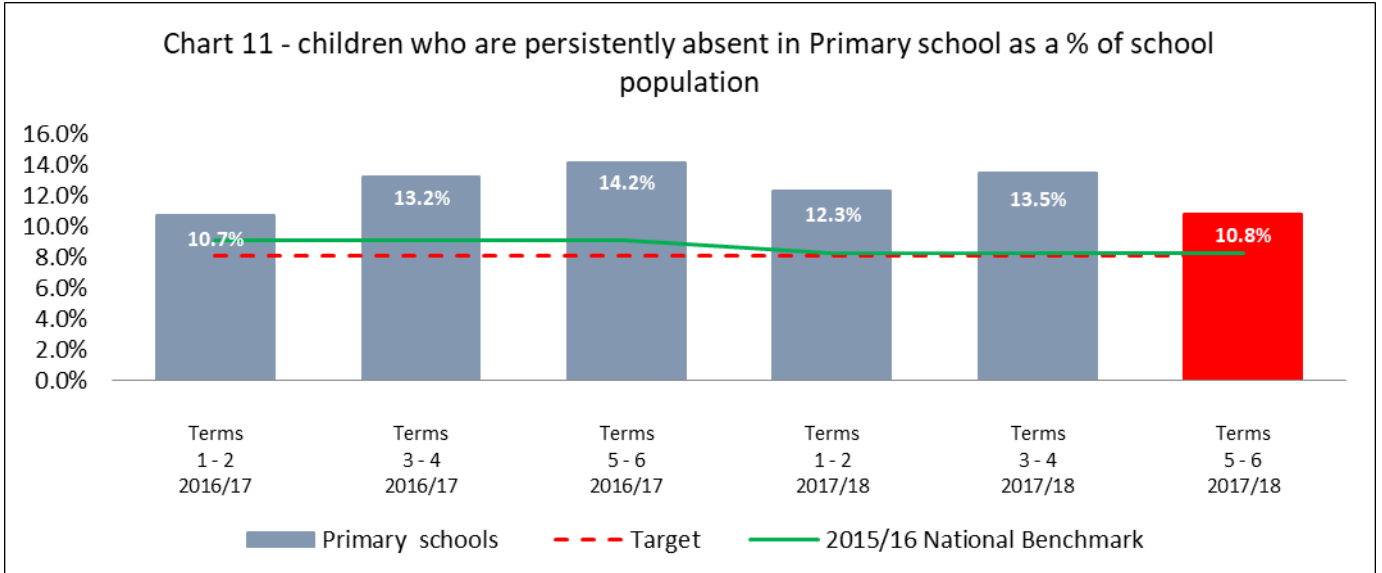
Chart 10 shows the trends of persistent absence rates across all school phases as a percentage of the whole school population (not as a percentage of overall absence as previously discussed)



A closer look at persistent absence local data (Chart 10), across two years spanning 2016/17 and 2017/18, shows that increases in persistent absence had increased across both primary and secondary phase in 2016/17. In 2017/18 decreases in persistent absence across all school phases can be seen.

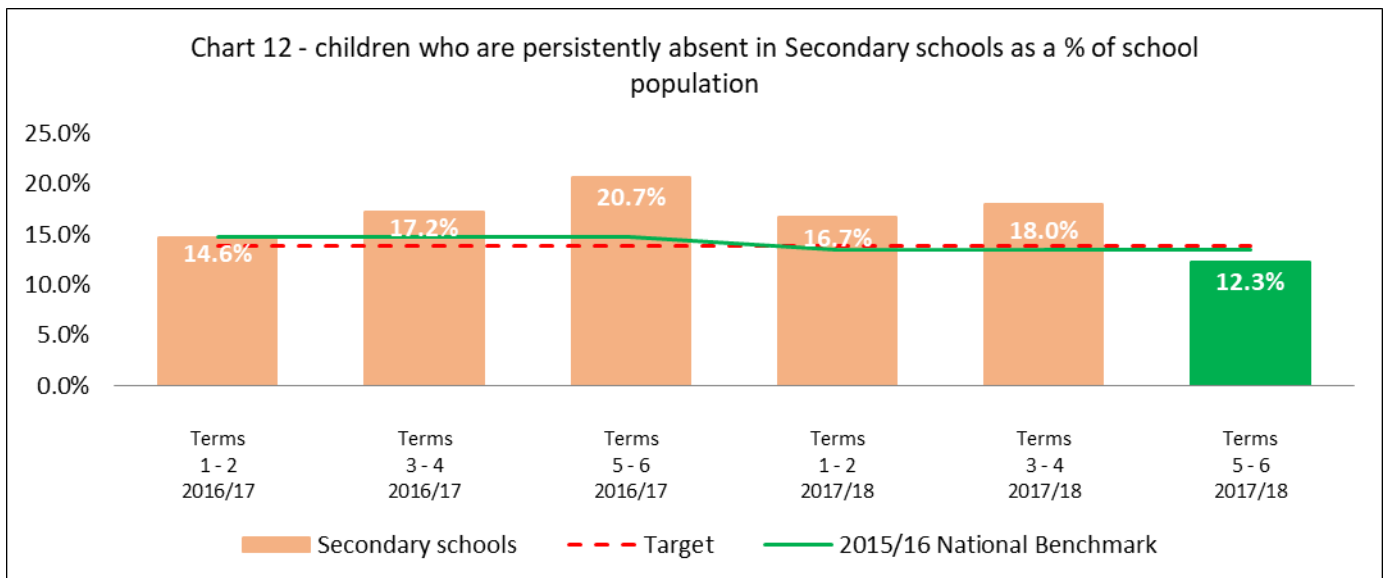
Persistent absence rates in primary schools (chart 11) show a decrease of 1.5pp throughout 2017/18 and were on par with the beginning of the 2016/17 academic year. A target of 8.1% had been set for 2017/18 to reach the current national benchmark.

Currently Plymouth exceeds its target and the national benchmark. Despite trends improving, this is a cause for concern.



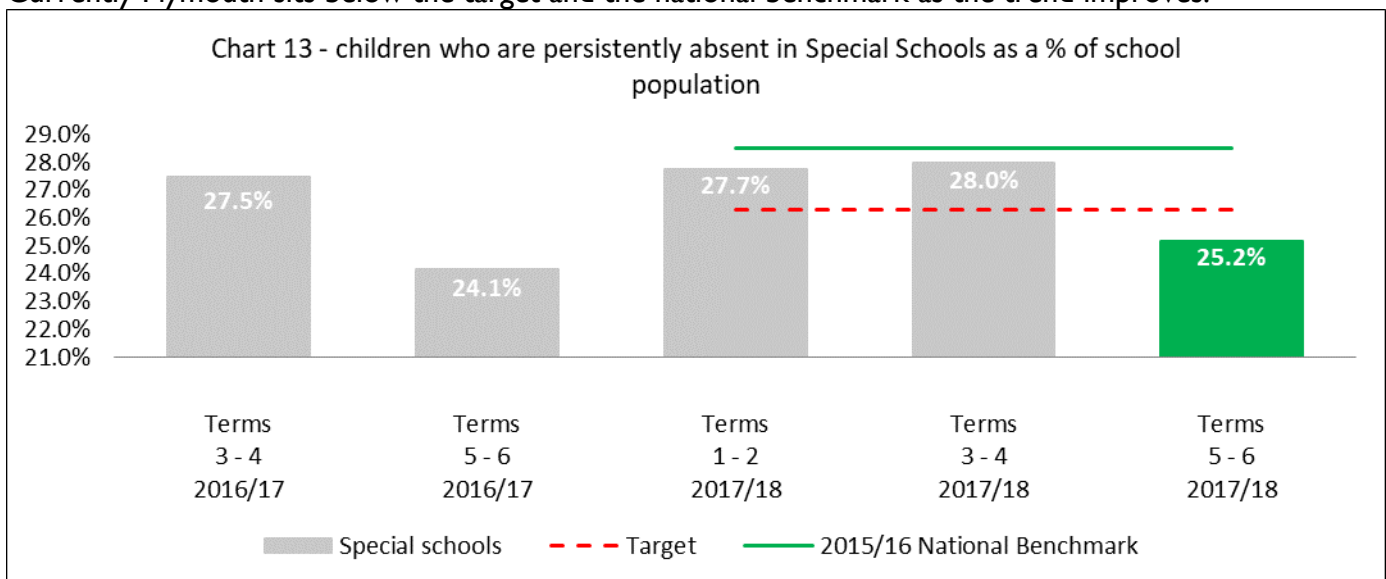
Persistent absence rate in secondary schools (Chart 12) show a decrease of 4.4pp throughout 2017/18 and were 2.4pp lower than the beginning of 2016/17 academic year. A target of 13.8% had been set for 2017/18. We set this target to reach the current national benchmark.

Currently Plymouth sits below the target and the national benchmark as the trend improves.



Persistent absence rates in special schools (Chart 13) show a decrease of 2.4pp throughout 2016/17 but were 1.1pp higher at the end of 2017/18 academic year compared to the end of the 2016/17 academic year. A target of 26.3% had been set for 2017/18. We set this target to reach the current national benchmark.

Currently Plymouth sits below the target and the national benchmark as the trend improves.



Trends and Action

The Inclusion Attendance Welfare Service (IAWS), whose primary function is to ensure that all statutory school aged children are accounted for, receiving and attending suitable, full time education has identified the top causes of absence from school and have asked all schools in the city to submit data on a termly basis (as shown above in charts 7, 8 and 9 above). This is to ensure we can effectively monitor the data and take any actions necessary to support schools to manage absence.

N.B. All data from ACE Multi Academy Trust and Plymouth School of Creative Arts is excluded from the analysis below. The reason for this is because their data would not reflect the different phases of school as their pupils are in Primary and Secondary and the data would be skewed.

The IAWS fulfil Plymouth City Council's (PCC) statutory responsibilities in relation to children missing education (CME), persistent absence, Fair Access reintegration admissions (Managed Transfers) and exclusions. The IAWS has safeguarding responsibilities specifically for all statutory school age children on roll in all Plymouth schools, those in un-regulated settings, educated at home and CME.

The Team currently provide the enhanced traded service to 63 of the 68 Plymouth Primaries; 17 of the 18 secondary Schools (Stoke Damerel Community College opted out in 2017); 6 of the 7 Special Schools and the Alternative Complementary Education Service. Each has a named Education Welfare Officer who regularly visits the school to undertake attendance monitoring meetings with designated members of staff and provide advice, support and challenge. While schools continue to pay for the enhanced service, we are able to continue to have a close and collaborative relationship with schools and EWOs are able to access attendance information, and monitor attendance effectively.

In addition to the work undertaken by the IAWS, the Education Participation and Skills Department has a number of teams who work directly with schools to improve outcomes for children and young people, as an example the Plymouth Leadership Advisors (PLAs) challenge schools regarding their data and act as a critical friend, monitoring the schools development (maintained schools only) and carry out safeguarding reviews. We signpost to other services within the department e.g. 0-25 SEND Team and in addition schools are encouraged to use the expertise of local teaching schools where the issue may be a teaching and learning one. PLAs investigate every Ofsted complaint they receive and where appropriate suggest strategies for improvement.

As a city the absence codes that have been identified as the highest percentage of all absences are:-

Code G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.
Code I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
Code O	Absent from school without authorisation

Monitoring of these codes indicates the following:-

Code G (unauthorised holiday during term time) – whilst this is not a high percentage for either Secondary schools or special schools it remains in the top 15% for primary schools. This contributes to the overall persistent absence rate in the city and we have been concerned about the impact this will have on pupil attainment. Therefore, in an attempt to gain an understanding of any possible correlation locally, we ran the whole nationally published 2016/17 validated datasets for key stage 2 attainment and primary persistent absence through a programme called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This showed that nationally the correlation between Persistent Absence and KS2 attainment was significant. This means that there is a correlation between persistent absence and levels of attainment and the correlation is very unlikely to be down to chance.

Code I (illness) - the percentages are reflected across all phases of school (Primary, Secondary and Special). The evidence shows that pupil illness accounts for the highest percentage of all absences from school across all of the schools in Plymouth. High levels of absence due to illness have always been a concern and focal point for attendance monitoring and challenge within schools and with parents. There is consistent approach taken across all schools in Plymouth to challenge absence due to illness where there are concerns that the absence appears excessive or unusual. Where there is reason to believe absence is unjustified and school have been unable to resolve the concern themselves, referrals are made to the IAWS.

During the academic year 2016/17, there were 3924 school attendance and welfare cases open to the IAWS and in 2017/18, there were 3966 across Primary, Secondary and Special Schools.

Absence due to anxiety and mental health issues accounts for a significant proportion of the absence in the city and the lack of specialist support services is regularly cited as a major concern by schools, parents and agencies. However, extracting data from the figures above to show the impact of mental health on school attendance is not possible as attendance monitoring databases in schools do not allow for different types illness to be recorded.

Of the referrals made to the IAWS over the last 2 academic years, the numbers of pupils referred who have SEND has remained stable at 24%. Service realignment now means that the IAWS sits within the SEND and Inclusion service area, this will facilitate further development in relation to reducing absence for pupils with SEND. In addition, the service and schools are supported by the SEND Leadership Associate Team across both primary, secondary and special schools.

The data for 2016/17 showed that the overall absence rate for pupils in Plymouth is lower than pupils across the comparator groups (national and regional). This is true across all school types. In Plymouth, primary school pupils with a Statement of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have a higher absence rate than all other primary school pupils; Secondary school pupils who receive SEN support have a higher absence rate than all other secondary pupils.

The data for 2016/17 shows that the persistent absence rate in Plymouth's primary schools is lower than the rate across the comparator groups. In Plymouth, primary pupils with a Statement or EHCP are most likely to be persistently absent. However, this still compares favourably against comparator groups. The persistent absence rate in Plymouth's secondary schools is higher than the national rate but lower than our regional or statistical neighbour's rates. In Plymouth, secondary pupils who receive SEN support are more likely to be persistently absent. The persistent absence rate in Plymouth's special schools compares favourably against comparator groups. The data for 2017/18 is currently being finalised for the Plymouth Book.

Supporting Pupils with Health Needs

Schools have responsibility to ensure that all children with health needs should have a Health Care Plan (not to be confused with an Education Health Care Plan under SEND). Most children and young people who are supported under the multi-agency Early Help Assessment process or through school based 'Team around Me' plans. In cases where a child is appropriately deemed unable to access education in school, the LA provide support for children to access alternative provision via the s19 (Supporting Pupils with Health Needs) Panel. However, this is a finite resource. ACE is currently funded for 34 full time equivalent places for pupils who cannot attend school due to a health need. 16 of these places cover the education provided at the Hospital settings. This leaves 18 full time places for Outreach and Dover Road placement.

A project group has been established to review the current policies and processes over how students with medical needs access a suitable education provision. The project group is now looking at ways to broaden the offer for students with medical needs that will make their education more accessible. This includes exploring options which make better use of the available resources and new technologies. Discussions are underway with two well established providers and the Local FE College to explore the option of distance learning for some students who would benefit from this offer. The IAWS have also developed stronger links with CAMHS over the last 18 months following meetings with the Consultant Psychiatrists, Managers and Mental Health Practitioners. This work centred on promoting a shared understanding of the capacity to support children in school as an alternative to simply being 'signed off' school. This remains an on-going piece of work.

The introduction of the Reduced Timetable Protocol in October 2017 sets out Plymouth's position in relation to pupils who experience reductions in their full time education. This along with improved recording on the CME Risk Register is enabling the LA to gather data regarding the number of children experiencing a reduction in their entitlement to a full time education. The Reduced Timetable Protocol was created following the identification of the misuse of the B code resulting in children's absence being hidden within normal attendance monitoring checks. Code B represents 'Off Site Educational Activity' and statistically counts as a present mark. This code should not be used when children are just completing set school work at home. Schools are now correctly coding the absence as I for illness or C other authorised circumstances, which are obviously absence codes. Further analysis will need to be undertaken regarding the use of the B code and RTTs in order to understand the impact this has had on the overall absence rate in the city.

Schools are now aware that all children on reduced timetables are classed as CME and that this needs to be reported to the LA. The CME at Risk Register enables the LA to monitor and challenge excessive use of reduced timetables and where children may be at risk of remaining on reduced timetables without a clear plan of support and reintegration.

Code O (unauthorised absence) – This is in the top 15% of all absences for all three phases of schools Primary (7.59%), Secondary (15.43%) and Special Schools (12.44%) reflecting the overall data for the city. Three secondary schools out of the 18 account for a high percentage of the figure. They are in localities where there are additional challenges due to deprivation.

Unauthorised absence (code O and G) are offences under s444 of the Education Act 1996 and can lead to legal action

Legal enforcement action is taken by the IAWS as a last resort following extensive casework and support offered. The low number of prosecutions compared to the average number of open cases over the last 2 years- 3945 per annum is demonstrated in the table below.

Prosecution data

	2016/17	2017/18
Primary	65	51
Secondary	98	87
Total	163	138

Penalty Notices

As an alternative to prosecuting parents in court, the law allows the LA to issue penalty notices (fines) instead. In Plymouth, we use discretionary powers to issue penalty notices in relation to unauthorised absence. Penalty notices are an alternative to taking parents to court and avoid the potential for parents to receive a criminal conviction. Payment of the fine settles the matter completely and it cannot be referred to again. This is why penalty notices were used for unauthorised absence due to holiday and are currently used for low level and first time offences. Of the average number of referrals per annum (3945) very few resulted in a penalty notice as demonstrated in the table below.

NB: If a parent does not pay the penalty notice it results in a criminal prosecution for the offence not the non-payment of the fine.

Penalty notices issued:

	2016/17	2017/18
Primary	64	59
Secondary	196	182
Total	260	241

The IAWS team through extensive and complex casework continue to be successful in improving attendance for a large proportion of persistent absentees. However, the complexities around mental health diagnosis have presented an increasingly challenging landscape in terms of improving attendance for many children and young people. The extent to which we can challenge and pursue non-attendance in these circumstances is often greatly limited.

Code C Leave of absence authorised by the school. This code is used to indicate absence due to an unavoidable cause or circumstances that do not fall within the codes above. An example would be absence to attend a family funeral. This code is also sometimes used by schools in place of the illness code when a child is on a reduced timetable. If a child is on a reduced timetable as part of a behaviour management plan the expectation is that schools will use this absence code for the sessions that the pupil is not expected to attend.

This code accounts for 5.44% of the total absences from school and this is reflected across all three phases of school.

- Primary Schools 4.40%
- Secondary Schools 4.65%
- Special Schools 10.49%

Conclusion

We have a clear understanding of our priorities and in response we have set about establishing a steering group, which will drive the agenda for inclusion forward for children in this City and address the following areas for development:

- Systems and processes in relation to primary Fair Access to be reviewed and updated with impact assessment. Further analysis is required to understand the impact of changes to behaviour management policies in schools.
- Analysis of impact of new Secondary Placement Panel arrangements to be undertaken. Further analysis of the range of reasons for absence due to illness in order to identify any potential steps which might improve the impact on school attendance.
- Impact assessment of reduced timetable protocol to include numbers of pupils with reduced time tabled and compliance with protocol included in management data set.
- Work with schools to review the approaches taken to monitor children who are being educated off-site (Code B) including risks and outcomes.
- Review Section 19 (medical needs) provision to ensure sufficiency in the available offer.
- Explore evidence-based interventions which may support and improve school attendance for children and young people.

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject:	High Cost Placements
Committee:	Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	6 February 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member of Children and Young People) Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation)
CMT Member:	Alison Botham (Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Neelam Bhardwaja, Service Director
Contact details	Tel: 01752 308803 Neelam.bhardwaja@plymouth.gov.uk
Ref:	
Key Decision:	No
Part:	I

Purpose of the report:

To provide information about the high cost placements, the circumstances when these placements are used and the cost to the authority.

Corporate Plan

This report meets the objective of the Caring part of the Corporate Plan in that children in need and those at significant risk are provided with accommodation to meet their needs, to keep them safe and to prepare them for adulthood.

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

Although the numbers of looked after children are reducing, the mix of placements and the increased cost have had an impact on the budget.

Since the original MTFs was formulated, there has been a significant increase in costs particularly around the cohort of more complex young people resulting in an over spend on the placement budget.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

Equality and Diversity

Has an Equality Impact assessment carried out? No

Alternative options considered and rejected: Not applicable

Published work / information:

Not applicable

Background papers:

Not applicable

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off: comment must be sought from those whose area of responsibility may be affected by the decision, as follows (insert references of Finance, Legal and Monitoring Officer reps, and of HR, Corporate Property, IT and Strat. Proc. as appropriate):

Fin		Leg		Mon Off		HR		Assets		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the contents of the report? Yes													

1.0 The Council has a statutory responsibility to safeguard and provide accommodation for children whose parents or carers are unable to care for them. The children can come in to care under voluntary arrangements or under the powers of a court order. In situations of an immediate harm the police can also exercise the powers of Police Protection and remove a child to a safe place, usually a foster placement.

1.1 When a child needs to be accommodated, every effort is made to care for the child in an in-house fostering placement in the first instance. However, the number of places required are far greater than the current capacity of the in house service.

1.2 In these circumstances the next option considered is an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placement although more expensive than an in house placement, it still provides a family setting for the young person.

2.0 Some children exhibit such complex behaviours that they cannot be cared for safely in a family setting. For these children, consideration has to be given to placing them in a residential placement which are far more expensive than either the in house or IFA fostering placements.

2.1 Children may need to be placed in specialist residential placements by virtue of having severe disabilities and requiring specific handling and lifting equipment which cannot be provided in a home setting.

3.0 There have been a number of young people recently whose behaviours have been so complex or risky that even residential placement providers have terminated the placement with very short notice.

3.1 In these circumstances, an arrangement has had to be made to create an individual package of care involving securing accommodation and round the clock staff cover. These arrangements work out to be the most costly and are referred to as Supported Living placements.

4.0 There are occasions when young people present such a risk to themselves or others that they cannot be cared for in the community and in these circumstances, they have to be placed in a secure setting. The Service Director can consent to a YP being placed in a secure placement for up to 72 hours and beyond that the matter has to be placed before the court for any extension

4.1 Supported Living, Residential and secure placements are classed as high cost placements and have the most impact on the budget leading to an over spend.

5.0 **Supported Living:** There are currently 19 Supported living placements with the projected year end cost amounting to £3691764. The average cost was budgeted at £3376 per week whereas there are a number of placements costing, 5 and £10000.

5.1 **Residential Placements:** There are currently 35 residential placements with the projected year end cost £7838372. The average cost was budgeted at £4081 per week whereas majority of the placements are costing well over that amount and there has been 13% increase in cost of residential placements.

5.2 **Secure Placements:** There are currently 3 welfare secure placements with the projected year end cost £707723. One of these placements is costing £16000 per week because given the complexity of the behaviours, this YP requires staffing above and beyond what would be available in a secure placement.

6.0 The volatility of the situations being dealt with frequently makes it difficult to forecast the cost accurately, for example, a young person who has been in a secure placement for a number of months was expected to step down into a cheaper placement, however, within a couple of days the YP needed to be returned to the secure placement due to risky behaviours or a YP whose placement provider gives notice has to be then cared for in the much more expensive supported living arrangement as alternative residential placements are never available at short notice.

Conclusion:

The table below provides information about the budget for the above categories of placements, the spend, variance on the budget and the reason for the overspend.

Type of placement	2018/19 Budget	2018/19 Month 9 Forecast until Year End	Variance	Breakdown	Current Number of Placements in Situ	Average Weekly Rate
Net Residential Placements (<i>less Health/Education Contribution</i>)	£7,068,310	£7,838,372	£770,062	2018/19 Budgeted Placements	36	£3,765.46
				2018/19 - Month 9 Actual Placement in Situ	35	£4,076.72
Net Supported Living Placements (<i>less Health Contribution</i>)	£980,018	£3,691,764	£2,711,746	2018/19 Budgeted Placements	15	£1,252.99
				2018/19 - Month 9 Actual Placement in Situ	19	£3,085.65
Net Secure Placements (<i>less Education Contribution</i>)	£236,365	£707,723	£471,358	2018/19 Budgeted Placements	1	£4,533.03
				2018/19 - Month 9 Figures	3	£8,148.13
Total High Cost Placements	£8,284,693	£12,237,859	£3,953,166			

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EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Work Programme 2018 - 19



Please note that the work programme is a 'live' document and subject to change at short notice.

For general enquiries relating to the Council's Scrutiny function, including this committee's work programme, please contact Amelia Boulter, Democratic Support Officer, on 01752 304570.

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Prioritisation Score	Reason for consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer
20 June 2018	Education and Children's Social Care Landscape		To give the committee a better understanding of the two service areas.	Alison Botham/ Judith Harwood/ Neelam Bhardwaja
18 July 2018	Ofsted Report 'Front Door Services'		To provide the committee with an update on the recent inspection.	Neelam Bhardwaja
	School Transport		The Committee to be assured that all school transport is safe for children and young people following the recent article in the Plymouth Herald of an untaxed vehicle.	Judith Harwood
	School Readiness		The Committee to receive a report around assessments undertaken in early years and reception to ascertain speech and language levels and the support provided to the child and family.	Judith Harwood

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Prioritisation Score	Reason for consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer
19 Sept 2018	Headline Performance data		To enable the Committee to scrutinise more effectively, headline performance data going back 2 - 3 years to be provided with the caveat that data received was not comparable year on year	Judith Harwood
	SEND Transition		To receive a report on the support received by families with children and young people with high functioning autism and SEND, in particular, exploring housing support and transition into adulthood	Judith Harwood
	Torbay Children's Services – monitoring		To be kept informed	Alison Botham
28 Nov 2018	Children Services Business Plans including action plans			Alison Botham/ Neelam Bhardwaja/ Judith Harwood
	Plymouth Education Board		A report on the Plymouth Education Board to include overview of the board, membership and terms of reference	Judith Harwood
	Social workers/ thresholds/ recruitment			Alison Botham/ Neelam Bhardwaja
	Ofsted Update			Alison Botham/ Neelam Bhardwaja
6 Feb 2019	Plymouth Challenge		To monitor the progress of the Plymouth Challenge.	Judith Harwood

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Prioritisation Score	Reason for consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer
	High Cost Placements		To receive a report on high cost of placements and how the scrutiny committee can effectively monitor these placements	Alison Botham/ Neelam Bhardwaja
	School Attendance			Judith Harwood
13 March 2019	Regional School Commissioner (invite the Regional School's Commissioner)		Understanding of the role of the Regional Schools Commissioner	Judith Harwood
	Raising School Standards/ Attainment Levels			Judith Harwood/ David Bowle
	Monitoring of the NSPCC Together for Childhood		To receive a report outlining the NSPCC's Together for Childhood project and how progress of the project is monitored over the next 10 years	Alison Botham/ Neelam Bhardwaja
	Ofsted Report		To receive the Ofsted Action Plan.	Alison Botham/ Neelam Bhardwaja/ Judith Harwood

Items to be scheduled				
	Agenda item	Date to go to Committee	Reason for consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer
	Plymouth Children Safeguarding Board	TBC	Update form the Plymouth Children Safeguarding Board	Andy Bickley
	School Readiness Review			

	How schools deal with behaviour and low level disruption			
	Care Leavers		what benefits/ packages do they receive/until what age	
	Bullying in Schools		How schools deal and address bullying, support for victims/PSHE	Judith Harwood
	PAUSE Project			
	Barnados Project			

Select Committee Reviews

	Plymouth Studio School		Review into the governance issues surrounding the Plymouth Studio School	

Cross Scrutiny Items

	Mental Health/ CAMHS			
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Scrutiny Visits

25.01.19	Gateway and Hub		The Committee to meet the team and gain a better understanding of the 'front door'. This visit has taken place.	Alison Botham/ Neelam Bhardwaja
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Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minute No.	Resolution	Target Date, Officer Responsible and Progress
20 June 2018 Overview of the Children's Directorate Minute 5	It was <u>agreed</u> – 5. Visit to the Gateway for the Committee to meet the team and gain a better understanding of the 'front door'.	Date: July 2018 Officer: Amelia Boulter/Sarah Allum Progress: Visit took place on 25.01.19 for those Cllrs that could attend.
19 September 2018 Headline Performance Data Minute 20	The following were agreed: 1. for the communities to be provided with benchmarking information with like authorities, specifically with regards to a similar make-up of schools, including Grammar and studio schools, including readiness for school information; 2. for the committee to be provided with a briefing paper regarding the role of the Regional School's Commissioner and for an invite to be extended to her to attend a future meeting; 3. for future reports to include information regarding the pupil premium, specifically in regards to key stage 4 and 5; 4. for a briefing to be circulated to Members on the Progress 8 measure; 5. for information to be provided to Members regarding military children's performance; 6. for the feasibility of holding a select committee review into the governance issues surrounding the Plymouth Studio School to be investigated.	Date: Sept 2018 Officer: Judith Harwood Progress: 1. Complete 2. RSC has been invited to March 2019 meeting 3. For future reports 4. Complete 5. Complete 6. Scoping meeting to be arranged. Email circulated 20.11.18
28 November 2018 Ofsted Update Minute 27	The Committee <u>noted</u> the verbal update and requested the Ofsted Report to be provided at a future meeting.	Date: Nov 2018 Officer: Amelia Boulter Progress: Competed Added to the March meeting.
28 November 2018 Children's Services Business Plans and Budgets Minute 28	The Committee to receive a report on the work undertaken to reduce child protection plans.	Date: Nov 2018 Officer: Amelia Boulter Progress: To be progressed.

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minute No.	Resolution	Target Date, Officer Responsible and Progress
28 November 2018 Plymouth Education Board Minute 30	<u>Agreed</u> that the Committee receive an update on the Oracy Project.	Date: Nov 2018 Officer: Amelia Boulter Progress: To be progressed.