

# BRIEFING FOR AMBITIOUS SCRUTINY

19<sup>th</sup> October 2015

## Education Paper



### Blended approach

The Plymouth Teaching School Alliance (PTSA) was awarded the prestigious Teaching School Status in March 2012 and is led by Prince Rock and High View Primary Schools. The Alliance is made up of almost all of the city's schools; each contributing and being involved in the work of the Alliance. The remit of Plymouth Teaching School is to:

- Lead an alliance of other schools and partners to improve the quality of leadership, teaching and learning across the Plymouth Teaching School Alliance;
- Train the next generation of outstanding teachers with its Higher Education Institutions and other partners, so that there is a supply of high-quality new teachers;
- Lead peer-to-peer learning and professional development, including the designation and deployment of Specialist Leaders of Education;
- Identify and manage talent and nurture leadership potential;
- Form a national network to support schools in innovation and knowledge transfer;
- Be at the heart of a different strategy of school improvement that puts responsibility on the profession and schools themselves.

Plymouth LA supported PTSA's application for Teaching School Status and has sat as a key strategic partner on its board since then. We work in partnership to ensure that Plymouth's schools benefit from a joined up '**blended**' offer of support and challenge. With less money available for the Council to fund school improvement this has been a very effective way of preserving a central service. The PTSA's work is divided into the following key areas:

- Continuing Professional Development
- School 2 School Support
- Initial Teacher Education & Training
- Leadership
- Research and development.

The benefits to Plymouth:

- We now publish a shared directory of training courses available to all school staff. This includes courses provided by the LA, PTSA, Marjon and Plymouth University;
- Very close partnerships with the universities mean that the best newly qualified teachers are offered jobs in Plymouth;
- Subject hubs have been set up to ensure that teachers can access like-minded professionals to share knowledge and specific training opportunities. The LA has a link with most hubs;
- Schools that have been supported through our 'blended' school improvement approach have made greater improvement than Plymouth's other schools;
- Limited resources are combined so funding is not wasted through duplication of effort;
- Leadership talent is nurtured to improve succession planning for Plymouth's schools.

## **Under-performing/coasting schools**

The Education and Adoption Bill is currently being debated. Clause 1 of the Bill will create a new category of 'coasting' school. The Department for Education (DfE) will consult on the exact definition but it could impact on a large number of Plymouth's schools.

*Those schools, which have been deemed to be "coasting" for a number of years, will be offered help from the best education experts in the country to improve their results and will be required to produce a clear plan for improvement....*

*The policy is about capturing those schools which have, year on year, failed to push every pupil to reach their potential. The regulations therefore identify a group of schools which, as shown in three years of data, are performing below a reasonable level of attainment and progress....*

*The Government's Regional Schools Commissioners - eight education experts with in-depth local insight supported by elected head teacher boards from the local community - will then assess whether or not the school has a credible plan to improve sufficiently. Those that can improve will be supported to do so by our team of expert heads and those that cannot will be turned into academies under the leadership of our expert school sponsors....*

*Once tests and examinations have been sat and verified in 2016, we will then use these regulations to set out the exact coasting level which will apply in that year, based on the accountability measures being introduced in 2016. (DfE guidance note).*

Summary:

- Current floor standards require schools to exceed a minimum threshold score (65% L4+ combined reading, writing and maths or 40% 5xA\*-C including English and maths) as well as be above the median national progress levels in each core subject.
- The new coasting levels are proposed to be set at a higher level than the current floor standards. 85% for primary schools plus below median national progress in reading, writing and maths and 60% for secondary schools plus below national median progress in English and maths.
- A school will be coasting if it has fallen under the coasting criteria for all of the three years 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The levels prescribed in draft regulations will not be applied to special schools – a new definition will be developed for these schools and for Pupil Referral Units.
- No school in Plymouth is currently 'coasting' as the definition is subject to consultation and will not be applied until 2016.

## **Multi Academy Trusts**

The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) Sir David Carter is supported by a board of academy principals who approve new academy sponsors or the conversion of schools to academy status.

RSC four priority areas:

- Developing regional capacity to support academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs through formal collaboration – to lead and encourage our fastest improving and our best schools to play a greater role as leaders of MATs and as sponsors. This includes developing strong sponsors

to support underperforming maintained schools and supporting schools who have decided to become academies within MATs.

- Intervening in underperforming academies – ensuring the right balance between challenge and support, conversations and interactions with MATs and single academy trusts; holding leaders and governors to account for the commitments they have made to improve standards for their communities.
- Developing the role of the Head Teacher Board – building on the expertise and knowledge that they have provided in year one to provide further input at a sub-regional level and to lead on strategic development across the region.
- Increasing the number of free schools – working closely with local authorities, MATs and single academy trusts to deliver the vision of the Government to increase the number of free schools to 500 by 2020.

### Multi Academy Trusts in Plymouth

Name	Sponsor
All Saints Academy Plymouth	CE Diocese, Marjon, PCC
Marine Academy Plymouth	Plymouth University, Cornwall College, PCC
Mayflower Community Academy	Talent and Enterprise Trust (Plymouth University)
St George's Academy	St Christopher's MAT (CE Diocese)
Marine Academy Primary	MAP Secondary Academy
Old Priory Junior Academy	St Christopher's MAT
St Matthew's Academy	St Christopher's MAT
Austin Farm Academy	Eggbuckland Secondary Academy
St Boniface, Notre Dame, St Peter's, St Pauls', Holy Cross, Keyham Barton, St Joseph's, Cathedral	Catholic and Anglican Schools Trust (RC Diocese)
Plymouth School of Creative Arts	Plymouth College of Art

### Summary

All schools are expected to become academies by 2020. The aim is for each school to be in a MAT led by a strong sponsor. PCC works with the DfE, RSC and schools to find local solutions to ensure that accountability remains within existing communities.

## Children's Centre Performance

75% are currently 'good' or better with the rest being 'satisfactory' (on the old framework).

Cluster and organisation	Children's Centres	Ofsted Grade – Old Ofsted framework pre April 14	Ofsted Grade- Post April 14 (New Ofsted Framework)
Cluster 1 4 Children	Nomony	Outstanding	
	Plumtree	Good	Good
	Plymstock		Good
Cluster 2 Action for Children	Green Ark	Good	
	Manor Street	Not yet inspected	
Cluster 3 LARK	LARK	Good	
	Popin	Satisfactory	
	Morice Town	Good	
Cluster 4 4Children	Tamar FOLK	Good	
	Four Woods	Good	
Cluster 5 Barnardos	Dell	Good	
	Crownlands	Good	
	Sweetpeas	Satisfactory	
Cluster 6 Barnardos	Southernway	Good	
	Plym Bridge	Satisfactory	
	Whitleigh	Satisfactory	

### Children's Centre Performance Management.

All organisations meet with the Early Years Children's Centre Advisor on a quarterly basis to measure their progress against the agreed targets and outcomes. All organisations are expected to provide qualitative and quantitative data. To date all organisations have met their agreed contractual targets and outcomes for 2014- 2015.

### Priorities for 2015-16

The LA and Cluster priorities for 2015-16 will be agreed at the next quarterly review in November.

The current priorities are as follows:

- To encourage staff to work collaboratively as a cluster, and stabilise staff teams;
- To continue Advisory Board development, especially the role of parents in cluster governance;
- To effectively record the levels of vulnerable children and families, and their outcomes;
- To better capture the child's voice in order to influence their care and centre development;

- To track and monitor the impact and outcomes of children and adults, including evidencing learning, return to employment, improved health and educational attainment.

### Summary

Performance within our Children's Centres remains generally good and the new commissioning relationship is developing. The new contracts reduced the staffing and funding and the scope of the work is now focused on reaching the most disadvantaged and hard to reach families.

### **Increase in free childcare provision**

An election commitment is to introduce 30 hours of free childcare if both parents are working. The Early Years Strategic Partnership has included this as a priority from September 2017. Plymouth has a high take up of the current free entitlement with 98% of 3 and 4 year olds accessing early education in a range of childcare providers:

105 PVI early years providers

48 registered child minders

20 maintained Nursery classes

2 Nursery schools

Many providers have made significant alterations to their current provision to help the Local Authority meet its statutory duty to provide free places for eligible 2 year olds. This has included a significant capital investment to provide new nursery spaces. 1170 2 year olds currently take up a free place making Plymouth one of the better performing LAs in the country.

### Possible implications for Plymouth

- With tax free childcare more parents might decide to go back to work, especially if there are 30 free hours on offer too, putting a strain on current provision.
- If more working parents take up this offer by extending the number of sessions their child is attending then some providers will struggle with capacity, especially where many of them have used their surplus capacity to take 2 year olds, leaving very little physical space for additional 3 and 4 year old places.

### Provision

Of the 127 setting based providers including schools

- 10% cannot expand as they do not have sole use of the building
- 30% are situated where there is lack of space to expand.

This could have capital implications and impact on Plymouth's statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare for parents who want it, particularly working parents.

### Schools with a nursery class

- If working parents are currently using a maintained nursery class there are implications for where the family will take their additional hours (the current pattern of take up suggests that the majority are either not working or paying for additional hours elsewhere).

- Lack of space in schools to deliver the whole entitlement or to work in partnership with a PVI to deliver additional hours.
- Impact on maintained nursery places if families move their child to full day care setting to take up 30 hours in one setting.

#### Sustainability and pressures on providers

- Nationally it is felt that the funding rate provided for Early Education is insufficient to cover the costs and providers recoup this cost from those parents who pay for additional hours therefore if the funding rate is not raised they will not be sustainable.
- Implementation of employer's pension contribution, which will be phased in according to the size of each business, will add additional pressure to financial planning.
- Commercial business rates can impact on private providers adding to sustainability issues.
- Implications of the living wage and the cost of incremental rises for those with more responsibility e.g. room leaders and deputy managers
- The use of childcare is fluid and the impact/loss of income for 30 hours will be greater when a child leaves, especially for child minders.

#### The workforce

- Need to increase the workforce to ensure there are sufficient workers at every level especially graduates
- Currently many groups are reporting challenges recruiting high quality staff and this is hampered by the requirement for staff progressing to level 3 needing to have grade C and above in English and Maths plus the difficulty in recruiting graduates
- Attracting staff is a challenge as this is a low paid sector with a high turnover rate.

#### Benefits for working parents

- Working parents will receive a boost to their income having a further 15 hours of childcare funded for them. This should mean that families should have more disposable income to spend in the local economy.
- Mothers especially should be able to return to work or increase their hours of paid employment. The cost of paying for childcare in the past has been prohibitive for lower paid workers.

#### NEXT STEPS

- Undertake a review of current childcare provision to update current data to find out:
  - % are working parents in each setting
  - % of working parents taking up 30 hours or more
  - Plans providers already have for expanding provision to meet new offer
  - Providers that would have capacity to expand if capital was available.
  - Potential number of registered child minders who could take funded children for 30 hours or work in partnership with existing providers
  - Recruit more child minders to increase the number of places available.
- Analyse data to provide information on current take up and potential gaps in provision, and plan for ways to increase sufficiency.

- Consult with parents to be able to make an accurate prediction as to how many parents might be tempted back to work when new offer is in place and where potential places might be needed.
- Continue with recruitment workshops in partnership with 1000 Club and local training providers to encourage additional practitioners to enter the early years workforce.

#### Summary

The manifesto commitment will undergo consultation and change before it is rolled out nationally. We could apply to be a pilot LA so that we can learn about the challenges as well as benefit from grant funding to develop local provision.

#### **Headteacher succession planning**

The age profile of headteachers in Plymouth is similar to many LAs. The majority of headteachers are over 50. The MAT agenda may assist with filling the potential vacancies in that an Executive Headteacher will oversee a number of schools. Each school will be led by a Head of School. This is a model of provision that has existed in Plymouth for some time (Southernway Federation). Some senior leaders do not wish to be headteachers but would consider becoming a Head of School under the leadership of an Executive Headteacher.

This is a national issue. As a LA we support Governors in recruiting maintained headteachers. Most national adverts now attract single figure applications but Governors have been able to appoint without the need for advertising. Promoting Plymouth as a great place to live and work is a way of securing more interest in local headships. This has helped in the past with adverts highlighting the quality of life to be enjoyed in the city.

#### Summary

We will continue to work with Governors in supporting them to make good appointments.

John Searson  
Head of Education & Learning  
29 September 2015