

Introduction

The Plan for Education comprises five key plans and expands on the policy areas in the Plymouth Plan and Joint Local Plan.

The 5 areas are:

- Attainment/standards. Aspiration is a priority for the Children’s System Design Group (Childrens’ Partnership) and delivered through the Plymouth Education Board.
- Planning for pupil growth – the plan on capital need
- SEND – developing an improved, integrated system
- Skills/STEM – how are we educating and preparing the workforce of the future?
- Creating a strong system through partnership.

As a suite of plans the Plan for Education outlines how, alongside partners, we will champion better outcomes for children, commission the right support to meet the additional or special needs of children and convene partnerships to create sustainable and effective systems leadership. It is a plan that is supportive of agendas concerned with people and place: improving educational outcomes is a critical element of the city’s growth agenda and the health and well-being of residents. The Plan necessarily includes a section on the physical infrastructure required to underpin our ambition. Behind this strategic plan sits a self-evaluation statement and a more detailed operational plan that guide the work of individual teams.

The Vision: We will provide vibrant, effective and modern educational settings that enable our children and young people to develop as active citizens in the community and enjoy a good quality of life in a dynamic and modern economy.

The Approach: Our work will encompass three key roles for the local authority. We will champion the interests of parents and pupils by monitoring and challenging the work of all providers and schools. Through our stewardship, parents and pupils will have their voices clearly heard and their interests effectively met. We will commission a range of services and educational provision from a range of providers, including early years’ settings, schools and health, as a means of securing improved outcomes for all learners. As a convenor we will promote and organise ways in which schools and the LA can collaborate and work in partnership with providers to secure improvement through networks and cooperative trusts. Through integration, where feasible we will promote a shared vision of aspiration and reduce inequality.

We recognise that public accountability for those who work in schools has never been greater and that all educational settings are under increasing pressure to reach ever-higher outcomes.

We all accept that there is no room for complacency: standards are improving only variably and need to improve more quickly. Head Teachers know that expectations are rising and are working in a system where autonomy is to be earned, enjoyed and embraced, but they know that being isolated is not ideal. External support from and collaboration between schools and MATs, can accelerate improvement and remove barriers. In Plymouth, the Local Authority and schools acknowledge the shared responsibility for the outcomes for all children and young people and ‘blended’ approaches to improvement are now well embedded. The new system requires different leadership and a new

relationship and to be sustained it must adapt approaches to support, challenge and intervention and use available resource creatively and dynamically. A consequence of this new shared approach is the establishment of the Plymouth Education Board, Chaired by the Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council. Membership includes Officers of the Council, representatives of Academies and Multi Academy Trusts, Maintained Schools, Regional Schools Commissioner's office, Higher Education and Further Education.

Our context

Plymouth has a diverse educational estate with 99 schools and 125 private, voluntary and independent early years' settings. 45 childminders are registered to provide early years' education and care. There are 69 primary schools (includes 3 infants and 3 juniors), 2 nursery schools and 8 special schools including a pupil referral service. There are 19 secondary schools, all with post 16 provision, with diverse offerings, including grammar schools. In addition, we have one all through primary/secondary free school.

Educational standards over recent years in Plymouth have shown some variation. However, in general, attainment has been below average for at all key stages and by the end of KS4, results remain below the national average in terms of attainment and progress. At Post-16 the percentage of pupils achieving three or more 'A' Levels grades A*-E is also below the national average. We are currently seeing the need to stabilise the evolving new system with standards at KS4 in particular continuing to decline, in some cases rapidly. The Plan for Education represents a significant move towards creating a coherent and high performing education system.

In terms of disadvantaged pupils, the data highlights the fact that disadvantaged pupils attain less well than non-disadvantaged pupils. This is true from the end of Reception Year to the end of KS4. Attainment of children with special educational needs or disabilities performance data shows that pupils attain less well than non-SEND pupils.

With regards to Looked after children, while remaining significantly below national averages, KS1 and 2 cohorts showed an improvement in attainment compared to 2016. At KS4, 70% of students achieved an English or maths qualification of some kind.

Destinations data for the city shows that the percentage of pupils in education, training or employment post-16 is on a rising trend with the latest figures showing that 95% of pupils secure employment with training or taking a place in further education.

In terms of the quality of provision, 100% of children attend a good or better nursery; 84% of pupils attend good or outstanding primary schools and 65% of pupils are educated in secondary schools judged to be at least good. In addition, a number of secondary schools are awaiting inspection and the data suggests vulnerability. 100% of special schools are good or outstanding. Absence and exclusions are rising across the city as is complexity of need. Social, emotional and mental health needs are a predominant category of special need. The number of children in elective home education is rising as are safeguarding concerns and complaints.

Strategic partnerships

PCC has adapted well to the changing educational philosophy and has actively supported school run organisations and accountability by:

- Having LA representatives sit on the Boards of the Plymouth Learning Partnership (PLP), the Plymouth Teaching School Alliance (PTSA), Plymouth Excellence Cluster (PEC), Plymouth School Sports Partnership (PSSP) and CATERed.

- Establishing CATERed, a co-operative trading company. The company is jointly owned (49% schools and 51% Council) and is run as a co-operative trading company with all surpluses reinvested back into the Company to be used for its ongoing development and management of the school kitchens and services to children. 51% of the company is the Council, but the company is not funded by the Council. The company operates using schools' budgets which they have, for the last three years, "pooled" in an entirely altruistic, shared and co-operative manner to support each other for the greater good of all schools and all pupils. CATERed was created to ensure that children and young people in schools across the City could have access to high quality food whatever their background or school they attended. With reductions in public spending 'blending' our joint resources is one way of securing the vital frontline services that vulnerable children and families require.
- Working in partnership with the PTSA, where school-to-school support is targeted to ensure performance issues are tackled effectively. Support is provided for all schools including academies. Schools Forum has invested £1.35m over 2012-2018 of unallocated DSG to fund PTSA which is providing the resource to secure school-to-school support. The LA has been working in closer partnership with PTSA over the last four years and schools that have been supported during this period have shown improved performance over time. In many cases, the rate of improvement has been greater for supported schools than non-supported schools in the city.

The plan on a page attached illustrates the priority areas of our work and the actions that have been identified and are being undertaken.