

Schools Forum

20th September 2016

School Ready Report

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to share information and monitoring data with Schools Forum regarding their £250,000 'school ready' investment. The report will reassure members that the fund is being used to deliver a comprehensive, value for money, outcome focussed action plan. The report will also detail improved outcomes for children, families and practitioners and will include progress and attainment data.

2. Background

- 2.1 School Forum investment aligns to the vision that as many Walsall children as possible, will achieve 'good levels of development' at five years of age, giving them a secure foundation in learning, relationships and life experiences.
- 2.2 At the time of the investment, in 2014, Walsall children's outcomes at five were one of the lowest in the country, with only 53% achievement.

Area	2014 % Good Level Development
Walsall%	53
Walsall rank	137
W Mid%	58
Statistical neighbours	55
Nat %	60

3. Progress

- 3.1 Detailed data analysis was carried out to identify the underlying barriers to children not achieving good levels of development.
- 3.2 Data demonstrated that there were extremely low levels of achievement particularly more disadvantaged children, those entitled to FSM, Looked After Children, SEND, Boys and Summer Born.
- 3.3 Reading, Writing and Maths were the particular areas of learning that children did not achieve so well which could be underpinned by lower achievement in the area of communication and language and understanding the world.

- 3.4 Clear actions were planned to progress early year's agendas to narrow the attainment gap such as Early Years Pupil Premium and early learning for eligible two year olds.
- 3.5 The 0-5 School Ready Strategy was written to provide a clear focus to LA improvement work.
- 3.6 In line with the wider school improvement strategy an action plan was drawn up to address the priorities in the strategy with a particular focus on strengthening Early Years Leadership and School to School Support.
- 3.7 A partnership was formed between Walsall EY Team and Ryders Hayes Teaching School as it offered particular expertise in early years. Two leadership projects were developed and delivered to include: a) Hub Leaders who were trained to coach and support other school leaders and b) Maths and Literacy Leaders who lead learning in their own setting and disseminate best practice through network meetings and training events.
- 3.8 A comprehensive programme offered training and improvement projects to all schools, settings and childminders.

4. Current Status

- 4.1 The percentage of pupils achieving a 'Good Level of Development' within Walsall has improved by 8%, from 53% in 2014 to 61% in 2015. National outcomes for this measure have improved by 6%, from 60% in 2014 to 66% in 2015. The gap to national has narrowed from 7% to 5%.

Area	2014	2015	% improvement
Walsall %	53	61	+8
Walsall Rank	137	131	
West Midlands %	58	64	+6
Statistical Neighbours %	55	62	+7
National %	60	66	+6

- 4.2 At the time of this report National or Walsall GLD for 2016 has not been published. Early indicators demonstrate that in Walsall there has been a further 3.8% improvement from 60.8% to 64.6%. Only two thirds of other LA's had submitted data with an average GLD of 68.8% showing a 2.5%. This national data however cannot be relied upon.
- 4.3 In October 2015, Walsall had a lower percentage of good and better, outstanding and good school EYFS grades than national. By May 2016 there had been an improvement and now Walsall has a higher percentage in all three categories compared to National. Although there are currently a much lower percentage of schools that are inadequate there are a higher percentage of schools that require improvement than national.
- 4.4 Currently Walsall has a much higher than national average of good or better early years private provision (both childminders and private day nurseries) and a lower percentage of requires improvement grades. There are, however a lower percentage of outstanding grades and a higher percentage of inadequate day nurseries.
- 4.5 Walsall continues to deliver early learning for eligible two year olds well. There are currently 14 primary schools and 8 nursery schools offering places for two year olds as well as 56 day nurseries and playgroups and 72 childminders. 69% of 2 year olds are taking up their

entitlement to free early learning. Of these children 37% take up their place in a school or nursery schools. 62% take up their place with a private provider and 1% with a childminder.

- 4.6 Walsall has been selected as an Early Innovator to develop and share learning around sufficiency, flexibility and SEND. Plans are underway to prepare to deliver the extended offer from 2017. A new Sufficiency Lead post was created and appointed to for April 2016. A detailed sufficiency assessment is now being carried out to inform the next stage which entails building sufficiency in areas of need.
- 4.7 Networks for EY Leaders and training events have been well attended. Clear messages and examples of best practice, particularly around Early Years Pupil Premium, have led to improved practice. 97% of schools submitted claims in Spring 2016 which was an increase from 84% in Autumn 2015. 65% of settings submitted claims in Spring 2016 which was an increase from 48% in Autumn 2015. 71% of eligible children receiving EYPP in Spring 2016. This was an increase from 51% in Autumn 2015.
- 4.8 In February 2016 Ofsted inspected the local authority arrangements for supporting school improvements. They confirmed that 'although the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is below the national average in the early years in mainstream schools, standards are improving faster than those nationally. This reflects the positive impact of the authority's 0-5 strategy and some effective school-to-school support for early years'. Ofsted also reported that 'partnerships, networks and localised initiatives, such as 'early help' for families whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, are having a positive impact on children and families in some areas of Walsall. This, for example, is helping more young children in the early years to reach a good level of development, and families are engaging more with the early years in schools, nurseries and other settings'.

5. Future plans

- 5.1 The School Ready/ Early Years Lead Adviser and team will continue to work in partnership with wider LA teams, teaching schools, regional partners and national expertise. Actions will continue to be delivered addressing priorities in the 0-5 School Ready Strategy.
- 5.2 There will be a greater focus on targeting vulnerable groups. A second EY Improvement Plan has been written and is being delivered, as is an EY/LAC Plan and an EY/SEND Plan. (see Appendix 5)
- 5.3 Training and project participation will be monitored and schools/ settings that are RI or inadequate will be contacted individually to encourage take up.
- 5.4 A targeted support plan for schools and settings will be delivered to those with RI or I grades or lower than Walsall average GLD.
- 5.5 A borough wide EY Toolkit is being developed and all frontline EY practitioners from health and children's services will use it to identify and address children needs.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 In 2015/2016 priorities for investment included: a) partnership with the teaching school to deliver the leadership programmes, b) bringing innovative and inspiring Maths and Literacy Trainers into Walsall and c) delivering the training and projects programme to reach all parts of the early years workforce Total - **£50,000**

6.2 In 2016/2017 priorities for investment include: a) partnership with the teaching school to deliver more maths and literacy leader programmes to include more private sector practitioners and a new leaders programme, b) school to school support through the hub leaders, c) Reading Every Day in Every Way project, d) Partnership with Parents Projects focussed on writing and maths, e) English as a new Language training and toolkit, and f) EY Practitioner Toolkit. Total - **£80,000**

6.3 In 2017/2018 - **£60,000**, in 2018/2019 - **£60,000**.

All financial spend is delivered in line with Walsall's LA policy and practice to ensure value for money linked to improved outcomes.