

**Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny
Management Committee**

25 September 2020

Report of the Director of Children, Education and Communities

Schools Update

Background

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee with an update on the full opening of schools from 7th September 2020.
2. The effective partnership working between schools and City of York Council continues to be a strong feature of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The York Schools and Academies Board is continuing to meet weekly, both as a full board and in primary and secondary phase specific sub groups. A third sub-group is made up of the city's specialist settings, Hob Moor Oaks, Applefields and the Danesgate Community. The sub –groups provide a weekly report from their meetings to the York Schools and Academies Board. The Council's education team continues to hold weekly meetings for maintained school heads. These meetings provide a forum for collective problem solving and peer support. There continues to be a commitment to working collaboratively across the city's maintained schools and multi-academy trusts.
3. Schools continue to be well supported by the City's public health team who have been providing very responsive advice and guidance to headteachers which continues to be very highly valued.
4. Overall attendance has remained above national averages since the start of term. As of 25th September 2020 attendance in York's state funded schools was 88% with the national average being 86.2%. The attendance of children with an education, health and care plan across all phases was 85.3% with the national average

being 79.9%. The attendance of children with a social worker across all phases was 82.1% against the national average of 79.5%.

5. School transport arrangements have been working well since the start of term.

Primary Schools

6. All primary schools in the city opened at the start of the autumn term. Three schools with nurseries have had a phased return in their reception classes. There has been the need to close class bubbles at two primary schools since the start of term as a result of confirmed cases of Covid-19.
7. On-going challenges highlighted by primary headteachers are:
 - Staff and pupil absences related to access to and the speed of testing.
 - The additional costs associated with the pandemic, for example supply costs to cover for staff absences, additional costs of cleaning and personal protection equipment.
 - The on-going disruption to the school day created by the preventative measures e.g. frequent handwashing and cleaning, which impacts on learning time.
 - Staff tiredness due to managing the new arrangements.
8. On the whole school leaders remain very positive about the return to school and have reported that children are pleased to be back.

Secondary Schools

9. All secondary schools in the city opened at the start of the autumn term. One secondary school has had to close year group bubbles since the start of term.
10. Secondary schools have adopted the Director of Public Health's recommendation to promote the wearing of face coverings in communal areas.
11. Secondary heads are continuing to meet weekly and have developed a joint agreement about the way open evenings are being conducted this term. They are also sharing ideas and resources to support remote learning.

12. On-going challenges highlighted by secondary headteachers include those highlighted by primary heads and in addition:

- Exam invigilation – many exam invigilators are retired people and are therefore in a vulnerable group.
- Work experience.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to still feel part of the whole school community when they are having to be kept in discreet year group bubbles.

Further Education Colleges

13. Both York College and Askham Bryan College have adopted a phased return, with a mix of onsite and remote learning taking place. This varies according to the specific demands of each of the courses of study.

Recommendation

14. The Committee is asked to discuss and note the content of the report.

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Report Approved



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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All



For further information please contact the author of the report