



Report

Date: 9 December 2021

To Chair and Members of the CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

EDUCATION AND SKILLS THEME REPORT

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Lani- Mae Ball, Cabinet Member, Schools Children and Young People	All	Yes part decision:- To outline the proposed implementation plan and review funding requirements for the delivery of the Education and Skills Strategy 2030

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with an overview of developments in Education and Skills during the academic year 2020-2021 and further developments during the Autumn Term 2021. This includes the Education and Skills Strategy 2030 and the development of a Talent and Innovation Eco-system. The emerging strength of the school system in meeting the significant challenges of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic will be outlined along with the guidance and support provided to schools and settings in preparation for the full reopening of schools in September 2021 and the subsequent work that has taken place during the autumn term. This report focuses specifically on the following:
 - The Education and Skills Strategy 2030 and the development of a Talent and innovation Ecosystem (TIE).School Organisation.
 - School attendance during the Covid 19 pandemic.
 - Developments in Speech and Language Therapy
 - The continuing work to further develop good inclusion practices within schools and reduce exclusions. This includes developments in alternative provision.

- Progress for those 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. It is recommended that the Panel
 - a. Review and support progress against the Education and Skills Strategy 2030 and development of a Talent and Innovation Eco-system.
 - b. Review and note:
 - Changes to assessment arrangements at GCSE, (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and cancellation of all primary assessments in 2021.
 - Progress regarding Speech and Language Therapy

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. The Education and Skills 2030 Strategy will develop the life-long learning offer within the borough, enabling people, places and businesses to participate in a growing and inclusive economy.
 - Educational outcomes have a profound influence on people's ability to live a fulfilling life and engage in quality employment. Enabling all residents to have access to high quality education and training is one of the most effective ways to improve wellbeing, boosting self-confidence and self-esteem, building a sense of purpose, and providing opportunities to connect with others.
 - An ambitious delivery programme to implement the Education and Skills Strategy at this point will enable the Council and its partners to refocus resources and efforts. This will enable residents to retrain and reskill at any age and stage of life, supporting people to access the jobs of the future, fulfil their aspirations and to develop the full remit of skills needed to live well.

BACKGROUND

Education and Skills Strategy 2030 and Talent and Innovation Eco-system

5. The Education and Skills Strategy 2030 is centred on a ten year vision for ***Equitable and inclusive lifelong learning that empowers people to fulfil their aspirations and thrive in life and work.***

The **Priorities** are four life-stage priorities (1-4), and one crosscutting all-age priority (5):
Priority 1: Best Start

Priority 2: Accelerating Achievement

Priority 3: A New Model of Post-16 Education

Priority 4: New Skills and Pathways to Fulfilling Life and Work

Priority 5: Equitable and Inclusive Lifelong Learning

6. At the end of each priority section of the strategy, a number of aims, key areas for action and key measures for success have been listed in boxes to provide a SMART connection on how we can achieve the aims and make systemic changes in 'delivery phase' of this strategy.
7. The final section of the strategy called **Working Better Together – Our Approach to System Transformation**, makes the case for developing a whole-system approach to transformation through establishing an effective **Talent & Innovation Ecosystem (TIE)**. The TIE is the major transformative element of the 2030 Strategy, and is the key driving force behind our five strategic priorities.
8. Team Doncaster has committed to the TIE model because it recognises that in order to have sustained resonance and impact, some fundamental changes to our existing education and skills delivery model must be made. Indeed, whilst the full scale of the impact of COVID-19 on our people and economy is not yet known, it is clear that this has fast-tracked many opportunities for change the system in a way that ensures our residents and organisations are better equipped to deal with future uncertainties. Recent events have shown that there are other ways of doing things; methods that may not have previously been seen as 'best practice' are now emerging as having potential to meet the changing needs of people in more dynamic, flexible, and inclusive ways.
9. There is even further scope to adopt new and innovative approaches that fit well with Doncaster's ambitions. A good place to start is to understand the variety of learning pathways and destinations that are available for our residents. Historically, learning provision has been biased towards traditional, academic, formal routes that are not always suited to learner strengths and needs. We need to offer greater opportunities for work experience and develop transferrable skills that lead to flexible careers and lifelong learning.
10. This is why we have worked closely together with a Senior Advisor from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), to ensure the strategy – through its commitment to TIE model – reflects international thinking and best practice.
11. **Outline of the TIE model:** TIE will support a more diverse and inclusive borough-wide learning community that caters to the individual needs of residents and encourages them to get and stay involved. This requires a whole-system approach involving partners from across and outside of the sector, and perhaps most importantly, learners. The TIE is characterised by four key themes:
12. Learning for the real world - Bringing together learners of all ages, employers and community partners to collaborate on meeting real-world design and commercial challenges. This includes national and global issues such as climate change, artificial intelligence, and pandemics. By putting learners at the forefront of innovation, the TIE will provide learners with opportunities to develop both soft and hard skills, as well as conceptual and practical knowledge that will allow them to flourish in life and work. Our residents must feel that they have a part to play in the world, and that they are trusted, valued and able to contribute to positive change. Working to establish innovative forms of

teaching, assessment and accreditation for these wider capabilities alongside the more traditional assessments dealing with the mastery of content will be crucial enablers for this – ensuring learners can develop the essential, transferable skills needed for lifelong learning.

13. Education to employment through hybrid learning - Making available informal and formal, traditional and non-traditional, academic and vocational learning opportunities to ensure that all residents can learn, train, re-skill and up-skill at all ages and stages, no matter what their learning style or ability. Establishing this Doncaster-specific hybrid model of education will require a number of collaborative developments across the system. Within and across formal education settings, this will involve curriculum enrichment to ensure that skills and qualifications support local jobs. The informal learning offer will also be enhanced through a digital learning platform that develops existing skills and often-unrecognised ability through digital micro-credentials, and makes available local learning and employment opportunities. This will create a series of pathways for local learners to access and progress fulfilling careers, as well as encouraging the learning of new skills as one of the five 'ways to wellbeing'.
14. Strengths-based and demand-led - Combining further and higher education, aligning learning to areas of economic growth potential with existing skills gaps within Doncaster and the Sheffield City Region to ensure the skills offer is demand-led. Building on our University City ambitions, the TIE will promote post-16 learning through four Centres of Excellence: Health and Medical and Engineering are the two most developed, providing a clear pathway to specialist learning and a training offer from levels 1 to 6. Creative and Digital and Green Technology are identified as local growth sectors to work alongside education and skills providers to enable a sustainable and future developing skills supply. Work is underway to align the Centres of Excellence with the Talent Innovation Ecosystem, utilising close partnership working to deliver a joined up post 16 offer across a range of partners, sharing assets and alignment of learning pathways between local and regional partners.
15. Learning coordinated by local experts - Utilising the wealth of expertise and assets across the system by establishing a local partnership with representation from across education, business, and the community, to develop and coordinate the local ecosystem, in alignment with our Centres of Excellence and local industry specialisms. The partnership will act as:
 - Provider – co-designing and co-delivering learning experiences, including through assessment and accreditation
 - Curator – creating a digital library of learning resources
 - Enabler – supporting learners' progress through new and existing pathways
 - Broker – building relationships between business, communities and education providers
16. As well as drawing on expertise from within the local area, the partnership will also look outwards to draw on best practice and expertise from regional, national and international arenas, to develop accreditation, curriculum enhancement and professional development. This will serve to raise aspirations and put Doncaster at the forefront of innovation.

ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE ADOPTION OF THE STRATEGY

17. Since the strategy was adopted at the beginning of this year, a number of key pieces of activity have been progressed. These are outlined as follows:

18. **Alignment with other key strategies:** The Policy, Insight, and Change Team have ensured that the Education and Skills 2030 Strategy has been reflected in and complemented by other key and emerging strategic plans. This includes the forthcoming Culture Strategy, and the Doncaster Delivering Together Borough Strategy. Education and Skills are central to this strategy, featuring within the six well-being goals and the 'Great 8' Priorities:

Goal	Vision
Greener & Cleaner Doncaster	All residents, communities and organisations working together to protect and enhance the local and global environment to improve wellbeing
Prosperous & Connected Doncaster	A stronger, greener & fairer economy that provides good, well paid jobs and is supported by improved transport & active travel infrastructure and access to good broadband
Safe & Resilient Doncaster	Residents feel safe and communities are more resilient to challenges and emergencies
Healthy & Compassionate Doncaster	A compassionate borough where collectively everyone is supported to add life to years and years to life
Skilled & Creative Doncaster	Residents have improved skills and a creative culture supports wellbeing, business success and solutions to the borough's challenges
Fair & Inclusive Doncaster	A borough with reduced inequalities and improved access for all to social and economic opportunities

Figure 1: Six Well-Being Goals



Figure 2: The Great 8 Priorities

19. **Alignment with SYMCA (South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority) Activity and National Funding:** Work has also been undertaken to ensure these local strategic developments align with activity at the regional level. This includes consultation on the plans for a new SYMCA Skills Strategy, and use of the Adult Education Budget (see §64-66). It also includes working with the SYMCA and other partners locally to submit a bid for the Community Renewal Fund that is centred on a 'skills escalator model' that is complementary to the TIE.

20. **Governance arrangements:** A governance structure has been established, which includes a Board and Steering Group. Business leads and co-leads will support the latter.

Co-leads, including business and community leads, will shape the requirements for each of the five priorities and Talent Innovation Ecosystem to ensure that the future pathways are development with and for the people of Doncaster. Education professionals, business leads and community representatives have been invited to complete expressions of interest for the co-lead roles. These have been received and a number have been shortlisted for interview. This group will form the basis of the 'engine room' for the delivery of the Education and Skills Strategy, working across the system, partnership and within communities. A shadow board has already been established and meets every six weeks and a steering group every three weeks.

21. **Reading, Writing, and Maths Strategy** – In partnership with the Opportunity Area, Council and national Literacy Trust, an all age Reading, Writing and Maths Strategy has been developed to support learning in these three key areas. The strategy is aligned to the Education and Skills 2030, its three year plan is already in its second year of delivery. The strategy is designed to engage Children, young people and their families in learning and to improve reading, writing and maths skills, The strategy is also aligned to the Adult Family Learning, transition, early years, South Yorkshire Maths Hub, Partners in Learning, The Research School, Doncaster Library Service and the National Literacy Trust through Doncaster Stories

22. Doncaster Council is a member of the Commission for the Skills and Post 16 Education Bill and, in conjunction with ResPublica will be producing a report on the subject of why Education and Skills is a driver to transform Doncaster as a place. This report will be presented to the Commission as part of its evidence base. The place-based report will seek to place Doncaster at the forefront of the national skills agenda and set out a series of asks of Government to enable the local strategy. The report will be launched at the GELP conference in November.

23. **Developing a Talent & Innovation Ecosystem (TIE)** - In order to progress the development of the TIE model two partnership workshops have taken place to co-create a set of cross-cutting programmes that address the following themes:

- A Doncaster Curriculum and Credentialing system
- A programme of engagement, driven by a Doncaster Centre for Applied Learning, which seeks to engage every person in the borough as a learner
- Broadening out the TIE model to reflect the other elements within Doncaster's wellbeing wheel – asking how can we develop a multi-faceted learning ecosystem, to improve all dimensions of people's lives, within thriving communities?
- Ensuring the TIE model delivers for vulnerable learners and older learners

These themes will be the subject of local and international discussion and development at the GELP event in November (see §44).

24. **The Global Education Leaders Partnership (GELP)** – Doncaster is the first UK place to hold this international event, with a clear local focus. It comprises of a set of education system leaders who are committed both to transforming education through the development of learning ecosystems through implementing, at scale, new partnerships, pedagogies, curricula and assessment that enable well-being.

25. In May this year, Doncaster hosted an online conference for GELP, and showcased the 2030 Strategy and examples of provision in Doncaster that exemplified the TIE model.

26. This November, Doncaster (with backing from the Northern Powerhouse Partnership and

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority) hosted a follow-up conference that took place both on-line and in Doncaster.

27. The centrepiece was a three-day conference called Designing Doncaster's Education Future. Over the three days (10th – 12th November), some of the world's leading education experts from the GELP community will be chairing discussions that help to progress the TIE.
28. Each evening the international GELP community discussed education transformation, education leadership and the recognition of learning - and in each case, Doncaster made a key contribution, based on the conference discussions.
29. **Current State Assessment:** To support implementation of the strategy and GELP, a current state assessment is underway. Upon appointment of the business leads (existing roles from the Council and partners, the strategy is to have initial sessions to produce a high level overview. Further sessions will take place to support GELP and full workshops will commence after GELP and appointment of the co-leads.
30. **University City and the Development of Centres of Excellence:** The University City Steering Group has been working to develop a joint post-16 prospectus centred around four Centres of Excellence. Two of the Centres of Excellence have well established industry sectors locally (Engineering and Health & Medical) and a further two require greater local sector growth alongside skills supply – Green Technology and Creative and Digital).
31. Work is underway to align the TIE development with these Centres of Excellence, providing a unique specialist learning and training offer, utilising close partnership working to deliver a joined up post-16 offer across a range of partners, sharing assets and alignment of learning pathways between local and regional partners.
32. **The South Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)** pilot is being led by Doncaster Chamber working alongside Sheffield, and Barnsley and Rotherham Chambers of Commerce and a range of partners including the region's colleges and Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre. The pilot involves working closely with colleges and other providers to provide skills solutions for employers in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) related industries. As well as putting businesses in the driving seat when it comes to articulating skills demand, the pilot will also seek to encourage businesses to increase the level of investment in their workforce. This builds on the TIE model.
33. **START in Doncaster** – Start in Doncaster and Opportunities Doncaster are working in partnership to bring many of the Borough's careers resources into one place as a single point of contact for skills and careers in Doncaster. Jointly funded by Business Doncaster and the Opportunity Area, this online Careers, Advice, Information, and Guidance Service (Doncaster START) has been revamped to provide an improved more accessible experience. START in Doncaster provides support and information for young people (GCSE to Post 18 pathways), information for graduates, adults, parents and careers, educators and employers. Given its success, this service has now also been shared across the SYMCA.
34. **Doncaster Careers Hub** – The hub is partly funding by the Opportunity Area programme and Careers Enterprise. Its purpose is to help schools and colleges provide high quality careers information education advice and guidance. They bring together a partnerships of schools, colleges, Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities, businesses, and

careers providers, to develop and share good practice to help schools and colleges best support their students to young people connect closely to local skills and economic needs. The Doncaster Careers Hub has now merged with the Sheffield City Region Careers Hub working with 112 schools (33 Doncaster Schools). This includes Further Education/Sixth Form Colleges, University Technical Colleges, Mainstream Secondary, Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units.

35. A developed work experience programme to support young people in schools. This includes sharing local and national best practice. This includes funded Opportunities Doncaster/North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership to deliver work experience to every Doncaster mainstream school and signposting schools to funded virtual opportunities via providers such as Speaker for Schools/Pathway and fully funded VWEX (Virtual Work Experience) in the Gaming sector delivered by Speakers for Schools and Game Academy, BAME into STEM, (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Summer Academy, girls into STEM Summer Academy and the Bridge project work experience placements for young people with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND).
36. The Careers Hub has also implemented a fully funded apprenticeship support and knowledge programme. This is available to all schools and delivered by Opportunities Doncaster. There is a primary aspiration programme to support education in primary schools, a widening participation project, in partnership with Zero gravity to support young people in accessing university, including Oxbridge and Russell Group, a post 16 project to improve the quality of A level and vocational provision targeted at young people at risk of Not being in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and the development of an all age careers platform focussing on Doncaster employers, opportunities, learning providers and labour market information.
37. **Employment Hub** - A single Access Gateway into Employment Skills and Enterprise support established in 2020 to help people affected by the Covid Pandemic to navigate the employment and landscape. Services were brought together to provide one easy channel to find support and help, for example for people made redundant, furloughed, those looking to change career to move into demand roles e.g. social care and healthcare. The Hub provides web, email and telephone channels for engagement.
38. The online gateway to the hub is built onto the START in Doncaster (all age careers platform) and a re-vamp and re-design of START is underway with smarter functionality and improved user interface particularly from an Adults perspective. The developments will improve the adult user journey and will include the provision of a CV builder, skills profiling, exploring industries and job search. The project is also now being rolled out across the SYMCA.
39. **Employment, Skills and Enterprise activity** is aligned to the Employment Hub to ensure residents can find information, get support and benefit from opportunities easily, this includes:
40. **Employment Academies** - Employment Academies are being established to ensure local residents can access employment opportunities at major development sites across Doncaster, as well as recruitment support for employers located on site.
 - [The iPort Academy](#) is live
 - [The Gateway East Academy](#) (Airport Business Park) is live
 - The Unity Academy will be launched later this year

41. **Youth Hub 2** – The local Youth Employment Hub delivered by Business Doncaster is set up to support 18-24 year olds Universal Credit (UC) Claimants into; work, training or self-employment. Doncaster has highest levels of young people claiming Universal Credit in South Yorkshire. This service is grant funded by DWP from its Flexible Support Fund and is delivered in partnership with Doncaster Chamber. Referrals are made directly by Job centre staff (Work and Youth Coaches) and young people are supported with employability skills, development and careers action planning, CV development, and job applications, with the key aim to reduce claimant numbers. A physical Youth Hub has been set up in the One Stop Shop in the Civic Office where the delivery team meet and support Youth Hub customers, as well as engagement and delivery focussed across Doncaster where it is needed most, including currently Hexthorpe and Thorne.
42. **Launchpad** – Delivered by Business Doncaster and Doncaster Chamber this is our well known self-employment and new business start-up offer - available to anyone 16 or over, as well as existing micro businesses. Launchpad can be accessed via the employment hub or directly.
43. **Adult and Family Community Learning (AFCL)** – Doncaster’s AFCL service is fully funded through the recently devolved SYMCA Adult Education Budget. It provides a vital role in supporting residents aged 19+ to enter, return or progress in the areas of education and/or employment. By taking delivery out to communities, learning becomes more accessible and begins to break down the barriers that many adults face when (re-)entering education or employment.
44. **The AFCL curriculum strategy** is aligned to the 2030 Strategy and the Reading, Writing and Maths Strategy. The provision of a Functional Skills offer in maths and English, an Essential Digital Skills offer and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications enables adults across the Borough to better engage with society and begin their journey to employment or upskilling. The Family Learning offer supports parents/carers to support their children’s learning at home, preparing and supporting the future generation of workers; and the Community Learning offer builds community resilience and reduces social isolation and mental health issues.
45. Throughout the Covid pandemic, the service successfully changed its delivery model to enable it to continue reaching out to communities, from predominantly face to face delivery they created Google classrooms, delivered learning via Teams sessions and delivered resources to beneficiaries across the Borough to enable them to take part in learning. Tutors diversified their delivery, looking to offer programmes of learning that would support mental health and well-being in difficult times away from their usual curriculum areas.

The Current Education Landscape

School Organisation

46. The table below outlines the current organisation of school across Doncaster. It shows the number of schools in each phase of schools and the split between maintained schools and academies.

	No. of Schools	Maintained Schools	Academies	Free Schools	Total Academies	% Academies
--	----------------	--------------------	-----------	--------------	-----------------	-------------

Type Of Establishment						
Infant	9	3	6		6	67%
Junior	7	2	5		5	71%
Primary	82	30	52		52	63%
Secondary	19	0	17	2	19	100%
Special	6	1	4	1	5	83%
Pupil Referral Unit	2	2			0	0%
Sixth Form College	1	N/A		1	1	100%
University Technical College	1	N/A		1	1	100%
Alternative Provision	1	N/A	0	1	1	100%
Total	128	38	84	6	90	70%

47. This table shows that there are still separate infant and junior schools in the borough, although this number has reduced over the last decade as schools amalgamate and become primary schools. All secondary schools are academies along with approximately 63% of primary schools and 83% of Special Schools. The majority of academies belong to multi academy trusts (MATs) and 19 MATs have schools in Doncaster. There are also eight standalone academies. The Department for Education are now encouraging standalone academies to join other multi academy trusts. For Special schools, Nexus Academy Trust have five schools with Stone Hill remaining as a maintained school.

Pupil Population (Census - Summer Term 2021)	
Type of Establishment	Number of Pupils
School Nursery	2948
Primary School	25666
Secondary School	18405
Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units	654
Total Number of Pupils	47673

48. This table shows the total number of pupils within the school system in the Summer Term 2021 and numbers of pupils within each phase.

49. In terms of school organisation, the job of the team is to ensure that there are enough high quality school places to meet demand.

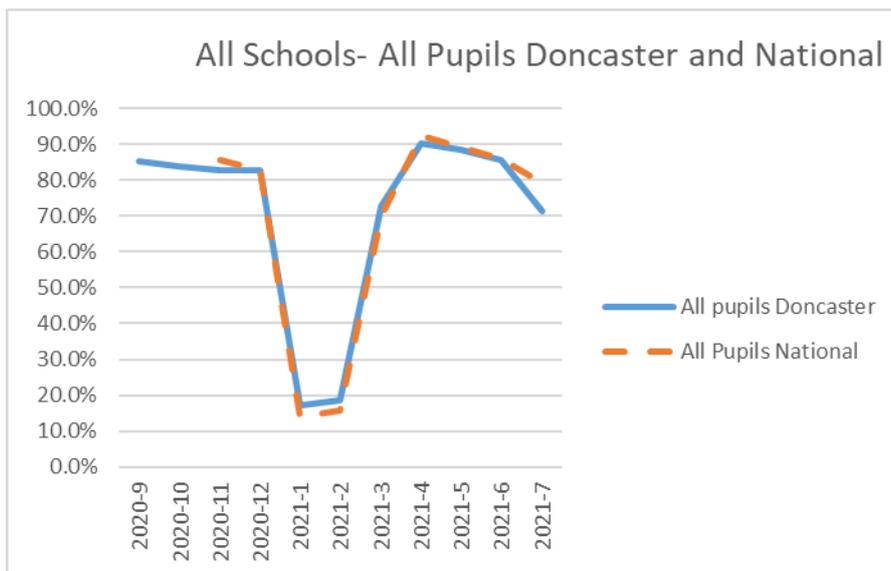
50. The Admissions Service has continued to operate very efficiently and effectively since the start of the pandemic with the team adapting very quickly to the new challenge of remote working. The year of entry data for admissions shows that Doncaster surpassed regional and national percentages in all areas. For primary admissions, 97.1% of applicants gained a first preference place. This compares favourably with the Yorkshire and Humber average of 93.3% and the national average of 91.8%. At secondary, 88% of all applicants gained a first preference place compared to the Yorkshire and Humber average of 86.9% and the national average of 81.1%. The service continues to deal with high volumes of in year admissions from both children and young people moving into the borough and those who move schools within borough. The team is now preparing for the

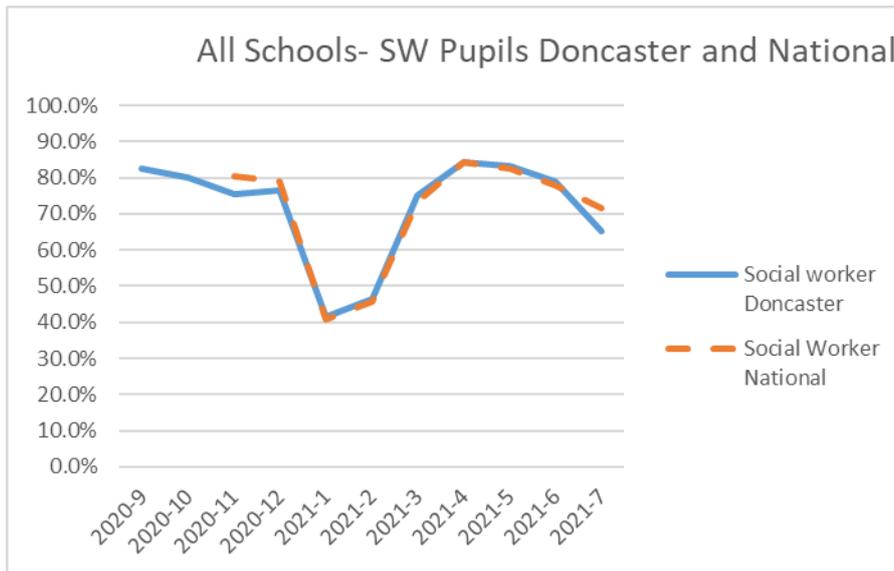
2022 round of admissions.

Attendance

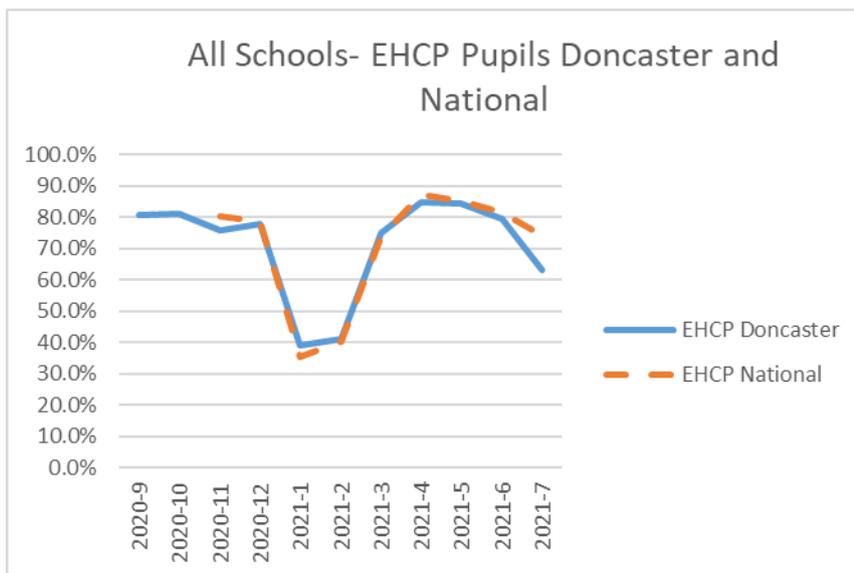
51. The Attendance Service take an early intervention approach with teams offering direct support to schools and families in localities through a revised case work approach, working closely with locality teams. The service has played a lead role in supporting individual school and family circumstances, providing a cohesive approach to communications, engagement and support. The service provides advice, guidance and resources to support school practice and leadership. This approach has shown impact on attendance and associated areas such as elective home education and children missing education. School attendance had stabilised prior to the pandemic with a number of key outcomes improving significantly since 2018, with primary absence moving in line with national figures and secondary persistent absence improving from 19% to 17% during the first year of our attendance strategy. Despite the challenges around covid, these outcomes continued to improve throughout the period of the pandemic, with gaps closing with the National Average and overall absence being close to national average for most of the last year:

- For 2020-2021, Autumn term figures show that primary and secondary attendance was slightly below average overall, having been in line with average during November but affected by bubble closures during December. For the Spring term 2021, primary school attendance was above national average with secondary attendance consistently in line with national figures average.
- For the first part of the summer term, primary attendance was consistently above or in line with the national average until July 2021. Secondary attendance had been broadly in line or slightly below for much of 2021 but attendance at both phases was negatively impacted by the sharp rise in Covid infections during June and July with the gap to national consequently increasing in July.





52. Attendance of children with a social worker had also been in line with national average until July. The attendance of those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has been broadly in line but more variable, fluctuating with local levels of infection.



53. Additionally, the sharp rise in the infection rate during September 2021 has similarly affected attendance at the start of the academic year. Whilst the infection rate is significantly higher, the attendance of young people has compared well to the national average and the same period in previous years. This high infection rate continued into October with a resultant drop in attendance, particularly at secondary.

	All	EHCP All	Social Worker All	Primary All	Secondary All
Doncaster September 2020	85.1%	80.5%	82.7%	87.8%	81.0%
Doncaster September 2021	88.7%	84.1%	85.7%	92.3%	83.5%

National September 2021	89.1%	85.5%	84.1%	92.6%	85.9%
-------------------------------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Elective Home Education

54. Doncaster has a history of high rates of Elective Home Education (EHE). During 2018/19, Doncaster continued to see an increase in parents opting to electively home educate and rates in Doncaster were above the national average. The academic year 2020/21 was a challenge with an increase of 252% in notifications for EHE as many parents were reluctant to send children back to school following periods of home education. This rate was mirrored nationally and regionally. The Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service modified its strategy to ensure rapid support and challenge to schools and families who expressed an interest in elective home education so that all decisions were in the best interest of young people. We have used a targeted approach to follow up on cases, challenging where we believe that children are vulnerable and not in receipt of a suitable education. Many expressions of interest were addressed without a formal notification being sent into the Local Authority, with officers resolving problems between all parties where this was necessary. Whilst there were 330 actual new notifications, 255 of the overall cases have now been closed down. Where young people have returned to schools, we have supported this through our centrally commissioned services including alternative provision and transition teams. Whilst Doncaster had seen a dramatic rise in enquiries and notifications over the last year, there has been a real time 25% decrease in electively home educated children within the borough since the start of the 2019-2020 academic year. This has reduced from 609 to 409 since July 2019 and by 10% (450 to 409) since December 2020.

Children Missing Education

55. Children Missing Education (CME) referrals grew through the period of the pandemic, with 504 (1.29% of overall population) received during academic year 2020-2021. Our early intervention approach has ensured that 87% of open cases were closed during the academic year, with the current CME list showing 132 children. This represents 0.34% of overall population. There are currently no young people with a social worker in the Children Missing Education cohort.

Inclusion

56. Our Behaviour and Transformation programme continues to deliver an early intervention approach to meeting behaviour needs with a graduated approach and specialised alternative provision framework. Decisions around provision for young people are made using a multi-agency model. Over the last year, we have developed a Memorandum of Understanding with all secondary schools, with devolved funding used to build early intervention approaches in school supplemented by direct access to support and guidance to prevent exclusions. Each school has targets to reduce exclusions with data subject to peer challenge. To complement this, we have developed a local solutions approach and a Team Around The School model working with Early Help leads, CAMHS and Social Care to develop plans with families and schools where this is needed most. This reflects the developing locality model of delivery.

57. Big Picture Learning now supports young people who have been home educated, excluded or absent back into schools. Vega College works with older students (14-16)

through job coaching and sustained work placements, aided by the Chamber of Commerce.

58. As a consequence of integrated work, we have reduced permanent exclusion by 87% over the last year. In the last 12 months, 27 exclusions have been issued and 31 have been prevented through integrated working, as compared to 112 declared and 26 withdrawn in 2018-2019. There has been only one primary permanent exclusion since January 2020 as compared to 16 in 2018-2019. Only two of our secondary estate have seen an increase in permanent exclusions in this period, both of whom had either none or one previously.
59. Where there have been exclusions, all statutory timeframes have been met and all young people have transitioned into mainstream provisions without further permanent exclusion. Exclusions have been low for SEND groups (reducing from 28 in 2018-2019 to 6 in 2020-2021) and Children in Care (reducing from 1 to 0). 162 students have accessed time bound placements over the last academic year, including a number where emergency placements were required as a response to growing mental health needs. There has been a 98% reintegration rate into schools for these pupils.
60. With this system now embedding, we acknowledge that reducing fixed term exclusions continues to be a challenge for us, despite recent strong improvements. Our primary fixed term exclusions have reduced significantly over the last two academic years, from 549 to 182, reflecting a 23 place improvement in the national L.A. rankings. The gap with the national average for primary rate (ie number of sessions per student) has, since 2018-2019, reduced by 1.22 to 0.11 and for the number of pupils with 1 exclusion per 100,000 by 0.47 to 0.04.
61. However, whilst our secondary fixed term exclusion rate has reduced substantially, from 5796 to 2685, we know feel that this can be improved significantly and is the service's primary focus. Two schools in a single trust, contributing 33% of overall exclusions, have disproportionately influenced the overall secondary figures. There is now a firm partnership foundation to address this and work has begun with all schools who are disproportionately represented in fixed term exclusion data to improve policy and practice in this area.

Special Educational Needs

62. The SEND Strategy is being launched to ensure that children and young people are educated as close to home as possible. This approach reinforces the principle of early intervention, improves capacity and sufficiency in schools and ensures alignment with The Education and Skills 2030 Strategy.
63. The SEND strategy has six key themes. These are:
- Ensuring that the graduated response to meeting need is delivered coherently and consistently.
 - Ensuring that there is a clear partnership response to young people's mental health needs.
 - Ensuring that children and young people on the autism, attention deficit disorder and other neurodevelopmental pathways have their needs identified and met in a timely manner
 - Ensuring that Doncaster's secondary schools provide teaching that meets the needs of

SEND students so that they make good progress

- Improving positive transitions for young people with SEND so young people are prepared for adulthood and are able to independently access suitable employment
- Improving the use of information to inform strategic planning and joint commissioning.

64. Exclusions have been low for SEND groups (28 in 2018-2019 to 6 in 2020-2021) and Children in Care (1 to 0). Despite the challenges of the last year, our performance for Education Health and Care Plans completed in 20 weeks remains well above the national average. (84.62% national average 59%). There has been a 17% increase in requests and 10% increase in the number of plans maintained. NEET figures for the EHCP cohort of are in line with the national average (0.5%), due to our strong planning and partnership response.

Speech and Language Therapy and The Neurodevelopmental Pathway

65. Therapies including SALT (Speech and Language Therapy) and OT (Occupational Therapy) continue to be reviewed. There is an increasing gap of employed therapists across the UK with vacancies remaining unfilled in Doncaster also. This is approximately 25% of therapists for children and young people. Work is ongoing to look at how the current team can be reshaped to support future service need. Therapies continues to be solely Health funded, this provides limitations to funding and services. There is increasing demand for therapy provision within some Special Schools. This is diluting the provision within other Educational settings and makes the delivery of an equitable service difficult.

66. SALT have now finalised the South Yorkshire Talking Together pathway and have worked closely across Team Doncaster to implement this model.

67. General Development Assessments (GDA) referrals from schools and Early Years providers are up from an average of 30 per month to over 100. A large number of these referrals are inappropriate and are having to be sent back to schools and Early Years providers for further information. A GDA pathway group has been established by Doncaster Council to look at Early Help/ Early intervention to address some of the inappropriate referrals and how they could be reviewed earlier by the wider system. Waiting times will continue to rise if we are unable to reduce the time spent on signposting and re-evaluating incomplete referrals For ADHD (Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder), , a digital provider 'Helios' has commenced digital assessments from RDASH (Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Hospitals). This commenced on the 18th Oct and will look to reduce the long waits in the system.

Participation and Transition Service

68. This service continues to operate extremely effectively during the last academic year and the latest available data on young people aged 16-18 who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) compares very favourably with both regional and national data.

69. Figures released in October give the final data for the academic year 2020/2021. This shows that Doncaster's combined average NEET/Not Known figure at the end of August 2021 (4.7%) is lower than most of our statistical neighbours, lower than the Yorkshire &

Humber average (5.7%) and lower than the national average (5.3%). The Doncaster average percentage of young people participating in learning at the end of July 2021 was 93.3% which is higher than all of our statistical neighbours, the Yorkshire & Humber average (91.6%) and the national average (92.5%). These positive figures are testament to the continuing dedicated work of the Participation and Transition Team.

Education Outcomes and Current Actions

70. As in 2020, there were no formal examinations or assessments taken in 2021. At primary level, there were no formal assessments of Early Years, Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. At secondary level for GCSE and A Level, the problematic approach using an algorithm and other measures that caused difficulties in 2020 was replaced by a system of teacher assessed grades with support and exemplars for the examination boards. The date of release of results was also changed with both A Level and GCSE results released on 10th and 12 August respectively.
71. Examination and assessments results from 2021 will not be published in performance tables and assessment results. Doncaster's results have not been shared outside a very small group of senior leaders and elected members. Doncaster's results at both GCSE and A Level improved in line with the national trend.
72. A significant development over the last academic year has been the development of The Wellbeing and Curriculum Group and the associated development of The Equity and Diversity Group, led by officers from The Learning Standards and Effectiveness Team. It was originally set up to support educational settings to respond to the challenges of Covid-19 but has subsequently led to the development of a range of actions including:
- **A Briefing paper on inequalities and attainment in Doncaster** for pupils with a range of characteristics such as ethnicity, English as an additional language, free school meal eligibility, gender, Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities with a particular focus on intersectionality.
 - **Focused work on diversifying the reading curriculum** so that there is positive representation of pupils of all characteristics, particularly those that are currently under-represented such as British Asian and Minority Ethnic pupils (BAME) and those pupils with additional learning needs. A working group of a range of staff, including headteachers of schools have been working hard to collate resources and recommended books for schools to use. They are now in the process of developing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for schools so that they can use these resources effectively, as well as looking into getting some of the authors to visit our schools as soon as it is safe to do so.
 - **The recruitment of over 40 Equity and Diversity Champions from schools**, with a view to affecting positive change in terms of equity and diversity as well as closing the attainment gaps. The first meeting of this group took place on the 4th June and the Equity and Diversity Champions want to focus on two key areas: Closing the attainment gap for a range of pupils and diversifying the curriculum.
 - **Leadership Networks**. These have been twice half termly events that have been attended by approximately 90 leaders in Doncaster and the themes have been tied to the work of the Wellbeing and Curriculum working group themes.

73. Since September, the continuing priority remains the mental wellbeing of staff and pupils and ensuring that all pupils have access to a broad, balanced and equitable curriculum that aligns with the priorities in The Education and Skills 2030 Strategy.

- The work of the Mental Health in Schools Group is continuing.
- The Leadership networks and curriculum group have continued alongside the ongoing work of The Equity and Diversity Group and the Schools Operational Group.
- These different groups, led by officers from The Learning Standards and Effectiveness Team, continue to support schools in a range of important areas and ensure that all schools and school leaders can access support and advice.
- The daily Incident Management Team (IMT) meetings continue as we work with public health colleagues to monitor positive cases and provide advice and support to schools and settings.
- The Schools Operational Group continue to meet fortnightly. This is an important forum for sharing the latest advice and guidance on a range of school related issues. Membership of this group includes trade union colleagues as well as council officers and school leaders.
- Ofsted have now returned to a full programme of inspections in the Autumn term. At the time of writing, there have been 12 inspections since the start of the Autumn term but only four reports have been published. The focus is mainly on schools that have not been inspected since 2016. For Doncaster; this has meant two previously inadequate schools have received good judgements while all other schools except one have kept their previous judgement of good. The Learning Standards and Effectiveness team have organised a briefing session on 29 November to share good practice and practical advice from schools that have been inspected this term. The Learning Standards and Effectiveness Team continue to work closely with maintained schools and offer advice and support to academies to help prepare schools for inspection.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

74. This section is not applicable

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

75. This section is not applicable.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY OUTCOMES

76.

	Outcomes	Implications
	Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;	The continued availability of education during the Covid-19 pandemic has enabled key workers to access childcare to continue with their vital roles in Doncaster’s key services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>The recovery curriculum and Education and Skills 2030 Strategy with equity and diversity as a guiding principle aims to provide local children and young people with the skills and competencies to access local employment and/or ignite interests that allow them to access further education locally.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>Improved outcomes help all children and young people to make the most of the opportunities offered by the borough.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>The recovery curriculum and The Education and Skills 2030 Strategy with equity and diversity as a guiding principle aims to ensure children access meaningful education opportunities that exercises and promotes life-long learning.</p> <p>The further development of The Education and Skills Strategy 2030 will ensure that every child and young person is well prepared to meet future challenges.</p>

	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>Improved outcomes help children to make the best possible start in life. The emphasis on equity and diversity will ensure that no section of the borough's population is left behind. The continuing focus on mental health will help ensure that vulnerable children have access to appropriate support.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>The ongoing work of teams across the council as outlined in this report will enable all our children and young people to benefit from improved outcomes and opportunities.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

77. Reputational Risk: There is a risk to the council that not achieving improved outcomes would result in a lack of future employment opportunities for young people. Children and young people with low educational outcomes increase the risk of being unable to reach their full potential. The added pressures on schools and settings caused by the current Covid- 19 Pandemic further compound this risk.

78. Financial Risk: There is a risk of increasing pressure on other council resources due to limited educational opportunities for children and young people with low educational outcomes.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: SRF Date: 19.11.21]

79. There are no legal implications arising from this report. Specific advice can be provided on issues raised by the panel.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: SB 19/11/21]

80. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. The impact of COVID on the council's finances has been reported on through the revenue monitoring reports. All schools have had the opportunity to claim exceptional costs from the DfE

associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) whilst continuing to receive their core funding allocations.

81. Learning & Opportunities, Children and Young People's Services are funded through a variety of funding streams including the general fund, grants (including the Dedicated Schools Grant) and traded income from schools.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: CR Date: 22.11.2021]

82. There are no direct HR implications relating to this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: PW Date 22/11/21]

83. There are no technology implications relating to this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: RL Date 22/11/2021]

84. Through the Covid-19 pandemic, education settings across Doncaster have supported pupils, their families and school staff in the balance of reducing Covid-19 transmission risk within their setting and the delivery of both education and school based activities that enhance wellbeing. The Covid-19 pandemic is ongoing, and provision to support the balance of health protection and Covid-19 prevention and response with the education experience that children receive remains important.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: PR Date 18/11/21]

85. Improved provision in all phases will ensure that all children's education and development continues to benefit; this will increase and strengthen our Local Offer and support our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

86. The Council's duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when exercising its functions to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not share that protected characteristic, ensure fair access to learning and opportunities for all Doncaster's children and young people.

CONSULTATION

87. This section is not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

88. This section is not applicable.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AD/HD	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
AFCL	Adult Family & Community Learning
BAME	British Asian and Minority Ethnic
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CME	Children Missing Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DFE	Department for Education
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EHE	Elective Home Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GDA	General Development Assessment
GELP	Global Education Leaders Partnership
LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OECD	Organisation For Economic Cooperation and Development
OT	Occupational Therapy
RDASH	Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Hospitals
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths
SYMCA	South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority
TIE	Talent and Innovation Ecosystem
VWEX	Virtual Work Experience

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Paul Ruane, Head of Learning Provision
Telephone: 01302 737658
Email: paul.ruane@doncaster.gov.uk

Leanne Hornsby, Assistant Director, Education, Skills, Culture and Heritage
Telephone: 01302 734865
Email: leanne.hornsby@doncaster.gov.uk

Riana Nelson,
Director of Learning, Opportunities, Skills and Culture (DCS)