

Education Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Monday, 22 July 2019

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Early Years Education

(Appendix A refers)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

This report provides information about Lancashire's providers of funded early education for 2, 3 and 4 year old children, including updates on take up and quality of provision.

Recommendation

The Education Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i. Consider the information contained in the report.
- ii. Note the next steps outlined.
- iii. Identify and agree any recommendations to support ongoing work.

Background and Advice

Lancashire's funded early years education and childcare provision within the county is currently as follows:

Private Day Nursery	332
Nursery provision within Primary Schools (including maintained nursery classes and governor led provision "Section 27")	154
Nursery Schools	24
Childminders	533
Pre-school Playgroup	117
Nursery Units of Independent Schools	14
Special School Nursery Classes	18
After School Club	4
Breakfast Club	1
Total Providers	1197

The vast majority of children access funded early education and childcare in the private and voluntary sector.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Our latest childcare sufficiency assessment (CSA) shows that Lancashire currently has a sufficient number of childcare places. However, we do recognise that sufficiency may become more of a challenge within the next 12 - 18 months due to the impact of minimum wage increases and full implementation of the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) from April 2019. With this in mind we have developed a new system for undertaking the assessment, this includes reporting at a service planning area (SPA). This provides a more detailed analysis of childcare provision in an area so we can identify any localised issues and work in partnership with providers and parents.

Performance

Annually, the Department for Education (DfE) commissions National Statistics on the performance of each local authority against key headline measures.

Key findings from this year's report (Appendix A)

Ref: "Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2019: Early years provision for children under 5 years in the local authority maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors in England." Published 27 June 2019.

1. National take up of funded early education remains high among 3 and 4 year olds at 1,277,100.

Take up rates of funded early education for 3 and 4 year olds stayed the same as in 2018. 92% of 3 year olds, and 95% of 4 year olds benefited from funded early education in January 2019 – a total of 1,277,100 children (*compared with 1,284,632 in 2018*).

91% of all 3 and 4 year olds receiving funded early education attended a setting rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Lancashire take up of funded early education remains high among 3 and 4 year olds at 27,019

Take up rates of funded early education for 3 and 4 year olds increased on 2018. 97% of 3 year olds, and 100% of 4 year olds benefited from funded early education in January 2019 – a total of 27,019 children (*compared with 27,270 in 2018*).

94% of all 3 and 4 year olds receiving funded early education attended a setting rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

2. Nationally, over 328,000 children benefited from the extended funded early education, up 11%.

Nationally, in January 2019, 328,100 3 and 4 year old children benefited from the extended early entitlement (up to an additional 15 hours – meaning a total of up to 30 hours entitlement). This is an increase of 11% from 296,900 children in January 2018.

96% of all 3 and 4 year olds benefiting from the extended entitlement attended a setting rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

In Lancashire, over 9,000 children benefited from the extended funded early education, up 7%

In Lancashire, in January 2019, 9,274 3 and 4 year old children benefited from the extended early entitlement. This is an increase of 7% from 8,680 children in January 2018.

97% of all 3 and 4 year olds benefiting from the extended entitlement attended a setting rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

NB 37% of all 3 and 4 year olds benefiting from the extended entitlement attended a setting rated outstanding by Ofsted, compared with 29% nationally.

3. Take up rate for eligible 2-year-olds decreases to 68% nationally

Nationally, the number of 2 year olds benefiting from funded early education decreased by 6,200 to 148,800 in January 2019.

The take-up rate has decreased from 72% to 68% in 2019. This is mainly due to fewer children benefiting from the entitlement, but has also been partly affected by a change in the calculation of the eligible population.

96% of all 2 year olds receiving funded early education attended a setting rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

In Lancashire, the number of 2 year olds benefiting from funded early education decreased by 17 to 3,243 in January 2019. The take-up rate has decreased from 75% to 69% in 2019 (see note above).

99% of all 2 year olds receiving funded early education attended a setting rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

NB 39% of all 2 year olds receiving funded early education attended a setting rated outstanding by Ofsted, compared with 24% nationally.

4. The percentage of 2, 3 and 4 year old children benefiting from funded early education at private, voluntary and independent providers with staff with graduate statuses is high in Lancashire.

This detail is not included in the national main report but is included in the accompanying tables. The percentage of 2, 3 and 4 year old children benefiting from funded early education at private, voluntary and independent providers with staff with graduate statuses is 65% in Lancashire, compared with 52% nationally.

The percentage of private, voluntary and independent providers with staff with graduate statuses is 41%, compared with 36% nationally.

Conclusions from this report

All of the headline data figures contained within the statistical first release (related to take-up and Ofsted outcomes) are better than national figures. In summary, Lancashire's take up of Funded Early Education and the quality of the provision is better than that found nationally for all ages of children and provider types.

Furthermore, the key data is better overall than that of Lancashire's highest performing statistical neighbour (as measured by the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data).

Further Information

Pupil Outcomes

Last published data from 2018 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile:

GLD: good level of development (the expected standard at the end of Reception)

GLD	2016	2017	2018
Lancashire	69.2%	69.4%	69.7%
National	69.3%	70.7%	72%

Standards of attainment rose marginally in 2018 by 0.3% to 69.7%. Though there is a three year trend of improvement, this is slight and not matched by the national rise. Consequently, results are below the national average and the gap has increased over the last two years.

Early Language Outcomes

The DfE has set an ambitious goal to halve, by 2028, the percentage of children leaving reception year without the communication, language and literacy skills they need to thrive.

The measure that underpins this ambition is the proportion of children achieving the expected level or above for both the 'communication and language' and 'literacy' early learning goals of the early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP).

In Lancashire in 2018 70.8% of pupils achieved this measure, with our best-performing statistical neighbour achieving 76.2%.

Next Steps

1. Work with Public Health colleagues to agree a formal 'strategy' for the Early Years of childhood.
2. Improve the early language and communication skills of the youngest children in Lancashire.
3. Raise overall levels of attainment by the end of a child's first year at school (Reception year).
4. Continue to monitor the sufficiency of places in local neighbourhoods to enable pre-school children to access high quality Early Years provision.

Consultations

An ongoing dialogue continues with providers of funded early education and childcare through the Early Years Consultative Group and the Schools Forum Early Years Block Working Group.

Risk management

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Financial

Providers of funded early education in Lancashire report a number of financial risks to their ability to provide the funded early education, due to the Early Years national funding formula and increasing staffing costs.

Quality of provision

The ability to retain the current high quality provision in Lancashire may become harder within the continuing financial pressures.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
N/A	N/A	N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A