

Education Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 19 July 2016

Electoral Division affected: All

Early Education and Early Years, School Improvement Service

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform Education Scrutiny of the work being carried out by the Early Education and Early Years Teams. These teams comprise of Early Years Consultants, Quality Childcare Development, Family Information Service, Free Early Education, Safeguarding and Childcare Sufficiency.

Education Scrutiny are asked to receive and comment on the report and to receive further reports as appropriate.

Recommendation

The Education Scrutiny Committee to note and comment on the report.

Background and Advice

The Early Education and Early Years Services sit within the School Improvement Service and work with childcare providers throughout Lancashire.

Introduction

Early Education and Early Years Vision is about improving outcomes for children and families through improving children's development, resilience, achievement and aspirations to fulfil their potential and thrive.

The service itself supports over 2000 childcare environments across Lancashire by:

- Ensuring there is sufficient, quality and sustainable childcare throughout Lancashire
- Ensuring qualitative provision of childcare through the use of early warning groups/monitoring Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings, childminders and out of school clubs
- Providing information to parents and carers to allow them to make informed decisions on accessing good and outstanding childcare settings

- Ensuring the provision of free early education to three and four year olds and targeted two year olds
- Working with the sector to utilise Early Years Pupil Premium to ensure the best outcomes for disadvantaged children in Lancashire
- Supporting schools in lowering the school age range to develop more qualitative childcare provision
- Working with new settings to ensure they are ready for their initial Ofsted registration
- Providing training and support to the childcare sector
- Working with the sector to enable them to deliver new national priorities such as the increase to 30 hours free childcare

Lancashire currently has 89% of childcare provision rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted compared to the national average of 85%.

The Service comprises of the following teams:

Early Years Consultants Team

The Early Years Consultants (EYC) work with private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings to support quality improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They both support and challenge the sector through annual monitoring visits, training, developing suitable learning environments and enabling settings to achieve the Lancashire Quality Award. The work of this team is part traded and part Local Authority (LA) funded through Devolved Financial Management (DFM). The traded element allows setting to purchase a service guarantee which provides more intensive support. Currently 58% of the sector are purchasing this additional service. The LA funded element supports the statutory role of providing sufficient good quality childcare and ensuring settings provide a safe environment for the children of Lancashire. Lancashire currently has 95% of PVI settings judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted compared to a national average of 88%.

Quality Childcare Development Team

The Quality Childcare Development Team provides qualitative support and challenge to childminders, out of school clubs, Breakfast clubs, holiday schemes and new PVI settings in preparing them for Ofsted registration. They also carry out statutory functions in relation to the monitoring of quality of such provision. Lancashire currently has 834 childminders, 200 breakfast clubs, 100 holiday schemes and 240 out of school clubs. Support to the sector is provided through targeted visits of between one and three a year. This team also supports the statutory role of providing sufficient good quality childcare. Training is also provided in the EYFS and safeguarding and this area of work is partly traded. A further role within the team provides traded support to schools in working with them to lower the school age range and increase childcare places so ensure the market can meet demand. Lancashire currently has 89% of childminders judged good or outstanding by Ofsted compared to a national average of 84%. This team is primarily funded through the DFM.

Family Information Service (FIS)

The FIS team is a statutory service and provides support, advice and guidance to parents and carers in accessing good quality childcare provision across Lancashire. This information includes location, Ofsted judgements, costs of various forms of childcare and providing a brokerage service for vulnerable families, disadvantaged families and families looking for suitable places for children with special educational needs. They also provide advice on accessing Free Early Education (FEE) and whether children may be entitled to a free targeted two year old place. This team also works with the Childcare Sufficiency Officer in carrying out an annual childcare sufficiency assessment (CSA) to ensure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 or up to 18 for disabled children. This is also a statutory function of the LA and is funded through DFM.

Free Early Education

This team ensures that every three and four year old child, from the term after their third birthday is able to receive funding for 15 hours free childcare, 38 weeks a year. They also ensure FEE funding is provided for targeted two years olds who meet the National or discretionary criteria. There are approximately 950 FEE providers across Lancashire and current take up of FEE places is at 98% for three and four year olds and 78% for two year olds. FEE is a statutory function and is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant. Overall just under 26,000 children received FEE in the summer term. The team is also responsible for the administration of Early Years Pupil Premium. This team will also be administering the funding off the 30 hours free childcare from September 2017.

Safeguarding Officer

This officer represents the Early Years/Education Sector in child practice and multi-agency reviews (Serious Case Reviews) and plays the link role between the multi-agency panel and the setting/school. They are responsible for meeting with the relevant practitioners that have been involved with the family concerned and preparing a time line of significant events and briefing on the relevant context and issues. They are also responsible for feeding back any actions that have come out of the multi-agency review back to the sector in terms of future improvements to practice or systems and monitoring progress. They offer safeguarding advice to childcare settings and professionals as well as following up actions from any Ofsted investigations. This officer also carries out level 1 and 2 safeguarding training for the Early Years/Early Education sector which is fully traded. The rest of the post is funded through DFM.

Childcare Sufficiency Officer

The childcare sufficiency officer is responsible for the statutory duty of carrying out the annual childcare sufficiency assessment. This is to ensure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 or up to 18 for disabled children.

This is funded through DFM. This officer also works on a traded bases providing support to schools in lowering the school age range to again ensure we meet our statutory duty of providing sufficient qualitative childcare places for the children of Lancashire.

Consultations

N/A

Implications

N/A

Risk management

There are no implications for risk management arising from this report.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

N/A