



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

**CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**20 JANUARY 2022**

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Adaptions due to Covid and Covid Recovery - Appendix
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<b>Policy context:</b>	Education
<b>Financial summary:</b>	None immediately arising from this report

**The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

Communities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Places making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Connections making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUMMARY**

1. In November 2021, the Children and Learning Overview & Scrutiny sub-committee received a report on the adaptations schools made to both the content of their curriculum and most notably to the delivery of the curriculum in response to the impact of COVID-19.
2. This report provides a further update on the specific impact on pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and more-able pupils.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Members of the OSSC are asked to note the content of the report.

## REPORT DETAIL

### **Pupils with SEND**

4. The impact on children with SEND has been significant. Schools have had to be flexible in their approach to remote learning when it was necessary, and there have been many examples of providing homework packs tailored to individual children's needs.
5. Schools, particularly the special schools, supported families with outreach work, providing support to the whole family and lending equipment for use at home, delivering activities, and even shopping particularly at the height of the pandemic.
6. Getting children back into school following the various periods of lockdown and remote learning was done gradually, ensuring the anxieties of both children and parents were managed.
7. Transport arrangements were changed to ensure social distancing and this necessitated changes in times and in some cases travel by taxi instead of bus.
8. At times, impact on staffing levels due to COVID illness amongst staff was significant. This was mitigated by putting all special school staff forward for vaccination at the earliest opportunity. Uptake was good, but staffing levels and need for self-isolation continues to affect the levels of attendance at school.
9. There have been situations where children's progress has regressed, and a focus of schools has been to support children to regain skills and knowledge they have lost whilst being out of school. However, schools report that children have been remarkably resilient.
10. Support from the Local Authority consisted of support and training for schools regarding health and wellbeing, and managing anxieties. In addition, the Educational Psychology service ran a parent helpline which was well received. Regular support for SENDCos has been provided individually and through borough wide SENDco forums, to answer questions, share good practice to support school in maintaining their offer to children with SEND.
11. Short breaks provision was difficult to keep going during the pandemic, due to providers not being able to deliver and holiday clubs not open. This led to

families being under increasing pressure and the escalation of behaviours that challenge in children.

12. There was an increased direct payment offer where parents employed their own Personal Assistants, and an agreed amount of £300 was also allocated from existing Direct Payments for families to buy toys/garden equipment to help support their child. These measures helped, but long periods of being out of school without usual support has had significant impact on the parents of children with SEND in Havering, and we are seeing increasing numbers requesting support from children's social care.
13. Schools worked hard to provide face-to-face education for SEN pupils in mainstream during the pandemic. Attendance was below the national average as many parents were particularly nervous due to the complex medical conditions and vulnerabilities of their children. Where they attended school, they were in the main taught in a bubble and through on-screen activity as classes were mixed age/and ability with some LAC pupils and some key worker children.
14. Pupils were supported in the main by Teaching Assistant's, as teachers were in the main providing remote teaching from home. TA's were made fully aware of any special needs and delivered work was set by teachers. Where pupils did not attend the face-to-face offer, TA's supported pupils by attending virtual classes with them and through online support.
15. Schools included pupils with SEND in all their welfare call and welfare visits, enabling additional pastoral support to be provided where necessary.
16. It is nationally documented that pupils with SEND or additional needs fell further behind in many cases during the pandemic, and our (anecdotal) evidence from our schools suggests that this pattern is also true for Havering schools. This was because they had both lower online/face-to-face attendance rates than others, and often they were in families that are more economically challenged, resulting in parents struggling to provide the support for home learning. They also had issues such as sharing technology with siblings, although schools worked very hard to mitigate these factors, as evidenced in the previous report.
17. Pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils were often slower to return to school following the various periods of lockdown and remote learning. In this initial 'recovery' phase, schools put on additional intervention groups to attempt to make up for lost ground where pupils had fallen behind. Many of the pupils with SEND and other vulnerable pupils were included in these interventions as schools focused their resources on pupils who were significantly below age-expected norms.
18. Many pupils with SEND also have social and emotional additional needs, and again the impact of long periods of isolation has had a significant reported detriment to these (though not solely these) pupils. The initial recovery in many schools focused on these aspects before moving into academic recovery, as detailed in the previous report.

## **More-able Pupils**

19. Whilst no specific enquiries were made into the impact of more-able pupils, we do know that many schools provided a core curriculum and additional challenges which would have enabled more-able pupils to take subjects and topics further. We know that take up was variable and not completely restricted to more-able pupils.
20. The schools report, particularly in secondary schools, that some pupils, particularly boy, related very well to the flexibility of remote learning and did well, making good progress, and in a small number of cases probably better than usual progress.
21. More able pupils generally had better remote learning attendance, and better work completion rates (as perhaps might have been predictable), therefore seem to have suffered less loss of learning.
22. The attendance rates/completion rates varied across schools, and also the methods used for accounting these varied, as previously reported, and we are not aware of any national/regional benchmarking for any of this.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

### **Financial implications and risks:**

23. There are no direct financial implications from this report, as it is for information only. However, the teams responsible for undertaking the quality assurance functions identified above are funded from DfE grants and core Council funding.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

24. There are no direct legal implications from this report.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

25. There are no direct human resources implications from this report.

### **Equalities implications and risks:**

26. There are no direct equalities implications from this report, and an Equalities Assessment has not been completed as this report is for information only.