

Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Monday 26 November 2012

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Councillor David Hubber (Chair)
Councillor the Right Revd Emmanuel
Oyewole (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Sunil Chopra
Councillor Rowenna Davis
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Cleo Soanes
Reverend Nicholas Elder
Colin Elliott
Leticia Ojeda
Lynn Charlton

Reserves

Councillor James Barber
Councillor Chris Brown
Councillor Poddy Clark
Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Althea Smith

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information You have the right to request to inspect copies of minutes and reports on this agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

Babysitting/Carers allowances If you are a resident of the borough and have paid someone to look after your children, an elderly dependant or a dependant with disabilities so that you could attend this meeting, you may claim an allowance from the council. Please collect a claim form at the meeting.

Access The council is committed to making its meetings accessible. Further details on building access, translation, provision of signers etc for this meeting are on the council's web site: www.southwark.gov.uk or please contact the person below.

Contact Julie Timbrell on 020 7525 0514 or email: julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Eleanor Kelly

Chief Executive

Date: 16 November 2012



Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Monday 26 November 2012

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
----------	-------	----------

PART A - OPEN BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES

**2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR
DEEMS URGENT**

In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.

4. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 12 September 2012.

5. REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN (CYPP) 1 - 3

With Southwark Youth Council. Update report is enclosed.

**6. SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO
WORK AND COLLEGE**

Report to follow.

7. REVIEW : BULLYING

Item No.	Title	Page No.
-----------------	--------------	-----------------

School and council policy in supporting vulnerable children and reducing abusive and poor peer relations.

8.	LOCAL AUTHORITY ROLE IN EDUCATION	4 - 6
-----------	--	-------

The council's role with maintained , academy and free schools - exploring what the Local Authority governance and influencing levers are in a changing context, and how the council can promote good performance, and tackle poor performance. Report enclosed.

9.	REVIEW: UNIVERSAL FREE HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS	7 - 24
-----------	--	--------

Update reports from officers are enclosed and a research brief from the Department of Education's evaluation of a Free School Meals Pilot.

10.	ROTHERHITHE SCHOOL AND SOUTHWARK FREE SCHOOLS	25 - 26
------------	--	---------

Update report enclosed.

11.	REVIEW CABINET RESPONSE: SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS OF DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	27 - 33
------------	--	---------

Cabinet response to the review is enclosed.

12.	WORKPLAN	
------------	-----------------	--

DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION OF ANY CLOSED ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.

Date: 16 November 2012

Agenda Item 5

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 November 2012	Meeting Name: Education, children's services and leisure scrutiny sub-committee
Report title:		Quarterly Review of the Children and Young People's Plan	
Report author:		Kerry Crichlow, Director, Strategy and Commissioning, Children's and Adults' Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the education, children's services and leisure scrutiny sub-committee:
 - a. Notes the information contained in this report, which provides an update on progress towards achieving the priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)
 - b. Contribute its views, with Southwark Youth Council, on the emerging findings from the recent stakeholder consultations, which are the first step in refreshing the CYPP from April 2013

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. This report provides a further update to the reports received by the education, children's services and leisure scrutiny sub-committee, most recently in March 2012, on progress towards achieving the priorities outlined in the CYPP.
3. The March meeting included an interview with the cabinet member for children's services, with questions from the sub-committee and members of the Southwark Youth Council. The chosen themes were education and employment opportunities, changes to local youth services, bullying, gang culture, and obesity and sport.
4. Southwark's Children and Families' Trust monitors progress against the CYPP priorities by exception. At its last meeting in September, it reviewed progress achieving the priority 'Independence for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and their families' and in developing a local Troubled Families programme.
5. Work is underway to develop a new CYPP, to take effect in April 2013. This work takes place in the context of large-scale budget challenges, a raised bar in regard to inspection and regulation, and an increasingly demanding national policy landscape which includes Munro, draft Children and Families' Bill, education reforms and Troubled Families, among others.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Progress on current CYPP priorities

6. Since the last sub-committee meeting, the following highlights can be noted:
7. Thinking family – families at the centre of all we do:
 - a. Reconfigured youth service in place delivering higher-quality, fit-for-purpose arrangements that more young people will be able to access
 - b. Launch of projects supported by the community restoration fund, including pop-up youth clubs over the summer, a community-led grants scheme and the purchase of youth buses
 - c. Work is underway to develop personal budgets for children with special educational needs or a disability, which will give them greater choice and control over the services they receive

- d. A project team under the leadership of the council's senior leaders has been established to deliver the Troubled Families programme, and 419 families identified as meeting the programme's criteria
8. Narrowing the gap – better and more equal life chances for all:
 - a. The shadow health and wellbeing board is established, with priorities focused on the physical and mental health of children and families, and on providing early intervention to ensure all children get the best start in life
 - b. Reconfigured early help teams in place, providing locality-based support around the child, school or setting
 - c. Further narrowing of the gap in achievement at early years foundation stage and for pupils with special educational needs
 9. Raising the bar – high-quality provision that meets local needs:
 - a. Further improvements in attainment, with Southwark's school children outperforming their national peers across the phases; for example 83% of children at the end of primary school achieved expected levels compared to 79% nationally
 - b. More schools being judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding, in the context of a tougher new inspection regime for schools
 10. Succeeding into adulthood – at-risk young people achieve wellbeing:
 - a. Further reductions in the rate of young people not in education, employment or training, to 9.1% in September compared to a central London average of 10.5%
 - b. Reconfigured Connexions advice and support service focused on the borough's more vulnerable young people
 - c. Completed co-location of services for at-risk young people in care to a single site
 11. Working together – children are safeguarded from harm and neglect:
 - a. Safeguarding and looked after children services judged to be good with outstanding features by Ofsted inspectors in May; inspectors praised the strong, focused and improving services to protect vulnerable children across the borough
 - b. Reconfigured domestic abuse support services launched.

Developing a new CYPP

12. Key foundations for the development of the new plan have been in train over the past few months, including a needs assessment and '1,000 journeys' stakeholder consultation, which ran over September and October. We have collected our target number of stories, all providing powerful new insights into the lives and experience of our service users. This intelligence is currently being finalised and collated. It will be analysed over the coming months to identify key themes and issues which will form the basis of the new plan.
13. Initial analysis suggests that, on the whole, children, young people and families talk positively about living and growing up in Southwark. There is a strong community feeling in the borough and families talk confidently about the significant impact public services have had on their families' lives. The quality of schools and positive opportunities for children and young people have been highlighted as issues that parents feel strongly about. Bullying and concerns of bullying have also emerged as themes.

14. Young people getting into a career and parents getting back to work or developing in their career comes up consistently. To achieve this, young people say they need support and advice from provision such as Connexions which is instrumental in providing a credible CV and understanding the opportunities available to them. Young people also talked about the importance of volunteering and work experience opportunities to build their CV, and also provide valuable experience of a working environment. For parents hoping to get back to work, developing skills and updating their CV with relevant experience are seen as key. Childcare was also highlighted as a concern for many parents going back to work.
15. For many vulnerable parents, support offered by someone who has had a similar experience to them was highlighted as a significant positive, which was strengthened by parents saying they hope in the future to “give back”. The integrated model of support also received very positive feedback. Families talked about better understanding the support that was available to them and feeling that they are receiving a better service as they have a single point of contact for their whole family.
16. The scrutiny sub-committee and Southwark youth council are invited to contribute their views on these emerging findings, with these views contributing to the analysis phase of the plan’s development.

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 November 2012	Meeting Name: Education, children's services and leisure scrutiny sub-committee
Report title:		Council role in education, an introduction	
Report author:		Merril Haeusler, Director of Education	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the education, children's services and leisure scrutiny sub-committee notes the information contained in this report, which provides an overview of Southwark's schools system and the council's role to promote educational excellence for all pupils.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Southwark's schools system is diverse, with a broad mix of governance arrangements, including academies. There are currently two primary free schools open and a secondary in the planning phase, seeking a location.

	Primary	Secondary
Community	38	0
Voluntary aided	24	5
Foundation	3	0
Special (all community)	2	4
Academy	3	11*
Free schools	2	0
Total	72	20
* All-through Globe Academy counted in secondary column		

3. Southwark's schools are high performing, with strong and improving levels of attainment. 73.8% of primary schools and 85.7% of secondaries are judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding.
4. Performance is at or above the national average as described in the table below:

Key stage	2011	Provisional 2012	Provisional 2012 national average
Percentage achieving a good level of development at early years foundation stage profile	63.9%	69.4%	64.0%
Percentage achieving level 4 in English and maths combined at KS2	76.8%	83%	79.0%
Percentage achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths	58.0%	57.3%	58.4%
Percentage achieving passes equivalent to at least 2 A levels	94.8%	95.5%	91.1%

5. The 2011 Education Act and other reforms are creating a shift in the funding and responsibilities to schools, giving them more freedoms to determine how they organise teaching staff, the school day and the curriculum. These increased freedoms, however, do not reduce the council's duties to support children and ensure all receive the best education. Underpinning all actions is the conviction that all children and young people in Southwark schools, whether they are academy or maintained, are Southwark children and the council feels accountable and is committed to ensuring high quality provision.

6. The council's statutory responsibilities include among others, duties to secure sufficient places, tackle underperformance, ensure the education of looked after children, identify and support children with special educational needs, and assist parents in finding a school place of their choice. A further statutory duty to the council in enabling, encouraging and assisting young people's participation in education and training will be to raise the participation age to 18 by 2015. These responsibilities are underpinned by the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people.
7. Locally, the council has underlined its commitment to educational excellence through the Council Plan, and Children and Young People's Plan. These set a culture of ambition and prioritise the provision of high-quality services to enable all children and families to lead safe, independent lives and have the opportunity to thrive, and to narrowing the gap in life outcomes for disadvantaged groups.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Governance and influencing levers in a changing context

8. Strong, effective governance is crucial to improving and maintaining educational standards. The council, therefore, invests in providing support services to schools, including a highly valued, traded governor support service to the majority of local schools, including academies.
9. In addition, the council provides a comprehensive school admissions service as part of pan-London arrangements. This work includes in-year admissions, which includes working through the fair access panel to find places for harder-to-place children and young people.
10. The council also undertakes detailed planning to ensure there are sufficient places – a challenging role given the significant increases in demand for reception year places Southwark, and London as a whole, has seen in recent years. A new investment programme is being developed in order to ensure the borough secures sufficient, quality places in the short and medium term. This is being achieved through a combination of temporary and permanent expansions of local primary schools.
11. Work is also underway to ensure as this pressure for places feeds through into secondary provision, that additional secondary places are secured. This is particularly relevant with the raising of the participation age from 16 currently to 17 from September 2013 and 18 from September 2015.
12. Another influencing lever is the support the council provides to vulnerable learners, particularly those with special educational needs. The council has a statutory duty to identify these children and young people and ensure that appropriate support is put in place to support their learning.
13. More broadly, the council also provides support to schools through the early help and special education teams – for example in addressing poor attendance, education for excluded children and for children who are looked after by the council.
14. The early help teams within geographical localities are newly established and support schools and settings including educational welfare, educational psychology and inclusion services as well as additional support around parenting and disability.

Promoting good performance and tackling poor performance

15. In terms of supporting school standards, the council's role is focused on providing support and challenge to all schools alongside encouraging collaboration and sharing of best practice. This is backed by swift and decisive action to tackle underperformance when necessary, working within the system to improve standards.
16. The council's support, challenge and intervention role is discharged by the 0-19 standards team. This team has a range of strategies to promote good performance, from briefings and a training programme to more targeted schemes to raise teaching and learning standards, for example in supporting schools judged as 'requires improvement' by Ofsted to move to at least 'good'.
17. Through rigorous monitoring and school visits, the council identifies schools at risk of underperformance, and develops a programme of bespoke support to raise standards, such as curriculum or leadership development, or brokering support from local outstanding headteachers or schools.
18. In more extreme cases, structural reform such as federating two schools or supporting a change in leadership is considered. The council also has the power to issue a standards, performance or safety warning notice to maintained schools, which could, ultimately, lead to the closure of a school which repeatedly failed to raise standards.
19. As schools become more autonomous going forward, the council continues to develop new ways to work with the growing number of academies or free schools locally in order to ensure all children in the borough secure a good education. Southwark has built up solid relationships with its academies over many years, and these are generally good and mature. Examples include ongoing partnerships through the Building Schools for the Future programme which is refurbishing or rebuilding all secondary schools in the borough.
20. At a recent meeting between academy headteachers, the leader of the council and the cabinet member for children's services, the heads praised the effective council support around attendance, exclusions and behaviour, including the valued support provided by the director of education, the head of standards 0-19 team and the Southwark Inclusive Learning Service, which provides education for excluded pupils, and supports schools regarding young people who are at risk of exclusion.
21. An area for development is improving the sharing of timely information with academies in order to support local planning and improvement work. This includes information on vacancies, fair access, behaviour and support for vulnerable learners, with academies and relevant council teams collaborating and developing new ways of working together. This is particularly required around timely information on absence and exclusion rates, which are local priority performance concerns. The council continues to work in partnership with academies in the borough to share information in a timely way.

Conclusion

22. The council is under a wide range of statutory duties, which it is committed to fulfilling to ensure all children can secure high quality education.
23. In the diverse school landscape, the council continues to work in partnership with schools to share the responsibility for education provision.

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 November 2012	Meeting name: Education Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Report title:		Free Healthy School Meals Programme – Progress Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy and Commissioning, Children's & Adult Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the committee note the report and the progress to date.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Council took a decision to introduce free healthy school meals to all pupils attending primary schools in Southwark as part of its commitment to tackle the high levels of obesity and to tackle poverty and inequality.
3. A decision was taken to phase the roll out. In September 2011 reception and year one pupils started to receive the free meals. In September 2012, this was extended to years two – four. The final phase will see pupils in years five & six join the programme in September 2013.
4. Members have received a number of previous reports concerning this programme.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. During the first year of the programme the take up reached 91% of reception and year one pupils. During the autumn term 2012, the take up has reached 92% of pupils from reception to year four.
6. Members have visited five primary schools to talk to school staff, catering staff and pupils, whilst also observing the school lunch period.
7. Surveys of the children and parents have taken place at seven of the schools, to seek the views of parents. This was reported to the last meeting of this sub committee. The outcome information from the children's survey is at appendix one.
8. Whilst community, voluntary aided and foundation schools are required to meet the food and nutrition standards and the Governing body are responsible for ensuring these standards are met. Free schools and academies are not, Cllr Catherine McDonald whilst cabinet member for children's services wrote to the primary academies to ask them to conform to the standards. Since the start of this school year in September, Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle the current Cabinet member has written to all new primary academies and primary free schools to ask them to operate to these standards.

9. As members are aware from previous reports, schools are also actively encouraged to sign their school up to the food 4 life partnership award scheme.

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy and Commissioning, Children and Adult Services	
Report Author	Colin Gale, FHSM project manager	
Version	final	
Dated	13 November 2012	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team		15 November 2012

Appendix One

Free Healthy School Meals Children's (FHSM) Evaluation

- 1 The evaluation framework for the FHSM programme set out a number of aims.
- 2 These aims were supported by an agreed methodology and outcome measures.
- 3 As part of the methodology it was determined to carry out a snapshot of views from among others, the children.
- 4 As part of the evaluation, we were looking for changed attitudes to food and nutrition by children, as well as positive child feedback on the impact of the FHSM programme on children's eating habits.
- 5 We were also looking at an increase in take up and consumption of school lunches.
- 6 There were 250 year one (school year 2011/12) children surveyed from seven schools, of these 235 children had a school lunch.
- 7 The children were asked to rate the lunch, 78% rated the meal as good or very good. 10% rated the meal as bad or very bad.
- 8 62% of children confirmed, that they had been encouraged to try different foods at school.
- 9 75% of children confirmed that they eat different food at school than at home.
- 10 As part of the survey, food likes and dislikes were recorded, as this cohort of children go through the school, this will present an opportunity to measure the children's changes in attitude to types of food.
- 11 At this stage, it might be reasonable to assume, that as more children take up the opportunity to have a school lunch and with the schools encouraging them to try new foods, that the learning around healthy options, may 'stick' as they get older.
- 12 Though the most popular food item was chips at 71% it is encouraging that fruit at 50% and salad 34% were also recorded as favourite foods.



DFE-RB227

ISBN 978-1-78105-124-5

July 2012

Free School Meals Pilot Evaluation

Prepared by Sarah Kitchen, Nilufer Rahim, Emily Tanner, Clarissa White, Mehul Kotecha, Meg Callanan, Vicky Brown and Colin Payne from NatCen Social Research, Claire Crawford, Lorraine Dearden and Ellen Greaves from the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Susan Purdon from Bryson Purdon Social Research

This research brief summarises the findings of the evaluation of the Free School Meals pilot.

The Free School Meals (FSM) pilot was a two-year programme operating in three local authorities between the autumn of 2009 and the summer of 2011. Two different approaches to extending FSM entitlement were tested as part of the pilot. In the local authorities piloting a 'universal' offer (Newham and Durham), all primary school children were offered free school meals. In the third area (Wolverhampton), entitlement was extended to cover pupils in primary and secondary schools whose families were claiming Working Tax Credit and whose annual income did not exceed £16,040 in 2009-10 or £16,190 in 2010-11¹.

The pilot also included a range of supporting activities in each area to encourage take-up of school meals, raise awareness of the pilot and encourage parents to engage with the pilot. Activities included holding school meals taster sessions and a range of talks. The findings of the evaluation should therefore be considered in relation to the whole pilot approach rather than just the provision of free school meals.

The full reports on the impact and implementation of the pilot can be found at:
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/AllRsgPublications/Page1/DFE-RR227> and
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/RSG/AllRsgPublications/Page1/DFE-RR228>

¹ Under the current criteria, children whose parents receive one or more of the following support payments are entitled to receive FSM: Income Support; Income Based Jobseekers Allowance; an income-related employment and support allowance; support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, that as of 6 April 2012 does not exceed £16,190; or the guarantee element of State Pension Credit. Where a parent is entitled to Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after their employment ceases, or after they start to work less than 16 hours per week, their children are entitled to receive free school lunches. Children who receive a qualifying benefit in their own right are also entitled to receive FSM. According to a DWP Policy Simulation Model (based on FRS 2008/9) around 80% of children currently eligible for FSM live in out-of-work households or in households with earned income of less than £1,000.

Key findings

- Most pupils in the universal pilot areas took up the offer of free school meals. Around nine in ten primary school pupils were taking at least one school meal per week by the end of the pilot compared with around six in ten pupils in similar comparison areas.
- In the universal entitlement areas, take-up increased more for pupils who were not eligible² for free school meals before the pilot was introduced. Take up of school meals also increased among pupils who were already eligible for free school meals.
- The extended entitlement pilot did not significantly increase take-up of school meals among secondary school pupils, even for those who became newly entitled to free school meals as a result of the pilot.³
- Cost savings for families was the main reason for opting for a free school meal given by parents interviewed in the qualitative case studies. Other factors included: the choice and quality of the food available; the dining experience; time savings for parents; and, in the extended entitlement area, how well parents understood the entitlement criteria and application process.
- Successful delivery of the pilot was underpinned by: a willingness to trial new approaches to delivery and working as a school to solve problems; effective partnership working; building sufficient staff resources and capacity; and being able to accurately predict and monitor demand.
- In the universal pilot areas, the increased take-up of school meals led to a shift in the types of food that pupils ate at lunchtime, away from foods typically associated with packed lunches towards those associated with hot meals.
- Despite the changes in lunchtime food consumption, the universal pilot had few significant impacts on the reported overall consumption of different types of food, although children in the universal pilot areas were less likely to report eating crisps at least once a day than children in the comparison areas. This suggests that the reduction in crisp consumption at lunchtime did not lead children to eat crisps in the afternoon and/or evening instead.
- The extended entitlement pilot had little impact on children's diet and eating habits.
- The universal pilot had a significant positive impact on attainment for primary school pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, with pupils in the universal pilot areas making between four and eight weeks' more progress than similar pupils in comparison areas. These effects on attainment could have arisen through the provision of free school meals directly or through the wider activities that accompanied the pilot, such as the promotion of school meals and healthy eating to pupils and parents, or both.
- The improvements in attainment in the universal pilot areas appeared to be greater for children from less affluent families⁴ and those with lower prior attainment, though it should be noted that the effects between different types of pupils are not always significantly different from one another.

² Entitled to and registered for free school meals.

³ Information on the impact on take-up in primary schools in the extended entitlement pilot was not collected as part of the evaluation.

- The extended entitlement pilot did not significantly affect attainment for either primary or secondary school pupils.
- The improvements in attainment found in the universal pilot areas do not appear to have been driven by an increase in the amount of time children spend in school, as neither pilot approach led to a significant reduction in absence rates from school. This suggests that the increases in attainment evident in the universal pilot areas must arise as a result of improvements in productivity whilst at school.
- The source of these improvements in productivity is not clear, as the evaluation did not provide any evidence that the universal or extended entitlement pilot positively affected parents' perceptions of children's behaviour. The evaluation did not include a quantitative assessment of classroom behaviour though.
- There was no evidence that the FSM pilot led to significant health benefits during the two year pilot period. For example, there was no evidence of any change in children's Body Mass Index.
- The pilot was valued by school staff and parents for raising the profile of healthy eating, ensuring pupils get at least one healthy meal a day, increasing the range of food pupils eat, building their social skills at meal times, easing the financial stress for parents and helping parents save time by not having to prepare a packed lunch.
- The extended entitlement pilot yielded little in the way of positive benefits for any of the outcomes considered in this evaluation; thus it seems clear that it does not offer good value for money. Compared with selected other interventions designed to affect similar outcomes, the universal entitlement pilot appears to deliver better value for money than some, but worse value for money than others.

Background

The Free School Meals pilot

Building on evidence that suggested school lunches benefited children's behaviour, concentration and health,⁵ the Free School Meals pilot was set up to explore how extending entitlement to free school meals affected:

- take-up of school meals;
- pupils' eating habits at school and at home;
- pupils' Body Mass Index (BMI) and general health and well-being;
- pupils' behaviour, attendance and academic performance.

⁴ 'Pupils from less affluent families' here refers to both those who are eligible for FSM under the old criteria and those who are newly entitled under the extended entitlement criteria introduced in Wolverhampton.

⁵ See, for example:

Golley R, Baines E, Bassett P, Wood L, Pearce J and Nelson M (2010). School lunch and learning behaviour in primary schools: an intervention study. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 64: 1280–8;

Storey H C, Pearce J, Ashfield-Watt P A, Wood L, Baines E and Nelson M (2011). A randomized controlled trial of the effect of school food and dining room modifications on classroom behaviour in secondary school children. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 65: 32–8.

Table 1 Pilot areas and approaches to providing school meals		
A: Newham	Free school meals made available to all primary school children	Universal entitlement
B: Durham	Free school meals made available to all primary school children	Universal entitlement
C: Wolverhampton⁶	Free school meals made available to more primary and secondary school children by extending entitlement to include families on Working Tax Credit with an income of no more than £16,040 in 2009-10 (£16,190 in 2010-11)	Extended entitlement

The FSM pilot ran from September 2009 to July 2011. Two local authorities (Newham and Durham) offered free school meals to all primary school children, while a third (Wolverhampton) offered them to more primary and secondary school children by extending entitlement to families who were claiming Working Tax Credit and whose annual income did not exceed £16,040 in 2009-10 or £16,190 in 2010-11.

The evaluation

The Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) commissioned a consortium consisting of NatCen Social Research, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and Susan Purdon of Bryson Purdon Social Research (BPSR) to evaluate the Free School Meals pilot.

The objectives of the evaluation were to investigate and report on:

- how and to what extent the pilot affects the take-up of school lunches and whether this varies amongst pupils from different family backgrounds;
- the impact of the changes in take-up on children's outcomes including diet (at school and at home), health, behaviour, engagement with school and attainment;
- the process of implementing the pilot, to help identify the most effective methods of expanding provision of school meals;
- the value for money of expanding the offer of free school meals.

To identify the impact of the pilot on children's outcomes, pupils in pilot areas were 'matched' with similar pupils in a set of comparison areas on the basis of characteristics (for example, age, sex and ethnicity) before the pilot was introduced. The outcomes of this group of pupils in comparison areas were then used to represent the outcomes of pupils in pilot areas had the pilot not been introduced. Using this approach, the impact of the pilot can be estimated from the difference in outcomes between pupils in the pilot and comparison areas after the pilot was introduced.

⁶ Although the FSM pilot ran in both primary and secondary schools in Wolverhampton, the collection of data for the evaluation focused on secondary school pupils only, due to budgetary constraints. As such, it was not possible to identify the impact of the extended entitlement pilot on the diet, eating habits, behaviour or health of primary school pupils. It was, however, possible to identify the impact of the extended entitlement pilot on the attainment and absence from school of primary school pupils using administrative data.

The evaluation used the following approaches to collect and analyse information about the pilot:

- Administrative data from the National Pupil Database were used to select suitable comparison areas and to select the samples of pupils from whom take-up information was collected. They were also used to estimate the impacts of the pilot on attainment and absence from school.
- Information on the take-up of school meals for a sample of pupils was collected from schools in pilot and comparison areas before and after the pilot was introduced. This sample of pupils included those in Reception to Year 4 in Newham and Durham and Years 7 to 9 in Wolverhampton. This information was used to estimate the impact of the pilot on the take-up of school meals.
- A longitudinal survey of pupils and parents in pilot and comparison areas was carried out before and after the pilot was introduced. The sample was selected from those pupils who were not taking school meals before the pilot was introduced. Information from the longitudinal survey was used to estimate the impact of the pilot on various aspects of pupils' diet, health and behaviour.
- Qualitative case studies were carried out in pilot schools to explore how the FSM pilot was set up and delivered and to assess the challenges associated with implementation and the perceived impacts of the pilot. These provided information from a variety of stakeholders, including pupils, teachers and parents.
- Telephone interviews with school caterers were carried out to help provide information about the delivery of school meals from a provider's perspective, both before and after the pilot was introduced, in pilot and comparison areas. This evidence was combined with the qualitative case studies to support the interpretation and understanding of the impact evaluation by setting the context of what happened on the ground.

Findings

Setting up the pilot

Local authorities led the implementation of the pilot in each area, with support provided by the School Food Trust (SFT). Primary care trusts (PCTs) were primarily involved at a strategic level, engaging in discussions about the issues affecting the pilot. Set-up activities included promoting awareness of the pilot and ensuring schools had adequate kitchen capacity, equipment, catering staff and data-monitoring systems in place.

Implementation was approached in different ways, depending on the pilot type and on the anticipated increase in take-up as a result of the pilot. In the local authorities providing universal free school meals, schools concentrated on building their capacity to deliver the pilot by extending school kitchens and purchasing new equipment. In contrast, in the extended entitlement area, there was a need to develop effective data-monitoring systems and to promote the pilot to parents.

The scale of work undertaken to set up the infrastructure in schools was the most extensive in Durham. The average cost per school of extending and equipping school kitchens and dining facilities was reported to be around £20,000. The catering company contracted by the local authority increased its workforce by 30 per cent, which translated into 160 new cooks including staff employed on fixed-term two-year contracts. It seems clear that much of this activity would have been carried out even if the pilot had not been taking place.

In Newham, there was some investment in additional equipment and furniture in specific schools but facilities were mostly seen to be adequate to deal with the increased demand. There was also a 30 per cent increase in staff recruited in Newham. Due to uncertainty about the future of the pilot, these were largely temporary agency staff.

In Wolverhampton, implementation activities involved identifying entitled families, adapting the application process to cope with the extended entitlement and processing applications.

Delivering the pilot

The primary challenge for schools, particularly in the universal pilot areas, was dealing with an increased volume of pupils taking school meals. Initial teething problems, such as a lack of storage space, insufficient time to train staff to use new equipment and speeding up the lunch service, were addressed quickly and schools soon settled into efficient routines.

The following minor challenges continued to present some schools with ongoing difficulties:

- Management and organisation of the lunch service. Coping with external factors that could slow down the lunch service, such as the arrival of reception pupils who were unfamiliar with lunch routines, increased noise levels and more accidents in dining halls. Responses included extending the lunch break, a buddying system for reception pupils and various practices to reduce the noise.
- Meal planning and preparation. Schools found it difficult to accurately predict demand for particular meal options and order the appropriate quantities of food. This problem was addressed using a pre-order system for meal selection in some schools.
- Staffing. Continuing problems with understaffing and high staff turnover in catering and lunchtime supervisory teams meant some schools found it difficult to achieve both adequate and consistent levels of staff to cover the workload during the pilot.
- In extended entitlement pilot schools, there were concerns that entitled parents were not applying for the pilot and parents reported difficulties understanding the entitlement criteria and application process. Parents' difficulties stemmed from literacy problems, language issues, and uncertainty about whether they met the new criteria and how to demonstrate entitlement. Some schools responded by providing one-to-one support and guidance to parents, but this resulted in a further drain on staff capacity.

Experiences of information, support and guidance

Local authorities and catering services were the main source of information, support and guidance for schools throughout the pilot. They helped schools implement changes to the physical school structure, workforce and menus, and in Wolverhampton they helped set up administrative systems and sent schools literature for distribution to parents.

Good relationships between schools and local authorities were underpinned by the provision of timely, clear and accurate information and by responsiveness and flexibility in addressing individual schools' needs.

Less positive experiences often resulted from delayed or unclear information. For example, although resolved fairly quickly, some case-study schools in Wolverhampton reported that they did not receive adequate information about eligible pupils and entitlement rules. They also stemmed from being unable to access additional resources to help manage capacity issues and being unable to modify menus and portion sizes.

Perceived impacts of the pilot on schools from an implementation perspective

The following impacts were identified by schools particularly where there was a large increase in the number of children opting for a free school meal as a result of the pilot:

- Staff. Administrative and catering staff increased their working hours and/or took on additional duties resulting from the pilot.
- School infrastructure. The pilot resulted in an expansion of school kitchen facilities and serving areas and the rearrangement of dining halls to cater for more pupils. Durham saw this impact more than the other pilot areas.
- Lunchtime arrangements. These tended to be modified to accommodate the increased number of pupils taking school meals. Changes tended to involve one or more of the following: staggered lunchtimes, pupil involvement in clearing up their own trays and the introduction of the pre-choice menu system.

Impacts of the pilot

Both staff and parents taking part in the case study component of the evaluation found it difficult to disentangle the influence of the FSM pilot from impacts arising from other school and local authority initiatives. These initiatives were seen to work alongside and sometimes complement the pilot in producing observed health and pupil performance-related impacts. Many of the initiatives that were mentioned by stakeholders during the case studies, such as the 'Healthy Schools' programme, would also have been taking place in comparison areas. Other initiatives such as teaching strategies are likely to vary from school to school. Consequently, it is important to recognise that the FSM pilot did not happen in isolation, but alongside other activities in schools. It did not appear that there were particular initiatives taking place across the pilot areas that were not in operation in comparison areas, so it seems unlikely that these concerns would undermine the approach to estimating the impacts of the pilot.

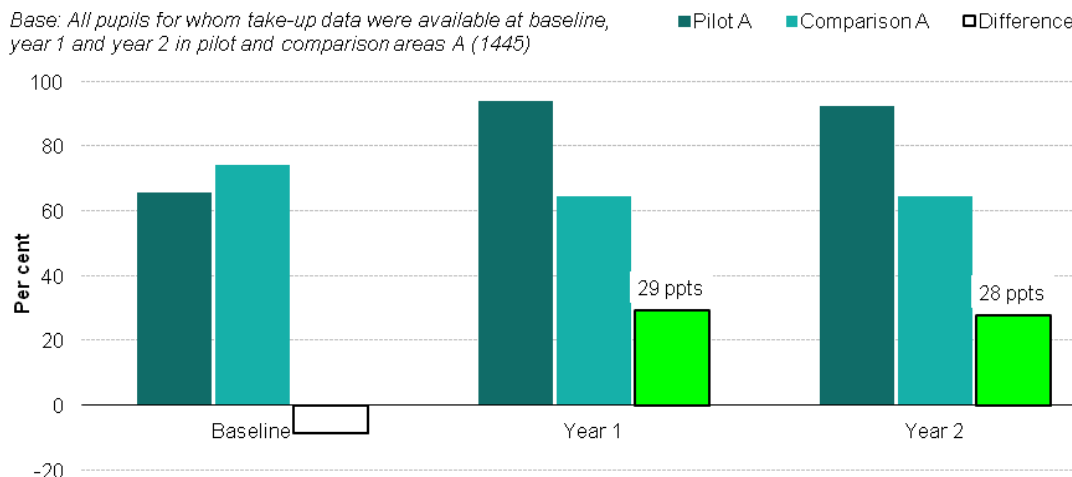
It is also important to note that the pilot included substantial investment in catering facilities and activities to encourage take-up of school meals by schools and local authorities, supported by the School Food Trust. Activities included promoting school lunches and the pilot to parents and enforcing strict packed lunch policies. The impacts reported should therefore be seen as the impacts of the whole pilot approach, rather than solely as the effects of making free school meals more widely available.

Take-up of school meals

The universal entitlement pilot in Newham and Durham led to a large increase in the number of children opting to eat a school lunch. Based on take-up information collected directly from schools, around 90 per cent of pupils were taking school meals in the pilot areas at least once a week at the end of the pilot, compared with around 60 per cent of similar pupils in comparison areas. This suggests that the universal pilot led to a nearly 30 percentage point increase in the percentage of primary school pupils taking school meals at least once a week.

Figure 1 Impact on take-up of school meals in area A (Newham; universal entitlement area)

Base: All pupils for whom take-up data were available at baseline, year 1 and year 2 in pilot and comparison areas A (1445)

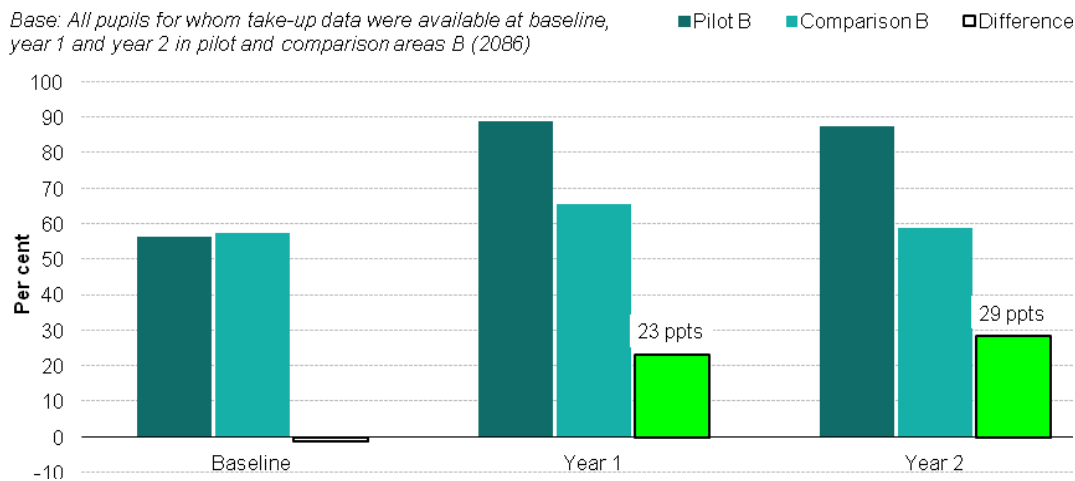


Notes to Figure 1: If the difference between the pilot and matched comparison groups is not shaded green, then the impact estimate is not significantly different from zero at the 5 per cent level.

Source: Data collected from a sample of schools in pilot and comparison areas for pupils originally sampled for the longitudinal survey of parents and pupils. These figures relate to all pupils in Years 0 (Reception) to 4.

Figure 2 Impact on take-up of school meals in area B (Durham; universal entitlement area)

Base: All pupils for whom take-up data were available at baseline, year 1 and year 2 in pilot and comparison areas B (2006)



Notes to Figure 2: If the difference between the pilot and matched comparison groups is not shaded green, then the impact estimate is not significantly different from zero at the 5 per cent level.

Source: Data collected from a sample of schools in pilot and comparison areas for pupils originally sampled for the longitudinal survey of parents and pupils. These figures relate to all pupils in Years 0 (Reception) to 4.

Figures 1 and 2 present the impact of the universal entitlement pilot on the take-up of school meals at least once a week in Newham and Durham respectively. In each figure, the dark turquoise bar shows the percentage of pupils in the pilot area who take up school meals, the light turquoise bar shows the percentage of similar pupils in comparison areas who take up school meals and the final bar shows the percentage point difference between them. Where this final bar is shaded bright green, the difference between the two groups of pupils is statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. The figures at 'baseline', before the pilot started, in both areas (the first two columns) show that the proportions of pupils taking school meals in the pilot and comparison areas were very similar before the pilot was introduced. This provides reassurance that the estimates of impact are valid.

The effects on take-up in the universal entitlement areas were greatest for

- children who did not take school meals before the pilot;
- children who were not eligible for free school meals before the pilot;
- children from families who would have been newly entitled to free school meals under the extended entitlement criteria introduced in Wolverhampton (that is, pupils whose parents were claiming Working Tax Credit and whose annual income did not exceed £16,040 in 2009-10 or £16,190 in 2010-11).

There was also a significant increase in the take-up of school meals amongst primary school children who were eligible for free school meals under the previous criteria before the pilot was introduced.

In Wolverhampton, extending entitlement to free school meals did not have a significant impact on the take-up of school meals for secondary school pupils, even amongst those who were newly entitled.

Take-up information was not collected for primary school pupils in Wolverhampton as part of the evaluation, but the local authority provided management data based on primary and secondary school pupils who it estimated to be entitled to free school meals under the new criteria. These data showed that more meals were eaten per week by these primary school pupils than by secondary school pupils who the local authority estimated to be entitled to free school meals under the new criteria.

The take-up of school meals by primary school pupils in Newham and Durham, the universal entitlement areas, who would have been newly entitled to free school meals in Wolverhampton, the extended entitlement area, was higher than the take-up of school meals amongst pupils who were estimated (by the local authority) to be entitled to free school meals under the new criteria in Wolverhampton.⁷ While this is not a perfect comparison, it suggests that extending entitlement does not increase take-up as much amongst this group of children from less affluent families as making school meals available to all. Evidence from the case studies suggests that this may be because the universal pilot decreased the stigma attached to taking free school meals, because parents were not aware of or did not think they met the entitlement criteria in Wolverhampton or because they were deterred by the application process.

Understanding the changes in take-up

Awareness of the pilot

Awareness of the pilot among parents was very high. After the pilot had been running for two school years:

- Almost all parents of primary school children surveyed in Newham (99 per cent) and Durham (100 per cent) were aware of the pilot. Most found out about the scheme through communication from the school.
- Awareness of the scheme in Wolverhampton was lower, although 71 per cent of parents whose children were estimated to be entitled to free school meals under the extended entitlement criteria were aware of the pilot. Lower awareness may partly explain the lower take-up of school meals in this area.

Choosing to take up free school meals

The qualitative case studies identified three approaches to deciding whether to take up free school meals:

- Child-led decision-making. Here, the parental priority was to ensure that the child would eat their lunch, whether that was a school meal or a packed lunch.
- Parent-led decision-making. Parents who made the decision to take school meals as a result of the pilot identified the financial benefits, the reduced burden on parent time, the quality of the meals and the social benefits of school meals as factors that potentially outweighed the preferences of the child.
- Joint decision-making. The parent encouraged their child to try school meals but left it open for them to return to packed lunches if they preferred.

Cost savings were identified in the case studies as the main reason for taking up a free school meal. Other factors included: the choice of food available; the extent to which pupils and parents felt they had control over what children ate; the quality of the food available; social factors; the dining experience; the impacts on parents of taking school meals; and, in the extended entitlement area, the entitlement and application process.

The main reasons given in the survey by the minority of parents in the universal pilot areas whose children did not take school meals every day were to do with food choice and provision. More than half of these parents said that there were not enough meals available that their child liked to eat.

⁷ Note that it is not possible to observe take-up amongst primary school pupils who are predicted to be newly entitled to free school meals under the extended entitlement criteria introduced in Wolverhampton on the basis of evaluation data; nor is it possible to observe the number of meals eaten by pupils who are estimated to be entitled (not just newly entitled) to free school meals in Newham and Durham under the extended entitlement criteria introduced in Wolverhampton from management data.

In the extended entitlement area, cost remained a deterrent for a minority of parents surveyed. School caterers in Wolverhampton reported that the average price of school meals for those who still had to pay rose over the course of the pilot, although the price by year 2 was comparable to that in similar secondary schools in other areas. This increase could have depressed demand for school meals among those who had to pay and, given that not all parents were aware of the pilot, possibly among some who would have been entitled to free meals.

Schools taking part in the case studies identified a number of initiatives that were felt to encourage take-up including: introducing a pre-order system for meal selection; maintaining a strict policy about the contents of packed lunches; involving children in decisions about the menu options; improving the dining experience; offering taster sessions to parents; promoting school meals by emphasising the health and social benefits; and reducing the stigma attached to school meals through, for example, the introduction of a cashless payment system.

These efforts appeared to have had positive effects on parents' perceptions in the universal pilot areas. In the survey, parents in these areas were more likely to rate school meals positively in terms of quality and how healthy they are and to think that a school meal is healthier than a packed lunch. Given the importance of quality of meals in parents' decision-making, these improved perceptions are likely to have contributed to the high level of take-up of meals in the universal pilot areas.

Impacts on children's eating habits, health and behaviour

In the universal pilot areas, the increased take-up of school meals led to a shift in the types of food that pupils ate at lunchtime, away from food typically associated with packed lunches towards those associated with hot meals.

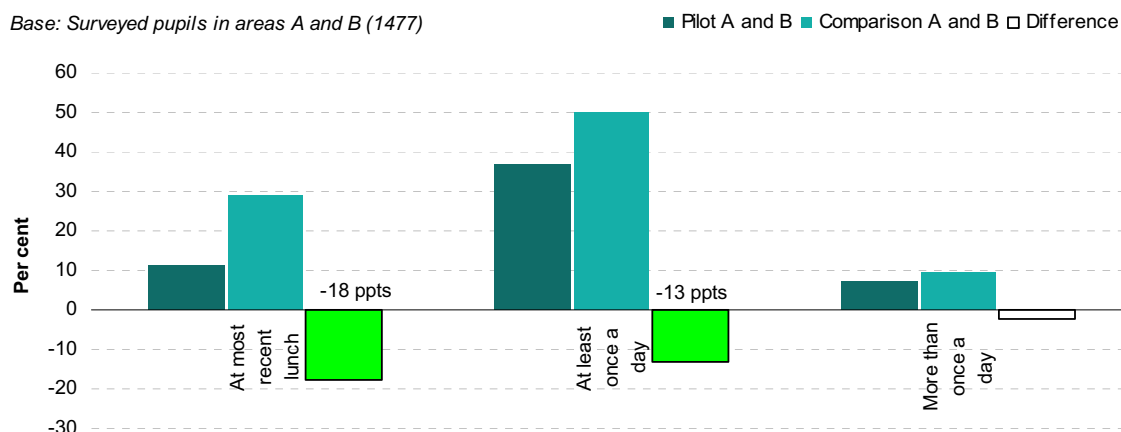
At lunchtime, children were:

- more likely to eat hot food, vegetables, chips or fried/roasted potatoes, and rice, pasta or potatoes not cooked in oil;
- less likely to eat crisps, sandwiches and whole pieces of fruit;
- more likely to drink water and less likely to have soft drinks with lunch.

There was little evidence of substitution between a hot meal at lunch or in the evening. The majority of pupils in Newham and Durham had hot food⁸ at lunchtime and for their evening meal. Some parents in the case studies did report feeling under less pressure to cook a meal for their child in the evening.

Pupils in the universal pilot areas were also less likely to eat crisps at least once a day on school days (Figure 3). There was, however, no change in the total reported consumption of chips, vegetables or fruit on school days, despite the changes in food eaten at lunchtime.

⁸ It is important to note that hot food is not necessarily more nutritious than cold food; the nutritional value will depend on the content of the meal.

Figure 3 Impact on eating crisps in areas A and B (Newham and Durham; universal entitlement areas)

Notes to Figure 3: If the difference between the pilot and matched comparison groups is not shaded green, then the impact estimate is not significantly different from zero at the 5 per cent level.

Source: Data collected from a sample of parents and pupils as part of the longitudinal survey in year 2 of the pilot. These figures relate to pupils in Years 0 (Reception) to 4 at baseline.

The universal pilot was perceived to have had positive impacts on the range of food that children were prepared to eat. Parents surveyed in the universal pilot areas were more likely to agree that their child was willing to try new food. In the case studies, parents commented on the positive impact of the pilot on diets and cooking practices at home, with children tending to be less 'fussy', eating more healthily and asking for new dishes at home.

School staff interviewed in the case studies noted that the universal pilot appeared to have a 'levelling effect' on the quality of lunches that pupils were eating. Staff noticed that there could be quite a difference between the types of packed lunch that children brought to school prior to the pilot. They attributed any differences in the content and healthiness of packed lunches to parents' income levels, perceiving that those on a higher income were able to provide a better-quality and healthier packed lunch than those who were less well off. The pilot was seen to address this by ensuring that all pupils received a meal of a similar standard, variety and quality.

By contrast, extending entitlement to free school meals in Wolverhampton did not show any significant impacts on lunchtime eating habits and had fewer positive effects on parents' attitudes to diet and school meals.

There was no evidence of change in children's Body Mass Index (BMI) over the two year pilot period, nor that the pilot positively affected parents' perceptions of their child's behaviour at home under either pilot approach. There were differing views among participants in the case studies about whether children's behaviour and concentration in the classroom had improved as a result of the pilot. The evaluation did not include quantitative assessments of classroom behaviour.

Impacts on children's attainment and absence from school

The universal entitlement pilot for primary school pupils in Newham and Durham led to a significant increase in attainment for pupils in these areas. The estimates are larger in magnitude and more consistently significant at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1, with pupils in both areas found to make around two months' more progress, on average, than similar pupils in comparison areas.

The universal entitlement pilot not only provided all primary school pupils with free school meals, but also included a range of supporting activities to promote the pilot, encourage the take-up of school meals and support healthy eating. The effects on attainment, and the impacts on diet and eating habits discussed above, could have occurred through the provision of free school meals directly or through the wider activities that accompanied the pilot or both.

The effect of the universal entitlement pilot appears to be stronger amongst pupils from less affluent backgrounds⁹ than amongst pupils from more affluent backgrounds. It also appears to be stronger amongst pupils with lower prior attainment than amongst those with higher prior attainment. These findings provide some suggestive evidence that the universal entitlement pilot may help to reduce educational inequalities. This evidence is only regarded as suggestive, because the effects for pupils with different characteristics are not always statistically significantly different from one another.

By contrast, there was little evidence of any significant effect of the extended entitlement pilot on the attainment of pupils in Wolverhampton, either for primary or secondary school pupils. This was true even for children who were predicted to be newly entitled to free school meals.

These results suggest that extending entitlement to free school meals and undertaking any other activities implemented alongside the extension of entitlement criteria may not replicate the positive and significant effects found in the universal entitlement areas for pupils who would have been entitled to FSM under the extended entitlement criteria introduced in pilot area C. This implies that universality, combined with the additional activities undertaken by schools and local authorities as part of the universal pilot, may be key to the improvement in attainment for these pupils in Newham and Durham.

It is clear that reducing the amount of time that pupils are absent from school is not the route through which the universal entitlement pilot improved attainment, as the pilot had no effect on the amount of time pupils were absent from school. This suggests that the increases in attainment evident in the universal pilot areas must arise as a result of improvements in productivity whilst at school, although the evaluation was not able to identify what form these improvements in productivity might have taken.

Value for money

The total running cost of a programme is thought to provide a good indication of its likely cost in the long term. The total running cost of the FSM pilot was estimated to be £12.1 million in Newham and £16.6 million in Durham (the universal entitlement areas) and £2.0 million in Wolverhampton (the extended entitlement area), over two years. These figures are equivalent to around £220 per primary school pupil in Newham and Durham and to just under £40 per pupil in Wolverhampton.

The 'deadweight' cost of the pilot is the cost associated with providing free school meals for pupils whose parents would have paid for them in the absence of the pilot. This amounted to £3.8 million in Newham (around one-third of the total running costs), £7.6 million in Durham (just under half of the total running costs) and £0.72 million in Wolverhampton (just over one-third of the total running costs).

It is difficult to estimate the fixed costs of the pilot with any degree of accuracy, but it is clear that they are relatively small compared with the overall running costs. The figures in the report suggest that reasonable estimates may be around £2500 per school to upgrade kitchen and dining facilities and around £150,000 per local authority to promote and support the pilot.

The extended entitlement pilot yielded little in the way of positive benefits for any of the outcomes considered in this evaluation. Thus it seems clear that it does not offer good value for money.

⁹ 'Pupils from less affluent backgrounds' here refers both to those who are eligible for free school meals under the old criteria and those who are newly entitled under the extended entitlement criteria introduced in Wolverhampton (children living in households with parent/s or carer/s claiming Working Tax Credit and whose annual income did not exceed £16,040 in 2009-10 or £16,190 in 2010-11).

The universal entitlement pilot gave rise to significant increases in a variety of outcomes. To assess whether it offers good value for money, it is necessary to translate these benefits into a common metric, such as a cost per percentage point (ppt) impact. This enables the FSM pilot to be compared with other interventions designed to affect similar outcomes.

The outcomes that can be most readily compared with those in other studies are the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level of attainment in English and maths at Key Stages 1 and 2. The universal entitlement pilot led to a 1.9ppt increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading at Key Stage 1, a 2.2ppt increase for maths at Key Stage 1, a 4.0ppt increase for English at Key Stage 2 and a 5.5ppt increase for maths at Key Stage 2. At a cost of around £112 per pupil per year, this suggests that it has cost £50 to £60 to obtain a 1ppt increase in attainment at Key Stage 1 and £20 to £30 to obtain a 1ppt increase in attainment at Key Stage 2. Table 2 provides the full details of these estimates.

Table 2 Value for money of the universal pilot				
	Key Stage 1		Key Stage 2	
	Reading	Maths	English	Maths
Impact (ppt)	1.9	2.2	4.0	5.5
Cost per 1ppt impact	£59	£51	£28	£20

Comparing these figures with those for selected other interventions designed to affect similar outcomes suggests that the universal entitlement pilot delivered better value for money (in terms of higher attainment of pupils on average) than some educational interventions, but worse value for money than others. It is clear that the universal entitlement pilot provides better value for money than the extended entitlement pilot (which did not significantly improve any of the outcomes considered in this evaluation), but the evidence raises questions over its value for money compared with some other initiatives.

Conclusions

It is important to note at the outset that the Free School Meals pilot was accompanied by substantial investment in catering facilities and activities to encourage the take-up of school meals by schools and local authorities, supported by the School Food Trust. Activities included holding school meal taster sessions, promoting the pilot to parents and enforcing strict packed lunch policies. This means that the impacts of the pilot cannot be attributed solely to making meals available to some or all pupils free of charge, but rather to the whole pilot approach. Any roll-out of the pilot would thus need to consider the supporting activities that might be necessary to achieve the same impacts.

A number of key points underpinned successful implementation of the pilot:

- Effective communication and partnership working between all parties involved in delivering the pilot. School staff involved in delivering the pilot identified the need for local authority staff and senior school managers to provide clear, accurate and timely information, to be available and responsive, to consult with the relevant staff, and to share information and updates.
- Building sufficient staff resource and capacity. This was achieved by having the appropriate levels of staff with the right skills.
- Being prepared to trial new approaches to delivery until the right solution was found. This helped schools develop systems to manage the increased volume of free school meals being delivered.
- Being able to monitor demand accurately. Cashless payment systems, such as Capita SIMS, were a helpful resource in monitoring take-up in Wolverhampton.

The universal pilot approach was very successful at increasing the take-up of school meals among primary school pupils, with most pupils taking school meals. In contrast, the extended entitlement pilot did not succeed in significantly increasing take-up among entitled pupils. The evaluation findings also show that only the universal entitlement approach had positive impacts on children's diet and attainment. It therefore appears that it is only through the universal provision of free school meals, and the accompanying activities undertaken by schools and local authorities in the pilot areas, that outcomes have improved.

Of particular note is the fact that the universal pilot approach improved outcomes among children from less affluent families: it increased the take-up of school meals among pupils who were already eligible for free school meals before the pilot was introduced and had positive impacts on diet among these pupils. School staff in the qualitative case studies also noted that the pilot had a 'levelling effect' on the quality of lunches eaten by pupils from different backgrounds; the implication was that while the quality of packed lunches varied considerably by socio-economic background, all pupils taking school meals had access to a nutritious, balanced meal, thus reducing socio-economic differences in the quality of food eaten at lunchtime. The improvements in attainment in the universal pilot areas also appeared to be greater for children from less affluent backgrounds and those with lower prior attainment. The evaluation findings thus provide some suggestive, but not conclusive, evidence that rolling out the universal pilot might help to reduce educational inequalities. Evidence from the evaluation shows that it would be a more effective way of trying to do so than extending entitlement to free school meals to a small group.

The shift in lunchtime eating habits in the universal pilot areas from packed lunches to school meals underlines the importance of balanced, healthy school menus. For example, the restrictions on starchy food cooked in oil and deep-fried foods help to ensure that these types of food are not consumed too frequently, while offering desserts with fruit content may help to counteract the decrease in children eating whole pieces of fruit as a result of the pilot. As new academies and free schools no longer have to comply with the nutritional standards, any roll-out of the universal pilot needs to consider how best to ensure that all school menus offer healthy, balanced meals.

It is important to note that the mechanisms underlying the improvements in attainment observed in the universal pilot are not clear. Neither the universal nor the extended entitlement pilot reduced the amount of time pupils were absent from school, suggesting that the increases in attainment must arise as a result of improvements in productivity whilst at school. The evaluation did not find any evidence that this increased productivity resulted from better pupil behaviour, as neither the universal nor the extended entitlement pilot appeared to positively affect parents' perceptions of children's behaviour. The evaluation did not include a quantitative assessment of classroom behaviour though and, of course, it is possible that classroom behaviour might have improved in a way that was not picked up by changes in parental perceptions of behaviour. Nor did the changes in lunchtime eating habits translate into any quantifiable health benefits (for example, in terms of Body Mass Index), at least not during the lifetime of the pilot. It is therefore difficult to identify the underlying causes of the improvements in attainment that have been found, and consequently which elements of the universal entitlement pilot will be key to its success in any future roll-out.

The universal pilot approach cost £12.1 million in Newham and £16.6 million in Durham, equivalent to around £220 per primary school pupil, over two years. Of this, 32 per cent in Newham and 46 per cent in Durham was deadweight cost (that is, involved paying for meals that would otherwise have been paid for by parents). It is clear that the universal entitlement pilot delivers better value for money than the extended entitlement pilot, which did not significantly improve any of the outcomes considered in this evaluation. Compared with other initiatives targeting similar outcomes, the picture is more mixed. The universal entitlement pilot appeared to deliver better value for money (in terms of higher attainment of pupils on average) than some educational interventions, but worse value for money than others. This raises questions about its overall value for money compared with other initiatives.

Additional Information

The full report can be accessed at <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/>

Further information about this research can be obtained from

Research Publications, Area P Level 5, St Paul's Place, 125 Norfolk Street, Sheffield, S1 2FJ or email Publishing.RESEARCH@education.gsi.gov.uk

This research report was commissioned before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 26 November 2012	Meeting Name: Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Report title:		Southwark Schools for the Future: New School Rotherhithe, Compass and Southwark Free School	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Project Director, Southwark Schools for the Future	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee note the briefing provided below.

UPDATE

Compass

2. Compass School have yet to identify a site and this non-identification of a site, both permanent and temporary, is a significant risk to the school opening as proposed in September 2013.

University Technical College (UTC)

3. The DfE has approved the deferral of the opening of the UTC to September 2013. This date is now unlikely to be achievable and there is significant uncertainty associated with the project as a result of the proposed merger of Lewisham and Southwark College and the potential for this to result in the non-availability of the site or the necessary ancillary facilities for the UTC on the College's Bermondsey site.

Southwark Free School

4. In 2011 Southwark Free School (SFS) secured Department for Education pre-opening approval to open in September 2012. At the time of this approval the school was proposed to be established at a site in Great Dover Street.
5. In March 2012 SFS initiated a public consultation process seeking feedback from local stakeholders in regard to proposals to establish a 420 place primary school at 399 Rotherhithe New Road.
6. The school has now been granted a 2 year lease from the Council for the Ledbury Estate Tenant's Hall to enable their establishment.
7. The school's permanent proposals for 399 Rotherhithe New Road are currently the subject of pre-application discussions with Southwark planners.

Other Free School Proposals

8. A German/English bilingual primary school has been provisionally approved by the

Department for Education and is exploring options for establishment in the Dulwich area.

9. Another proposer will be bidding to the Department for Education to be approved in the next round of free school approvals to establish a primary school in Peckham or Camberwell for Latin-American children.
10. Neither proposer currently has an identified site.

AUDIT TRAIL

Report Author	Sam Fowler	
Version	final	
Dated	15 November 2012	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team	16 November 2012	

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 25 September 2012	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Response to the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Sub-committee’s review of support for parents and carers of disabled children and young people	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle, Children’s Services	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES

Providing effective support for children and young people with a special educational need or disability and their family is a central priority of this council. The service seeks and welcomes feedback which enables it to improve the support it offers, and it continues to identify areas for improvement. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee's report and recommendations are received in this context. The recommendations will help the service ensure that families with children and young people with a special educational need or disability receive the support and information they may need to fulfil their potential and lead healthy, safe and independent lives.

I am pleased to note that Southwark received a special mention in the London Evening Standard on the 10 September highlighting the fact that staff at our Fusion leisure centres since March 2012 have received disability training and that each leisure centre has a 'disability' champion. Surrey Docks watersports centre offers adapted sailing and as part of our £2 million Olympic legacy funding we have committed £85,000 on a new outdoor disability multi-sports court for Peckham Town Football Club. This facility will provide an all weather venue that will allow members of Peckham Town FC disability teams and surrounding areas special needs schools players and local disability groups an opportunity to take part in football development sessions, competitive games and coaching programmes.

I am also pleased to note we have installed a new disability pool hoist in order to increase inclusivity for disabled users at the Peckham Pulse Healthy Living Centre.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet note and agree the response to the recommendations of the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

2. The then Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee conducted a review of support for parents and carers of children with special educational

needs and disability (SEND). It reported its recommendations to cabinet on 19 June 2012. Cabinet agreed that the recommendations be noted and that the cabinet member for children's services bring back a report to cabinet in order to respond to the sub-committee by 25 September 2012.

Report summary

3. The review focused on how best to support parents and carers so that they in turn can have a better quality of life and be in the best position to parent their disabled child, look after their wider family and participate in community life. Evidence submitted to the review included responses from parents, Contact A Family, the Southwark Parent Carers Council, and council services.
4. The review identified 18 recommendations, many of which were already being addressed by children's services. This report contains a detailed response to each of the recommendations.

Response to recommendations

5. The report and its recommendations complement ongoing work in the special educational needs (SEN) and children with disabilities (CwD) teams to develop and continue to improve support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEN or a disability.
6. For example, this has included development work to give children and their families greater choice and control over the services they receive, in line with the recent SEND paper, and the Children and Families Bill which is due to be published in the autumn. The council has established a personalisation pilot to take these ideas forward, and is working with families to ensure it meets their needs. Up to 30 personal budgets will be developed in this financial year, with a gradual roll-out from April 2013 onwards in line with learning from the initial pilot families and the national personalisation pathfinder projects which are due to report in 2013.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Recommendations from sub-committee/response

7. The scrutiny sub-committee made 18 recommendations, to which responses, grouped by theme, are set out below.

Sport and leisure

8. Recommendation 1: Improve the accessibility of universal services by developing and promoting disability awareness training for staff in Southwark's sports and leisure facilities; such as libraries, museums, swimming pools and parks. Ensure this includes training on meeting the needs of hearing and visually impaired children and children with autism.
9. Response:
Southwark already provides free online disability awareness training for sports and leisure staff as well as voluntary partners. In addition, all libraries have induction loops and access to Supernova software, which provides magnification, speech and Braille support. There are plans to offer access to Supernova on all library computers by early 2013. This summer the annual

summer reading challenge in libraries included multi-sensory storytelling for all special needs children with staff being specially trained to deliver this. This was also be offered during the Boundless Festival in September.

10. Recommendation 2: Encourage sports and leisure facilities to increase the accessibility of mainstream services and provide special sessions suitable for disabled children and young people.
11. Response:
The council already works closely with mainstream sports and leisure facilities to encourage inclusive sessions, and is investing in its leisure centres to ensure all are fully accessible. The community sport team includes a sports equity officer, responsible for promoting disability sport to improve access and quality of provision. In addition, the community sports team has launched a £15,000 legacy grant scheme alongside the Olympic and Paralympics Games, and Southwark's team at the London Youth Games for disabled young people secured a £2,000 grant from Balfour Beatty to develop the local teams.

Short break activities and work plan

12. Recommendation 3: Take forward the short break work plan.
13. Recommendation 4: Evaluate the services in place to support parents and carers of disabled children over the age of 5; particularly recognising the evidence received of the additional stresses that families experience when young people reach adolescence and in times of transition.
14. Recommendation 5: Where resources allow, provide additional services and support for children and young people with autism; particularly those with challenging behaviour or ADHD and for children under 8.
15. Response:
The council is already taking forward the actions agreed in the short breaks workplan, which includes actions to improve provision in line with recommendations 4 and 5. Progress to date includes establishing an autism post-diagnosis support worker at Sunshine House and expanding the range of holiday schemes for children aged five and over as well as revising the school travel policy and developing provision which siblings of disabled children can also attend.

There is already a wide range of support at times of transition from the early help and SEN teams, and independent parent partnership. In addition, we have already established an integrated adults' and children's services 'transition team' for 14 to 19 year olds will further support a smooth transition to adulthood.

Disability register

16. Recommendation 6: Keep Southwark's Council Disability Register updated and set up a dialogue with partners on protocols to share data in ways that are transparent, lawful and that will assist families and partner organisations supporting families.
17. Response:
The CwD team accepts this recommendation and will establish a steering group, with parent carer representation, to review the eligibility criteria for inclusion on

the disability register and the information available about the register on the council's website and in the form of leaflets and other written information.

Information and data sharing

18. Recommendation 7: Explore how the council can do data sharing better and more sensitively. Particularly look at the request that social workers take into account information available from health practitioners when making assessments of children and families.
19. Response:
The CwD team carries out its assessments in line with the national assessment framework and this requires that information from health and other professionals should be taken into consideration. Clear guidance already exists for social workers on when and how they can share information. The service will continue to explore how it can do this more sensitively.

Assessments and use of CAF

20. Recommendation 8: Guarantee that all children will receive an assessment by social and educational services if referred by a professional. Undertake these as early as possible in recognition of the importance of timely support.
21. Recommendation 11: Ensure that the common assessment framework (CAF) enables organisations to support families of disabled children, that there are no unnecessary barriers and that the CAF acts as a collaborative system for statutory and voluntary services to identify and support families in need.
22. Recommendation 12: Ensure assessments and consultations take into account parents' and carers' responsibilities for other children or work commitments, particularly when taking decisions about the services and support these families receive.
23. Response:
Children referred to social and educational services by professional always receive an assessment. These are conducted according to statutory guidance, which include thresholds for the provision of statutory support. All social work assessments are undertaken as early as possible, and all must take a holistic view of the family, including the other pressures parents and carers may be under, when determining what support services families receive.

Those children who do not meet thresholds for statutory support are signposted to services that can offer support. The council is reconfiguring these services to better support families and prevent the need for statutory intervention. This includes developing teams around schools, settings and children's centres which can provide extra support for children and families, such as support for autism, educational welfare or educational psychologists.

There are no barriers to the use of the CAF, and the council continues to promote its use including providing free training sessions. As a collaborative tool, the CAF can help speed up the assessment process, in part because parents need tell their story only once.

Information, advice and guidance

24. Recommendation 9: Provide clear advice and support to parents and carers on their rights, through publications and support organisations.
25. Recommendation 14: Provide families with information on statutory, community and generic services available through events, publications and support organisations.

26. Response:

Parents and carers can access a wide range of information on events, activities and their rights from the family information service, the parent partnership service, the SEN, early help and CwD teams, and commissioned provision such as Contact A Family. This is available in written publications as well as by telephone or in person. New publications include the parent partnership's A to Z of SEN guide for parents and its guide to secondary SEN provision in schools.

The council is also working to expand the information available online, as well as develop innovative solutions such as online user forums. The information that council services provide, however, is reliant on the cooperation of providers to notify the council of events and activities on offer, and the council strongly urges community and commissioned providers to work with the council to better coordinate the information available to parents and families.

Schools and statements

27. Recommendation 10: Ensure that statements of special educational need are adhered to.
28. Recommendation 15: Work with all schools to promote better relationships and communication between home and school for families of disabled children and young people.

29. Response:

Schools are responsible for the annual review of statements, and interim or emergency reviews can be called by the school or parent or carer at any time. The council must be invited to any such review. The council also continues to work closely with schools to promote better relationships and communication with parents, primarily through the parent partnership. Key activity for this team includes supporting parents at meetings at school and visiting schools with parents; advising parents on the types of schools suitable for their child, transition, navigating the statementing process; and training sessions. In addition, the early help service can put in place support identified through a CAF, and will move to a statutory assessment if no progress is made. The SEN team will then work with parents and schools directly.

Employment support

30. Recommendation 13: Promote provision for parents of disabled children to find meaningful employment, whilst also fulfilling their caring responsibilities. Parents recommended a pilot developed by the London Borough of Wandsworth.

31. Response:

The council already provides a wide range of back-to-work support, including through children's centres and commissioning voluntary sector organisations. In developing new commissioning contracts from April 2013, the Wandsworth pilot will be considered. The parent partnership also provides a wide range of support to boost parents' confidence, including training on assertiveness and being a volunteer, which for many parents is a vital stepping stone towards employment.

Consultation and peer support

32. Recommendation 16: Improve consultation and engagement by:

- a. Ensuring that results of consultations are shared; wherever possible explain why some requests cannot be honoured
- b. Offer various methods to collect feedback (ie face to face consultation, questionnaire, electronic survey, telephone survey)
- c. Provide opportunities for parents to participate in the strategic planning of services wherever possible
- d. Use robust methods to engage children and young people and include their views

33. Response:

The council already uses a range of consultation methods, including face-to-face, telephone and written surveys. The council also continues to support the local independent parent-led parent carer council, through providing co-located office space and seconding two workers to support the parent carer council's development. Key milestones for the year ahead include developing a participation strategy and preparing joint good practice guidelines.

34. Recommendation 17: Value parents as a resource and the power of peer support; particularly in times of scarce financial resources.

35. Response:

The council strongly agrees that parents and carers are the experts in their child's life, welfare and upbringing. This belief underpins the council's investment in peer support through the parent carer council and voluntary organisations including Contact A Family. In addition, the personalisation pilot offers further opportunities to empower parents and carers by increasing the choice and control they have over the services they receive, and ensure they are at the heart of decision-making about their care.

Voluntary sector

36. Recommendation 18: Commission contracts for as long as reasonably possible.

37. Response:

In line with the Southwark Compact, the council remains committed to supporting the voluntary and community sector, including the need to take early, clear decisions on contracting arrangements.

Community impact statement

38. The council is committed to supporting children and young people with SEN or a disability, and their families, to lead healthy, safe and independent lives. This includes providing clear, accessible information, advice and guidance, as well as

timely assessment and support. The recommendations detailed in this report support these commitments.

Resource implications

39. No additional resources are being requested to deliver the recommendations of this report.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Departmental Finance Manager, Children's (Ref: CS0226)

40. The resource implications are as set out in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Support for Parents and Carers of Disabled Children and Young People - Report from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-committee	160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH http://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=3127	Scrutiny Team 020 7525 0514

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
Lead Officer	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's Services	
Report Authors	Rory Patterson, Deputy Director, Specialist Children's Services	
Version	Final	
Dated	13 September 2012	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services	Yes	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Officer		13 September 2102

This page is intentionally blank.

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012-13**

AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)

NOTE: Original held by Scrutiny Team; all amendments/queries to Julie Timbrell Tel: 020 7525 0514

Name	No of copies	Name	No of copies
Sub-Committee Members		Council Officers	
Councillor David Hubber (Chair)	1	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's Services	1
Councillor Right Rev E Columba Blango	1	Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Environment & Leisure	1
Councillor Sunil Chopra	1	Adrian Whittle, Head of Culture, Libraries, Learning and Leisure	1
Councillor Rowenna Davis	1	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	1
Councillor Paul Kyriacou	1	Sarah Feasey, Legal Services	1
Councillor Rose Shimell	1	Eleanor Parkin, Policy Officer, Children's Services	1
Councillor Cleo Soanes	1	Rory Patterson, Assistant Director of Specialist Children's Services and Safeguarding	1
Reserves		Kerry Crichlow, Assistant Director, Children's Services	1
Councillor James Barber	1	Elaine Allegretti, Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance, Children's Services	1
Councillor Chris Brown	1	Merrill Haeusler, Deputy Director, Children's Services	1
Councillor Poddy Clark	1	Yolanda Houston, Headteachers Executive business Manager	1
Councillor Darren Merrill	1	Tania Robinson, Environment Dept	1
Councillor Althea Smith	1	Alex Doel, Labour Political Assistant	1
Education Representatives		William Summers, Liberal Democrat Political Assistant	1
Revd Nicholas Elder	1	Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Team SPARES	10
Colin Elliott	1	External	
Leticia Ojeda	1	Local History Library	1
Lynn Charlton	1	Total:	
Other Members		Dated: July 2012	
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle	1	45	
Councillor Catherine Bowman	1		
Councillor Veronica Ward	1		