

# Annual Report of the Education Strategy Board

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 25 May 2016

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Author:	Head of Education, Swindon Borough Council
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

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## 1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report provides information on the work of the Swindon Education Strategy Board which was set up in July 2015. The Board is chaired by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for the South-West, Sir David Carter, and its membership consists of the major education stakeholders within Swindon. These include local authority representatives, leaders of headteacher groups, Swindon teaching school alliance, and other representatives for example from the College sector and governance. Its role is to support school improvement within Swindon and to ensure that there is a strong partnership between the RSC and the local authority. The Board has met five times since July 2015 with agendas including analysis of school results in national tests and examinations, inspection outcomes, and also looking at other data such as that on exclusions. Schools are asked to make short presentations at these meetings too, with the schools presenting either being categorised by Ofsted as “requiring improvement”, being recognised as having challenging issues to address, or having good practice to share. Recommendations arise out of the Education Strategy Board meetings to address any matters raised as appropriate.
- 1.2 This report is necessary to inform members of the Board on the progress being made with a key recommendation arising out of the Ofsted inspection in December 2014 of the Swindon School Improvement function. This highlighted the need for there to be much closer working with all involved in school improvement in Swindon and that there needed to be much closer collaboration and communication with the office of the RSC.
- 1.3 The work of the Swindon Education Strategy Board is a key strand of the vision for Swindon. Priority 2 states that Swindon will “offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs in the right places”. As part of this, pledge 17 states that we will “improve educational attainment in particular at ages 16-19 so we are above the average in England within 5 years”.

## 2. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Request that a further report be presented in spring 2017 once further information on the impact of the Swindon Education Strategy Board is available.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Peter Nathan, 07467 440955, pnathan@swindon.gov.uk.

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## 3. Detail

- 3.1 The Swindon Education Strategy Board (SWEB) first met in July 2015. Its terms of reference state that it “has a long term role as an overarching body taking collective responsibility for all children and young people in Swindon, ensuring consistently high outcomes by coordinating the work of all educational organisations in the area engaged in raising standards and improving outcomes for children and young people”. A key driver for the setting up of the Board has been the changing educational landscape nationally in terms of the number of academies that have been set up. Swindon has a high number of academy schools which are independent state funded schools outside of local authority control. Most academies in Swindon do continue to work with the local authority because the local authority has a range of statutory responsibilities for children and young people, and academies also buy into a range of traded services offered by the local authority.
- 3.2 Swindon Borough Council’s arrangements for supporting school improvement were inspected in December 2014 by Ofsted and a number of recommendations were made for improvement. These included to “increase accountability by implementing the proposed Education Strategy Board” and to “ensure that concerns about standards and leadership in academies are referred promptly and directly to the RSC so that standards rise at the end of Key Stage 4 and all secondary pupils have access to education that is at least good”. The reference to secondary education was made because all but one secondary school has academy status and the proportion of schools judged good or better was (and is) low compared to other local authorities (55% against a national average of 74%). At the time of the Ofsted inspection of Swindon Borough Council, the proportion of primary schools judged to be good or better was below the national average but this has now improved and is just above the national average (87% against a national average of 86%). A further outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Swindon Borough Council was that there needed to be closer working between stakeholders such as the Swindon Teaching School’s Alliance, the local authority and other quality education providers.
- 3.3 The terms of reference of the SWEB sets out the roles of the key stakeholders involved in school improvement in Swindon. All of these stakeholders sit on the Board and these include local authority representatives, leaders of the Swindon head teacher groups, the Swindon Teaching School Alliance, National College of Leadership, Teaching and Learning representative, and College and governor representation. The vision for the Board is “For every child irrespective of background, to fulfil their potential through the best education possible”. It also has two high level success criteria. These are “to champion excellence so that every school should be at least a good school and a high percentage of schools should be judged good or outstanding” and to ensure “that educational standards should be amongst the best nationally at every phase of education with all pupils equipped to be lifelong learners”. Because of the high number of academy
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schools in Swindon, the SWEB needed to include strong representation from the office of the RSC which is why the board has been chaired by Sir David Carter, the RSC for the South-West. It is interesting to note that this model of Strategy Board has now been adopted across the south-west and is likely to be introduced nationally.

- 3.4 The SWEB has met five times with meetings usually taking place each term. The initial meetings focused on scrutinizing baseline information such as on outcomes from public examinations and tests, Ofsted inspection outcomes, exclusions data and other local information provided by officers. At each meeting, there have been presentations from 2 or 3 schools. These presentations have been mainly from schools judged by Ofsted as requiring improvement but have also included schools with good practice or improving. The focus has been on their plans for improvement or further improvement. The Board discussed the presentations and may make recommendations for further support or endorses the current support in place. For example, the work of Ferndale Primary School with Ruskin School was acknowledged with the agreement to move the two schools into a multi-academy trust. Improvements in the outcomes of Nova Hreod and Swindon Academy were discussed with recommendations for dissemination amongst other secondary schools. Data highlighted the need for further work to address the relatively low achievement of white disadvantaged pupils and this is being taken forward with the Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers.
- 3.5 The SWEB is still in its early days as a Board. Its minutes are circulated to all schools in the Borough and there are reports back to the various headteacher groups. One of the key outcomes has been the closer working relationships that now exist between the RSC and the local authority. The RSC is now in a position to know any concerns (and successes) there are with Swindon schools, particularly in the secondary sector. There are also much stronger relationships between the Swindon Teaching Schools Alliance and the local authority, for example with specific support now commissioned for key schools and also a new headteacher induction and mentoring programme being put in place. The SWEB also provides a more local accountability mechanism highlighting key issues but with support being able to be provided as identified.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The work of the SWEB will be closely monitored for its effectiveness and impact. There were no alternative options considered at the time as this was a recommendation arising out of the inspection by Ofsted of Swindon Borough Council's support for school improvement function.

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## **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

### Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 None.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 None.

### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.3 None.

### Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA)

5.4 No DIA has been completed in support of this report as its purpose is to provide an update to the members of the Health and Wellbeing Board of work undertaken and does not ask for any decision to be made that will affect current or future service provision.

### Risk Management

5.5 There are no risk management implications.

## **6. Consultees**

6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

## **7. Background Papers**

7.1 None.

## **8. Appendices**

8.1 None.