

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR PEARCE - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR EDUCATION

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 FEBRUARY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	NOW IS THE TIME: READING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS OF OUR STUDENTS		
SERVICE:	EDUCATION	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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Thank you to the officers that have been working on this strategy and who will continue to do so. This strategy will be a working document that continually evolves and adapts to reflect the nature of Reading's schools and what we need to do to improve. It is a job that can never be finished, as we will always be seeking to build on what we have.

The strategy is split into seven main strands that reflects our focus over the upcoming years. We have some excellent provision, great teachers and hardworking staff across our schools in Reading, but we also realise there are areas we need to improve. Resources are tight as budgets continue to be squeezed so we must focus intervention and support to where need is greatest. We must ensure that provision and outcomes are more even so that ALL of our schools and educators have the capacity and expertise to learn from each other and collaborate. We want parents to choose our schools and academies because they meet the needs of their children.

In Reading the proportion of pupils with additional needs is increasing, and this strategy identifies our aims to increase provision. This will include expansion of provision at The Avenue and Blessed Hugh Farringdon, bidding for a new SEND free school, two new ASC Units in our Primary schools and relocation of Phoenix College. We understand the battles parents of our SEN pupils often face and want to ensure provision is increased to enable all of our students to access the education they are entitled to. These projects will help increase capacity to enable more students to stay in Borough.

We also know that our exclusions are too high. There is a big cross over in our exclusions with SEN as well as students being disadvantaged. Schools cannot solve all of society's problems, many exclusions are often the thin end of a bigger wedge. But we can do more to help schools understand this and help keep these young people in

school. A document that will run alongside this strategy, a therapeutic and trauma informed approach to managing behaviour has been discussed and welcomed by Head teachers, and will help schools with approaches to keep our most vulnerable students in classrooms and schools.

This strategy sets out a practical plan on what our education team will focus on, how we will achieve more for our students and how the local authority, brighter futures for children, the regional schools commissioner, our schools and our teachers will work together to raise standards in Reading. Only with all of these parties working together will all of our students get the start in life they deserve.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 1. That the attached report from Brighter Futures for Children be considered.**