

People Select Committee

Scrutiny Review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School



Final Report

December 2016

People Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1LD

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Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank the following people for contributing to its work:

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Foreword

We are delighted to introduce the People Committee's report on Disadvantage in Early Years and School.

It is clear that many children are disadvantaged from birth when compared to their peers, due to a range of reasons including but not limited to poverty; it is now widely recognised that this can have a major impact on their life chances.

The Committee has examined this issue to understand what is happening locally to tackle the impact of disadvantage, with a particular focus on the early years.

We found that there is some great work taking place in Stockton, with staff dedicated to engaging with families and helping them to access services. Early Years settings, schools, and health partners are working closely together to enable children to achieve school readiness and further progress beyond the age of five.

We spoke with local community volunteers, and learnt about their work to provide peer support to help families access childcare and other services when they may not have otherwise done so.

We were also really pleased to see examples of work to broaden the horizons of local children, and improve their feeling of independence. We learnt that pupils at Tilery Primary, located in the ward with the highest levels of deprivation, had been taken on visits to places such as Oxford University, as well as residential trips across the region.

There is of course always room for further improvement and we have identified a number of recommendations to achieve this.

During 2016 Ofsted has undertaken a national review of disadvantage in the early years and the results were published in the report '*Unknown Children: Destined for Disadvantage?*'.

As part of our evidence sessions, we were delighted to be able to hear direct from the author of the report, Lee Owston, Ofsted's National Lead for Early Years. The Committee was able to see how Stockton compared to other authorities, and Ofsted's recommendations were very useful in setting the overall context for our own suggestions.

We would like to thank Lee and everyone who has contributed to the review process.

We hope you find our report useful and commend the recommendations to you.

Cllr Jean O'Donnell
Chair

Cllr Eileen Johnson
Vice-Chair

Original Brief

Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The following Council Plan 2015-18 Priorities are relevant:

- Making sure there is effective early years support for children and families
- Improving educational performance of all children and young people across the Borough

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

In order to raise achievement of disadvantaged pupils the Government has provided pupil premium funding to schools. The funding is targeted at disadvantaged pupils from reception to Year 11 and applies to all children who have been eligible for Free Schools Meals (FSM) at any point in the previous six years. Schools make their own decisions on how to allocate their share of funding taking account of their individual circumstances, and must publish details of funded initiatives online. Ofsted inspections take account of the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

Following on from the review of Child Poverty, the review will start by considering the role of the Pupil Premium, how this has been used in the Borough to ensure funding is being used to maximise achievement, and how schools use/access good practice.

The main focus of the review will be on tackling disadvantage in the early years, including school readiness. Some children in the Borough need to be supported to catch up significantly on a range of factors such as socialisation.

Review will consider the role of early years services (including public health/health provision, and Fairer Start), the new Early Years Pupil Premium, the Council's new Transition Guarantee for 0-5, and understanding school v parent perceptions/views of 'school readiness'.

The Council has contributed to an Ofsted Survey to gather information and good practice on disadvantage in early years; this should be published in the summer and will be used to inform and provide a framework for the review.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What is the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Stockton Borough? How does this compare to non-disadvantaged pupils? How does the Borough as a whole compare?

What examples of good Pupil Premium practice exist in Stockton? How is good practice identified and shared? Are all claims for eligible FSM (leading to Pupil Premium) being made?

What is the Council's role in ensuring pupils are 'school ready' at Reception? What is the role of others, and how well do agencies work together to tackle disadvantage?

What is the role of Early Years provision? How will the Early Years Pupil Premium be utilised?

What are the perceptions of disadvantage and 'school readiness' (parents/professionals)?

What is the role of Public Health and Health services? What has been the impact to date of Fairer Start?

Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the People Select Committee's review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School.
- 1.2 The main focus of the review was tackling disadvantage in the early years, including school readiness. Some children in the Borough need to be supported to catch up significantly on a range of factors such as socialisation. The review also intended to follow on from the review of Child Poverty and examine how Pupil Premium was being used in the Borough, and consider the role of the new Early Years Pupil Premium.
- 1.3 The impact of disadvantage on a child's development and education is now widely recognised, as is the crucial importance of the first five years of a child's life, particularly between birth and the age of three, in terms of establishing the way that they think, learn and behave.
- 1.4 During 2016, Stockton contributed to a national Ofsted Survey review which focussed on disadvantage in the early years. The final report, 'Unknown Children – Destined for Disadvantage?' was published in the summer and has been used to inform and provide a framework for the Committee's review and recommendations.
- 1.5 Members have been impressed by the range of work undertaken by the Council and partners with the aim of providing disadvantaged children with the best start in life, and support as they journey into school.
- 1.6 A number of interventions have been developed at the national level, and by effectively utilising these in conjunction with local initiatives, the effects of disadvantage can be minimised. The Committee has identified recommendations to help secure further improvements.
- 1.7 The Committee recommends that the Council should:
 1. **Ensure that there is a clear focus on what is meant by disadvantage and this is reflected in relevant strategies.**
 2. **Maintain the focus on identifying children eligible for funded Early Years education, and ensuring a comprehensive level of take-up**
 3. **i) Roll out the 'Moving Forward Foundation Stage 0 to 5 Years' Transition Guarantee approach**
 - ii) **Embed the 0-5 Years Transition Guarantee and additional work (eg. local Partnership meetings) to track the impact of children's progress through different settings to inform targeted interventions and quality assurance.**
 4. **Ensure the improvement in number of 2½ yr olds receiving health development reviews is sustained and coverage approaches 100%.**
 5. **Work towards an integrated 2 year old check with health and education professionals**
 6. **Ensures the Committee receives a full update on the work of local Early Years' services, including the role of both the Children's Centre Teams and the health visiting service as part of the 0-19 Workforce, following the reviews of these service areas.**

- 7. Consider a renewed focus on sensory, physical, and communication activity for Under 5s in Early Years Settings.**
- 8. Ensure that use of Early Years Pupil Premium is reviewed and audited to ensure local good practice (in line with the approach taken with School Pupil Premium)**
- 9. Explore the feasibility of developing a system to secure Pupil Premium funding for the whole journey of the child through their education to reduce the number of eligibility checks required**

Introduction

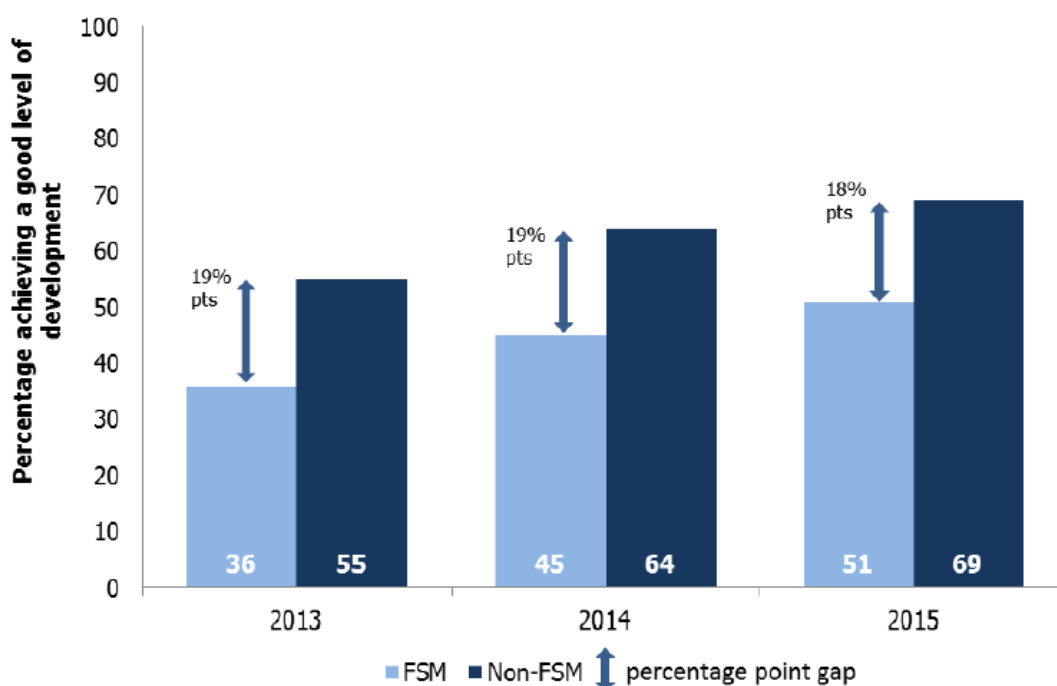
- 2.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the People Select Committee's review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School.
- 2.2 The main focus of the review was tackling disadvantage in the early years, including school readiness. Some children in the Borough need to be supported to catch up significantly on a range of factors such as socialisation. The review also intended to follow on from the review of Child Poverty and examine how Pupil Premium was being used in the Borough, and consider the role of the new Early Years Pupil Premium.
- 2.3 During 2016, Stockton contributed to a national Ofsted Survey review which focussed on disadvantage in the early years. The final report, '*Unknown Children – Destined for Disadvantage?*' was published in the summer and has been used to inform and provide a framework for the Committee's review and recommendations. The national recommendations from Unknown Children are included at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The Committee considered evidence from a range of sources, including the Schools and Early Years Teams, and the Committee was also pleased to be host an evidence session with the author of the national Ofsted Report.
- 2.5 Members have visited Star Children's Centre and Tilery Primary School, and hosted a discussion with Community Champion Volunteers from the A Fairer Start project. The review also considered the results of research into parent/teacher perceptions of school readiness as co-ordinated by High Flyers Children's Centre.
- 2.6 The Council is undertaking a separate review on the future delivery of Early Years and Children's Centres; consultation and engagement began during the period of the Committee's own work. The recommendations contained in this report are intended to improve local delivery of services, irrespective of the final shape of early years services in the Borough.

Background

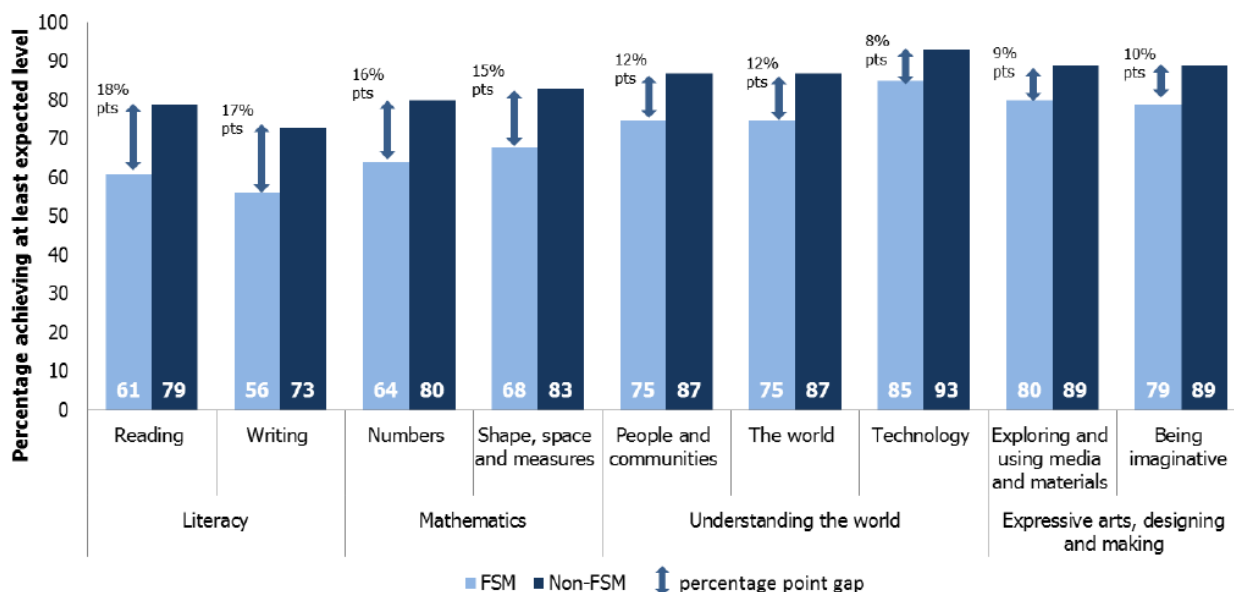
3.1 The impact of disadvantage on a child's development and education has been recognised for a long time. The overall attainment gap at the age of five has started to close, but the Sutton Trust found in 2012 that a gap in speech and language equivalent to 19 months had emerged for some children in the lowest income groups. The recent study, 'Effective pre-school, primary and secondary education project' (DoE 2015), highlighted the crucial importance of the first five years of a child's life, particularly between birth and the age of three, in terms of establishing the way that they think, learn and behave.

3.2 The following charts provide a national overview of levels of development at the age of five.

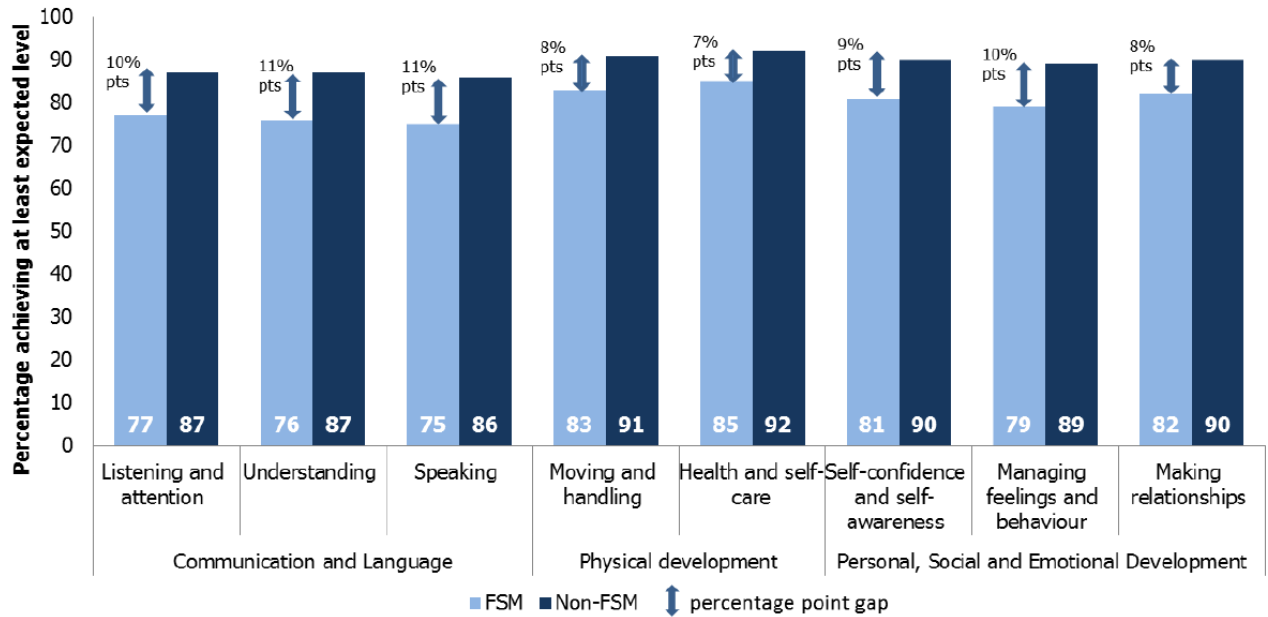
Proportion of children achieving a good level of development, by eligibility for free school meals (FSM):



Proportion of children achieving at least expected level in literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; expressive arts and design early learning goals in 2015, by FSM eligibility:



Proportion of children achieving at least expected level in communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; physical development early learning goals in 2015, by FSM eligibility:



'Unknown Children: Destined for Disadvantage?', Ofsted 2016

3.3 It is widely recognised that Stockton is a Borough that includes areas of both affluence and significant deprivation. Clearly the health and wellbeing of many children in the Borough is very good, but as the 2016 Child Health Profile for the Borough (Public Health England) notes:

'The health and wellbeing of children in Stockton-on-Tees is generally worse than the England average. The infant mortality rate is similar to and the child mortality rate is worse than the England average. The level of child poverty is worse than the England average with 21.8% of children aged under 16 years living in poverty.'

The number of children in care has increased over the past year, in line with regional and national trends.

3.4 When seeking solutions to tackle these issues affecting the youngest children and their families, access to good quality early years education and health support has been seen as increasingly important in recent years.

3.5 In Stockton, the review took place against the background of having almost universally Good or Outstanding early years provision, with good levels of take up, but with further work needed to translate this into improved outcomes.

3.6 For children of school age, one of the more high profile interventions of recent years has been the Pupil Premium. The measure generally used in educational settings to determine economic disadvantage is whether a child is eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Pupil Premium is allocated to schools for each child registered for FSM, as well as the number of looked after children.

3.7 Nationally, in 2015-16 the funding allocated for Pupil Premium amounted to £2.545 billion. Schools make their own decisions on how to allocate their share of funding taking account of their individual circumstances, and must publish details of funded initiatives online. Ofsted inspections take account of the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

3.8 In December 2016, a report to Cabinet outlined the 2015-16 school performance of vulnerable pupils including those in receipt of Pupil Premium funding. The summary of the results for those pupils was as follows:

‘At Key Stage 1, disadvantaged Stockton children achieved very favourably, outperforming disadvantaged children nationally in reading, writing, science and maths at the expected standard or above as measured for children on Free School Meals (FSM). Stockton non-FSM pupils also outperformed this group nationally in all subjects. It is therefore very particularly pleasing that the gap between Stockton FSM and national non-FSM is smaller than the national gap in all subjects.

KS2 Disadvantaged pupils made most progress in writing and least progress in reading. 35% of disadvantaged Year 6 children in Stockton achieved Combined Reading, Writing and maths at the expected standard or above in 2016. Within Stockton the KS2 attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils is wider in comparison to 2015 however no national data for this cohort is yet available.

At Key Stage 4, based upon 2015 measures, overall LA attainment and progress of disadvantage Year 11 pupils has improved and progress gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils have narrowed for English and Maths GCSEs. Attainment gaps have widened. The new Progress 8 measure however shows that disadvantaged pupils achieved on average 0.29, i.e. a third of a grade, less than non-disadvantaged pupils in Stockton.

School level performance varies considerably, with some schools showing very strong performance and others a disappointing drop in performance.

Curriculum, assessment and performance measures have changed significantly in 2016 and national data is not yet fully available. Once national data for disadvantaged pupil gaps is released, it will be possible to make valid comparisons.’

Findings and Recommendations

Definitions

4.1 In its recent report 'Unknown Children', Ofsted notes that:

'Disadvantage is a complex issue. It can affect children from birth and, left unchecked and unchallenged, can impact negatively on every aspect of a child's life. Poverty is often the driving force, influencing the quality of parenting and home environment that children experience, which in turn shapes their outlook on life. As such, disadvantage can have a long-term grip on families and communities, holding them back generation after generation. Ensuring that the home, health and educational experiences of the youngest children are of the highest quality provides opportunities to reverse this long-term cycle of deprivation.'

4.2 As noted, the number of pupils on Free School Meals is the most commonly used measure of disadvantage in educational settings. As an indicator, it has the benefit of being relatively simple and widely understood. It is however not perfect as:

'- It is a black and white measure that does not always distinguish well between levels of disadvantage. For instance there is scope for substantially different levels of poverty within the eligible and not-eligible groups. There is potentially very little difference in disadvantage between those on either side of the threshold. The measure has no shades of grey.

- The qualifying benefits for FSM are mainly out of work benefits, so it does not cover the 'working poor' that well.

- Not all families eligible for FSM actually claim them. The DfE has estimated that around 14% of pupils who should be entitled do not claim them. This rate is thought to be higher among older pupils and in less deprived areas.' (*Support for Disadvantaged Children in Education in England*, House of Commons Library, July 2015)

4.3 Ofsted identified that there needed to be greater clarity on the contributions of health, education and social care to tackling disadvantage, particularly health, and that a common, broader view of what disadvantage in early years means should be developed. For example, to encompass parenting skills and the home environment, as well as economic status.

4.4 In order to provide consistency at the national level, Ofsted recommended that the Department of Education:

'provide a common definition for 'disadvantaged children', incorporating a range of economic, health and social indicators, to support a coherent approach to improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged children and families.'

4.5 Stockton Council's definition of disadvantage (in relation to education) is that a child is disadvantaged if they had been affected by any factor that impacted on their educational outcomes.

4.6 The Council works on this agenda across early years, education, and public health, and with partners particularly in the NHS. It is therefore important that there is a locally agreed view on what and who should be the focus of service delivery. In advance of any adoption of a national definition of 'disadvantage', the Committee recommend that the Council and appropriate partners should:

1. **Ensure that there is a clear focus on what is meant by disadvantage and this is reflected in relevant strategies.**
- 4.7 Ofsted's review stressed the importance of leadership, the importance of undertaking the key early health and learning assessments, ensuring sufficient good quality early years places for disadvantaged children, and ensuring additional funding is used effectively.
- 4.8 As part of its fieldwork, Ofsted visited Stockton along with a number of other authorities. The National Lead for Early Years reported to the Committee that the results of Stockton's visit were positive, as the Council was well placed to tackle future challenges with a good awareness of local priorities. Good practice included the retention of the Early Years Development Team, and accountability was strong including via the Scrutiny system and the Committee's review was indicative of that. Where areas for further focus were identified, these are addressed below.

Local Early Years Services

- 4.9 Early Years education in Stockton Borough is provided through a variety of settings: these include school nurseries, child minding, day nursery, out of school care, and pre-school / playgroups. Children may access a variety of settings during their early years and before they attend school.
- 4.10 All schools and Ofsted-registered Early Years settings must follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The overall aim of the national EYFS framework is that children should reach a Good Level of Development by the time they begin school.
- 4.11 Research co-ordinated by the High Flyers Children's Centre looked at perceptions of school readiness amongst parents and professionals including Teachers in Thornaby. In general terms, professionals gave higher priority to practical skills compared to some of the more aspirational responses provided by parents.
- 4.12 In the area covered by the research, 49.8% of children had achieved a Good Level of Development at the time of the report in 2015 (this increased to 66% in 2016). Professionals were asked about the main characteristics of children who were not ready for school and top answers included: poor vocabulary; poor social skills; not toilet trained; and a lack of independence. The research suggested further joint working with parents and schools to create shared understanding and closer relationships.
- 4.13 Support to disadvantaged children has been developed via the offer of funded access to early years provision. Disadvantaged children are able to access 15 hours per week funded childcare from two years old. Disadvantage in this sense is measured economically via benefit take up, and also whether a child has SEN, is Looked After, or uses Disability Living Allowance.
- 4.14 All children at 3-4 years are able to access 15 hours per week (this will be extended to 30 hours for working families from September 2017). From 2015-16, disadvantaged 3-4 year old children in any early years setting have been able to receive additional support funded via the Early Years Pupil Premium.
- 4.15 In Stockton there is a high level of school nursery provision with 88% of disadvantaged 3 or 4 year old children attending a school nursery. Most schools do not take two year olds

but Tilery Primary School has opened two year old provision following capital investment, and are integrating two and three year old sessions.

- 4.16 Members of the Committee visited the Star Children's Centre, and Tilery Primary School. The notes of these visits are attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.17 During the period of the review the Government announced a consultation on a national early years funding formula in order to provide greater consistency across the country. The Committee noted that the initial proposals would be positive for Stockton if implemented.

Engagement with / Quality of Early Years Services

- 4.18 The Committee was impressed with the range of work that takes place to improve family engagement with local services, and ensure children receive their entitled hours.
- 4.19 The Department of Work and Pensions lists provide details of eligible 2 year olds. Locally, this data is used in conjunction with a range of work to identify and engage with disadvantaged children and families takes place in Stockton:
- promotional work includes advertising of the offer through relevant services including social care teams, and health services including midwifery and health visitors;
 - outreach work from Children's Centres is used to identify children and families. Assessments are undertaken to identify elements of the outreach package to be delivered, and information shared with other providers such as private voluntary and independent (PVI) settings, other children's centres and school nurseries;
 - Children's Centres also offer targeted services supported by crèche provision to allow parents access to parenting and employability programmes;
 - a dedicated Early Years Engagement Worker operates in the community to locate families and supports those that have not engaged to date;
 - Early Years Early Help Panels discuss potential vulnerable families and identify the lead professional to take the work forward;
 - targeted work in the Town Centre area via the 'A Fairer Start' Project.
- 4.20 In 2016-17, Stockton is trialling a 'golden ticket' offer based on Middlesbrough's approach which was developed on the basis of sending eligible families vouchers to use at early years provision. This is therefore an opt-out system rather than waiting for them to opt in. Ofsted recognises that authorities may need to be flexible in this way to reduce barriers to access.
- 4.21 Members received testimonials for the work of the Early Years Engagement Worker, including examples of where support had been provided to families through home visits, and viewing of settings with the parents.

'Thank you so much for all your help and support and finding my daughter a childcare place. [The child] has gained a lot of confidence and loves going to the nursery. The staff are lovely there too which as a mother is the best reassurance you can get. I am really happy with this scheme and if available in a couple of years time will be ideal for my baby son too.'

- 4.22 The 'A Fairer Start' project is focussed on Stockton Town Centre ward and aims to ensure that every child had the best start in life. The Town Centre Ward is the most deprived in the Borough and the 17th most deprived in the country. A Fairer Start recognises that

'each parent, child and family had a unique journey and the importance of understanding where they were on that journey'.

- 4.23 The pilot is in place for 3 years and was currently funded by SBC Public Health and NHS Hartlepool & Stockton-On-Tees CCG. The project focusses on improving three key outcomes for 0-3 year olds:
1. Social and Emotional Development
 2. Speech & Language Development
 3. Nutrition
- 4.24 Community Champion volunteers are a key element of the project, focussing on engagement with local families and supporting access to services. Members met with representatives of the Champion volunteers to further understand their role.

Fairer Start Community Champion Volunteers

The volunteers engage in range of outreach and supportive activity in order to improve engagement with services and outcomes for 0-5s in the Stockton Town Centre area.

Many parents felt isolated and therefore the outreach services provided the opportunity to socialise, integrate with the wider community and also receive feedback and encouragement.

As a method of ensuring people were aware of services and encouraged to take part, word of mouth was seen as being particularly important to Stockton families.

It was explained that many people who did not access the services due to choice, made this decision due to fear of involvement with social services and the potential of being judged. The volunteers focus on improving access to early years services, to alleviate these concerns.

The volunteers supported parents to bring their children to sessions such as Stay and Play. It was noted that the crèche was a good opportunity to identify the needs of children and their families. Often at the crèche, children opted to stay close to their parents due to the unfamiliarity of play with other children.

The team followed the Early Years Foundation Stage whatever the child's background.

Services are provided to Asylum Seekers locally based in the area. Coffee mornings were held as part of the outreach programme and these were helpful in enabling staff to identify needs.

The volunteers offered a unique, special service due to their own experiences and difficulties faced.

- 4.25 Ofsted noted that the use of community champions and peer-supporters was seen as good practice.
- 4.26 The Committee found that across the Borough, recent work to improve take up particularly in relation to the two year offer has seen good results. 80% of local eligible families (842 children) are benefitting from the Two Year Offer, and this has increased by 20 percentage points between 2015 and 2016. 99% of disadvantaged 3 – 4 years olds are now accessing Early Years education.
- 4.27 The Committee found that the quality of Early Years education had improved significantly over recent years and as of June 2016 94% of childminders and 100% of other settings were ranked Good or Outstanding.

- 4.28 A range of measures have been taken to improve quality across settings including the Journey to Outstanding guidance document, training opportunities, hosting of an 'Outstanding Forum', the use of welfare audits that are sent to all settings (including questions as to how providers meet the needs of vulnerable groups), and the hosting of local partnership meetings involving different settings and schools.
- 4.29 The Committee found that take up and quality of provision was therefore good, but further work was needed to improve outcomes.
- 4.30 In 2015, 38% of Free School Meal eligible children had achieved a Good Level of Development in Stockton, compared to 64% of those who were not eligible. Ofsted noted that this was up from 23% in 2013 but had meant Stockton was placed 152 out of 152 Local Authority areas. Ofsted identified that progress once within local schools was good, but school readiness could be improved.
- 4.31 However the most recent 2016 data has shown a significant improvement of 14 percentage points and 52% of disadvantaged pupils have now gained the Good Level of Development, and this narrowed the gap to their peers to 17 percentage points. As an example of results in a local area, the results for schools in the A Fairer Start area for all pupils, were as follows:
- St Cuthberts – 70%
 - Bowesfield – 38%
 - Oxbridge – 42%
 - Mill Lane – 48%
 - Tilery – 38%
- 4.32 The Committee was informed of the development of the Moving Forward for 0-5 Transition Guarantee. This follows the development of the Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 Moving Forward Guarantee, and this was launched in 2015 (this itself was developed following the scrutiny review of Transition from Primary to Secondary by Children and Young People Committee¹).
- 4.33 The aim of the 0-5 Transition Guarantee is to 'ensure that transition arrangements between one early years setting and another are effective enough for children to be safe and secure so that they continue to make progress towards achieving a good level of development at the end of the EYFS.'
- 4.34 The Guarantee was been piloted and then launched during 2016-17. This is seen as a key document that will ensure that providers that sign up to it ensure that each child has relevant assessments in place and key information about them is transferred to their next early years setting/ school reception class. There is a Borough-wide Moving Forward/School Readiness Forum to highlight the importance of this agenda.
- 4.35 Ofsted noted that the 0-5 Moving Forward approach was an exemplar in relation to transition across early years and into school.
- 4.36 Nationally there was no method of tracking the impact of Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings on individual children until the age of 5; locally, Stockton tracked where children were accessing provision if they had a funded place, but there is room for improvement in how this information was analysed. Work that will contribute to this includes the partnership meetings outlined above, and the Transition Guarantee will enable schools to see the child's previous progress in their setting.

¹ This project was a finalist in the Excellence in Governance and Scrutiny category at The MJ Awards 2016.

4.37 In order to strengthen and sustain the good work that is already taking place, the Committee recommend that the Council should:

2. **Maintain the focus on identifying children eligible for funded early years education, and ensuring a comprehensive level of take-up**

3. i) **Roll out the ‘Moving Forward Foundation Stage 0 to 5 Years’ Transition Guarantee approach**

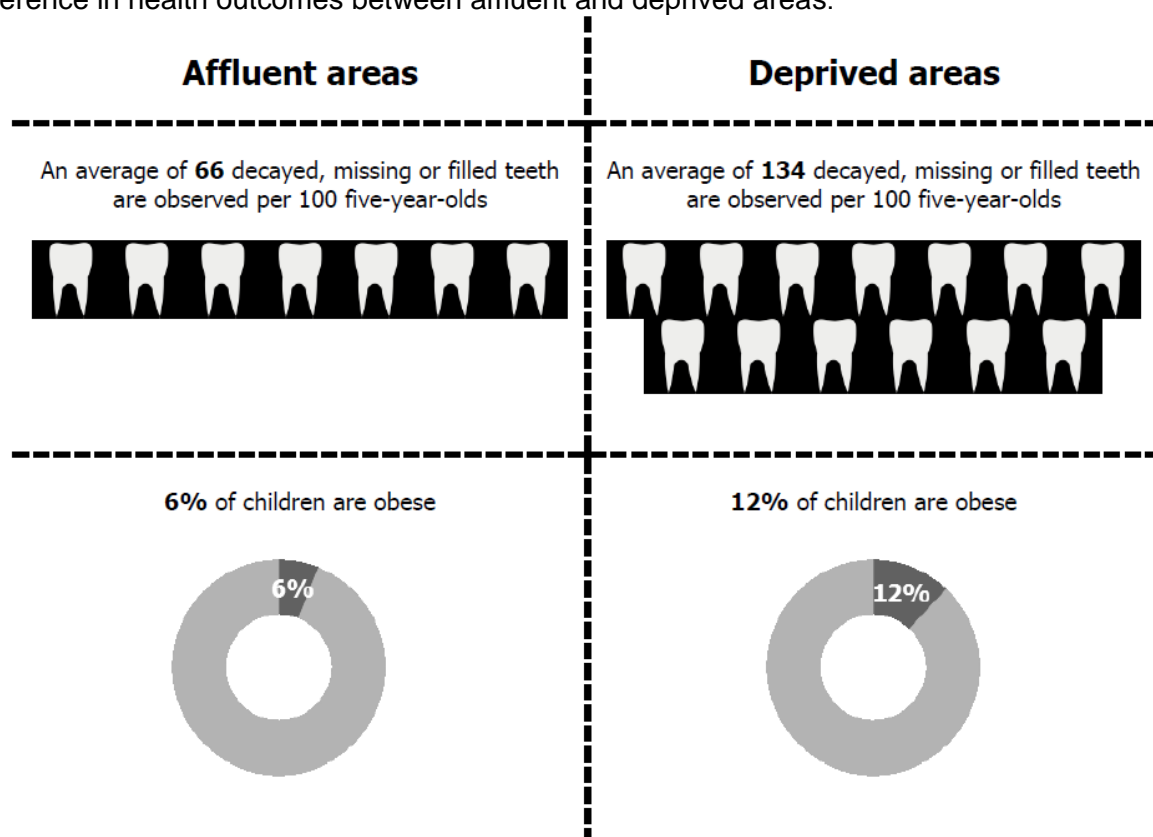
ii) **Embed the 0-5 Years Transition Guarantee and additional work (eg. local Partnership meetings) to track the impact of children’s progress through different settings to inform targeted interventions and quality assurance.**

Health in the Early Years

4.38 When considering how disadvantage should be measured, the Committee found that it is important to include all relevant factors not least the health and wellbeing of children, alongside records of their learning and development.

4.39 Using health outcomes as measures reveals some stark inequalities between sections of the community, for example when comparing obesity and the rate of tooth decay.

Difference in health outcomes between affluent and deprived areas:



Unknown Children, Ofsted 2016

This reinforces the need to tackle disadvantage in a holistic way.

- 4.40 Ofsted identified that, nationally, health providers needed to improve their engagement with the tackling disadvantage agenda. Key services include health visiting, and the regular checks the service undertakes are important when measuring a child's development.
- 4.41 Locally, Health Visiting is now commissioned by Public Health and provided by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. Following transfer of commissioning responsibilities to the Council, a new specification has been put into place with greater focus on vulnerable families, and the contract has been extended until March 2018 to enable Public Health to undertake a longer term look at the service.
- 4.42 Health Visitors should deliver five key contacts with young children with a final check at age 2 ½. There is a tight window to undertake the development check between 2 years 3 months and 2 ½ years; cancellations, for example, can delay the process. If a review is carried out even one day later than this period, it is recorded as part of an exception report. Catch up processes to follow up on missed appointments raise the overall total, however the total number for Stockton was previously c.75%-80% therefore up to a quarter of children were not receiving these checks.
- 4.43 Public Health have been working with the Trust to rapidly improve the uptake of the 2 to 2 ½ year review. Latest data for Quarter 2 in 2016-17 shows an improvement with the numbers at approximately 85%. This records the reviews that are completed within the 2 years 6 months timeframe. Quarter 2 data for all 2 to 2 ½ year reviews undertaken is at approximately 95%.
- 4.44 This is an indicator being measured through the Early Help performance framework, and it will be important to maintain the level of improved performance in the longer term.
- 4.45 In addition to this, the Health Visiting service has rolled out the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3) as part of this developmental review. ASQ3 is an evidence based tool which measures physical, social and cognitive development and provides overall scores on a range of categories. This data will be collected as part of Public Health's performance/contract management.
- 4.46 Department of Health now has an expectation that the Ages and Stage Social and Emotional (ASQ-SE) Questionnaire should be rolled out. This tool explores social, emotional and cognitive development in greater detail, and will be used locally as soon as staff are trained.
- 4.47 The Committee found that as Learning and Development Checks also take place between two and three years, a new integrated check could be introduced which involved one event attended by a health professional and an education professional completing an assessment together. It is seen as best practice for health and development checks to be integrated wherever possible to reduce duplication for professionals and parents, and improve chances of identifying children in need of help.
- 4.48 From October 2015, work with the Trust led to a pilot integrated health and early years development review. This took place in the first six months of the contract but the work was not embedded. An information sharing agreement between the Council and Trust was not in place but would have benefitted this work.
- 4.49 The Moving Forward Document includes reference to health indicators, and the Early Years Team in the Education Improvement Service (EIS) is working increasingly closely with health services.

4.50 The Committee recognised the importance of these checks, and recommend that the Council should:

4. Ensure the improvement in number of 2½ yr olds receiving (health) development reviews is sustained and coverage approaches 100%.

5. Work towards an integrated 2 year old check with health and education professionals

4.51 The separate review of Early Years and Children's Centres includes examination of how to ensure a more integrated approach of health with early years settings. As well as the Early Years & Children's Centres review, Public Health is currently reviewing its vision for 0-19 services (which includes health visiting services which it commissions, among others including school nursing). There is close working with Children's Services to align both visions and this presents a significant opportunity to maximise the early years workforce. This is also reflected in the Children's Services Improvement Strategy.

4.52 As part of the Early Years and Children's Centre Review it is proposed to build on the Fairer Start Model and develop the network of peer mentoring and volunteer led support.

4.53 The Committee recommend that the:

6. Committee should receive a full update on the work of local Early Years' services, including the role of both the Children's Centre Teams and the health visiting service as part of the 0-19 Workforce, following the reviews of these service areas.

4.54 Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust (TEWV) worked with children between the ages of 0 to 18 years, although it predominantly worked with older children. Key issues for the Trust included:

- TEWV was keen to work with and support other agencies working with children. The Trust stressed the importance of social and emotional development to promote resilience. Early detection is key, and the Trust as able to provide training and help to organisations to support them with clients;

- there had been an increase in referrals from younger age groups. TEWV was starting to see children at age 3 referred to them, although the youngest had been 1 ½ years old. There was open access referral and the waiting list was under 27 days with the majority of people being seen in under two weeks. However it was noted that although a referral may be made at age four for example, diagnosis may not generally be given until they are at age 6;

- services were aligned with school clusters and work took place on behaviour, which was often a reason for referrals. It was noted that while TEWV worked with families to understand behaviour, it also looked at gathering information from other people and organisations in addition to accessing information from the beginning of the child's life.

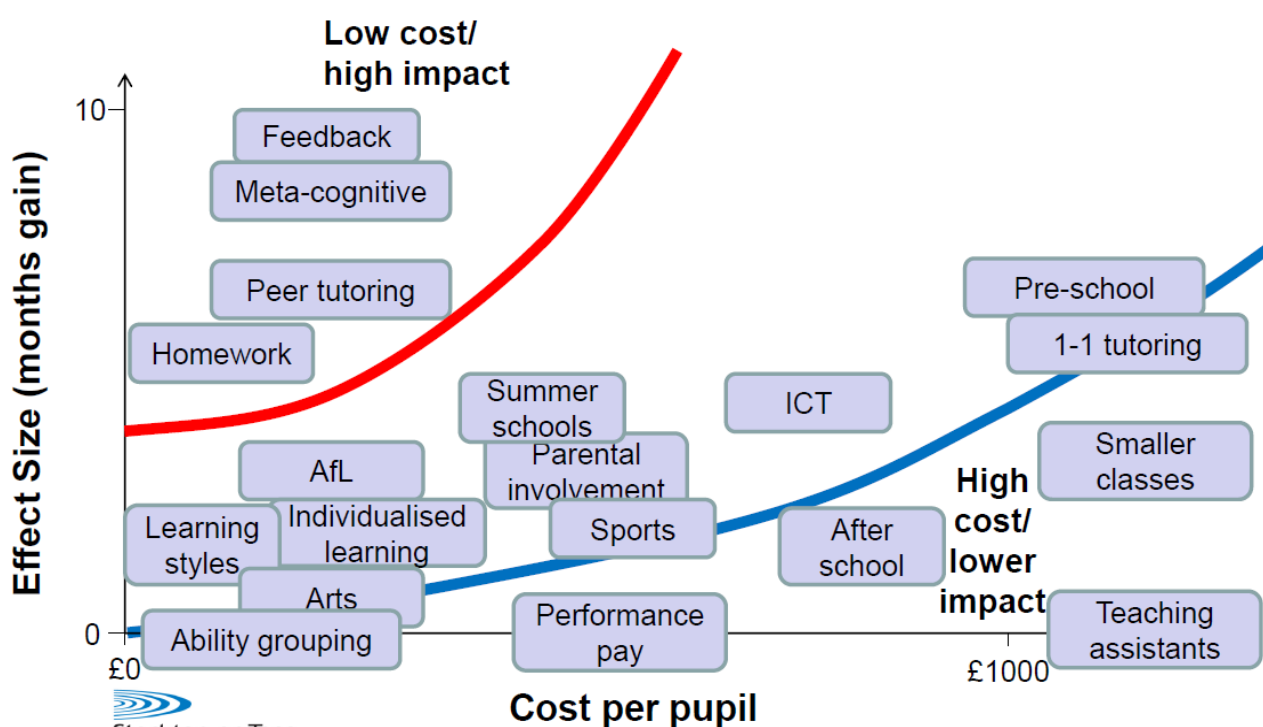
4.56 During its evidence session with the Committee, Ofsted suggested that there could be greater focus on whether early years settings were ensuring children were undertaking physical activity. It was not enough for settings to have access to outdoor space and play equipment, if children were not actively using this space to undertake periods of supervised exercise.

- 4.57 Public Health agree that the focus should be on physical activity; measuring weight and specifically referring to obesity in very young children can be problematic but the promotion of healthy lifestyles should be encouraged at all ages.
- 4.58 There is also an opportunity to reinforce the role of Early Years settings in relation to developing sensory and communication skills. This would support other work to improve speech and language skills in the Borough.
- 4.59 The Committee recommend that the Council:
- 7. Consider a renewed focus on sensory, physical, and communication activity for Under 5s in Early Years Settings.**

Pupil Premium – In Early Years and School

- 4.60 Pupil Premium (PP) can provide a significant source of income for schools and is paid for each pupil registered for Free School Meals at any time in the previous six years, and also looked after children. For 2016-17 the funding equates to:
- Primary: £1,320 per pupil registered for Free School Meals at any time in last 6 years
- Secondary: £935 per pupil registered for Free School Meals at any time in last 6 years
- Looked After Children: £1,900 per pupil
- 4.61 Schools have wide discretion in the spending of the Premium but must account for the specific impact it has had on the pupils it is allocated to, and all spending must be published on school websites. It is recognised that the choices schools are able to make when using PP will differ depending on the size of their allocation, and some schemes will benefit other children in addition to those directly eligible for the Premium.
- 4.62 The Committee noted that Ofsted has a new focus on ensuring the progress of the most able disadvantaged children in school.
- 4.63 Harewood Primary (Thornaby) was one of the Local Key Stage 2 Award Winners in the 2016 Pupil Premium Awards. In September 2016, the School had a fund worth £277,160; the school spent this on a range of programmes to provide experiences for pupils who may otherwise not have had them, and parental support schemes. Specific examples include:
- Parent Support Advisors advise and signpost parents to additional support, and run a pre-school group at local Childrens Centre;
 - additional staff and Teaching Assistants are employed across all years to improve staff/pupil ratios and address any underachievement in a targeted manner;
 - a counselling service is in place for those experiencing difficulties with their emotional wellbeing;
 - access to an Education Psychologist is in place to identify barriers to learning;
 - free uniforms for those in hardship and breakfasts for those on FSM;
 - a mini bus is used by the school to take children on free visits.
- 4.64 The value of this work can be seen in the school's attainment data, with outcomes across most measures better than the national/local authority figures for all pupils. See Appendix 3.

- 4.65 The visit to Tilery Primary also showed how the school was using Pupil Premium (see Appendix 2)
- 4.66 Several initiatives are in place locally to audit Pupil Premium and share good practice:
- the Education Improvement Service uses a variety of tools including the Pupil Premium Toolkit, Inclusion Quality Mark, Gender Audit, Governance Checklist, and website audit and guidance. Throughout its work there is a strong focus on strengthening middle and senior leadership;
 - the EIS hosts Closing the Gap Cluster Meetings - these support schools to close the progress and attainment gap between disadvantaged groups, and boys and girls;
 - work within schools includes PP Reviews with the Senior Leadership, and schools are also grouped together into Raising Achievement Partnerships.
- 4.67 The Committee noted that local schools including academies are engaged with the Closing the Gap clusters; attendance is monitored by EIS and followed up where appropriate. The EIS continually challenges schools to justify their Pupil Premium spend and provide the rationale for chosen interventions.
- 4.68 The cost effectiveness of interventions that could potentially be funded by the Premium have been summarised by the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) as follows:



(This is a cost/benefit analysis therefore although each of these may have some impact, some interventions are seen as more effective than others. To note - Teaching Assistants are effective when managed appropriately, Parental Involvement in this case refers to a specific time intensive programme, and some schools have large class sizes but still achieve good outcomes.)

Support for Looked After Children (LAC)

- 4.69 In Stockton, agreement between the Borough's Schools Forum and the EIS means that £500 from each LAC Pupil Premium payment is top-sliced for use by the Virtual School.

A top slice of £500 is in the mid-range when compared to the approaches taken elsewhere.

- 4.70 Aggregated together, the topsliced funding creates a Borough-wide fund that can be spent on individual pupils if appropriate. This fund is monitored and spent by the Virtual School Board. Schools are able to bid for funding from it, but Borough-wide interventions can also be developed; current spending includes two Educational Development Advisors.
- 4.71 The Pupil Premium Plus – the remaining £1400 provided direct to schools for each looked after child – is monitored via the individual pupil’s Personal Education Plan (PEP), and an annual audit is carried out by the Virtual School Headteacher.
- 4.72 The Virtual Headteacher can withdraw funding from schools if it is not being spent on appropriate targeted support, but this is not currently considered to be an issue.
- 4.73 The Premium for LAC has been used on a range of interventions targeted at supporting academic progress or other social, emotional and mental health difficulties that may be affecting learning. These include 1:1 tuition at home or school, Breakfast Clubs, enrichment activities, and precise interventions, for example in literacy.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

- 4.74 Early Years Pupil Premium is available to 3-4 year olds who are receiving funded early years education at school nurseries or private settings, and meet the relevant criteria². In 2015-16 the funding was £300 per child.
- 4.75 The approach to monitoring the use of EYPP in the private sector will mirror the approach taken with schools. The EIS aims to ensure questions about PP and disadvantage are continually discussed when engaging with providers. In Stockton, Early Years PP is seen as an opportunity to: build resilience and self-regulation; secure the vocabulary base; and improve mental health.
- 4.76 In relation to LAC in Early Years, the Virtual School is working with settings to implement a monitoring system similar to that used with schools. The Committee found that the Virtual School Headteacher recognises that outcomes for Looked After Children in Early Years needed to improve (38% achieved GLD in 2016 although this was out of a total small number of 8 children).
- 4.77 A working party has identified a number of recommendations including ensuring PEPs are in place, ensuring EYPP is used effectively, and encouraging attendance at early years settings to support assessment of their needs. It is recognised that there can be a balance between encouraging attendance of LAC at EY settings, and ensuring they are settling into their new placements.
- 4.78 In order to quickly embed good practice in the use of the new Early Years Pupil Premium, the Committee recommend that the Council should:

8. Ensure that use of Early Years Pupil Premium is reviewed and audited to ensure local good practice (in line with the approach taken with School Pupil Premium)

² A child’s family must be in receipt of a named benefit (including Income Support, and Income Based Job Seekers Allowance), or the child may be looked after.

Take Up

- 4.79 Ofsted identified that across the early years and into reception, families needed to apply more than once for Pupil Premium/Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility. This could potentially be streamlined to reduce bureaucratic burdens on families who may already have needed support to access provision and could be dissuaded by further eligibility checks.
- 4.80 An emerging issue is that, following the introduction of universal free school meals for Key Stage 1 children, the need to apply for Free School meals has become less apparent to families. As the numbers on FSM is the key method via which schools are allocated their Pupil Premium funding, it will be necessary to ensure eligible families still come forward to register.
- 4.81 Schools may undertake promotional work to increase take up, and Parental Support Advisors have been very effective. The Committee support methods of ensuring take up wherever possible, for example by advertising the benefits of the Pupil Premium to the child and their schools, and not only the benefit of Free School Meals. It is also important to reduce any unnecessary bureaucracy for families and so the Committee recommend that the Council:
- 9. Explore the feasibility of developing a system to secure Pupil Premium funding for the whole journey of the child through their education to reduce the number of eligibility checks required**

Conclusions

- 5.1 Members have been impressed by the range of work undertaken by the Council and partners with the aim of providing disadvantaged children with the best start in life, and support as they journey into school.
- 5.2 A number of interventions have been developed at the national level, and by effectively utilising these in conjunction with local initiatives, the effects of disadvantage can be minimised. The Committee has identified recommendations to help secure further improvements.

Appendix 1

Unknown Children – Destined for Disadvantage?

Ofsted National Review, July 2016

Recommendations

Schools, settings and childminders should:

1. ensure that key information, including early assessments, is shared promptly at points of transition so that the needs of the most disadvantaged children are known quickly
2. review their use of the early years pupil premium to ensure that support is focused on improving the areas of development that will help a child to catch up.

Local authorities should:

3. publish their strategy for meeting the needs of disadvantaged children and families so that local communities are clear about the support available and how its success will be measured
4. work with schools and early years settings to ensure that there are sufficient high-quality and sustainable places available to disadvantaged children and increase the proportion of eligible children who take up the two-year-old offer
5. ensure that early years pupil premium funding is devolved quickly to schools and settings with eligible children, ensuring that managers and staff are aware of who has the additional funding from the start
6. ensure that the health and development checks carried out at the age of two are completed as a crucial first assessment of children's needs so that they can be used as a benchmark for progress across the rest of a child's early years
7. improve information-sharing protocols so that professionals across children's services have ready access to a range of data, particularly about health outcomes, so that early assessment and identification of need lead to timely, effective support.

The Department for Education should:

8. review how local authorities are held accountable for their services to disadvantaged children and families, ensuring that 'school readiness' at the end of Reception is clearly defined and used as one measure of each local area's success
9. provide a common definition for 'disadvantage children', incorporating a range of economic, health and social indicators, to support a coherent approach to improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged children and families
10. require schools and other settings to publish information about the impact of the early years pupil premium, where received, on their website
11. align the different funding streams for disadvantaged children and families in the early years so that only one application by parents is needed for continuous funding until a child reaches the end of the Reception Year.

Ofsted should:

12. ensure that the impact of additional funding on children's health, learning and development is reported clearly and consistently, including the impact of funding for eligible Nursery and Reception children in schools.

Appendix 2

Tilery Primary School Visit Notes

Tilery is the first school in the Borough to provide for 2 year olds. The school has benefitted from capital funding to remodel its Early Years building, which is separate from the rest of the school. Sessions can be mixed, with 2 and 3 year olds in same group.

Tilery has close links with the Star Children's Centre, and this enables the school to makes links when children from families are accessing both.

Early Years Pupil Premium (PP) has enabled the school to sponsor two children into full time early years provision (these have additional needs identified).

Staff believe there is a strong community feel in the area, with parents wanting the best for their children, but needing support to help them achieve that. Almost all children entering services at Tilery are behind the level of development where they should be at for their age. At age 5, 40% had reached a Good Level of Development.

Tilery feels that it has a good relationship with the local community and this should ensure good take up of the childcare offer from local families. Staff have seen a noticeable difference between the 2 and 3 year olds, and as cohorts of children move through 2 year old provision into school, staff will be able to monitor the impact on outcomes.

The school regularly accepts asylum seeker and refugee children. Children may only be with the school for a relatively short period of time before being moved on. They often require intensive support, and a recent example was provided of Syrian children. Early years staff needed to gradually extend the length of sessions provided to these, and socialisation was particularly important. The school needed to provide language support.

Funding for the 2 year old offer is calculated and paid on a termly basis, whereas 3 year funding is set annually and is less than the 2 year funding. 2 and 3 year childcare rates were set locally. Pupil Premium rates are set nationally. It was stated that the school runs its Early Years services at a loss but choose to invest in them.

There is a garden area and Little Sprouts CIC provide services on site. The school staff have established a Food Group to see what projects can be undertaken to improve awareness of good food, including education of parents.

There is a school-run holiday club (with some PP funded places), which provides food, and food poverty during holiday periods is a recognised issue. The school also runs a breakfast club.

The school often works directly with parents through Early Help meetings, and Pupil Premium helps fund two Pupil and Family Support workers who work closely on Children in Need and Child Protection issues. There are at least one Early Help meeting per day.

An identified issue is that children lack resilience to overcome setbacks, and a large part of the school's efforts are based on social support and raising aspirations. This is throughout the school and has included taking years 5-6 to Oxford University and other trips. The Tilery Passport enables pupils to track their progress across a range of key skills eg. by end of key stage 2 pupils can demonstrate they are able to cook a meal.

The school has a programme of activities which parents are asked to contribute to at a cost of £5 per term which enables a mix of trips, activities and play activity.

Across the school there are a high proportion of children eligible for Pupil Premium. The school uses this to undertake activities including:

- Teaching Assistants (Tilery aims to have a high proportion, including in Early Years)
- mentors to tackle issues such as attachment
- visits (both nationally and locally to increase knowledge of local area)
- sporting activity and visits which is particularly important to local children
- breakfast and holiday clubs
- sponsored places
- cooking and food activities.

Some of this activity is also funded via contributions for example, but PP was seen as key, particularly to ensure a high level of staffing.

To enable further access to the 30 hour entitlement for three year olds, it would be likely that further investment on the site would be needed. However this would be beneficial if the school could work with parents to improve the number of people working in the local community.

Star Centre Visit Notes

Star Centre in Bath Lane is a children centre commissioned by the Council and provided by the Big Life company. There were 1100 under 5s in the Star Centre Catchment area.

The Centre focusses on school readiness, improving the 2 year offer uptake, parenting, and employability. Some outreach and parenting activities are provided in the home. The area served by the Star Centre faced a number of challenges. The Centres were a resource for local parents and were available on an open access basis, to help with issues such as low mood. Big Life was involved in a number of safeguarding cases and attended the relevant conferences.

The programme has a range of activities open to all – the What's On programme, and more targeted activities. The Centre generally encourages activities where the parent and child can be together.

Parenting activities are supported by a dedicated parenting post. Ante-natal nurturing takes place with referrals from midwives, social workers, and self-referrals. Often staff feel that referrals are too late but ante-natal care was seen as important as a bad ante-natal experience could affect parenting, and parents own childhood could affect how they parented.

Behaviour classes called '123 Magic' were provided and parents often attended as a couple.

Other activities include Home Safety Courses, Toilet Training, Weaning, and Early bird Groups which were for people very early in their pregnancy and gave general advice and key tests.

School readiness activity was focussed on understanding that children from an early age needed to experience and achieve, and that this needed to be followed up by praise and reinforcement of good behaviour. This included reinforcing benefits of ante-natal socialisation.

The Stay and Play activities were discussed as an example. This included messy play, and familiarisation with books which were not always present in the home. The Bookstart Trust provided free books as part of their scheme linked to Star Centre. Children took part in rhyming and singing exercises, and important routines such as sitting in a circle for reading time were introduced.

The 2 year Childcare provision was provided by nurseries at Big Life Centres at Frederick Natrass, Newtown, and Ragworth.

Big Life hosted the Fairer Start Community Champion Volunteer programme. Volunteers came from a variety of sources including refugees and trainee GPs.

A quarterly report on volunteering activity was available. Some of this activity was focussed on improving take up on the 2 Year childcare offer. It was agreed that it would be useful to hear from the Community Champion Volunteers at a future meeting.

Stay and Play sessions were held adjacent to Health Visitor sessions in order to encourage greater turnout at the latter. Staff at Big Life had identified that attendance at Health Visitor sessions was particularly low in the Town Centre area compared to the other Centres it operates at (Newtown and Frederick Natrass). There was a marked reluctance to attend from some parents, but the actual reasons were not verbalised. A session had been held at Tilery School but this had not had a major effect.

Portage sessions took place where children with additional needs had been identified before school. These were for any type of need for example global delay, cerebral palsy, but where it was not possible to see what the effect would be on the options for schooling. These sessions consisted of tasks broken down into a series of small steps, to try and get some level of achievement.

Appendix 3

Harewood Primary School Attainment Outcomes

Number on roll: 416							
	% Ever 6 FSM	% SEN support	% SEN statement/ EHCP	% EAL	% Ethnic minority pupils	% School stability	LAC
School data:	46.4%	20.9%	0.6%	22.1%	26.7%	96.6%	0.5%
National average (2015):	26%	13%	1.4%	19.5%	30.7%	85.9%	

2015-16	Attendance for academic year	% Persistent absence	Number of fixed term exclusions
School data:	96.6%	7%	0%
Local Authority average:	96.2%	8.1%	

2016 results

	National/ LA	All	Boys	Girls	Disadvantaged	Non disadvantaged	SEN	Non-SEN
Early Years Good Level of Development	65% (LA)	46%	24%	62%	37%	50%		
Phonics Year 1	83.2% (LA)	93%	93%	93%	92%	94%		
KS1 Reading Year 2	76% (LA)	78%	84%	73%	73%	84%	56%	86%
KS1 Writing Year 2	68.4% (LA)	83%	72%	91%	79%	88%	63%	90%
KS1 Maths Year 2	75.6% (LA)	78%	80%	76%	73%	84%	63%	83%
KS1 Combined Reading Writing and Maths	63.5% (LA)	69%	72%	67%	61%	80%	56%	74%
KS2 Reading Year 6	66% (National)	81%	87%	76%	81%	81%	68%	88%
KS2 Writing Year 6	74% (National)	83%	80%	86%	78%	89%	53%	98%
KS2 Spelling Punctuation and Grammar Year 6	72% (National)	85%	83%	86%	84%	85%	58%	98%
KS2 Maths Year 6	70% (National)	90%	93%	86%	88%	93%	74%	98%
KS2 Combined Reading Writing and Maths	53% (National)	71%	73%	69%	63%	81%	42%	85%
KS2 Progress reading	0 / -0.3	0.1	0.5	-0.3	1.1	-1	1.8	-0.7
KS2 Progress writing	0 / 0.4	0.4	0	0.7	0.4	0.3	-1.1	1.1