

People Scrutiny Committee – 9th July 2019

Public Questions

Question from Mr Webb to the Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care – Cllr Trevor Harp and Cabinet Member for Children & Learning – Cllr Anne Jones

Question 1

What initiatives and policy are being put in place that children aged from 5 to 18 have activities to keep them engaged and healthy?

Answer

Healthy Schools

Public Health has been actively working on supporting the health and wellbeing of children in educational settings since 1999 using the recognised Healthy Schools assessment framework. The Southend Healthy Schools programme objectives are to help children develop healthy behaviours, raise pupil attainment, reduce health inequalities and improve social inclusion. In 2017 the Healthy Schools Network introduced a new Enhanced Emotional Health and Wellbeing package in addition to the routine and enhanced programmes already on offer to schools.

Strong PSHE (Personal Social Health Education) is seen as the foundation of a healthy school. This gives children gives pupils the knowledge, skills, and attributes they need to keep themselves healthy and safe and to prepare them for life and work in modern Britain. PSHE is enhanced in schools by theatre in education opportunities through peer education.

The Health & Wellbeing package offers an opportunity for schools to access and experience a range of training and interventions which gives pupils and schools strategies to deal with emotions for example- relaxation strategies, positive thinking and mindfulness. There is also a range of offers on for training relating to emotional wellbeing, mental health first aid and topic based training for example bereavement, self-harm and eating disorders.

The Daily Mile is recommended to all Southend Schools via the Healthy Schools Programme. The Daily Mile is 15 minutes of physical activity during the school day where children jog or run at their own pace. As well as improving fitness it has been found to improve wellbeing and concentration. It can inspire a lifetime of fitness by instilling good habits from an early age.

Health4Life

Health4Life is a healthy weight programme for children and young people ages 5-16 living in Southend, with the aim to help children and families enjoy a healthy and happy life. It is partnered with Southend United Football Club who provide the physical activity offer in the programme, in addition to a range of partners including the Cook4Life chef and local dental nursing. The programme runs during school term time and was recently reviewed and redesigned in 2018 to meet local needs.

The free 6 week programme is offered to both parents and their children together, for two hours a week. The course provides an opportunity to learn together about: healthy eating, tasting a range of fruit and vegetables, creating healthy packed lunches, having a cooking demonstration, cooking on a budget, understanding food labels, creating balanced meals, identifying food swaps and healthy alternatives and games and exercise to keep families active by playing together. A weekly children's club is offered over Easter and summer holidays.

Health4Life Schools based programme was developed in 2017/18 to be delivered in partnership with schools through classroom delivery and afterschool clubs. This programme is a child focused lifestyle intervention provided to schools where there are high level of deprivation or areas identified by the National Childhood Measurement Programmes as having more overweight and obese children in reception/year 6. The programme is delivered to children as a mechanism of brief intervention as well as to recruit families to the 6 week course. The programmes content covers sleep, screen time, oral health, healthy diets and active lifestyles and compliments the family lifestyles programme.

99 by 19

In addition, as part of the five year roadmap for 2050, "*our children are school and life ready, and our workforce is skilled and job ready*", the Council is working with the Local Cultural Education Partnership to introduce a scheme called 99 by 19. This programme will encourage all young people to engage in and participate in a range of activities, sporting, healthy, cultural, and artistic over a period of time. This initiative will be co-designed with young people and for young people, and will be launched later in the year.

Question from Mr Webb to the Cabinet Member for Children & Learning – Cllr Anne Jones

Question 2

*It was reported in July 2018 that Chase High school is dedicated to expanding pupils vocabularies. A recent study found that in the first year of secondary school, more than 4 in 10 students do not know enough words to achieve make top grades. At Chase High School the school has being reading 20 minutes every day (Drop everything and read a book), Big book give away, struggling students had reading interventions, encouraging parents to read at home. **What does the portfolio think of the approaches of Chase High School in expanding pupils vocabularies and activities and what is the Council supporting schools with reading for children from 0 – 5, 5 – 11, 11 – 16 and adulthood?***

Answer

Thank you for your question Mr Webb, and I am happy to agree that reading is of critical importance in ensuring children, young people and indeed adults can unlock their full potential. As such, the Council is undertaking a significant amount of support for this vital life skill.

In specific response to your question regarding Chase High School, as a member of Brentwood Multi Academy Trust, the academy is responsible for its own school improvement and development activity. I am supportive of any activity that schools use to support Literacy and reading for pleasure that Chase High School is adopting. The core skills of reading and comprehension are the critical foundation for accessing the curriculum and achieving positive outcomes. Officers continue to work with Chase, and other secondary schools to promote reading.

More generally in the early years, through our partners we undertake a range of reading support initiatives. We are working with Early Years Alliance to deliver 'First and Foremost' a programme focused on the home learning environment and early language development. In addition, Bookstart provides free resources to all early years providers to promote parents/carers reading with their children. Importantly our partnership with A Better Start Southend includes 'Let's talk', a suite of interventions working directly with parents/carers and young children and 'FRED' Fathers Reading every day with their children.

Within the primary phase, there are two main initiatives that the council is currently undertake to support reading.

The first is the phonics project which has been commissioned through the Primary Teaching School Alliance. The main purpose of the project is to improve pupil's outcomes with regards to phonics and particularly reduce the gap between SEND and non-SEND pupil outcomes across Southend.

The second is the 'Time to Read' programme. Time to Read gives a free book to every Reception aged child in England. We ensure that a book is delivered to every reception child in all of our schools. The 'Time to Read' programme, endeavours to make sure that every Reception pupil in England has their own book to treasure and share with their family at home.

This commitment to literacy through reading extends to the work with adults through Southend Adult Community College. They offer a range of free English courses, from programmes for adults who cannot read or write all the way through to GCSE. All courses focus on reading, writing and speaking & listening skills. To encourage increased participation in reading they offer a Book Club and work in partnership with the libraries through the Read Ahead Scheme and supported library visits for our learners.