

---

Cllr Nigel Jupp  
**Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

12 November 2020

Dear Nigel

**Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee – Impact of Covid 19 on schools and educational outcomes for children and young people**

At the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee meeting on 5 November 2020 members considered the above item. The Committee was asked to consider the support being provided to schools, early years provision and special educational needs to keep children safe during the pandemic, the key lessons learned, areas of good practice, and any areas that were considered to require further attention to deal with the ongoing pandemic. The Committee were also asked to comment on the key challenges that had been identified for the forthcoming months, identify any further areas of focus and any areas for potential future scrutiny.

On behalf of the Committee I wish to thank you for the comprehensive report provided to the Committee and the breadth of work being carried out to continue to support our schools and children during the ongoing pandemic.

Following the debate and hearing from a range of witnesses, the Committee made a series of recommendations for your consideration and response:

1. Expressed its thanks to County Council officers, senior leadership teams, teachers, staff, governors, students and parents for all of their efforts to keep children learning during this unprecedented and very challenging time
2. Requested that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills writes to the Department of Education to highlight the following:
  - The need for better timed and coordinated communication and guidance for schools moving forward,  
The need for early clarity over all examination testing procedures moving forward.
  - The need for further funding to support schools on the additional expenses they continue to incur and the loss of income opportunities as a result of the ongoing pandemic
  - Welcomes that schools will remain open during the current lockdown and requests that further closures be considered only as a last resort, and if required be minimised both in number and length of time.

3. Understood the impact of the current pandemic on the emotional health and wellbeing of young people and asks the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to consider carrying out an online survey with parents and children on the impact of Covid-19 in order to gather qualitative and quantitative data that can be used to best direct support and resources, and to repeat at intervals as the pandemic continues.
4. Recognised the additional pressure on school staff, particularly senior leadership teams, and suggests that a similar survey as outlined in recommendation 3 is carried out with schools at key points during the pandemic to inform the County Council's ability to develop and respond to any potential changes to the support it provides to schools.
5. Requested that the service urgently reviews the support it provides to School Leaders during the pandemic and that this information is provided to the business planning group.
6. Highlighted the key challenges moving forward on school recruitment, increased attainment gap for all children, particularly the most disadvantaged, access to technology for remote learning for all children and career support for post 16 young people and will refer these items to the Business Planning Group to monitor as potential areas for future scrutiny.
7. Requested that a report on the financial stresses on schools as a result of the pandemic is presented to a future Business Planning Group for consideration.
8. Requested that the service considers the content of future communications to schools and governors to ensure they are supportive and relevant considering the ongoing pressures they face.
9. Agreed to collate any further feedback from schools following the Committee Meeting and pass on to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills for consideration when working with schools moving forward.
10. Asked that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills writes to the Secretary of State to highlight the need to resolve the issue of enabling those children who require aerosol generating procedures back into school to minimise their time away from learning.

The Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee is next meeting on Thursday 7 January and therefore I would be very grateful if you could provide any written response you wish to make to this letter by Friday 18 December 2020 to [Katherine.delamora@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Katherine.delamora@westsussex.gov.uk), so that it can be considered by the Committee at that meeting.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Stephen Hillier  
Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee

CC Paul Wagstaff, Director of Education and Skills  
Ellie Evans, Assistant Director Compliance and Pupil Entitlement