

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Director of Education, Inclusion & Early Years

Southend's 2050 Ambition states:

“People here feel valued, nurtured, and invested in. This means that they have a love of learning, a sense of curiosity and are ready for school, employment, and the bright and varied life opportunities ahead of them.”

The role of Director of Education, Inclusion & Early Years is critical to this ambition.

Overview of service area

Inclusion

Inclusion is a core principal and informs the direction of all our work. We work closely with Members, education providers, parents and carers, to ensure that inclusion is at the heart of our approach to education in the city.

The service ensures all our children, but especially those from vulnerable groups, whether they are children we care for, children and young people with special educational needs or children in alternative education provision receive the highest quality education to secure the best possible outcomes.

The Council's SEND services were under a written statement of action (WSOA) but following an Ofsted / CQC visit in 2021 3 out of 4 of the WSoA priorities were met and the remaining area is subject to an accelerated progress plan. So we have made good progress to meeting the required improvement. The High Needs Block of our Dedicated Schools Grant is not in deficit.

We have secured £1m of funding from Schools Forum to improve the graduated offer so that children and their families can access the right support at the right time via their schools. This will improve the specialist and targeted support in mainstream settings to enable more children and young people to remain in mainstream classes in mainstream settings.

Our Virtual School promotes the educational outcomes of children we care for and care experienced young people, so that they have the very best opportunity to reach their full potential.

The pandemic has shone a light in Southend on children missing education and those children whose parents have elected to educate at home and we are working hard to ensure that those families receive the support they need to access good quality education.

Early Years

Our Early Years service leads the work for the Council on delivering its statutory duty in providing sufficient childcare for eligible 2, 3 and 4 years olds and runs our 9 Family Centres in the City. We support registered childcare including pre-schools, day nurseries, childminders, out of school providers, school nurseries as well as support for Children Centres.

Schools Profile

Our children and young people receive education at 56 state funded schools across the city:

- 9 maintained schools (all Primary)
- 12 Secondary schools (all Academy)
- 5 special schools (all Academy)
- 2 Alternative Provision (all Academy)
- 39 academies

95% of the City's schools are good or outstanding. 2 of our secondary schools are currently judged to be inadequate.

Of the c30,000 children and young people in state funded provision, 1544 are on an EHCP Plan. A quarter of Southend's children and young people have received free school meals in the last six years. For over 13% of our children and young people, English is not their first language.

Southend has an element of selective provision; we have 4 state funded grammar secondary schools and several secondary schools that offer a grammar stream.

All the services within the portfolio are important political priorities and key to the Southend 2050 Ambition.

Further information

Early Years | www.livewellsouthend.com

Virtual School | www.southendvirtualschool.co.uk

Southend Learning Network | www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk

SEND | www.sendiassouthend.co.uk