



Notice of a Meeting

Education Scrutiny Committee Wednesday, 21 April 2021 at 1.00 pm Virtual

Please note that due to guidelines imposed on social distancing by the Government the meeting will be held virtually. If you wish to view proceedings please click on this [Live Stream Link](#) However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

Membership

Chairman Councillor Michael Waine
Deputy Chairman - Councillor John Howson

Councillors: Ted Fenton Jeannette Matelot Emma Turnbull
Mrs Anda Fitzgerald- Gill Sanders
O'Connor

By Invitation: Donald McEwan Carole Thomson

Notes: *Date of next meeting: 23 June 2021*

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

- a focus on the following key areas:
 - work in relation to the education strategy, and including review of an annual report on progress;
 - constructive challenge on performance issues highlighting issues where the Committee can support the improvement dialogue;
 - reviewing the Council's education functions including early years, Special Education Needs and school place planning;
 - reviewing the progress of, and any issues emanating from, the School Organisation Stakeholder Group with regard to admissions patterns and arrangements;
 - reviewing issues raised by the Schools Forum.
- assists the Council in its role of championing good educational outcomes for Oxfordshire's children and young people;
- provides a challenge to schools and academies and to hold them to account for their academic performance;
- promotes jointed up working across organisations in the education sector within Oxfordshire.

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am four working days before the date of the meeting.**

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Chairman	-	<i>Councillor Michael Waine Email: michael.waine@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i>
Senior Policy Officer	-	<i>Robin Rogers, Tel: 07789 923206 Email: robin.rogers@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i>
Committee Officer	-	<i>Deborah Miller, Tel: 07920 084239 deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i>

Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive

April 2021

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 678,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

2. Declarations of Interest - see guidance note of the back page

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2021 (**ESC4**) and to receive information arising from them.

4. Petitions and Public Address

This Education Scrutiny meeting will be held virtually in order to conform with current guidelines regarding social distancing. Normally requests to speak at this public meeting are required by 9 am on the day preceding the published date of the meeting. However, during the current situation and to facilitate these new arrangements we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e. 9 am on 15 April 2021. Requests to speak should be sent to deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk together with a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9 am 2 working days before the meeting.

Where a meeting is held virtually and the addressee is unable to participate virtually their written submission will be accepted.

5. Update on Return to School

1.10

The Committee have requested to receive an update on the impact of COVID-19 on Education and Oxfordshire Schools. Accordingly, Corporate Director of Children's Services, Kevin Gordon and the Deputy Director for Education, Hayley Good will attend the meeting to give a verbal update on the current situation following the return to school in March.

6. Reflection on Progress over the Year/Administration

1.40

To provide an opportunity for the Committee to reflect upon the achievements and successes of the Committee, together with lessons to be learnt for the future.

7. Suggestions and Ideas for the New Scrutiny Committee

2.00

An opportunity to discuss how Education Scrutiny might look in the future.

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Glenn Watson on **07776 997946** or glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 3 February 2021 commencing at 1.00 pm and finishing at 3.05 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Michael Waine – in the Chair

Councillor John Howson (Deputy Chairman)

Councillor Ted Fenton

Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor

Councillor Jeannette Matelot

Councillor Gill Sanders

Councillor Susanna Pressel (in place of Councillor Emma Turnbull)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Services

By Invitation: Mr Donald McEwan, Council of Oxfordshire Teachers' Organisation (COTO) and Mrs Carole Thomson, Oxfordshire Governors' Association.

Officers: Corporate Director for Children's Services, Kevin Gordon, Deputy Director Education, Hayley Good, Deborah Bell, Kate Bradley, Kim James; Robin Rogers and Deborah Miller (Law & Governance).

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

35/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Emma Turnbull, with Councillor Susanna Pressel in substitution.

36/21 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on were approved and signed as an accurate record of the meeting with a number of typo's to be amended and signed off by the Chairman.

37/21 COVID 19 UPDATE

(Agenda No. 5)

The Committee had requested to receive an update on the impact of COVID-19 on Education and Oxfordshire Schools. Accordingly, Corporate Director of Children's Services, Kevin Gordon and the Deputy Director for Education, Hayley Good attended the meeting to give a presentation on the current situation. As part of the update, the Head of Learner Engagement, Deborah Bell would provide the Committee with an update on the Reintegration Timetable. A copy of the presentation was attached to the signed copy of the minutes.

During the presentation, the Director for Children, Kevin Gordon Services made the following points:

- Schools remained open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.
- Pressures on places for Critical Worker children remained; with 10 schools reporting that they had no places left for Critical Worker Children. Officers had provided support and guidance to heads as well as working with public sector employers to ensure that there were enough spaces for Critical Workers such as hospital workers.
- From 8 March, Government hoped to begin 'wider' onsite school provision with all pupils returning to school.
- There were significant challenges for schools at the moment including dual classes (virtual and onsite) and lots of staff and pupils self-isolating, with around 3-400 pupils and 160 staff self-isolating at present.
- Asymptomatic testing was being carried out in schools:
 - staff in secondary schools were being tested on site twice a week.
 - Primary staff were 'Home testing' + PCR if required.
 - Students in secondary schools who were on site were able to be tested, following consent.
 - Early Years providers (mass testing as of 8th February at 3 OCC sites in the first instance).
- Half-term: Free School Meals funding would be supported centrally by the Council – Covid Winter Grant. Government funded in 'term time'.
- Increasing internal capacity to coordinate and drive initiatives around reducing digital exclusion across the Partnership. Officers were doing a lot of work with the voluntary sector, though it was not just about getting laptops. Laptops had to be cleaned of data, configured, made secure, broadband or access provided, together with training and support to parents.
- There was a very high level of engagement from Headteachers, CEOs, Governors/ Trustees - 100% dedicated to 'get it right' for the pupils of Oxfordshire. Weekly meetings were carried out with individual school groups which were very well attended and received very positive feedback.

Elective Home Education and Reintegration Timetable

Mr Gordon reported that there had been a rise in children Electively Home Educated (EHE), though it needed to be taken in the context of the pandemic (taking into account parental fear and anxieties). It was not possible due to the pandemic to do a comparison with previous years, but numbers had gone up, though were below the

National average and the average for the South East. Oxfordshire figures were below comparator but still high with 881 from 661 pre-pandemic. A lot of early intervention work had been carried out by officers to visit families with a mediated offer to try and broker their return to school. Figures would have been well in excess of 1000 without the mediation offer.

Reintegration timetables were being used differently than on previous years. The use of Reintegration Timetables was viewed as a positive strategy to encourage the attendance of reluctant children from anxious families, to offer a basis to build upon in lieu of families deciding to electively home educate.

- RTTs reported as of January 2020 – 191
- RTTs reported as of January 2021 - 288

The Chairman welcomed the presentation. He paid tribute to the Director and his Team for all the hard work that had been undertaken. He commented that he had received wonderful reports from every quarter regarding what officers had been doing and that the fact that nearly all secondary heads turned up to the weekly meetings to hear the guidance and support of Education, (although there was no obligation in many cases due to them being academies) was a testament of the excellent work being carried out. The Chairman requested that the Committee's thanks was passed on to all staff.

Councillor Fenton queried why there was a difference between testing in primary and secondary schools, and whether both systems were satisfactory?

In response, Kevin Gordon explained that there were National schemes and the clinical governance of the schemes was carried out nationally. The schemes were adapting and changing. In terms of effectiveness, he believed asystematic testing was another layer of helpful intervention. He thought that the systems were different because it was not realistic to expect primary school children to carry out the tests on themselves.

Councillor Pressel reiterated the Chairman's comments thanking the staff. She asked that all schools be thanked by the Committee as well. She queried whether the laptops given out were on loan or would stay within the families and also in relation to free school meals, whether it could be made clear to families that if they were struggling in half term for food, even if they were not technically free school meals families, help was available. She also asked if the Director could comment on the catch-up fund and the National Tutoring Programme.

In response Kevin Gordon reported that the laptops were being given from central government to schools who were doing individual loan agreements with pupils and families. There was no compulsion from central government to ask for those laptops back, so they would become part of the school equipment store. Before Christmas they encouraged heads to engage with their families to ensure Free Schools Meals (FSM) were taken up. There was a recognition that families just above the FSM threshold were struggling, so they had given individual hardships funds for headteachers, with a fair latitude of discretion to use on families who needed it. The Government tutoring fund and the discussions on what was going to happen to that post pandemic were wider than just funding, the funding was reasonable but when

broken down to Oxfordshire level would only provide 5 or 6 tutoring sessions per pupil which would not close the gap. As a system, both locally and Nationally there was a need to think about what was needed to be done post pandemic. They were starting to have conversations with other partners on how to approach it.

Councillor Matelot added thanks to the technicians in schools who were working extremely hard on preparing the laptops. In relation to the 10 schools who had not got places for Critical Worker Children, she queried whether those schools would be able to take all the pupils when government allowed pupils to return to school

In response, Kevin Gordon endorsed the comments regarding school technicians, acknowledging the vast amount of work that had been undertaken. There would be a National risk assessment for the reopening of schools and changes in guidance.

Donald McEwan reiterated the thanks to officers for their work with schools. He asked if the public health message could be reiterated for headteachers to use in discouraging non-critical worker children in schools. He expressed the importance of rebranding home learning to emphasise that it was not all on-line. In response Kevin Gordon reported that they were undertaking a survey to get more insight into remote learning.

Carole Thomson, in relation to future proofing the digital access, queried whether the thinking was to be prepared for any future pandemic type of scenarios or whether he saw it as a way of augmenting the work of the hospital school for any sick child or family crisis. In response Kevin Gordon reported that any lessons to take away should be and could be used in hospital schools etc, but there would need be a balance. It was for the Education Sector to work out in a Strategic Way.

Councillor Howson, reiterated thanks to schools who had been running two systems with one set of funding. He queried about the use and cost of supply teachers to cover staff who were self-isolating and how it was going to affect school budgets and whether the Director had any view on how schools were going to cope with it. In response, Kevin Gordon undertook to take the question away and have a look at the issue of supply teachers to look to see whether there had been any particular rise or pressures. In relation to school budgets, it was a national issue, he believed there would be some more central government funding, but there would be significant demands in other sectors as well.

38/21 UPDATE ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN OXFORDSHIRE (Agenda No. 6)

The Committee had before it a report (ESC6) which outlined the developments since November 2020 in transforming SEND services in Oxfordshire.

The Deputy Director of Education, Hayley Good, introduced the report and summarised the progress set out in the report. She explained that as a Council and as a local partnership they were committed to achieving the very best outcomes they could for children and young people with SEND within the total resources we have available. There was a growing demand on essential services, an increasing demand and complexity of needs amongst our residents. The financial challenge had provided

an opportunity to fundamentally rethink and transform the way that local services were delivered. The focus was on equitable provision with a drive to meet needs earlier to avoid expensive last resort options.

She reported that they were in the process of recruiting for a permanent Head of SEND in order to lead and deliver on strategic priorities for the Service. Whilst they invested time in the process, key senior leaders from within the SEND team were responsible for the APP, SEND Transformation, Strategy and Partnerships. Other senior leaders within the Education SLT were supporting the interim line management of the various SEND services.

Interim contract management support was now in place, reviewing contractual arrangements for out of county placements. An interim procurement officer had been appointed and was monitoring and implementing improvements to the procurement of placements in independent non maintained special schools. A more permanent commissioning structure for Education would be implemented in 2022 through the development of the Health, Education and Social Care arm of the new OCC commissioning hub. Combined, this additional capacity would have a very positive impact on the rate of progress against actions, specifically on securing best value out of county placements.

An interim casework team was being recruited to work alongside the existing team in order to ensure statutory responsibilities were met in regard to timeliness. The expectation was that the team would be live in February 2021 and would take a lead on annual reviews, helping to address the backlog in this area.

The Chairman, Councillor Michael Waine welcomed the update. Part of the problem was that when schools reached a certain stage with children, schools would feel that it was the County Council's responsibility and the County Council had little fallback on what the school had not put in place beforehand. He felt that the word 'delayed' could be added to paragraph 15 of the report to reflect this.

The Director for Children's Services, Kevin Gordon stressed that Councillor Waine had made an important point. There had to be a change in the roles of how all the different stakeholders and actors play within this system. The current system for SEND was dysfunctional to distribute resource and pitched stakeholders up against one another. The County Council did not hold the budget for SEND in Oxfordshire.

Kate Bradley, SEND Strategic Development Improvement Officer reported that part of her role was relationship building, talking to parents and SENCO's. They were holding their first SENCO briefing shortly and had received over 200 replies. There were lots of comments that had come in, quite a lot negative, but she was hoping in time that they would turn into suggestions and that it would become a sharing forum. They were looking at quality so that they could get high quality teaching for all young children in Oxfordshire by pulling funding and support forward to understand early identifiers. They were also looking at locality models so that schools between them could decide equability where the funds go and support earlier.

During the debate the Committee made the following points:

The Committee welcomed bringing children back in County and the preventative work being carried out to stop children having to go out of the family setting.

Carole Thomson welcomed her membership on the Transformation Board which ensured the whole area of Governors was taken on board. She expressed concern that the National High Needs Review had still not been published and that the work currently being undertaken may need to be changed as a result of the outcome of the review. She urged officers to influence the DoE to publish the Review as the escalating EHCPs were taking away support lower down.

The Committee noted that the January Data showed that 66% of EHCPs had been completed within the 20-week deadline which was below national average.

The Committee queried whether any progress had been made with Health colleagues for early flagging through paediatrics when entering the school system. Kate Bradley confirmed that the early year SEN team were working very closely with Health colleagues and that there were 380 Health Care Need Assessments being undertaken at the moment.

RESOLVED: to note developments to date since November 2020, in order to transform the provision of education, health and care services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

39/21 CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES CAPITAL PROGRAMME (Agenda No. 7)

The Committee had requested to receive an update on the delivery of the Children Education & Families Capital Programme including the additional school places successfully delivered in 2020 and the additional school places the council plans to deliver in 2021 and 2022.

Accordingly, the Head of Access to Learning, Allyson Milward attended the Meeting to update Members on the current position. She reported that as well as directly delivering capital projects the Council also worked closely with academy trusts who wished to self-deliver their expansion project. This is managed via a formal funding agreement between the academy Trust and the Council.

If a new school was required, the Council sought to secure land and funding from housing developers. As part of the Option Appraisal process the Council explored opportunities for relocation and expansion of existing schools on to new sites alongside the need for new academies to be created.

The Council often delivered new schools, directly managing the design and procurement process. In some cases, developers and academy sponsors had opted to self-deliver new schools, where this was the case the Council worked closely with the third party to support the design process and coordination of the delivery programme.

In recent years the Council has also been successful in securing the provision additional pupil places by the creation of new schools through the DfE 'wave' Free

School programme. This involved working closely with academy sponsors to make a case for a new Free School and supporting a successful bid application. Successful projects were usually directly delivered by the Department for Education (DfE), for example the new Bloxham Grove SEND Free School currently in development

Details of the capital investment programme to provide additional pupil places in 2020, and the planned investment for additional pupil places in 2021 and 2022 was summarised below; a detailed breakdown of individual projects is provided at Annex A to the report.

2020 (Complete)

- 9 schools expanded
- 3 new primary schools
- 1 new secondary school

2021 (Planned)

- 11 schools expanded
- 1 new primary school

2022 (Planned)

- 6 schools expanded
- 2 new primary schools (includes relocation/expansion of an existing school)
- 1 new SEND school (externally funded 'wave' Free School)

The delivery of the Council's capital programme, including CEF basic need, was managed in accordance with the council's capital governance framework and is subject to regular review and monitoring at a corporate level.

All the critical mainstream pupil places required for September 2020 had been provided. This had been achieved either through the completion of capital works in time for September occupation or, where completion was not possible, using contingency arrangements agreed with individual schools.

Projects providing additional pupil places for use in 2021 and 2022 were being progressed and in some cases construction work was already underway. All projects were closely monitored to ensure that appropriate contingency plans were in place in the event of additional accommodation not being completed in time. This was particularly important as the council continued to deliver its capital programme during the Covid19 pandemic.

The delivery timescale of new schools being delivered by third parties (e.g. Graven Hill Primary School and Bloxham Grove SEND Free School) were still subject to confirmation.

Projects required beyond 2022 were in various stages of development, those linked to the delivery of new housing are subject to monitoring and review in light of current uncertainty with developers housing delivery programme.

Councillor Howson queried why the Swan School was not on the list and whether it was due to the different way in which it was being funded directly from the DFE and whether there was any early indication of pupil number changes as a result of Brexit?

Mrs Milward reported that the Swan School opened in 2019, which was why it did not appear on the list for 2020. In relation to the pupil number changes, she reported that they had not looked at that issue yet. They were currently looking at the applications they had received for secondary school places for September and a certain amount of analysis had been undertaken. Applications were down on what they were expecting in terms of housing growth and they were questioning whether this was due to slowed housing growth.

Councillor Sanders in relation to paragraph 14 of the report, queried what 'subject to confirmation' meant against the Graven Hill Primary School and Bloxham Grove SEND Free School. In response Mrs Milward reported that the Bloxham Grove was being delivered by the DfE as it was a free school, so the projected completion date was September 2022. She believed they were on track for that date but were due to meet with the project teams to ensure that any issues could be addressed.

Carole Thomson asked whether the schools maintenance list could go on school news and queried how confident officers were that the list was robust, given the recent lack of surveys of schools. Mrs Milward agreed that the list could go on school news but thought there could be a better mechanism for getting the information out to schools and was working with property colleagues on that issue. There was a discussion currently being undertaken about how condition surveys for the entire council's property portfolio could be undertaken, ready to inform the next capital programme in 2023.

Councillor Matelot queried whether Icknield College planning another form entry would clash with the Chargrove Airfield School. In response, Mrs Milward explained that the spaces were needed now, so catchment areas would be altered as and when the new school was built.

Councillor Ted Fenton queried whether with all the expansions there were currently being undertaken, any small schools were in danger of closing. Mrs Milward responded that officers were in discussion with any schools where there was a danger of them becoming unsustainable to help them remain sustainable. She confirmed that there was no immediate danger of school closures at the current time.

The Committee thanked Mrs Milward for her report.

40/21 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (Agenda No. 8)

The Committee have requested to receive an update on Educational Attainment in Secondary Schools. Accordingly, the Deputy Director for Education, Hayley Good and the Head of Learning and School Improvement, Kim James attended the meeting to give a verbal update on the current data available.

Hayley Good reported that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the summer exam series was cancelled in 2020. Students scheduled to sit GCSE and A/AS level exams in 2020 were awarded either a centre assessment grade (based on what the school or college believed the student would most likely have achieved had exams gone ahead) or their calculated grade using a model developed by Ofqual - whichever was the higher of the two.

As a result, the 2019/20 data should not be directly compared to attainment data from previous years for the purposes of measuring changes in student performance.

Nationally the Attainment 8 score increased from 46.8 to 50.2 as a result of an increased number of pupils with higher grades following this year's GCSE awarding process. In Oxfordshire the Attainment 8 score increased from 47.4 in 2019 to 50.2 in 2020, in line with the national average. Oxfordshire ranks 60th out of 151 local authorities for this measure.

52.0% of pupils in Oxfordshire achieved a grade 5 or above in both English and maths in 2020, an increase from 46% in 2019. Oxfordshire remained above the national average of 49.9% for this measure, ranking 47th out of 151 local authorities.

The DfE state that the national increase for this measure was a consequence of the way GCSE grades were awarded in 2020 and the higher proportion of entries graded at 5 and above.

63.9% of pupils in Oxfordshire achieved grade 5 and above in English in 2020. This is an increase from 60% in 2019. This was in line with the national average of 63.6% and Oxfordshire ranked 63rd out of 151 local authorities. 79.7% of Oxfordshire pupils achieve grade 4 and above in English, compared with 80.7% nationally.

58.4% of pupils in Oxfordshire achieved grades 5 and above in maths in 2020. This was an increase from 52% in 2019. Nationally 55.9% of pupils achieved grade 5 and above in maths. Oxfordshire was ranked 43rd out of 151 local authorities for this measure (2nd quartile). 77.1% of Oxfordshire pupils achieved grade 4 and above in maths, compared with 75.3% nationally.

Pupils with No SEN, an EHCP or a first language of English were the characteristic groups where the average Attainment 8 score in Oxfordshire was above the corresponding national average. Pupils with an EHCP in Oxfordshire had a higher Attainment 8 score (18.0) than that nationally (15.2). For this indicator, Oxfordshire ranked 40th out of 150 local authorities.

Attainment 8 scores for pupils with either SEN support; free school meals disadvantaged or a first language other than English were less positive and below national averages.

Oxfordshire ranked in the top quartile of local authorities for attainment at grade 5 and above in English and maths for pupils with No SEN (59.8%) and pupils with an EHCP (9.5%). The proportion of pupils achieving grades 5 and above in both English and maths was lower than the national average for pupils with SEN support (16.4%);

free school meals (24.0%); disadvantaged pupils (25.6%) and those with a first language other than English (42.3%).

Oxfordshire's lowest performing group by ethnicity were white pupils, who performed well below the national average. Within Oxfordshire, only Chinese pupils had a higher attainment 8 score than those nationally. This was a very small cohort of 16 pupils.

A level APS per entry increased substantially in 2019/20. The DfE indicated this was as a result of the process for awarding qualifications in 2020 rather than reflecting a change in underlying performance. The increase in Oxfordshire (+3.94pts) was less than that nationally (+5.74pts). Oxfordshire ranked 81st out of 150 local authorities for this measure.

87.5% of students in Oxfordshire achieved at least 2 A levels, higher than the national average of 86.3%. Oxfordshire ranked 53rd out of 150 local authorities.

88.4% of girls achieved at least 2 A levels in Oxfordshire (86.9% nationally) compared with 86.5% of boys (85.5% nationally).

27.5% of pupils in Oxfordshire achieved A-levels at grades AAB and better, compared with 33.5% nationally. In Oxfordshire a higher proportion of boys (28.2%) achieved higher grades than girls (26.9%). The reverse is true nationally.

18.1% of Oxfordshire pupils achieved at least 3 A*A grades at A-level. This was an increase from 10.0% in 2019. Nationally the proportion of pupils achieving those top grades increased by 10.2%pts to 22.5%. The gender distribution of those higher grades was different to that nationally. In Oxfordshire more boys achieved 3 A*A grades than girls.

Councillor Pressel queried whether officers believed they had achieved what was hoped in terms of closing the gap and whether there was any comparison of the proportion of students undertaking A Levels with elsewhere in the Country. In response Mrs Good reported that she did not believe that they were closing the gap looking at the data they had for disadvantaged pupils on free school meals and that that was going to get worse post Covid. Nationally, the gap was not being closed and had been a long-standing issue. They needed to look creatively going forward with the Education Strategy to change the situation.

The Committee thanked Mrs Good for her presentation and suggested that the new Scrutiny Committee after might wish to look at the attainment for white boys.

41/21 ZERO CARBON AGENDA FOR SCHOOLS BUILDINGS

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee had requested to receive an update on what was happening in relation to school buildings in light of the Council's agreed commitment to Climate Change, including the capital programme for new schools/retro fitting of existing schools and to receive an update on whether school transport vehicles are being looked at in terms of pollution. Accordingly, the Head of Access to Learning, Allyson Milward was invited to attend the meeting to give a verbal update on the current data available.

Before the Committee was also a briefing note from the Corporate Director Communities. It explained that when the council renewed its terms and conditions in 2019 for awarded contracts, it set a minimum standard of Euro 3 for its school buses and coaches, one of the first authorities to do this. In doing this, it was recognised that it wasn't setting the bar particularly high but given where the market was, it was considered a good start to its longer-term ambitions of awarding carbon neutral contracts in 2031.

Working closely with the market and the council's own climate change team, environmental standards would be raised every four years as the Dynamic Purchasing System (through which contracts are awarded) is renewed. This would be in 2023, 2027 and then with the carbon neutral target in 2031.

In 2018, surveys were carried out to assess the current carbon output from supported transport activities. This showed that each day some 50,000 miles were travelled performing this function accounting for around 3,800 tonne CO₂e per year.

From September 2021 there was an ambition that tracking devices would be installed in all vehicles allowing detailed monitoring of emissions allowing a targeted action plan to be developed in 2022 on how it might meet its 2031 ambitions and the standards it would need to set when the dynamic Purchasing System was renewed in 2023.

Allyson Millward reported that the Council were looking at the Carbon Neutral response in relation to building works in their existing schools and new schools. Carbon neutral did mean more expensive generally, but funding had been added to the Capital Programme, which would be used to potentially top up and enhance some of the new build schemes that were subject to development agreements which had already been signed. They could also use the fund to enhance expansion schemes and they were in the process of formulating a new policy for future negotiations on new schools which would be making its way through the governance structure in due course.

Councillor Ted Fenton queried why school buses and coaches were not electric vehicles given the fact that school buses were only used briefly for a period in the morning and at the end of the day and could be charged up overnight and during the day.

Councillor Howson queried about cooking by gas and whether there was any knowledge about how many Oxfordshire schools still cooked by gas and if there were any plans for replacement with electricity?

In response, Councillor Milward reported that those kinds of issues were being looked at by a designated climate change team within the Council, but that she could find out and come back to Councillor Howson.

42/21 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee have requested to receive an update on Elective Home Education and the Oxfordshire situation. Accordingly, the Head of Learner Engagement, Deborah Bell attended the meeting to give a verbal update on the current situation.

The Chairman reported that he had asked for this item to be put on the Agenda as the Performance Scrutiny Committee had requested that the Committee look at the recent Serious Case Review to see if there were any issues for the Committee to take forward.

Deborah Bell reported that the serious case Review was a matter of public record and could be found on the OSCB website. She stressed that the events surrounding the circumstances were aged from an Education perspective and that there was no one in the Local Authority now who was around at the time and they were operating from a very different place now regarding services to electively educating children and families. Although the legislation hadn't changed, their approach very much had. A lot of work had gone into changing their approach, and she believed that the action plan which would come out of the serious case review, would reflect many of those significant changes, that had already been put in place. The learning and the consequential action plan would also be a matter for public record.

The Chairman stated that from the figures they had been given, they were aware that numbers of parents who were knowingly home educating their child had gone up, it would be a matter of record once they were through the worse of the pandemic how many of those trickled back into school and what the new number was. From conversations held at the Performance Scrutiny Committee it was felt that there was work to be done with colleagues in other sectors like Health, to underline their understanding of what rights the Local Authority had in terms of entry into properties.

The Secretary of State had been written to several times now, asking for a full review of Elective Home Education and the rights of local authorities, so that the rights of local authorities could match in some way to the responsibilities.

Deborah Bell reported that two letters had been sent to the Secretary of State, with a third pending regarding the existing legislation and in terms of learning from Child K, the arrangements for health colleagues to record a child's educational status had been expanded to incorporate elective home education, which health colleagues were unsighted to at the time. There was now a system in place whereby all electively home educated families were written to annually, for the explicit purpose of highlighting health services that were available for them to access, including the school nursing service, who were responsible for the rollout of inoculations to all pupils in Oxfordshire. They wanted to incorporate all electively home educated children in that cohort.

When a child became electively home educated in Oxfordshire, they now had an information pack that was sent out, highlighting health services that they were entitled to access. That was not in place at the time of the events surrounding Child K.

Councillor Pressel queried whether the authority ever paid for exam entrance for children who were being electively home educated. Deborah Bell reported that they did not and that there was no obligation or budget to do so, and it was something that was articulated very clearly to parents when they make the decision to Electively home educate.

Councillor Howson referred to the fact that the serious case review had made mention of the role of general practitioners in the review and queried whether the issue should be referred to the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee to have a look at. Deborah Bell commented that the action plan coming out of the review would inform a wider remit than just Education, so maybe to wait until the action plan came out to make that decision.

The Director for Children’s Services, Kevin Gordon stressed that it was being looked at by the Children’s Safeguarding Board.

The Chairman suggested that it be added to the new committee’s work programme for June.

43/21 FORWARD PLAN AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

(Agenda No. 11)

The Committee considered the forward plan and **AGREED** the business for April 2021 as set out in the report, subject to the additional of an update on Elective Home Education being moved to the next meeting and the addition of and update on SEND being added and that the Chairman and Vice Chairman, together with officers would manage the business on the current work programme for the efficient running of the Committee.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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