

**Notice of a Meeting**

Education Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday, 14 March 2018 at 1.30 pm
Meeting Rooms 1&2, County Hall

Membership

Chairman Councillor Michael Waine
 Deputy Chairman - Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor

Councillors: Sobia Afridi John Howson Gill Sanders
 Dr Suzanne Bartington Jeannette Matelot Alan Thompson

Co-optees: Richard Brown

By Invitation: Ian Jones Carole Thomson

Notes: **Date of next meeting: 27 June 2018**

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 on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

For more information about this Committee please contact:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Chairman | - | <i>Councillor Michael Waine</i> <i>Email: michael.waine@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i> |
| Senior Policy Officer | - | <i>Katie Read, Tel: 07584 909530</i> <i>Email: kate.read@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i> |
| <i>Policy & Partnership Officer</i> | - | <i>Lauren Rushen, Tel: 07990 367851</i> <i>Email: lauren.rushen@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i> |
| Committee Officer | - | <i>Deborah Miller, Tel: 07920 084239</i> <i>deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i> |

Peter G. Clark
 Chief Executive

March 2018

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

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

1. **Introduction and Welcome**
2. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
3. **Declarations of Interest - see guidance note of the back page**
4. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2017 (**ESC4**) and to receive information arising from them.

5. **Petitions and Public Address**
6. **Regional Schools Commissioner**

13:10

The Deputy Regional Schools Commissioner, Dame Kate Dethridge will attend the Committee for a question and answer session regarding the work of the Regional School Commissioner and school performance across Oxfordshire.

7. **Anti-Bullying Charter for Voluntary Adoption by Schools (Pages 13 - 22)**

13.55

In response to a motion from Council about reviewing the prevalence of prejudice-related bullying in schools and online, the Committee previously received a short report outlining policy and guidance on prejudice-related bullying and cyber bullying and how the Council is working to tackle this issue. Please see this report for further detail about the work being done as part of Oxfordshire's Anti-Bullying Strategy

At the meeting on 13th December the Committee recommended that an Anti-Bullying Charter be developed for voluntary adoption by schools. This report outlines the progress that has been made towards achieving this.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

8. **School Absence and Attendance (Pages 23 - 32)**

14:15

The Committee has previously agreed to undertake a review of educational attendance in Oxfordshire and this report outlines the scope of the review, following the

presentation by Officers at the last meeting in December. The report also asks that the Committee agrees to co-opt another non-Cabinet member to the sub-group as there is a vacancy on the sub-group that cannot be filled from existing Committee Members.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) agree the scope of the deep dive;***
- (b) Co-opt an additional Councillor to the sub-group.***

9. Forward Plan and Committee Business (Pages 33 - 36)

14:25

An opportunity to discuss and prioritise future topics for the Committee, potential approaches to its work and to discuss the schedule for future meetings.

Close of meeting

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.

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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 13 December 2017 commencing at 1.00 pm and finishing at 3.25 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Michael Waine – in the Chair

Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor (Deputy Chairman)

Councillor Sobia Afridi

Councillor Dr Suzanne Bartington

Councillor John Howson

Councillor Gill Sanders

Councillor Alan Thompson

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles

By Invitation: Mrs Carole Thomson
Mr Ian Jones

Officers:

Whole of meeting Director for Children's Services and Roy Leach; Deborah Miller and Katie Read (Resources).

Part of meeting Jo Brown, Rachael Etheridge, Joanna Goodey and Janet Johnson.

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

72/17 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

(Agenda No. 1)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting and the new Deputy Director Laura Patel.

73/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jeannette Matelot and Mr Richard Brown.

74/17 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 4)

The minutes of the Meeting held on 13 December 2017 were approved and signed subject to, page 3, change 'handwriting' for 'writing' and in the resolution, change the text 'Exclusions' to 'Attainment'.

75/17 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 5)

Councillor Emily Smith addressed the Committee in relation to Agenda Item 7 (Elective Home Education). She referred to her motion passed at Council which had asked for more local authority powers to identify and check on children classified as Home Educated. As a result of the motion being passed, she had received media coverage and had a lot of feedback from home educators and schools staff about the current situation and wanted pass some of these on to this committee in the hope that it would inform your discussion under agenda item 7 on Election Home Education, and possibly 8 on SEND.

1. Gaps in our data

- Children leaving school and becoming EHE – many we do not know why. Why don't we have this information. Did schools have it but not sharing it? Do we rely on parents for this info? What other ways can we find out?
- The way EHE children all fall under one category was unhelpful. Was it possible to break down the data so that we could target support to distinct groups? If a child was being educated successfully at home, was registered, getting a decent level of support and education could we put them in one group, then maybe a group for those with SEND waiting for a special school place or just under EHCP threshold, then those with history of exclusion or persistent absence, etc.
- Post 16 we record children as Participation in Learning, not participating in Learning, and unknown. Perhaps we need an Unknown category for pre-16s so we can target resource to this group?

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2. Reducing support for vulnerable children in school

- concern about the increasing number of vulnerable students being pushed out of mainstream schools.
- School funding cuts, along-side cuts to universal youth provision, long waiting lists of CAHMS support, league tables, were all making it harder for children to access the individualised support needed to thrive in the mainstream system. Could this committee look at the cuts this county had made to children's services over the past 10 years and how that was impacting on the off-rolling figures? And exclusion and attendance rates?
- Were there links to some of the issues raised in the SEND inspection. There were families who had been waiting months and years for special school places – who have considered EHE as their only option – despite not feeling qualified to home educate and having to give up work to do so.

3. Support for current EHE community.

- Until there was compulsory registration, how were we encouraging Home educators to register voluntarily. Particularly as many of them would have had negative experiences of 'the system'?
- Some asked why bother registering if we don't get anything out of it? So, what do we currently offer and what could be offered to encourage more vulnerable families to register?
- Specific things individuals said they would find useful were:
 - a. Safeguarding training,
 - b. physical space to store resources – perhaps some space in the central library or some of the Children and Family Centres,
 - c. Help with entering for exams (schools used to do this but don't now)
 - d. For councillors to understand home education better and to make contact with the home educating community
- Lastly, she commented that if she were a member of the committee here questions would be – do we have enough staff resources to meet with and offer support to this growing number of families? And given as the LA were seen as part of the system, would working in partnership with an external organisation to reach out to non -registered families work better to engage them?

76/17 ABSENCE (Agenda No. 6)

At its programme setting Meeting in July 2017, the Committee had identified School Absence as an issue of concern and agreed to add it to its work programme for a 'deep dive' investigation. The Committee now had before them a report which provided data and background information, together with any preventative action currently being taken on rates of absence from schools across Oxfordshire.

The Committee heard that the County Attendance Team had recently recruited and would now consist of 3 county attendance officers and 2 school liaison officers. A pupil tracking officer and elective home education team would work as wider members of the team.

Links with safeguarding included pathways being developed with Locality Community Support service (LCSS) to ensure consistency across the county and developing new pathways to share information through multi-agency working. - developing a Community Around the School offer.

The Pupil Missing Out working group were highlighting this is a bigger piece of work and a Missing person's panel, a formal meeting held once a month had been established to identify strategies for pupils missing more than 3 times (multi-agency). There were current concerns that not all staff had access to right systems.

Prevention activity

Data analysis and sharing was key to identifying the gaps and patterns in relation to school absence and the implementation of a targeted approach. This was however,

reliant on accuracy of data coming from schools. Schools were not always reporting children on reduced timetables. Senior Officers were collaborating with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board to address how Reduced Timetable were being used in schools. Only one third of schools had responded.

Enforcement

Parents could be prosecuted for their child's non-attendance, although this was used as a last resort. The County attendance team challenged the measures and support school were putting in place before referral to the team. School attendance orders were primarily used around EHE. Not many were used. Education supervision orders were used as a supportive measure to ensure multi-agency plans were adhered to. 4 members of staff (attendance officers and liaison officers) were working directly with 24 schools.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- Secondary attendance was at a worrying level. Was there any exemplar practice that could be shared?
- DfE changes authorised and unauthorised definition – were the figures consistent? –
- Reduced timetables – if not on timetable authorised absence? Yes, but School attendance marking was at the discretion of the Head
- Was there any data available on the length of absence for dental/medical appointments and trend in Oxfordshire?
- Children in hospital would remain on school roll, but were registered with the hospital school, which was currently rated outstanding.
- Paul Burnett was writing to schools who had not responded to the OSCB request for numbers on reduced timetables.

Following discussion, the following areas of focus were identified for the forthcoming deep dive investigation:

- More in-depth data on schools that were well performing and not (to inform school visits);
- Why does YOS stand out way above the rest?
- Anything more the LA can do to support education of persistent absence groups, particularly why YOS so high;
- Health – absences in primary and secondary for illness reasons – higher than national average;
- Absences for parents taking children out of school for holidays (look at service families);
- Reasons for unauthorised absence;
- Links between the LCSS and Attendance team;
- Role of governors and reporting to governors.

77/17 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

(Agenda No. 7)

At its programme setting meeting in July, the Committee had identified Elective Home Education as a top priority for scrutiny and agreed to give further consideration as to whether the Committee should undertake an investigation into this area.

Accordingly, Rachael Etheridge, Education Inclusion Manager and Joanna Goodey, Senior County Attendance Officer attended the meeting to present an overview to the Committee on the causes of the rise in the number of children being Electively home educated and the challenges this may present for the Local Authority

In introducing the report, Ms Etheridge outlined team changes including a new rag-rating system which had been developed to ensure the limited resources within the team were utilised effectively, and that those children and families identified receive the appropriate support quickly.

The team consisted of 3 officers, equalling 2 full-time equivalent posts. 2 of those officers were qualified teachers, and visited the EHE families at home to support and offer advice as well as assess the level of education taking place.

There were 558 recorded cases of EHE within the last academic year, an increase of 21%. 70 children returned to school, compared with 90 the previous year (see Annex 1).

The main reason given for removing from school roll to home educate was 'other/unknown'; where parents had, either been unable to identify the reason from those offered or had refused to let the Local Authority know.

The second most common reason was 'dissatisfaction with the system'. This also applies nationally. There had been a drop in the number of students who were EHE and had a statement or Education Health Care Plan. 43.88% of EHE children had school attendance of 90% or less and 8.67% of students had exclusions, either fixed term or permanent.

The number of EHE children in the various key stages were as follows:

| | Key Stage 1 | Key Stage 2 | Key Stage 3 | Key Stage 4 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| No of EHE children | 82 15% | 128 23% | 193 35% | 146 26% |

There were 9 children known to the Local Authority who were EHE and of non-statutory school age.

There were spikes in years 5, 7 and 9. Information from secondary schools may suggest there is inadequate information being shared between schools at transition stages to ensure the child's needs are being met.

A school exit form was required by the Local Authority. In completing this, schools are asked to provide information that may question the child's safety, and indicate any known risks to them, that may be associated with being educated at home. The form also asked for information regarding any agencies that were involved with the child. If there was any known social care activity around the child, EHE officers would follow this up with the social worker, and attend any Team Around the Family or Child Protection meetings. If the child has an EHCP, the Annual Review may be brought forward. If the child attends a special school, he/she cannot be removed from roll until an Annual Review has been held and the SEN team are satisfied that appropriate provision will be made.

It has been acknowledged that if the family chooses not to engage with the Local Authority, health professionals may be the only professionals to see the child. Only 6 families in Oxfordshire has refused to engage. Work with the School Health Nursing Service was being developed, to promote and address the health issues of the children within the EHE community.

Only if the Local Authority had been made aware of the parent's decision to home educate prior to coming off roll, were officers able to challenge their decision. If the school were made aware of the parent's intention, the Local Authority may have an opportunity to discuss this with parents and address any issues which may be affecting their decision. Ideally, parents should be able to have a 'cooling off' period prior to their child being removed from roll, to allow time for discussion. However, legislation prevented this and schools could remove immediately. Too often parents decided to home educate without a full understanding of what it involved, and in some circumstances, schools had been proactive in the encouragement of EHE.

Plans were being discussed to enable EHE families to receive generalist safeguarding training, delivered by the Local Authority.

It is worth noting that Elective Home Education was not a risk in itself.

Local authorities had no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis. However, under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities should intervene if it appeared that parents were not providing a suitable education. Local authorities also had a duty under section 175(1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- There were concerns that there was a feeling that officers were portraying a negative attitude towards EHE families. Rachel Etheridge undertook to investigate;
- Education rights remained with the parent in law & "efficient education" not defined in law;

- Particularly at KS4, members were concerned about the voice of the child, what could the Local Authority do to help them?
- Much of 'off-rolling' was taken at key exam stage. Members had grave concerns regarding the impacts on life chances of the pupil.
- Practical work going on with health (SHN and HV)
- What were the rights of the child in this area?
- Were there any strategies in place where parents were not happy with the provision? School-by-school based approach
- What were we doing in Oxfordshire to sign post families to support? Officers confirmed that a pack of information was sent to families and they had access to colleges
- Could members lobby for the exams to be funded nationally?
- Scope for Oxfordshire to explore requirements for enforcing an educational plan – officers confirmed that legislation meant they didn't have to provide one.
- Was there any feedback on services provided?
- There was a lack of clarity over 'unknown' reasons for EHE;
- There was a strong EHE lobby group that gave a lot of advice
- Was there a trend / view on whether schools were pushing parents to off-roll their children instead of permanently excluding
- Based on reasons for taking children out of school – could we tailor the support provided?
- How could we foster the relationships between EHE – what networks were in place?
- Members found it deeply worrying that there were families that we were unaware of – need to close the gap
- What the pack sent out to parents contained
- What tools were available to parents to help them challenge schools?

Following discussion, the Chairman proposed and it was **AGREED**:

- (a) that a small sub-group of 2 to 3 members (to include Councillor Emily Smith) meet with officers to delve into the questions raised today and report back to the Committee;
- (b) to invite someone from the EHE Community, preferably a parent who had been home schooling from an early age to come and speak to the group.

78/17 LOCAL AREA INSPECTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee had before it a report which outlined the outcome of the recent Ofsted and CQC joint local area inspection of Oxfordshire to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children's and Families Act 2014.

Inspectors spoke with children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs, parents and carers, local authority and National Health Service (NHS) officers. They visited a range of providers and spoke to leaders, staff and governors about how they were implementing the special educational needs reforms. Inspectors

looked at a range of information about the performance of the local area, including the local area's self-evaluation. Inspectors met with leaders from the local area for health, social care and education. They reviewed performance data and evidence about the local offer and joint commissioning.

The report was published on December 4th and stated that the local area was required to produce and submit a written statement of action to Ofsted that explains how the local area will tackle the following areas of significant weakness:

- the lack of clearly understood and effective lines of accountability for the implementation of the reforms
- the quality and rigour of self-evaluation and monitoring and the limited effect it has had on driving and securing improvement
- the quality of EHC plans
- the timeliness of the completion of EHC plans
- the high level of fixed-term exclusion of pupils in mainstream secondary schools who have special educational needs and social, emotional and mental health needs in particular.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) had determined that the local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group were jointly responsible for submitting the written statement of action to Ofsted within 70 days of the published report (March 14th).

Since the inspection there had been an opportunity to reflect and begin to implement the learning from the experience. The spot light on SEND had raised the importance of the area's joint responsibilities and emphasised how austerity measures had been impacting on Oxfordshire's ability to deliver the SEND reforms.

The Programme Board was overseeing the implementation of the reforms and was chaired by the Cabinet member for Public Health and Education, Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles, and would report to the Children's Trust and Oxfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Board, ensuring joint accountability.

Resources were being considered to strengthen services and provision for children and young people with SEND to enable the local area to fulfil its duties. Some immediate decisions have been made including:

- reversing the planned savings for the SEN casework team from April 2018 (£250,000) and providing an extra £250,000 to maintain the current staffing levels in the casework team if the DfE SEND grant ceases (April 2018).
- 3 additional educational psychologists.
- A manager to take a lead for improving behaviour.

As the detailed action plan was developed further resource implications would be identified.

Oxfordshire's SEND action plan was being updated to address the areas of weakness identified and in line with Ofsted guidance. The written statement of action would be submitted to Ofsted and the CQC within 70 working days of the published report (March 14th). The SEND Programme Board will sign off the action plan before submitting it to the DfE.

A performance dashboard containing targets across education, health and care was being developed.

During discussion, the Committee made the following points:

- the Committee welcomed the initial actions that had been taken thus far to address the areas for improvement that relate to education;
- there was a need to be mindful not to duplicate work in response to inspection that was being carried out by the ESC;
- the Committee felt that it would have been helpful for Ofsted/CQC qualitative;
- the report did not reflect that schools were in the process of changing to academies,
- the Strengths of the education service had not been recognised in the report;
- officers were submitting written statement of action on five key areas;
- the DfE had been surprised that we've been asked for a statement of action – supported the strengths highlighted through the inspection;
- the outcome would provide momentum for change;
- the Council were raising profile of SEND through stronger Programme Board, reporting to the Children's Trust;
- there was a Multi-agency action plan being developed, performance dashboard;
- Submitting written statement of action on five key areas;
- DfE surprised that we've been asked for a statement of action – supported the strengths highlighted through the inspection;
- Outcome will provide momentum for change;
- Raising profile of SEND through stronger Programme Board, reporting to the Children's Trust
- Multi-agency action plan being developed, performance dashboard
- That the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) waiting time were far too long.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Education, being present for this item, concurred that the waiting times for EHCP were not good enough and needed to be improved. She undertook to investigate the cause for delay.

Following discussion the Committee **AGREED** to ask the Chairman to write to the government regarding the continuing and historic underfunding of the high needs and to ask officers to report back to the Committee in June in progress, together with an action plan.

79/17 ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY

(Agenda No. 9)

In response to a motion from Council requesting that the Committee review the prevalence of prejudice-related bullying in schools and online, the Committee had before them report which outlined the current local evidence and action being taken to prevent and reduce bullying in Oxfordshire, including information about the local authority's legal obligations and how current work to address bullying met the local vision and priorities for Children's Services.

The report also included a brief overview of work being carried out as part of the current Anti-Bullying Strategy and the work to address both online and prejudice-related bullying and the specific focus on work to mitigate the impact on vulnerable groups.

The Committee was invited to identify areas of focus for a more detailed discussion on this topic at a future scrutiny meeting, including scrutiny of how this issue was being overseen by the Children's Trust and Corporate Parenting Panel. Accordingly, Ms Jo Brown, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator had been invited to attend the meeting for an initial discussion on this topic.

Ms Brown in introducing the report, explained that Oxfordshire's Anti-Bullying Strategy had a detailed action plan which was refreshed annually at the start of each school year. There was a wealth of both national and local evidence that indicated a link between bullying and not feeling "safe to learn" in school. There was also clear evidence of a link between bullying and reduced school attendance and attainment and evidence that bullying could impact on mental health and well-being.

Oxfordshire had a free online bullying survey that schools could access all year round. Schools who participated were provided with a unique link in order that they could identify and address issues locally. Last year 6,457 children (from 9 secondary and 15 primary schools) took part. Participating schools had used results to develop effective Anti-Bullying practice and thus create greater safety for students. Results were then analysed centrally in depth to inform the Anti-Bullying strategy action plan and ensure that it was evidence-based.

Results from last year's survey showed that, in line with national trends and previous local results, those young people who were "different" from the majority in terms of experience of a long-term illness or disability, race, religion, or sexuality were likely to experience increased frequency of bullying and "feeling unsafe". Of this group, secondary age young people who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) appeared to be very vulnerable with 10% never feeling safe in the classroom (compared to 1% of those identifying as heterosexual). Those results had been consistent over several years and, whilst showing some improvement, action to address prejudice-related bullying had remained a high-priority within the strategy. Work of the Anti-Bullying strategy therefore supported the local vision for Children's Services to ensure the children within Oxfordshire are healthy, safe, supported and successful. It also contributed to the current Children's Services obsessions specifically increasing school attendance – leading to improved attainment.

During discussion the following points were raised:

The Chairman queried whether there was a protocol that all schools had signed up to. Ms Brown explained that the role of the council was to promote and recommend that all schools follow the current government guidance on preventing and tackling bullying, but that the Council’s role was in an advisory capacity and that there was no requirement for schools to follow it. The Council did provide the on-line bullying survey, training and resources.

Members queried how many schools had responded to the Online survey. Mrs Brown confirmed that 25 primaries had completed the survey and fewer secondary.

This was currently in the national spotlight, need to be aware of any up and coming legislative changes.

Mrs Thomson queried whether this could be included/highlighted in the governor’s report – there was a need to give governors levers to work on.

Members of the Committee suggested that although there was no requirement by schools to follow a protocol, a ready-made solution could be offered to all schools to sign up to.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Education who was in attendance for this item indicated that she thought this was an excellent idea and agreed to work with officers to develop a code of practice.

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED** to request that a code of practice and protocol for all schools to voluntary sign-up be developed and brought back to the Committee and that officers seek a view from Children’s Trust and CPP on what they’re doing.

80/17 FORWARD PLAN AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS
(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee considered the forward plan and **AGREED** 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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Division(s): N/A

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14 March 2018

DEVELOPING AN ANTI-BULLYING CHARTER FOR VOLUNTARY ADOPTION BY SCHOOLS

Report by Deputy Director, Safeguarding, Children’s Social Care

Introduction

1. The paper submitted to the committee on 13th December provided information about the current local evidence and action being taken to prevent and reduce bullying in Oxfordshire. It included information about the local authority’s legal obligations and how current work to address bullying meets the local vision and priorities for Children’s Services. It included a brief overview of work being carried out as part of the current Anti-Bullying Strategy. The paper aimed to inform members about work to address both online and prejudice-related bullying and the specific focus on work to mitigate the impact on vulnerable groups. This paper is available at annex 1 of this report.

Anti-Bullying Charter - progress since December 2017

2. This paper outlines the progress made towards developing an Anti-Bullying Charter for voluntary adoption by schools as requested by the Education Scrutiny Committee on 13th December.
3. During January 2018, meetings took place between Jo Brown, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator and Jo Moxon, Deputy Director (Education) and Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles (Cabinet member for Education) to discuss desired content for an Anti-Bullying Charter. Jo Brown then contacted the Anti-Bullying Alliance to request permission to adapt their ten key principles on tackling bullying to create Oxfordshire’s Anti-Bullying Charter.
4. The Anti-Bullying Alliance is a nationally recognised body that promotes good practice and the content of the charter is therefore something that all schools would be likely to accept and sign up for. They are one of the main organisations signposted in the Department for Education guidance “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” and are currently funded by the DfE to deliver the “All Together” programme to support schools to improve their Anti-Bullying practice with a focus on children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities.
5. Oxfordshire has been successful in securing DfE funding (for the 2nd year running) to be an “All Together” local authority with the provision of face to face training for both schools and children’s workforce professionals (There are only 13 local authorities who have secured this funding nationally). The programme provided face to face training, free access to online resources and a well-being questionnaire to improve all aspects of Anti-Bullying practice with a focus on

the children with Special Educational needs and disabilities. This training has been attended by more than 80 Oxfordshire schools and 50 children's workforce professionals. It was therefore felt beneficial to consolidate and build on the work that Oxfordshire schools are already doing to improve their practice and policy in relation to bullying.

6. The Anti-Bullying Alliance were very keen to work in partnership with Oxfordshire and we have therefore adapted the charter, with their input and support, to include mention of online bullying and to highlight all areas of prejudice that may motivate bullying. This is to reflect the local and national evidence that indicates that a high proportion of bullying is motivated by prejudice as indicated in the earlier report attached at annex 1.
7. The content of the charter is attached at annex 1.
8. The Charter design is currently being worked on by our Communications Team and a launch event has been arranged for 28th February. The launch will take place at Chipping Norton secondary school with attendance from Jo Brown, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles, our Communications Team, and the Head teachers or representatives from the three Chipping Norton Schools. The Anti-Bullying Charter will then be presented at the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Safeguarding in Education Sub-Group on 28th February and launched to all schools in the following weeks school news.
9. Any school will be able to contact the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator to sign up for and adopt the Anti-Bullying Charter. Schools will then be provided with a copy of the Anti-Bullying Charter to display in their reception areas to show their commitment to these key principles. This will provide a strong message to everyone in the school community. It will also provide an opportunity to signpost Oxfordshire guidance, templates and protocols to support schools to develop good practice. Some short guidance for schools to accompany the charter is currently being written by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator
10. Schools may wish to achieve further recognition for their practice in relation to Anti-Bullying and alongside the Charter we are therefore offering an opportunity to receive the Oxfordshire Anti-Bullying Charter Mark (renewable annually) for schools that have committed to the following:
 1. Appointing an Anti-Bullying lead staff member and Anti-Bullying lead Governor.
 2. Completing an Anti-Bullying audit and having an action plan in place to prevent and tackle bullying (either the Oxfordshire [Anti-Bullying self-assessment](#) and [action plan](#) or the Anti-Bullying Alliance audit tool.
 3. Taking part in the Oxfordshire online bullying survey [Primary17-18sample](#) [Secondary17-18sample](#) (or other agreed survey e.g. the Anti-Bullying Alliance well-being survey) and using the survey to identify patterns, measure impact and inform and update the action plan.

11. Those schools who have signed up for the Anti-Bullying Alliance All Together Programme since July 2017 and who have also completed the requirements to stay on the programme would therefore be eligible to receive the Oxfordshire Anti-Bullying Charter Mark. A record will be kept of all school who sign up for the charter and this will also allow them to be added to the network for updates on Anti-Bullying and online safety and provide an opportunity to encourage them to apply for the Charter Mark.
12. The Oxfordshire Anti-Bullying Charter Mark will exist alongside the multi-level [Equality School Champion Award](#) which was developed to support schools to develop good practice in relation to preventing and tackling LGBT bullying. Our local survey found that older young people who identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender were most likely to be bullied or feel unsafe at school.

Conclusion

13. Considerable progress has been made since the request made by the Education Scrutiny Committee on 13th December. By the time the meeting goes ahead on 14th March the Oxfordshire Anti-Bullying Charter will have been launched and it is anticipated that schools will be keen to sign up and show their commitment to the Charter's principles.

Equalities Implications

14. These are discussed within the main body of the report

RECOMMENDATION

15. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the report.**

LARA PATEL

Deputy Director, Safeguarding, Children's Services

Background papers: Report to ESC on 13th December 2017; Copy of Oxfordshire Anti-Bullying Charter

Contact Officer: Jo Brown, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator

February 2018

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Oxfordshire Anti-Bullying Charter

Our school _____

1. **Understands** – all school staff, pupils and parents and carers understand what bullying is and what it isn't
2. **Believes** – all pupils, and their parents and carers, are acknowledged, believed and taken seriously when reporting incidents of bullying
3. **Listens** – all pupils and parents and carers are listened to and influence strategies to prevent, report and respond to incidents of bullying
4. **Takes Action** – we respond quickly to all incidents of bullying whether they take place on or offline. Pupils participate fully in decisions made about them and help to formulate appropriate action to respond to incidents of bullying
5. **Reports bullying** – all pupils within the school and their parents and carers understand how to report incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying
6. **Includes us all** – all pupils are included, valued and participate fully in all aspects of school life
7. **Challenges** – all forms of discriminatory language is challenged and taken seriously
8. **Celebrates difference** – difference is actively and visibly celebrated and welcome across the whole school. It is acknowledged that the school community includes disabled people, people of different races, ages, faiths, backgrounds and people who will be LGBT.
9. **Respects** – all school staff are role models to others within the school in how they treat others
10. **Has clear policies** – our school Anti-Bullying policy reflects these principles and is embedded within other school policies. They are widely and actively promoted to school staff and their parents and carers.

Signed _____ Headteacher _____ date

Signed _____ Cllr Hilary Hibbert-Biles _____ date
Cabinet Member for Education

This charter is based on the Anti-Bullying Alliance ten key principles on tackling bullying to reduce the impact and incidence of bullying and is approved by them.



OCC logo

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|--------------|
| Division(s): |
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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13TH DECEMBER 2017

HOW DOES OXFORDSHIRE ADDRESS BULLYING IN SCHOOLS AND ONLINE? WHAT ACTION IS BEING TAKEN TO ADDRESS PREJUDICE-RELATED BULLYING AND TO REDUCE THE IMPACT ON VULNERABLE GROUPS?

Report by Lara Patel, Deputy Director, Safeguarding, Children's Social Care

Introduction

This paper provides information about the current local evidence and action being taken to prevent and reduce bullying in Oxfordshire. The paper includes information about the local authority's legal obligations and how current work to address bullying meets the local vision and priorities for Children's Services. It includes a brief overview of work being carried out as part of the current Anti-Bullying Strategy. The paper aims inform members about work to address both online and prejudice-related bullying and the specific focus on work to mitigate the impact on vulnerable groups.

Legal context

The Education Act 2002 Section 175 placed a legal duty on maintained schools and Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Oxfordshire's work to prevent and reduce bullying therefore falls within this general welfare principle. It also supports the local authority's obligations in relation to The Equality Act 2010, which places a duty on all public bodies to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This has relevance to the work to address prejudice-related bullying and to mitigate the impact on vulnerable groups.

Local evidence and vision

Oxfordshire's Anti-Bullying Strategy has a detailed action plan which is refreshed annually at the start of each school year. There is wealth of both national and local evidence that indicates a link between bullying and not feeling "safe to learn" in school. There is also clear evidence of a link between bullying and reduced school attendance and attainment and evidence that bullying can impact on mental health and well-being.

Oxfordshire has a free online bullying survey that school can access all year round. Schools who participate are provided with a unique link to in order that they can identify and address issues locally. Last year 6,457 children (from 9 secondary and 15 primary schools) took part. Participating schools have used results to develop effective Anti-Bullying practice and thus create greater safety for students. Results are then analysed centrally in depth to inform the Anti-Bullying strategy action plan and ensure that it is evidence-based.

Results from last year's survey showed that, in line with national trends and previous local results, those young people who are "different" from the majority in terms of

Annex 2

experience of a long-term illness or disability, race, religion, or sexuality are likely to experience increased frequency of bullying and “feeling unsafe”. Of this group, secondary age young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) appear to be very vulnerable with 10% never feeling safe in the classroom (compared to 1% of those identifying as heterosexual). These results have been consistent over several years and, whilst showing some improvement, action to address prejudice-related bullying has remained a high-priority within the strategy. Work of the Anti-Bullying strategy therefore supports the local vision for Children’s Services to ensure the children within Oxfordshire are healthy, safe, supported and successful. It also contributes to the current Children’s Services obsessions specifically increasing school attendance – leading to improved attainment.

Some brief details of how this is being done will be outlined below.

National guidance for schools

Oxfordshire promotes and recommends that all schools follow the current government guidance on preventing and tackling bullying which includes guidance on cyberbullying. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

Local guidance, policy and support for schools

Oxfordshire County Council has a dedicated Anti-Bullying Officer who is responsible for managing the overall strategy to prevent and reduce bullying for all children in Oxfordshire 0-19 including those at maintained, free and independent schools and academies. This 0.8 post is based in the LADO and Schools Safeguarding Team within Children’s Services.

The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator sits on the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) Safeguarding in Education sub-group and the Child Sexual Exploitation sub-group and works in close partnership with the OSCB. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator is also jointly responsible for writing and co-ordinating the OSCB E-Safety Action plan. This reflects a growing use of technology by children and young people and an increasing prevalence in cyberbullying.

The following provides a brief overview and some of the highlights of work done as part of the Anti-Bullying Strategy. Further detail of work planned for the coming year can be found in the current Anti-Bullying Strategy and E-safety action plans.

- Updated and circulated a range of Anti-Bullying guidance, toolkits and templates for schools including a cyberbullying and online safety toolkit; a toolkit for managing youth produced sexual imagery (sexting); a toolkit for preventing and managing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying; guidance for managing bullying and prejudice related incidents and a suite of templates to support schools to manage bullying effectively.
- Provided schools with a regular newsletter and updates with a range of web-based information to ensure they are equipped with the latest guidance and information to support effective Anti-Bullying practice.

- Provided individual advice and support to schools to manage bullying incidents causing concern to support early resolution. Provided individual advice and support to schools to review both their e-safety and Anti-Bullying policy and practice.
- Secured funding for Oxfordshire to be an “All Together” Local Authority with the provision of face to face training for both schools and children’s workforce professionals. This Department for Education programme has ensured that schools have free access to online resources and a well-being questionnaire to improve all aspects of Anti-Bullying practice with a focus on the children with Special Educational needs and disabilities. This training has been attended by more than 80 schools and 50 children’s workforce professionals.
- Achieved 3rd place in the national Stonewall Equality Index (2017) which measures local authority management of prejudice-related bullying with a focus on young people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender. Support for this vulnerable group has been a major focus of work and has been supported by successful multi-agency partnership work. A successful youth conference focussing on addressing this area of bullying was held during Anti-Bullying Week in November 2017 attended by more than 50 young people and 35 adults.
- Over the past year trained more than 120 young people from 36 schools to lead Anti-Bullying Ambassador programmes in their schools with their active involvement in a plan to address bullying alongside school staff
- As part of the e-safety plan, secured funding for a Cybercrime Project from the Police and Crime Commissioner that will involve the delivery of a theatre piece and workshop with 40 performances in Oxfordshire primary schools (aimed at Year 6) with a focus on education young people about healthy online relationships, online grooming and cyberbullying to prepare them for their transition to secondary school.
- Provided a range of central and inset training for schools and professionals including training on prejudice-related bullying, online safety and cyberbullying and restorative approaches. This includes running the OSCB Digital Safeguarding training for children’s workforce professionals.

Equalities Implications

1. These are discussed within the main body of the report

RECOMMENDATION

2. This report is for information only with no recommendation at this stage

LARA PATEL
[Deputy Director, Safeguarding, Children’s Services]

Background papers: none appended

Contact Officer: Jo Brown, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator
[November 2017]

Division(s): All

Education Scrutiny Committee – 14 March 2018

School Attendance Deep Dive Scope and Membership

Report by Chairman of the Sub-Group

Introduction

1. The Committee has previously agreed to undertake a review of educational attendance in Oxfordshire and this report seeks to outline the scope of the review, following the presentation by Officers at the last meeting in December. The deep dive is also seeking a final nominated representative to participate in the review, in the first instance a nomination from the Committee should be sought however, if that is not possible then the Committee are asked to nominate another Member of the Council with an interest in the subject matter who is not a member of the Cabinet.

Background to the Deep Dive:

2. 'Thriving People' is one of three core aims in the corporate plan and includes a commitment to work with schools, families and partners to support increased attendance at schools and other education settings. The Education Scrutiny Committee has selected 'school attendance' as one of three deep dive investigations it intends to undertake during the Council year after discovering that attendance figures for secondary schools in Oxfordshire were above the local and national average.
3. The Committee received an officer presentation in December to inform the scope of this investigation and this report seeks to confirm the scope. In December it was noted that whilst primary school absences have historically been in line with or below the national average, secondary schools have been consistently above the regional and national average since 2013-14. In 2016-17, 5.7 half days were lost to absences at Oxfordshire secondary schools, compared to 5.2 in the South East and nationally. The pupil group with the highest persistent absence rates in 2016-17 were those in the youth offending services (accounting for 76.7% of all persistent secondary school absences).

Scope of the Deep Dive:

4. The deep dive seeks to:
 - (a) gain a greater understanding of trends associated with absence and attendance at secondary schools across Oxfordshire;
 - (b) identify the pathways that exist to tackle unauthorised and persistent absence and;
 - (c) to develop recommendations that enable the sharing of good practice to reduce absence rates across Oxfordshire

5. Several activities are planned for the deep dive group to meet the stated aims including understanding:
 - (a) the pathways that have been developed with the Locality Community Support Service and by schools themselves
 - (b) why absence rates are higher for certain pupil groups and particularly schools
 - (c) the methods used to address unauthorised absences such as warning letters, school attendance orders and attendance panel meetings.

It is intended that the deep dive will be completed by September 2018. Full details of the scope can be found at Annexe 1 of this report.

Membership of the Sub-Group:

6. There is presently a vacancy on the deep dive sub-group membership. The current membership consists of Councillor Michael Waine (chairman), Councillor Sobia Afridi and Ian Jones. A request for an additional member of the Committee to join the group was made in December, however it position remains vacant. As a way forward, it is suggested that the Committee nominates another Councillor to join the sub-group. The Chairman has suggested that Councillor Fenton should be co-opted to the sub-group as he has an interest in the subject matter. Scrutiny sub-groups are not required to politically proportionate but cannot include Cabinet members.

Financial and Staff Implications

7. There are no financial or staffing implications associated with this report.

Equalities Implications

8. The working group have identified that vulnerable learners have comparatively higher levels of absence rates. The deep dive group will seek to understand the reasons for this and will consider equalities implications in developing their final recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **agree the scope of the deep dive;**
 - (b) **Co-opt an additional Councillor to the sub-group.**

Councillor Michael Waine

Chairman of the Educational Attendance Deep Dive Sub-Group

Background papers: Nil.

ESC8

Contact Officer: Lauren Rushen, Policy Officer
Lauren.rushen@oxfordshire.gov.uk, 07990 367851

March 2018

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School Attendance and Absences Scoping document

Key Information

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Scrutiny Committee | Education Scrutiny Committee |
| Working Group Title | School Attendance and Absences |
| Date established | Education Scrutiny Committee, 13 December 2017 |
| Lead Scrutiny Member | Councillor Michael Waine |
| Membership | Councillor Sobia Afridi Ian Jones – Statutory co-optee 1 to be confirmed |
| Supporting Officer | Lauren Rushen, Policy Officer |
| Operational Lead(s) | Roy Leach, Strategic Lead for Education Sufficiency Joanna Goodey, Senior County Attendance Officer |

Working group rationale

‘Thriving People’ is one of three core aims in Oxfordshire County Council’s corporate plan. This includes a commitment to work with schools, families and partners to support increased attendance at schools and other education settings with the aim of improving attainment levels.

The Education Scrutiny Committee selected school attendance and absence as a priority area at their meeting in 19 July 2017. Primary school absence rates in Oxfordshire have historically been in line with or below the national average, yet rates for Oxfordshire secondary schools have been consistently above the regional and national average since 2013-14. In 2016-17, 5.7 half days were lost to absences at Oxfordshire secondary schools to absences compared to 5.2 in the South East and nationally. 13.5% of these absences were classed as ‘persistent absences’. Whilst this figure has been decreasing since 2013-14, it is still one of the higher rates in England with the national average being 13.1%. The pupil group with the highest rate of persistent absences in 2016-17 were those in the youth offending service (accounting for 76.7% of all persistent secondary school absences).

The most common reason given for authorised absence at both primary and secondary age groups is illness (66.9% at primary and 61% at secondary). The

second most common reason at secondary school level is medical/dental appointments (6.8%).

In December 2017, the Education Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of absence and attendance with the following aim:

To gain a greater understanding of trends associated with absence and attendance at secondary schools across Oxfordshire; identifying the pathways that exist to tackle unauthorised and persistent absence and to develop recommendations that enable the sharing of good practice to reduce absence rates across Oxfordshire.

Working group objectives

In order to achieve the deep dive's aim, the working group have identified the following objectives:

1. Undertake analysis of absence and attendance data for secondary schools in Oxfordshire to identify:
 - a. Secondary schools with low/high levels of absenteeism and persistent absenteeism
 - b. Greater understanding of the reasons for authorised absence, particularly illness and medical/dental appointments across schools in Oxfordshire
 - c. Pupil groups with the highest levels of persistent absence
2. Identify and share examples of best practice in managing absence and persistent absence rates, including pathways that are being developed with Oxfordshire County Council's Locality Community Support Service (LCSS) and good examples of shared working with partners/parents/pupils.
3. Investigate why absence rates for illness and medical/dental appointments are higher than the national average and to explore the role that school nursing and partners in health could play in addressing these statistics
4. To investigate the reasons for high levels of absence for certain pupil groups, particularly in the youth offending service and children in care
5. To investigate whether there are higher levels of authorised absences in areas with higher levels of service families in Oxfordshire
6. To gain a greater understanding of the methods used to address unauthorised absences e.g. the prevalence of warning letters, school attendance orders, attendance panel meetings and issuing of fixed penalty notices.

The working group will not look at the following:

- a. Primary school absence/attendance rates as these have consistently been above the local and national average rates since 2013-14
- b. rates of exclusion or levels of attainment, as these areas are planned to be the focus of other Education Scrutiny working. The learning and intelligence gained from the 'Exclusions' working group will assist with

informing this 'Attendance' working group.

Working group scope

The focus of the working group will be on pupil groups with higher rates of absence/persistent absence.

The timescales for the working group are as follows:

- February- March 2018 – finalising the scope and identifying schools/pupil group areas for particular focus
- March – April 2018 – research and consultation with schools, parents/carers, pupils and partners etc., avoiding Easter Holidays.
- May 2018 – finalisation of recommendations and final report, including sharing of recommendations with consultees
- June 2018 – Committee meeting to consider final report and recommendations

Evidence required

The Committee received a briefing from officers at their December 2017 meeting that informed the areas of interest for the deep dive work:

1. **Meeting with lead Oxfordshire County Council officers** to understand the details of the Oxfordshire context, particularly the new pathways that are being developed through the LCSS and more detailed attendance and absence data.
2. **Review of key guidance, policies and data in relation to school attendance and absence** – the County Council has a statutory code of conduct in relation to Education, Sufficiency and Access which details how penalty notices could be used for unauthorised absences
3. **Meeting with schools** – including head teachers and governors, where rates of absence are comparatively low or decreasing and those where absence is high or increasing. The aim of the meetings will be to identify good practice in reducing rates of absence, particularly persistent or unauthorised absences and the barriers schools face in addressing these issues.
4. **Meeting with the Youth Offending Service**– to understand the barriers that those in the service face in attending school and what methods are used to maintain levels of attendance
5. **Engage with the Children in Care Council** – to understand the experience and challenges facing children in care in relation to school attendance.
6. **Meeting with Oxford Health School Nursing Services** – to find out what role school nurses can play in addressing absence
7. **To identify whether absence rates are higher in service families and to**

identify the reasons for this.

- 8. Write to representatives of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group** to identify whether there are ways to reduce instances of absence due to medical/dental appointments

Activities for gathering evidence

The following methods will be used to gain the evidence required:

- Meetings with officers
- Visits to schools and developing good practice case studies
- Meet with school nursing services, youth offending service, representatives from service personnel
- Desk research to identify relevant policies and statutory guidance documents

Indicative Project Plan

| Task | January 2018 | February 2018 | March 2018 | April 2018 | May 2018 | June 2018 | July 2018 |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------|------------|----------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Scoping review | | | | | | | |
| Desk Research | | | 14 March 2018 ESC | | | | |
| Consultation activities | | | | | | | |
| Consultation analysis | | | | | | | |
| Final report drafting | | | | | | 27 June 2018 ESC (final report) | |
| Cabinet response | | | | | | | |

Key:

| | |
|--|---|
| | Pre-deep dive scoping and background research |
| | Internal briefings/desk research |
| | Public consultation activities e.g. site visits, meetings with schools etc. |
| | Analysis of research/consultation and interim draft report writing |
| | Recommendations workshop, final report writing and informing stakeholders |
| | Awaiting response from Cabinet to recommendations |

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Education Scrutiny Committee Work programme (2017 -18)

Outlined below is the Education Scrutiny Committee’s proposed work programme.

The programme aims to prioritise areas of scrutiny where the Committee can add most value, either by holding to account or contributing to policy development. It does this by focusing on areas of public interest, where the committee’s impact can be measured, interrogating performance information and keeping abreast of current areas of change / review.

| Agenda Item | Reasons and objective for item | Lead Member / Officer |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| 13 December 2017 | | |
| Elective Home Education | <p>Understanding the local authority legal responsibilities challenges and opportunities.</p> <p>Review annual analysis and trends relating to Elective Home Education in Oxfordshire.</p> | |
| Bullying | <p>Review of the prevalence of prejudice-related bullying in schools and online, particularly the impact on vulnerable groups.</p> <p><i>Include Serious Case Review</i></p> | |
| (Provisional) Educational attainment Secondary Phase performance (including vulnerable groups) | <p>To review analysis of Oxfordshire secondary school phase educational attainment annual performance tables (including those relating to vulnerable groups).</p> | Strategic Lead for Education Quality |
| <i>Outcome of SEN Review and High Needs Block Review</i> | | |
| <i>Outcome of MAT Survey on Local Authority MAT</i> | | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Absence Rates in Oxfordshire | | |
| 14 March 2018 | | |
| Annual Report for 2017-18 | To receive a draft of the annual report prior to publishing on line | Lucy Butler, Director Children's Services |
| Academies in Oxfordshire Annual Report | To review the annual performance of Academies in Oxfordshire | |
| Ofsted Regional Director | A question and answer session with the Regional Schools Commissioner | Cllr Michael Waine |
| (Provisional) Educational attainment Secondary Phase performance (including vulnerable groups) | To review analysis of Oxfordshire secondary school phase educational attainment annual performance tables (including those relating to vulnerable groups). | Strategic Lead for Education Quality |
| To be scheduled | | |
| Closing the gap (vulnerable learners) | Pathways to raising the attainment of vulnerable pupils (best practice), current provision of support, an overview of the profile of vulnerable learners | |
| LA's new relationship with schools | To help shape an evolving relationship with schools and colleges. | |
| Sufficiency of school places (particularly SEN) | Including places for pupils with Special Educational Needs. | |
| Looked After Children educational attainment | A review of attainment for a particular vulnerable group | |
| Demographic trends | Planning for school places and supporting families with English as a foreign language | |
| Disparity in educational outcomes across Localities | Profile of educational outcomes across Oxfordshire – sharing learning across the county. | |
| Schools funding formula | Potentially a task group reporting back to ESC | |
| Elective Home Education | Understanding the local authority legal responsibilities challenges and | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <p><i>opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>Review annual analysis and trends relating to Elective Home Education in Oxfordshire .</i></p> | |
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