

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 14 March 2018 commencing at 11.00 am and finishing at 12.35 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Michael Waine – in the Chair

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

Councillor Sobia Afridi

Councillor John Howson

Councillor Jeannette Matelot

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 Interim Deputy Director for Children's Services; Deborah Miller and Lauren Rushen (Law & Governance).

Part of meeting Sandra Higgs and Jo Goody (Children & Family Services) Katie Read (Resources).

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

81/18 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

(Agenda No. 1)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

82/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Suzanna Bartington and Richard Brown.

The Committee was advised that Richard Brown had resigned his position as a co-opted member as he was no longer eligible having resigned as a governor.

Exempt Item

RESOLVED: that the public be excluded during the consideration of Annexes of item ESC5 since it was likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda.

83/18 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (Agenda No. 5)

The Committee had before it a report which, following on from the December Meeting where Committee Members were given a briefing based on predicted levels of attainment at Primary school level, provided members with information on actual figures on primary school levels and the levels of attainment in secondary schools focusing on areas of inequality and achievement of vulnerable learners in order to provide a steer on the scope for the attainment deep dive.

In introducing the report, Sandra Higgs, Schools Service Manager explained that in Key Stage 1 year on year improvement could be seen across all areas other than writing where the County remained 1% under the national average. Writing remained a concern through Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 as well. Overall more than ½ the Counties children were receiving very good grades with Reading being 1% above the national average and maths in-line with the national average.

Overall, outcomes had improved in all subjects. Outcomes in Writing had increased by 4% from 2016. An additional 152 pupils reaching the expected standard would have put outcomes in line with the national average. However, outcomes in Writing were below those for Reading and Maths, a persistent pattern for the LA (and statistical neighbours/nationally). Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils remained below those of non-disadvantaged pupils, although outcomes in all areas had improved. The disadvantaged gap (2016) varied from 23%pts in reading (16%pts nationally) to 29%pts in writing (17%pts nationally).

The disadvantaged gap between Oxfordshire and other LA's in 2017 varied from 21%pts in reading to 25%pts in writing. Gaps in Reading and Writing had remained constant at 24% but the gap in Maths has narrowed by 1%

In relation to KS2 she explained that 61% of Oxfordshire pupils at the end of key stage 2 had reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to 62% nationally. This represented a 9% rise in the LA's results. Oxfordshire had moved up into the 2nd quartile nationally for both this measure and for pupils achieving the higher standard. The LA's results were also in-line with statistical neighbours with Oxfordshire now ranked 5th compared with 9th in 2016 for the % of pupils achieving at least the expected in reading, writing and maths.

In reading, 74% of Oxfordshire pupils reached the expected standard in reading and this was above the national average of 71% and in-line with the statistical neighbour average. This places Oxfordshire in the top quartile nationally.

Although writing was still below the national result, this represented an 8%pt increase in the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected standard, and showed a slightly greater increase than nationally. However, this result did place Oxfordshire in the bottom quartile nationally. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in writing was in-line with the national figure at 9%. The gap between outcomes in Writing in Oxfordshire and those nationally was narrowing (5% in 2016, 3% in 2017)

The attainment of pupils with SEN support in reading, writing and maths (RWM) had increased significantly on 2016. Pupils with SEN in Oxfordshire also attained better than pupils with SEN nationally. Disadvantaged learners had also attained better in 2017 but the gap between them and their peers had not diminished. Those with a statement or an EHCP attained in line with national average.

In Relation to **Secondary School** Outcomes, Attainment 8 for Oxfordshire pupils was 1.2% above that nationally. It was important to note that this measure had been revised so could not be compared with previous years.

A new performance indicator in 2017 was the proportion of pupils with a strong pass (grade 5+) in English and maths. Almost half of the pupils in Oxfordshire (48%) achieved a “strong” pass at grade 5 or above in English and maths, compared with 43% nationally. This placed Oxfordshire in the top quartile nationally for this measure.

Over two thirds of Oxfordshire pupils (68%) achieved a standard pass at grade 4 or above in both English and maths, this compared with 64% nationally. Again, placing Oxfordshire in the top quartile nationally. Oxfordshire performed strongly in maths this year, with 54% of pupils achieving a strong pass (grade 5+). Oxfordshire was ranked the 30th highest local authority (out of 151) for this measure. Progress 8 in Oxfordshire was above that reported nationally. Oxfordshire was placed in the second quartile nationally for this measure.

Attainment 8 for Oxfordshire learners with SEN and disadvantaged was lower than national and in the 3rd or lowest quartile.

The Committee then held a discussion around confidential Appendix 2 which provided Attainment 8 data for each secondary school in Oxfordshire as well as the breakdown for each of the pupil groups and Confidential Appendix 4 which listed the schools where disadvantaged learners and learners with SEN had made the most and least progress.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** that the following points be added to the scoping document for the deep dive into Education Attainment:

- Pupil premium, whether it was working and what impact it was making;
- The Split between boys and girls particularly disadvantaged boys?
- The need to challenge at local level and have representatives at locality level;
- The possibility of funding a data support officer

- The need to provide resource so that we could release time from our best schools to share good practice;
- Data needs to be broken down by schools not locality to enable the group to see those schools that were doing and those that were not doing so well
- Progress 8 – needed to look at progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4
- Attainment 8 – need to look into why we are 127 out of 152 authorities;
- EBacc - curriculum offer at Key Stage 4 is essential
- Need for further data by ethnicity – why Romany travellers have very poor outcomes
- Key Stage 5 data
- Need to look at the Inclusion Strategy and SENCO

84/18 SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS FINAL REPORT

(Agenda No. 6)

On 27 September 2017, the Education Scrutiny Committee had established a working group to investigate the increased use of fixed term and permanent exclusions across Oxfordshire. The group's aim was to identify the underlying reasons for the increase, understand how schools and the Local Authority were addressing it, and to make clear recommendations to help reduce the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions in the future.

The working group was led by Cllr Gill Sanders and consisted of Education Scrutiny members Cllr Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor, Cllr Jeannette Matelot and Carole Thomson. In addition, Cllr John Howson supported a number of working group activities. Officer support was provided by the Strategic Lead for Education Sufficiency; the Education Inclusion Manager; and a Senior Policy Officer.

The Committee now had before it a report which presented the working group's findings and recommendations.

Councillor Gill Sanders introduced the report. She thanked members of the working Group and officers in particular Councillor John Howson and highlighted key findings throughout the report, in particular the use of voluntary financial penalties for schools that exclude as a potential model for Oxfordshire and training for Governors on building an inclusive school.

Ms Jo Moxon, Interim Deputy Director for Children's Services welcomed the outcomes of the report. She explained that much of what was in the report was being developed under projects for the fit for future and learning and engagement.

A draft inclusion Strategy was being developed and 'fining' was being looked at by head teachers as part of that. She welcomed the idea of a pilot being set up along the lines of the 'Bristol model' or other models to achieve reduction in exclusions and reported that a project to manage pre-exclusions was also being developed.

The Committee welcomed the report and its findings and made the following points to the group for consideration:

- Further clarification was needed around paragraph 29 of the report in relation to the perceived' limited availability of places at Meadowbrook College;
- The Committee wished to see a further recommendation around 'reduced timetables' or 'off-rolling' and what was happening to children when they were not at school;
- The 13 schools who had no exclusions needed to be congratulated – promote inclusion gold mark using good practice;
- Schools had raised concerns around the work that Children's Centre's used to carry out and what had happened to it, particularly in relation to early identification of SEN.

Following discussion, the Chairman proposed and it was **AGREED** that a further report on Children and Family Centres and Locality Support Services be added to the work programme.

85/18 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATORS (Agenda No. 7)

The Committee resolved at the December 2017 meeting to meet with officers and elective home educators to investigate new procedures that had been implemented to support home educators and to identify the reasons for the 21% increase in elective home education.

The Chairman reported that the Group met in February 2018 and focused on the following areas: data gaps, Information provided to Home Educators, SEND and Vulnerable Learners and what support was provided for families. The meeting identified the following:

- A RAG (red/amber/green) rating system had been introduced to prioritise home visits. Any family that had previously been known to social care or were otherwise identified as a vulnerable learner would have a 'red' rating. Home visit invitations were a priority for this group;
- RAG ratings were not fixed and pupils could be recategorised if additional information was received;
- The authority did not have the power to undertake a home visit but most parents/carers were receptive to meeting with the Council;
- Some instances of EHE were temporary arrangements for example when a pupil was transitioning from one educational establishment to another;
- In December the Committee noted that the most common reason given for EHE on the school leavers questionnaire was 'unknown'. The questionnaire had since been revised by the Council to remove this option and would give more accurate data about the reasons for EHE in future;
- In 2016-17, Years 5 and 9 were the most common year groups opting for EHE.

The group had also requested that officers provide the following additional information to identify:

- (a) whether Years 5 and 9 have historically been the most common year groups for EHE and to explore the reasons for this with parents/carers
- (b) whether there is a link between high excluding schools and EHE
- (c) a comparison of EHE data by locality area.

Once this information had been received the group would aim to meet with parents who electively home educate. This meeting would aim to find out the experiences of EHE parents/carers and the reasons why they had made the choice to electively home educate. The group intended to bring a report detailing their findings and any recommendations to the next Committee meeting.

The Committee welcomed the report from the Chairman and made the following points for consideration by the Group:

- there was a concern about children who were taken into care and then moved out of County and the amount of time it took to find them a new school;
- a request was made that the group look at schools providing access to examinations for EHE children;

RESOLVED: to note the report and progress to date.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing