

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 3 December 2015 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.58 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Mark Gray – in the Chair

Councillor Michael Waine (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Kevin Bulmer
Councillor Steve Curran
Councillor Tim Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Pete Handley
Councillor Steve Harrod
Councillor John Howson
Councillor Sandy Lovatt
Councillor Neil Owen (in place of Councillor Richard Langridge)
Councillor Gill Sanders
Mrs Sue Matthew

By Invitation: Ian Jones; Carole Thomson

Officers:

Whole of meeting Andreea Anastasiu and Sue Whitehead (Corporate Services)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
6	Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning
7	Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning; Roy Leach, School Organisation Planning Manager
8&9	Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning; Mark Jenner, Improvement and Development Manager for Vulnerable Learners and Sharon Oliver, School Intervention Officer
11	Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning

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 are attached to the signed Minutes.

41/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 2)

An apology was received from Councillor Richard Langridge, (Councillor Neil Owen substituting).

42/15 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 4)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2015 were approved and signed.

The following information arising from the minutes was noted:

Minute 33/15 – Point 5) No note had been received from Sir Robin Boshier on the inspection regime for home schooling and the Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning agreed to contact Sir Robin Boshier.

Minute 37/15 – A number of councillors had expressed interest in a visit to Endeavour Academy and the Policy Team would arrange a suitable date.

Minute 38/15 – It was agreed that as part of the agenda setting meeting there be a discussion of what more the Committee can do to support LAASSI.

There was a brief discussion on fair funding and the Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning agreed to provide a briefing for Education Scrutiny Committee members.

43/15 EDUCATION ATTAINMENT REPORT 2015

(Agenda No. 6)

Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning presented the report that gave an overview of the educational outcomes of children and young people in Oxfordshire schools for the academic year 2014-15. Alison Wallace, Performance Information Manager (Education & Early Intervention) also attended for this item.

During discussion the Committee highlighted the position of vulnerable learners and in response to questions Rebecca Matthews detailed the actions being taken to address the gap in attainment. She explained the role of schools to be clear about who their disadvantaged groups were and to arrange a differentiated curriculum and high quality teaching. The Council was encouraging schools to look very hard at what they were doing and to use appropriate tools. However ultimately it was for the schools to make that difference. The Council's role was to provide robust data, and to support them to recognise and understand the position.

Responding to comments from a member that locally he was hearing that children were coming into school with worsening language and communication skills, Rebecca Matthews agreed that anecdotally she was hearing that. However this could not be an excuse for poor performance and highlighted that all stages of school education were vital from early years onwards. There was discussion on the importance of early years and some concern was raised about the possible

implications of proposals relating to children's centres. Whilst commending the work of the Early Years Team a member commented that much more needed to be done to promote work with the under 5's and that it was a question of insufficient resources. Members made the link between attendance and attainment, particularly in the early years. Rebecca Matthews indicated that she would investigate whether it was possible to do a piece of work looking at any correlation between groups of children prone to extended leave and attainment.

Concern was expressed that there was not the same level of focus at KS4 and 5 as at earlier KSs. It was agreed that a supplementary report be produced focussing on secondary schools.

During discussion a number of detailed queries were raised on the figures in the report:

- In relation to paragraphs 41 and 93 on SEN figures, Alison Wallis agreed to provide comparison information to national figures.
- Page 27 Key Areas of focus at KS5 – Carole Thomson queried the figures in relation to Henley College Grouping and Rebecca Matthews undertook to clarify what was included.

The Education Scrutiny Committee noted the 2015 Education Attainment Outcomes as detailed in this report and agreed the areas of focus identified with particular reference to vulnerable learners.

44/15 DRAFT EDUCATION STRATEGY 2015-18

(Agenda No. 7)

Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning, together with Roy Leach, School Organisation Planning Manager presented the Education Strategy that reflected the role of the Local Authority for the future. It sought to identify the key outcomes for the next three years and how schools, setting and colleges can work together to achieve their targets.

The Education Scrutiny Committee commented on the draft Strategy attached at Appendix 1 and in particular made the following points:

- 1) Elective Home Education (page 12 of the draft Strategy) – Responding to concerns from a member it was agreed that there be an annual review report to the Committee.
- 2) Data and Trends (page 10 of the draft Strategy) – following comments it was agreed to amend the bullet point to include sharing the information on schools that 'buck the trend'.
- 3) With regard to attendance the Committee was advised that a piece of work had been commissioned by Schools Partnership on what some schools are doing to buck the trend and it was agreed that this be considered by the Committee.
- 4) When discussing the key levers for effecting change set out as bullet points on page 6 of the draft Strategy the Committee agreed to add "aspiration" to 4th bullet point 'Influence and inspiration'.

- 5) That it was important that it be clear that this is a high level strategy that is to be underpinned by more detailed plans.

45/15 DRAFT STRATEGY FOR EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION (Agenda No. 8)

Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning together with Mark Jenner, Improvement and Development Manager for Vulnerable Learners and Sharon Oliver, School Intervention Officer presented the draft Strategy for Equity and Excellence in Education.

During discussion the following points were made:

- 1) Members commended the case studies and Mark Jenner added that the Head Teacher involved on one of them was part of the School Intervention Leaders Team supporting other schools.
- 2) Following comments from a member the Committee asked that there be something be included in the Strategy on the risks to achievement.
- 3) Councillor Bulmer commented on the need to strengthen the Strategy by reference to specific ambitions so that it was clear what would be deemed a success.
- 4) There was some discussion on the way in which the Fair Access Panels worked. Although not all schools that could attend one of the 4 Panels did attend every school was part of the protocol.
- 5) On page 101, bullet point 8 it was suggested that it would be useful to include percentages.
- 6) PCAMHs Review – it was suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee to know more about it and it was agreed that it was something that should be added to the work programme. Carole Thomson added that the Oxfordshire Governors Association were to consider a paper which could be circulated to Committee Members?
- 7) There was discussion of the use of reduced timetabling by schools and a member stressed the importance of information being put before governors to support the challenge process. In his local area there was generally a buy in to advice to governors but this could only work if governors were able to question headteachers and it was vital they had the necessary information.

46/15 EXCLUSIONS (Agenda No. 9)

Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning together with Mark Jenner, Improvement and Development Manager for Vulnerable Learners and Sharon Oliver, School Intervention Officer presented a summary of the data on permanent exclusions for 2014/5 in schools in Oxfordshire.

In response to questions Mark Jenner advised that there was not a clear picture on fixed term exclusions as the figures to the Directorate were significantly delayed. He confirmed that last year there had been a significant increase in permanent

exclusions and that so far this year that trend had continued. Asked if academy schools find it easier to exclude, Sharon Oliver explained that national guidance made it easier for all schools to exclude. They had noticed some correlation between a new headteacher in any school and an increase in permanent exclusions. They were seeing an increase in the number of primary school aged children being permanently excluded. In response to a question about the numbers of children excluded because they were receiving inappropriate type of provision for their needs Sharon Oliver advised that there was an increase in permanent exclusions amongst children under assessment.

Asked about what was done to support a school that took an excluded pupil Sharon Oliver explained the funding that came through the Schools Forum and added that Meadowbrook College did significant work. Mark Jenner explained the provision at Meadowbrook College itself and that it had been almost fully booked from the start of the academic year. This did create problems although some alternative provision was available at, for example, the Hill End Outdoor Centre.

Following lengthy discussion of the issues raised by the figures the Committee agreed that their concern at the upward trajectory of exclusion figures and the part played by disability be noted and that the Interim Deputy Director write to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

**47/15 YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, OR TRAINING:
REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP**
(Agenda No. 10)

Councillor Pete Handley presented the report that gave a summary of the discussion and the recommendations of the working group to the Education Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman, Councillor Gray added that due to the work going on, Members had not felt that a second meeting was needed.

Councillor Pete Handley proposed an amendment to the recommendations to include headteachers in recommendation (c) and to clarify that it is about the prevention of NEETs and an additional recommendation asking for an annual statistical report.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) recognise the positive trajectory of Oxfordshire County Council in supporting young people not in education, employment or training;
- (b) encourage Early Intervention and Economy & Skills teams to link on a regular basis with the Education and Learning Senior Management Team to ensure clarity and joint working;
- (c) ensure head teachers and governors are aware of their statutory responsibilities in relation to the prevention of NEETs.
- (d) agree a yearly report on statistics to this Committee.

48/15 VERBAL UPDATE REPORT AND CHANGES TO THE LA RISK REGISTER FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT (LAASSI) INSPECTION FRAMEWORK
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(Agenda No. 11)

Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director, Education & Learning gave a verbal update noting that there was no significant change to the risk register. She referred to the A3 story board which was available electronically.

49/15 FORWARD PLAN AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS
(Agenda No. 12)

Following discussion of the forward plan the following priorities were suggested for future meetings:

- PCAMHs – invite one of the managers for discussion on timescales and accessibility.
- Disadvantage of white working class boys – school by school analysis – to be discussed at agenda setting
- Map of roles similar to story board
- Item on risks of not achieving LAASSI
- Vulnerable learners
- Governors
- Childrens Centres
- Funding

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2016