

Education Scrutiny Committee – 28 November 2018

School Attainment Deep Dive and Membership

Report by Chairman of the Sub-Group

Introduction

1. The Committee has previously agreed to undertake a review of educational attainment in Oxfordshire and this report seeks to outline the scope of the review, following the presentation by Officers at the meeting in March 2018. The report also seeks nominations to participate in the deep dive, the investigation will be Chaired by Councillor John Howson and usually three other members or co-optees will undertake the work. Nominations to the deep dive should be sought from the Committee in the first instance, however if that is not possible then the Committee are asked to nominate up to three non-Executive members with an interest in educational attainment to participate in the deep dive.

Background to the Deep Dive

2. '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.
3. The Committee have previously undertaken deep dives into exclusions and are in the process of undertaking a review into school attendance. This was the third deep dive that the Committee agreed as a priority area.
4. The Committee received a presentation in March 2018 to inform the scope of the deep dive. The Committee noted that although the overall picture appeared to be positive, there were areas where the county was performing below the national average:
 - (a) Writing outcomes at KS1 and KS2 were below the national average, though improvements were being made
 - (b) Attainment for disadvantaged pupils and SEN learners remained below those of non-disadvantaged pupils, although there were areas of improvement
 - (c) The curriculum offer under Attainment 8 consists of 5 precise subjects and 3 open element subjects. The KS4 offer can vary across schools and the Committee felt that it would be beneficial to investigate how this impacts on the Attainment and Progress 8 scores across the County.

Scope of the Deep Dive

5. The overall aim of the deep dive is to gain a greater understanding of the drivers behind trends associated with improved educational attainment, particularly for vulnerable learners.
6. The deep dive seeks to:
 - (a) To gain a greater understanding of the Pupil Premium monies received by schools, how this income stream to other similar schools outside of Oxfordshire
 - (b) To identify how this money is used in schools to facilitate the educational attainment of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium and in particular children in care
 - (c) To investigate the work being undertaken by the Council, schools and colleges in the county to promote school inclusion and how this links to educational attainment
 - (d) To investigate the work undertaken to ease the transition between primary and secondary school, and for those that move into 14-18 schools, particularly vulnerable learners
 - (e) To consider the Key Stage 4 offer at schools across Oxfordshire and the opportunities and challenges that exist in relation to Progress 8 and Attainment 8 figures for all learners
 - (f) To understand the educational attainment levels of gypsy and traveller communities in Oxfordshire compared to the national average

Membership of the Sub-Group

7. The deep dive will be chaired by Councillor John Howson. Deep dive groups usually have four councillors and/or co-optees who undertake the investigation, including the Chairman. The Committee will need to appoint three additional members to join the deep dive group, ideally these should be committee members but if that is not possible then other non-executive councillors can be co-opted to the sub-group.

Financial and Staff Implications

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

Equalities Implications

9. The working group have identified that vulnerable learners have comparatively lower levels of educational attainment. The deep dive group will seek to understand the reasons for this and will consider equalities implications in developing their final recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

11. (a) **agree the scope of the deep dive;**
12. (b) **co-opt three additional members to the sub-group.**

COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON

Chairman of the School Attainment Deep Dive Sub-Group

Background papers:

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