

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 28 November 2018 commencing at 1.00 pm and finishing at 2.40 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Michael Waine – in the Chair

Councillor John Howson (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Ted Fenton
Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor
Councillor Jeanette Matelot
Councillor Gill Sanders
Councillor Emma Turnbull

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

By Invitation: Ian Jones and Donald Mcewan, Council of Oxfordshire Teachers' Organisations (COTO)).

Officers:

Whole of meeting David Clarke, Deputy Director for Education; Diane Cameron, Deborah Miller and Lauren Rushen (Resources).

Part of meeting Barbara Chillman and Kim James (Education).

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.

115/18 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

(Agenda No. 1)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting and in particular new Committee Member Councillor Ted Fenton. He welcomed Mr Donald Mcewan, Council of Oxfordshire Teachers' Organisations who had attended with Mr Ian Jones to observe the meeting.

116/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 2)

An apology for absence was received from Mrs Carole Thomson.

117/18 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 4)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 September 2018 were approved and signed as an accurate record subject to the following change to Minute 112/18 as shown in bold italics/strikethrough below:

The Chairman indicated that the Committee had identified the lack of data sharing from schools to be an ongoing issue and with the agreement of the Deputy Director for Children's Services, undertook to write to schools to encourage them to submit their examination data to the authority and to encourage them to sign up to the data sharing protocol that was being developed by the Deputy Director for Education. ~~and if schools still did not share their data, to escalate it where necessary to the Trustees.~~ ***The Deputy Director also undertook to all he could to encourage schools.***

Matters Arising

Minute 110/18 – The Chairman reported that the Committee would be receiving an update report at the next meeting.

Minute 118/18 – In relation to the resolution, the Chairman reported that a letter had now been prepared jointly from the Education Scrutiny Committee, The Schools Forum Chair and The Director of Children's Services and would be sent next week.

Minute 113/19 – the Committee raised concern over pupils who could be disadvantaged as a result of the parallel admission arrangements for the Swan School and requested that officers try and find a way of flagging pupils who may potentially suffer due to the situation and to do everything they could to mitigate the situation which was not of the Authorities making.

118/18 SCHOOL ATTAINMENT

(Agenda No. 6)

The Committee had previously agreed to undertake a review of educational attainment. The Committee now had before it a report which, following an officer presentation to the Committee in March, outlined the scope of the review and sought nominations to form the sub-group who would carry out the deep dive.

The Committee had at its previous meeting 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 consisted of 5 precise subjects and 3 open element subjects. The KS4 offer could vary across schools and the

Committee felt that it would be beneficial to investigate how this impacted on the Attainment and Progress 8 scores across the county.

The Committee agreed that the overall aim of the deep dive would therefore be to gain a greater understanding of the drivers behind trends associated with improved educational attainment, particularly for vulnerable learners, including:

- (a) gaining a greater understanding of the Pupil Premium monies received by schools, and how the income was streamed to other similar schools outside of Oxfordshire;
- (b) identifying how the money was 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 linked to educational attainment;
- (d) to investigate the work undertaken to ease the transition between primary and secondary school, and for those that moved 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 existed 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.

The Deputy Director, David Clarke whilst welcoming the investigation, cautioned that due to the size of this piece of work, greater clarity would be needed around whether around the scope of the review and whether this was focused around attainment 8 or progress 8. In response Councillor Howson indicated that it was the intention was to be secondary school focused, concentrating on the following vulnerable groups:

Pupil Premium;

SEND in Mainstream Schools;

ROMA and travelling Children;

Looked After Children – out of County – Implications of how long it was taking to get them into school;

Links with Progress 8;

Children who arrive Mid-Year – transfer/mobility Issues.

Following debate, the Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- (a) agree the scope of the deep dive;
- (b) co-opt Councillor Ted Fenton and Councillor Michael Waine to the sub-group;
- (c) ask Councillor Jeanette Matelot and Mrs Carole Thomson whether they are able to be the fourth member of the group.

119/18 OFSTED UPDATE

(Agenda No. 7)

The Committee had before them a report which provided information to assist the Committee in developing questions to ask Ofsted representatives at the next Committee meeting, including a summary of Ofsted outcomes as of 1st October 2018; examples of key themes Ofsted had reviewed in recent inspection reports; together with examples of the support that the local authority were giving to Headteachers and Governing bodies.

Following debate, the Committee **AGREED** that the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson use the report and consultation on the new framework due to be published in January as a tool kit for preparing strategic questions for Chris Russel, Ofsted Regional Director and to note that questions should be focused around the following areas:

- **Exclusions** – off rolling – what Ofsted were doing to tackle the situation;
- Safeguarding;
- The Wider Curriculum;
- Headship & Governance;
- Parts of requirements clashing;
- Data requirements.

120/18 PUPIL PLACE PLANNING 2018-2024

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee had before them a report which presented the 2018 Pupil Place Plan, including present and predicted future pupil numbers on roll; information about birth rates; school capacity; and new housing. The Plan set out proposed changes in the number of school places available over the next year and suggested where other changes may be necessary in the future. The Plan also set out policies on school organisation and the statutory framework for making changes such as opening, closing or enlarging schools.

In introducing the report, Mrs Chillman explained that the Plan did not itself propose service changes, but collated proposals which had been made, or were expected. The fall in birth rate meant that primary schools were seeing their numbers come down. The focus now was on growing capacity from Year 7 upwards where the demand for school places continued to rise as the higher birth rate last decade began to start effecting secondary schools.

In relation to areas of pressure for 2019, she reported that plans were in place to deal with the findings of the 'applications data' which showed pressure in Bicester and Oxford City, including 3 new schools, the Swan School due to open in September 2019, Whitelands Academy planned to open in SW Bicester in 2020 and an all-through free school at Grove Airfield planned to open in 2022.

11 Existing secondary schools would be expanded or increase their admission numbers to meet population growth.

The Swan School was due to open in temporary accommodation in 2019, subject to the Secretary of State signing a funding agreement with the River Learning Trust. This funding agreement would not be signed in time to offer places on National Offer Day, and therefore all pupils offered a place at the Swan School would also need to be offered a place at an existing school, to protect them against any potential delay in the Swan School opening. This would require existing schools to agree “bulge” classes to enable all applicants to be offered a place, but those bulge classes might not then be required if the Swan School does open as planned. This would clearly be a stressful time for all involved.

The Committee expressed concern over the low sixth form figures particularly in relation to Carterton. Mrs Chillman explained that this was often due to tightly defined catchment areas and that officers had now asked the Department for Education to break down planning areas which would lead to much more broken up areas.

The Committee confirmed that they reasonably confident that everything that could be done was being done and that all was on track. The Committee thanked Mrs Chillman for the report.

121/18 FORWARD PLAN AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

(Agenda No. 9)

Members considered the forward programme of items and agreed items for February and March meetings as shown below (changes shown in bold italics and strikethrough).

6 February 2019		
Educational Attainment Report 2018	To receive a report on the validated education attainment results across all Key Stages to include positive issues to highlight and areas to be addressed moving forward	Head of Learning and School Improvement/Performance Information Manager
School absence and attendance	Recommendations from the committee working group on improving school attendance	Cllr Michael Waine
School Exclusions Deep Dive – 6-month update	To receive a progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee’s deep dive into school exclusions	Director for Education/Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services
LA’s new relationship with schools	To help shape an evolving relationship with schools and colleges. This presentation is intended to act as a planning session for the Committee for the forthcoming Council Year.	Director for Education
<i>Studio Schools UTC</i>	<i>To investigate why there appears to be leakage at age</i>	

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New Date 25 March 2019 (previously 3 April 2019)		
Ofsted Regional Director	A question and answer session with the Ofsted Regional Director and/or representatives from Ofsted	Chairman
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy	To receive a report about the implementation of Council's SEND strategy.	Director for Education
Project Athens Update: School Building Maintenance	To receive an update report about how school building maintenance work is being prioritised and scheduled in maintained schools and academies who contract the Council following the liquidation of Carillion	Assistant Director for Major Infrastructure and Construction/Director for Capital Investment and Delivery
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	
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 an additional 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	
Children and Family Centres and Locality Community Support Services	To present the findings of the monitoring investigations undertaken by members of the Committee following on from the presentation in July 2018	Cllr Michael Waine/Area Social Care Manager
Regional Schools Commissioner	To undertake a question and answer session with the Regional Schools Commissioner	Chairman
Educational Attainment	Recommendations from the committee working group on improving educational performance	Cllr John Howson

..... in the Chair

Date of signing