

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 17 November 2014

PRESENT: Councillors Gill Furniss (Chair), John Booker, Mike Drabble, Talib Hussain, Karen McGowan, Pat Midgley, Colin Ross, Diana Stimely and Cliff Woodcraft (Deputy Chair)

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Gillian Foster, Education Non Council Voting Member
Jules Jones, Education Non-Council Voting Member
Joan Stratford, Education Non-Council Voting Member
Alison Warner, Education Non-Council Member

.....

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nasima Akther and Ian Saunders.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Jules Jones declared a personal interest in agenda items 7 (2014 City-Wide Attainment Outcomes in Schools and Academies) and 8 (Academies in Sheffield) as she has two children on roll at an academy in the City.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22nd September 2014, were approved as a correct record, and the Committee noted the attached Actions Update.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. 2014 CITY-WIDE ATTAINMENT OUTCOMES IN SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES

6.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted a report providing further detail with regard to attainment and performance outcomes from Foundation Stage to A Level in

Sheffield's schools and academies in 2014.

6.2 The report set out a number of headlines and contained details of the different assessments in respect of each key stage, a detailed summary of the attainment outcomes for the key stages, including comparisons nationally, with other core cities, statutory neighbours and metropolitan authorities, and details of the achievement of identified groups of vulnerable learners.

6.3 In attendance for this item were Antony Hughes, Interim Director, Inclusion and Learning Services and Children's Commissioner, Pam Smith, Head of Primary and Targeted Intervention, and Janet Doherty, Head of Learning and Achievement Service.

6.4 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- In the case of those schools or academies which were, or were likely to be below the Government's floor standards, the Authority would take a number of measures, such as engaging with the Heads to discuss any issues of concern. With regard to Sheffield Springs Academy, the Authority had a seat on the Academy's Improvement Board, and attended all the Board meetings in order to assist in the process for improving attainment levels. It was stressed that although the attainment figures in respect of Chaucer, Fir Vale and Sheffield Springs Academies had gone down, it was not possible to make a clear comparison to last year's results due to a number of changes made in respect of the examination marking systems.
- There were many varied and complex reasons for the drop in rankings in respect of Fir Vale Academy, following conversion.
- The reasons as to why attainment levels at Key Stage 1 had not been followed through from the Foundation Stage, at which Sheffield had been ranked 70th nationally in terms of children who had made good progress, had mainly been due to the fact that the results of children who had been in the country for less than two years could be discounted at Key Stage 2, but not at Key Stage 1, and this had resulted in a significant difference, particularly due to the increase in the number of young children coming into the country.
- In terms of all Key Stages, and taking into account Sheffield's social deprivation levels, it was envisaged that the City would be ranked between 103rd and 105th nationally.
- The work required to ensure that attainment levels in respect of the traditionally high performing schools remained high, was always viewed as a significant challenge.

- In respect of the lower performing schools, the Authority planned for better engagement with the Heads and to assist the schools in forging effective partnerships with other schools in order to learn from each other in terms of adopting best practice. The City Wide Learning Body would also assist with the process. Other strategies the Authority adopted to help improve performance included Every Sheffield Child a Learner.
- It was accepted that the attainment gaps in respect of SEN pupils at all key stages were not acceptable, with such gaps often being the widest in higher performing schools. Whilst it was agreed that attainment levels for SEN pupils were generally lower, work was being undertaken to support schools to improve such performance. The Authority was working closely with Rowan and Talbot Special Schools, and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOS) across the City, to look at how SEN needs were identified and how performance was reported, especially for those children on the P scale (lower than Level 1). There had been a number of incidences where the attainment gaps in respect of SEN pupils had narrowed.
- The Authority was engaging with schools in connection with the difficulties being faced by pupils whose parents' first language was not English, and strategies and programmes were in place, specifically in schools having high numbers of children with similar needs, in order to assist them. Significant investment had been made in the last few years in connection with the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2, which had resulted in a 4.2% closure in the attainment gap in terms of national outcomes.
- In terms of the attainment and progress of vulnerable learners, a number of pupils at some of the City's special schools would appear in more than one column on the chart in the report due to their complex level of need. The demand for places at Heritage Park, Spring Lane and Holgate Meadows was very high, and it was a challenge for the Authority to ensure that more young people were supported better, in terms of their education, in mainstream schools.
- A considerable amount of work was undertaken to try to ensure that parents or carers were fully engaged in pupils' education, both whilst at school and in the home.

6.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, the comments now made and the responses provided to the questions raised;

- (b) acknowledges that, although improvements have been made in the progress of children and young people at all key stages, there was still a considerable amount of work required to ensure that attainment levels improved in schools and academies, at all key stages; and
- (c) requests that arrangements be made for the establishment of a small sub-group, comprising Members of the Committee, to look in more detail at gaps in performance in connection with the attainment and progress of vulnerable learners in 2014, and to report back to the January 2015 meeting on their findings.

7. ACADEMIES IN SHEFFIELD

- 7.1 Antony Hughes, Interim Director, Inclusion and Learning Services and Children's Commissioner, gave a presentation on all aspect of academies. This included details of the number of academies in Sheffield and across England, and the different models in terms of academy status in Sheffield. He also provided details of those Academy Trusts that provided sponsorship, issues to be considered for those schools considering conversion to academy status, the Council's role in connection with schools attaining academy status, and issues for consideration by the Council in the light of the increase in the number of schools attaining academy status.
- 7.2 Also in attendance for this item was Matthew Bradshaw, Lead Project Manager.
- 7.3 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-
 - Any schools expressing an interest in moving to academy status would be required to consult with parents and carers of all children at the schools. There have been examples of both good and poor consultation in this regard and, where necessary, the Authority has challenged some schools, where the standard of consultation, though adequate, had not been good. It was very important to ensure that there was robust consultation in all cases.
 - With regard to the performance of those schools which had been in special measures, and had now converted to academy status, three sponsored academies had recently achieved their highest attainment figures ever. When schools first convert to academy status, they were no longer classed as having an Ofsted category until they were inspected two years after conversion. The Local Authority sits on the Governing Body of those academies which were in special measures before converting, right up until their first adequate inspection outcome.

- As with schools, there were a number of different curriculum models across the academies, with academies having the choice to choose what they wish to do in terms of the national curriculum they offered, which was compulsory in maintained schools.
- Once a school had moved to academy status, the Authority no longer had mandatory powers to take any action if there were any problems. The Authority's duty would be to inform the Department for Education and would only do this once the leadership of the school and the sponsor had been alerted to, but failed to address, Local Authority concerns.

7.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- (a) notes the information now reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses provided to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Antony Hughes for the presentation now made; and
- (c) requests the Policy and Improvement Officer to circulate a copy of the presentation to all Members.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

8.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer, Diane Owens, submitted a paper containing the Committee's draft Work Programme 2014/15.

8.2 Ms Owens made reference to a training session open to Members of the Committee, which was to be held on 24th November 2014, from 1.30 pm to 4.00 pm in the Town Hall. The training was on Questioning and Listening skills, and would provide Members with information and advice which should be useful as part of the scrutiny process.

8.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the draft Work Programme 2014/15; and
- (b) requests:-
 - (i) the Policy and Improvement Officer to identify a meeting or other suitable time when the newly appointed Police and Crime Commissioner, Dr Alan Billings, could attend to report on his response to the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation and other areas of work linked to the role of this Committee; and
 - (ii) Members inform the Policy and Improvement Officer if they wish to

attend the training session on Questioning and Listening skills.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 It was noted that (a) a special meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 15th December 2014, at 2.00 pm, in the Town Hall and (b) the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 26th January 2015, at 1.00 pm, in the Town Hall.