

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

Meeting held 13 November 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Andy Bainbridge, Lisa Banes, Kieran Harpham, Mohammad Maroof, Josie Paszek, Bob Pullin, Jim Steinke, Alison Teal, Sophie Wilson, Keith Davis (Substitute Member) and Andrew Sangar (Substitute Member)

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Gillian Foster, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)
Alison Warner, (School Governor Representative - Non-Council Non-Voting Member)
Sam Evans, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)
Joanna Heery, (Parent Governor Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)
Peter Naldrett, (Parent Governor Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)
Alice Riddell, (Healthwatch Sheffield, Observer)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Booker (with Councillor Keith Davis attending as his substitute), Craig Gamble Pugh, Abtisam Mohamed, Vickie Priestley and Cliff Woodcraft (with Councillor Andrew Sangar attending as his substitute).

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 In relation to Agenda Item 7 (2017 Pupil Outcomes – City Context and School Performance), Cllr Andy Bainbridge declared a personal interest as the City Council’s representative on the Learn Sheffield Board.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11th September 2017, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom:-

(a) Councillor Bob Pullin confirmed that he had received the information regarding the activities of Youth Officers working on crime prevention in the

Beauchief and Greenhill Ward; and

- (b) the Chair confirmed that:-
- (i) a letter to the Chair of the Youth Panel and Sheffield Magistrates' Court, with regard to further improving links between Young People's Services and Magistrates, was being progressed; and
 - (ii) requested that information on the ethnicity of adopters and foster carers in the City be circulated to Councillor Mohammad Maroof at the earliest possible opportunity, in the light of the delays in sending such information.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Fiona Nicholson, Independent Home Education Consultant, questioned how many families, who had taken up the option of elective home education in respect of their children, had been consulted in connection with the drafting of the report on Elective Home Education (Agenda Item 8) and how had such families been selected.

5.1.1 In response, Alena Prentice (Assistant Director, Inclusion and Learning Services) stated that the report comprised a brief contextual report, and that whilst parents were obliged to list their reasons for opting for home education for their children on the application form, there had been no survey undertaken of parents or engagement with them, as part of this report. She added that she had invited Ms Nicholson to meet with relevant officers to discuss any issues she had in terms of elective home education.

5.2 Andy Shallice referred to the minutes of the Committee's last meeting, specifically the reference to the disproportionate number of Roma children being excluded from schools, and questioned whether the Authority could give assurances that there would not be any reduction in the level of services and support offered to Roma, and gypsy and traveller families, as part of its work in trying to reduce the numbers of such children being excluded from schools in the City.

5.2.1 In response, Pam Smith (Head of Primary and Targeted Intervention) stated that there was extensive work being undertaken in terms of support for children from Roma families in connection with reducing the numbers of school exclusions, and there was no evidence to suggest that such work would not continue. Ms Smith added that whilst there were not as many children from gypsy and traveller families in the City's schools as there were from Roma families, she was sure that a similar level of support would be available for such families.

6. 2017 PUPIL OUTCOMES - CITY CONTEXT AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

6.1 The Committee received a joint presentation from Pam Smith (Head of Primary and Targeted Intervention), Kate Wilkinson (Service Manager – Performance and Analyst Service) and Stephen Betts (Chief Executive Officer, Learn Sheffield) on an interim update in terms of City-wide education attainment in 2017.

- 6.2 In terms of headlines, Ms Smith reported that Sheffield's performance had improved, or was sustained against the majority of headline measures; there had been significant improvements in the gap measure and Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1; performance at Key Stage 2 continued to improve and the number of schools below floor level was likely to reduce; and progress at Key Stage 4 remained strong, but attainment still needed to improve, with the number of schools below floor level likely to increase. She stated that a number of areas had been identified where focused work was required to drive improvement, including phonics, reading, attainment and progress for certain vulnerable groups, particularly White British disadvantaged pupils. Ms Smith reported on how Sheffield's performance compared to other local authorities, at Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 4 and 5, and referred to the other factors which had impacted on attainment and progress, with regard to Ofsted judgements and schools below floor level, and concluded by summarising both the successes and challenges facing the Authority in terms of the outcomes.
- 6.3 Stephen Betts reported on the impact of Learn Sheffield in terms of the outcomes, and reported on Learn Sheffield's strategic response in terms of 2017/18 key strategies and the longer-term strategy development (2018 onwards). Mr Betts also circulated an Outcomes Report – November 2017, produced by Learn Sheffield.
- 6.4 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-
- It had been identified that focused work was required to drive improvement in a number of areas, specifically the progress for certain vulnerable groups, and particularly White British disadvantaged pupils. It was hoped that by Learn Sheffield working with schools, together with the work being undertaken as part of the Pupil Premium Project, progress could be made in this area. However, the problem had been identified, both at local and national levels, and it was hoped that through the work of the South Yorkshire Regional Improvement Board and the Strategic School Improvement Fund, in which significant amounts of national funding had been invested, bids for funding could be made in terms of collaborative work in South Yorkshire to improve the progress made by such pupils. National statistics showed that the gap in performance between White British disadvantaged pupils and the rest of the cohort remained evident, from the end of Foundation Stage, throughout the other Key Stages.
 - Whilst performance at Key Stage 5 was welcomed, with the percentage of A-level students achieving grades AAB or higher being in the top quartile, it was very difficult to forecast whether similar performance levels would be replicated in future on the basis that there were many other options for students at post-16 level.
 - Further information on the gaps in attainment for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) was not available at this meeting, but could be provided to Members.

- Whilst the percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) was below that of the City's statistical neighbours and the national average, it was envisaged that, if the numbers continued to increase year on year, there would be a position where a higher number of the cohort were starting from a higher point, which should hopefully result in the number of pupils achieving the qualification being at, or above, our statistical neighbours and the national average. It was also envisaged that the work in terms of the Pupil Premium Project would assist with an increase, with the results of the Project hopefully being seen in future years. In addition, it was hoped that levels of partnership working could be increased and, in order to achieve this, there was a need for schools to work more collaboratively and share best practice in connection with this particular area of work.
- It was accepted that there was little publicity or reference to performance at Key Stage 3, which took in Years 7, 8 and 9, which represented the second longest stage of a pupil's education. There was also a general agreement that the removal of statutory assessments by the Government in respect of this Key Stage had resulted in a number of disadvantages, including there no longer being an agreed national attainment measure. It would be beneficial if there was more cross-phase moderation between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.
- The City's performance in Y1 phonics had caused particular concern in 2017. Phonics was used as a tool for developing reading. However, the Local Authority and Learn Sheffield were looking at how best practice could be identified and shared with the lower-performing schools. It was hoped this could be achieved by partnership working with those schools across South Yorkshire. In addition, the Sub-Regional Improvement Board had identified the improvement in reading as a key priority.
- Whilst it was understood that a high number of pupils in the City went on to undertake apprenticeships, there was no data available at the meeting. This information could be forwarded to Members.
- In terms of steps to be taken to improve progress of pupils from vulnerable groups, particularly those with SEN, a new SEN Inclusion Strategy was currently being developed, with the focus of improving outcomes for such pupils. Also, the Inclusion Taskforce was analysing data in attainment levels of SEN pupils at a locality level, with it also having a focus on training for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). This has been deemed as a priority area for the Authority and Learn Sheffield, and a considerable amount of work had been planned, or was already taking place, in this regard.
- Analysis of the attainment of White British disadvantaged pupils recognised that, when this was aggravated, for example, with those who were also boys and/or had SEN, this group had lower performance.
- Whilst it was likely that there was correlation between those schools in the

City with lower attainment levels were likely to be in areas of higher deprivation, this information would be available after December 2017.

- In terms of additional support for pupils for whom English was not their first language, the Department for Education had implemented a new series of categories with regard to pupils who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) in October 2016. This required all schools to implement a 5-stage category framework in order to assess English fluency of EAL pupils. This had meant that schools had been able to focus on the language needs of a high number of pupils. There was a statutory requirement on schools to report this as part of the school Census information.
- Whilst it was regretful that, staffing posts may be lost as a result of financial cuts to school funding, every effort would be made to try and promote best practice and ensure that more training and development was available to school leaders.
- Information in terms of the percentage of pupils who had attained AAB at A-level, and who were from disadvantaged backgrounds, and how these statistics compared to those in other local authorities, would be provided to Members if available.

6.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation, together with the contents of the Learn Sheffield Outcomes Report – November 2017, and the responses to the questions now raised;
- (b) thanks Pam Smith, Kate Wilkinson and Stephen Betts for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised;
- (c) requests Pam Smith, Kate Wilkinson and Stephen Betts to submit to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 15th January, 2018:-
 - (i) a more detailed report setting out the 2017 final results – City Context and School Performance, highlighting any key changes; and
 - (ii) a briefing paper, for information, containing information on:-
 - (A) the additional support offered, and services available to, pupils from Roma and gypsy and travelling families, in connection with helping to reduce the number of such pupils being excluded from school;
 - (B) work being undertaken in order to close the attainment gaps in respect of children with Special Educational Needs;
 - (C) numbers of children leaving school and going into apprenticeships;

- (D) the geographical location of those schools with lower attainment levels;
 - (E) the percentage of pupils attaining AAB at A-level, who were from disadvantaged backgrounds; and
 - (F) how the challenges can be incorporated into Learn Sheffield's strategic response, with particular emphasis being placed on Y1 phonics, the Pupil Premium and the performance of White British disadvantaged pupils; and
- (d) requests Stephen Betts to submit to a meeting of the Committee to be held on 12th March 2018, on (i) performance at Key Stages 3 and 5 and (ii) the lack of Key Stage 5 provision at school in the south of the City.

7. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

7.1 Elective Home Education

7.1.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, People Services, containing a summary of the Elective Home Education Service, and setting out statistical information in terms of the numbers of users of, and the reasons why families were opting to use, the Service.

7.1.2 Venetta Buchanan (Advisory Teacher for Elective Home Education) introduced the report, and also in attendance for this item was Alena Prentice (Assistant Director, Inclusion and Learning Services).

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

- Officers met with as many families as possible who had applied to educate their children at home, to discuss what was needed to be put in place. Additional support for families was available, if required, in the form of training and provision of help and advice.
- The progress of all children not accessing school in the standard manner was tracked and monitored by the Authority. This included children moving into the City, and looking for a school place, as well as looked after children.
- In terms of those pupils who had been educated at home, and for whatever reason, wished to return to school, support in connection with the transition was provided by the Local Authority, as well as a number of other agencies, including Multi Agency Support Teams (MAST). Headteachers were very co-operative in this regard, and there was an agreement with them that if the arrangements did not work out for whatever reason, within a 12-week period, arrangements would be made for them to return to school.
- Officers would be happy to provide details of a number of case studies regarding families who had opted to educate their children at home, in a

future report to the Committee.

- In terms of outcomes, although many children educated at home opted to take exams, they were not required to do so. The Authority worked closely with Sheffield Futures in terms of post-16 options, although Sheffield Futures was not obliged to share any information regarding outcomes with the Authority.
- The Authority had a duty to ensure that parents educating their children at home provided a suitable and efficient education, with plenty of variety. There was no formal framework for the ongoing monitoring of the children.
- The vast majority of children who had left school to be educated at home returned to school within six months, for a variety of reasons. This resulted in there being no big gaps in terms of their education, and also meant that their re-integration into school was not deemed a major issue.
- The Authority was obliged to accept all applications for elective home education, and officers would meet with parents, as part of the application process, to discuss their reasons for taking this option.
- The Authority wanted to see all children receive a suitable education, therefore would try to provide support for those families opting to have their children educated at home. If parents were not willing to accept the Authority's support, and/or the Authority had any concerns in terms of the standards of education being provided, it would look to make sure that arrangements were in place for the child to go back to school as quickly as possible.
- It would not be possible for the Authority to give any assurances that the number of children being educated at home would decrease. The Authority's target was simply to ensure that every child received a suitable education.
- Information in terms of children returning back to school, after having been educated at home, particularly with regard to their ability to mix socially with other children, would be provided as part of the case studies.
- The Authority was not able to instruct parents to offer specific types of education simply based on their reasons to home educate their children. Provision could only be assessed when they met families.
- Parents were required to provide written information with regard to the education they were providing and, if it was not deemed suitable, taking the experiences and needs of the child into consideration, the families would be referred to the Children Missing Education team, who would assist with a return to school. When all other steps were exhausted, families were referred to the MAST for a School Attendance Order.
- No applications for elective home education were refused from the outset.

The parents would be required to apply to the school initially, with the request then being referred for consideration by the Authority, and it was at this stage when a decision was made. If the Authority had any concerns, such as relating to child protection issues, the issue would be passed on to Social Care.

- The majority of parents provided extra curricula activities for their children, including sports and arts. There was also a large network which parents could use to seek help and advice.
- The Authority was not able to make any presumptions, when parents applied for elective home education in respect of their children, that the education to be provided would not be satisfactory. It had to place a high level of reliance and trust on the parents in terms of them making the right decision, and for the right reasons.

7.1.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information now reported and the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) in the light of the concerns and questions raised with regard to the Elective Home Education Service, requests the Executive Director, People Services, to submit a further, more detailed report on the Service, focusing on the issues now raised, particularly quality and safeguarding, and including a number of case studies, to its meeting to be held on 12th March 2018.

7.2 Alternative Provision

7.2.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, People Services, providing an overview of Alternative Provision in Sheffield.

7.2.2 The report was supported by a presentation from Emma Beal (Assistant Director, Lifelong Learning) and also in attendance for this item was John Bigley (Manager, Admissions).

7.2.3 Ms Beal reported on the definitions of Alternative Provision and on the network of Alternative Provision in the City. She also referred to proposed changes with regard to commissioning arrangements which, subject to the approval of the Cabinet, would result in the network provision being developed in response to both current and future identified needs.

7.2.4 In response to a question, Ms Beal stated that pupils in Alternative Provision remained on the school roll, which was different from those pupils who had been excluded from schools. The schools valued the provision from the point of view of diversification, despite the fact that the service offered was very expensive. It was accepted that alternative provision could never be a proxy for school education.

7.2.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information reported as part of the presentation, and the response to the question raised;
- (b) expresses its thanks to Emma Beal and John Bigley for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests that information on the recommissioning of Alternative Provision be included in the wider Special Educational Needs report scheduled for its meeting on 15th January, 2018.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

- 8.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer which set out its Work Programme for 2017/18.
- 8.2 The Chair referred to the meeting to be held on 12th March 2018, and indicated that it had been proposed that the scope of the scrutiny exercise in terms of Child Poverty would be narrowed down.
- 8.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee, in noting the comments now made by the Chair, approves its Work Programme for 2017/18.

9. SOCIAL MARKET FOUNDATION - "COMMISSION ON EQUALITY IN EDUCATION"

- 9.1 The Committee received and noted a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer, attaching a briefing paper of the Social Market Foundation, entitled – “Commission on Equality in Education”, which provided a summary of the full publication and a brief analysis of the process which had been adopted in order to gather the evidence.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 11th December 2017, at 10.00 am, in the Town Hall.

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