

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2017

PRESENT: Councillors David Evans (Chairman), Natasha Airey (Vice-Chairman) and Marion Mills

Also in attendance: Marjorie Clementson (Furze Platt Infant School), Sheila Singh (Furze Platt Infant School), Tricia Opalko (St Edmund Campion).

Officers: Wendy Binmore, Kevin McDaniel and Rita Vasa

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED: That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2016 be approved.

EARLY YEARS GOOD DEVELOPMENT

Rita Vasa, Senior Adviser (Early Years & Primary) stated that HMI had a conference for the south east that was very useful. They were looking at deprivation and had done a lot of research and analysis that the Borough was familiar with. Younger children learned better when playing with their older siblings while there was a huge gap between summer babies and babies born earlier in the year. Often in areas of deprivation, pre-schools would attract staff from that environment which presented challenges with language and literacy. Lead practitioners identified areas that made a great difference to work with schools on.

Adult led practice engaged with children that had difficulties with language or playing skills as some children did not know how to play. In terms of what the Borough could do, there were several suggestions:

- Attendance – schools responded in different ways. What were schools doing to raise attendance? – Early years champions that meet and every champion is allocated a number of schools. They will bond with reception teachers and share ideas.
- What does good development look like? – there were 17 ELGs with seven areas of learning.
- Prime areas of learning development included:
 - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Physical Development
 - Communication and language.
- Specific areas of Learning Development included:
 - Literacy

- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design.
- There were three levels of development in each area:
 - Emerging but not there yet
 - Expected where they have reached their target level
 - Exceeded where they have gone beyond their targets.

The youngest children were measured on the most indicators and expectations were extremely high. If children missed just one target, they did not obtain a good level of development.

The area children struggled most in was maths and literacy and every learning goal had to be moderated. The Early Years Pupil Premium Programme was running and The Senior Adviser (Early Years & Primary) was hoping to have fortnightly meetings and sessions targeting pupils that received the Pupil Premium in early years for writing. Speech and Language Therapy training was being provided for TA's to upskill them. Pupils also had more creativity and outdoor time as children flourished in outdoor summer schools. She added that the biggest challenge was engaging parents. Most schools carried out a pre-visit at home before the children started school; the Senior Adviser (Early Years & Primary) suggested the schools carried out more than one visit, the teachers could use their PPA time to carry out any additional pre-visits. Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown suggested that some children spend a whole day at their next school some two years before moving up to help prevent some children dipping in year seven when they started. She recommended three visits in 18 months so that children were engaged with the transition process.

PRIMARY SCHOOL "TYPICAL BARRIERS"

Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown stated she had looked at the types and characteristics of learners and why they might be poor learners over five year groups from Early Years Foundation Stage up to year four. Barriers in Reception year were different to other year groups and provision had to be bespoke. The main focus was to drive children to Age Related Expectations (ARE). She added that children that did not qualify for Pupil Premium did ten times better at school than those that did qualify.

In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), there were three boys, two of which were born in the summer and only one of those was predicted to reach a good level of development. The other two boys tended to be problematic, Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown confirmed that not all schools only had three Pupil Premium children, some schools had 35.

Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown explained that she had invited three head teachers to the Forum as they had relatively high pupil premium numbers but all of them had different views. One barrier to development was poor attendance. 60% of pupil premium children had poor attendance well below 90%. There were differences between Windsor & Maidenhead and Ascot and due to the three tier system in Windsor, results did vary.

Marjorie Clementson, Head Teacher at Furze Platt Infant School provided a handout detailing interventions and measures Furze Platt Infants had used to raise pupil premium attainment levels. The main key points of the handout included:

- There were three areas the school considered, they were SEN, Emotional needs and English as a second language.
- Seven pupils that fit the pupil premium category had no significant issues and did not fall into any of the three categories.
- The head teacher used Maslow's Hierarchy of School Needs and most children were at the stages of belonging (forming relationships, advisory, adult role models, friendship groups and peer relationships), and safety (emotional and physical safety, clear school/class routines, access to counsellors/nurse, ok to take risks).
- The head teacher then provided a breakdown of the hierarchy of school needs which explained that cohorts were changing across years.
- The head teacher of Furze Platt Infants recently undertook nurture training in Groups in year one and two. The training was fun by a behaviour support scheme, was cost effective training and would be run again for TAs.

It was all about bespoke tailoring as each child was an individual. The children that received support in the early years fared better later on. Some of the interventions used included:

- Nurture groups
- Emotional literacy
- Trialling tools – self esteem assessments, wellbeing assessments, progression framework.

Some children may not make academic progress but, would make emotional progress which allowed them to progress academically later on.

Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown stated she had been working with head teachers to get maidenhead schools together to form a pupil premium group. She added that one particular problem area was writing and that was across all schools. She had been looking at summer schools which would provide writing classes in the morning and activities such as dance, arts and crafts in the afternoon. It could help children learn in a different environment to what they were used to.

Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown confirmed that Gloucester and Lewisham councils did very well with pupil premium children but, the Royal Borough was unique as there were very few pupil premium children in the Borough and so that attracted less funding. Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services said local authorities like the Royal Borough, had been described as doing well in general with minority of children qualifying for pupil premium. It was about being creative with pupil premium and finding what worked. Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown said the key was to identify pupil premium children without stigmatising them. One thing schools spent money on was developing language; if pupils did not have the language skills, they were unable to express their emotional state and that was why it was a barrier to learning. The Chairman stated he was action orientated and was looking for something that could move things forward and the language intervention could really help.

The head teachers all agreed that language was not always due to English being a second language. There were a number of children who had difficulties with language and there were a lot of parents that did not read to their children and conversations were functional. Parents were working longer hours so they were not around as much and children went to bed with an iPad. It was the early language skills, the face to face time with babies and it was about that happening before they even got to nursery or

school. Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown stated children in poverty were exposed to 13 million words by the time they reached school; it was 45 million words if the children were from middle class backgrounds. It was not just about speech and language, it was also about class aspirations and giving children goals. For children living in poverty, for every positive stroke on their targets, there were six negatives.

Parents attended Triple Three courses went as they wanted to be there, they were very informal and relaxed. Seminars were open to all and included routine tips such as bedtime routines. Children had targeted readers that read to them daily as they did not read at home. Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown explained dysfunctional families did not always monitor homework and it was recommended that one person follow those children through school for years like an aunt, it was a long term strategy. Marjorie Clementson said that she was targeting parents in the mornings to show how they could read to their children. The head teachers found that children went into year two and then parents stopped listening to their children read as they were able to read on their own. Some year three and four parents were unable to help with reading comprehension with their children.

Members noted that domestic violence was having a real impact and that even after the domestic violence had ended, as boys mature there are signs of the damage later on, it has a dramatic impact as a barrier to learning.

Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown stated there were parents on the periphery who weren't affluent but did not qualify for pupil premium and this was recorded in her gap analysis. There was an implication that the teaching was not good but, she had not seen that as the teaching across the schools was excellent. The schools confirmed that they were finding recruitment very difficult and housing for key workers was vital. Schools also needed enough money to be able to maintain the levels of TAs in school.

The Director of Children's Services stated there were approximately 3,000 children in the Borough that were either in need or in a pupil premium group. The Borough invested £500k in pupil premium in 2017. A discussion was required to see if the Borough should slide back to providing general support for schools or, to continue to do a few things that really worked such as training staff. The Senior Adviser (Early Years & Primary) stated more needed to be done before the children got to school. The head teachers agreed that there needed to be a complete culture change with a massive drive in health and social work to explain that it could not just be for schools to pick up on needs and difficulties.

Councillor Airey stated it would help to know who is eligible to receive pupil premium so the Borough knew where they were. The Intensive Family Support programme was useful but those that needed it did not use it because of the stigma. Councillor Airey wanted to know how the Borough cross referenced the data for pupil premium and the Intensive Family Support programme. The deputy head teach at Furze Platt said the school no longer received domestic violence reports from the police, that was a very good bit of joined up thinking. Triple P would work for schools but parents had to have the will to change; there also needed to be someone that worked across primary and secondary schools and helped with the transition. The Director of Children Services stated there needed to be set targets to show the Borough was working on disadvantaged pupils to get them up to the same level of non-disadvantaged children. He confirmed that every school had their action plans reviewed annually to check that measuring and progress were good.

The Chairman stated that he had heard that language was a barrier to learning during the meeting so it was possible to implement training to get morning people into schools and summer schools to help. The Senior Adviser (Early Years & Primary) commented that vulnerable children were at their most vulnerable during the school holidays so she would like to see summer schools set up. The children that attended would be able to have a proper meal and be exposed to language and other experiences, creating resilience through outdoor activities and improving literacy through film. The Director of children's Services confirmed he would set up an action plan and carry out a costing exercise with Councillor Airey.

Councillor Airey stated she wanted to see a summer school in place in Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot and although that was quite a challenge, there could be a whole Borough Round Table events once per year. Bronwyn Hamilton-Brown suggested establishing groups and then work out how the should be run between them. Councillor Airey suggested linking up with the BCA and have an open day for primary and middle schools to raise aspirations. The Chairman wanted an update on progress to go to Cabinet later in the year. Councillor Airey stated KS2 and KS4 would be reported each quarter for Cabinet and could add that to Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel. She suggested working out the costs and taking that to the O&S Panel and to the next School Improvement Forum. The Chairman said he wanted to show the Borough was taking positive and direct action on improving outcomes for pupil premium children.

The meeting, which began at 5.00 pm, finished at 6.55 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....