

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Campo, Stuart Carroll (Chair) and David Coppinger (Vice-Chairman)

Also in attendance: Councillor Donna Stimson

Officers: David Cook, Clive Haines, Helen Daniels and Kevin McDaniel

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received. Cllr Coppinger reported he was running late.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved unanimously: that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2018 be approved.

STANDARD AND QUALITY EDUCATION- A REVIEW OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-2018

The Forum considered the report that detailed attainment levels of the Royal Borough schools for the 2017/18 academic year. The Chairman informed that the report had also been considered by the Adults, Children and Health O&S Panel. He informed that for this meeting he had asked officers to focus on the performance levels of disadvantaged pupils and work being undertaken to help improve attainment for them.

Officers informed the Forum that it had not been possible to present the exam results of schools in the Royal Borough until now because validated data was not available until February 2019 at the earliest and there were the local elections. There was some concern of attainment levels of disadvantaged pupils and work had already started on making improvements.

(Cllr Coppinger joined the meeting)

Attainment levels were lower than the national average even though there was a low number of disadvantaged pupils within Royal Borough schools. Tackling this issue had been a priority. The Forum were informed that this was a sensitive issue as some disadvantaged families in the Royal Borough did not want additional support as it would make any perceived social stigma worse and make their children stand out. It was noted that similar issues existed in the other Berkshire schools.

The early years setting had focused on reception classes with 14 schools taking part in an improvement project. Schools needed three pupils on pupil premium to take part in the project. Schools were encouraged to take part as long as they were prepared to 'buy into' the work by committing to attend meetings.

Barriers and what could be done were discussed, they looked at what percentage of children were on track, they undertook walk around schools, implemented action plans, networking and

training. Peer advice had also been undertaken with support from Lewisham. There had been an Improving Outcomes for all conference held and midyear data submitted by project schools showed the pupil cohort on track had improved from 30% to 50%. Three schools had received additional support from specialists leads in education, writing sessions for all schools had been provided and officers were revisiting what could be improved following data submissions.

The Chairman asked about best practice and the support from Lewisham and was informed that action planning and the project had been discussed as well as shared documents to help understand schools better. There was also training delivered and school improvement. Work was also undertaken in barriers to achievement with the main three being special needs, looked after children and language; not just pupil premium.

The Chairman also asked about learning walks and was informed that this covered support with a teacher or senior leader to help teaching and CPD, for example this could include putting up examples of good work to help encourage other pupils to try and get better.

The Forum were informed that there was a small team of advisor who visited schools and an area that they would be targeting was pupil premium. They were encouraging schools to have a pupil premium champion on their leadership teams and there were also champion network meetings. They were encouraging schools to share best practice.

The Sutton Trust report had been looked at for high impact strategies, they looked at how teachers worked and fed back information to children and language was also examined. Officers also flagged up resources such as books and research that teachers could access. In October there would be a focus on helping teacher assistants and in January 2020 how schools manage change.

The Forum were informed that the next steps were to look at other barriers to attainment and not just financial restrictions for example SEN or looked after children.

Cllr Coppinger asked if breakfast clubs helped and was informed that it was difficult to get data on this however experience showed that having a meal and a calm start to the day was beneficial.

Cllr Del Campo reiterated the importance of breakfast clubs and the quality of teaching; children should not be going to school hungry. In response the forum were informed that they had also introduced a 'cabin club' for a quieter homework environment where snacks were also provided.

The Chairman asked what else could be done and was informed that it was important to get into all schools and bed down the work already done. Not all schools engaged with the education improvement meetings. Both engagement with schools and parents was important.

Cllr Stimson asked if parents were reluctant to engage and were informed that some parents may have had bad experiences at school themselves and thus were reluctant to engage. Some parents engaged at after school clubs but the lack of engagement was a national issue. Due to the small cohort there could also be feeling of inadequacy that can be a barrier.

The Chairman thanked officers for the update and looked forward to hear about future progress.

FUTURE MEETING DATES & ITEM SUGGESTIONS

The Chairman reported that Forum members should feel free in contacting him or the clerk if they wish to add items to future agendas. In response to questions he informed that he would like the forum to focus on disadvantaged pupils and also undertake a scrutiny role. He

proposed writing to the leadership candidates of the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats about concerns of attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

Cllr Coppinger mentioned that it was also important to look at how head teachers could bring issues to this Forum.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public can be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the act.

Resolved unanimously: that the Part II minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2018 be approved.

The meeting, which began at 5.00 pm, finished at 6.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....