

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2020

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

Also in attendance: Lindsay O'Connell and Helen Huntley

Officers: Clive Haines and Andy Carswell

APOLOGIES

None.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

Members stated that there had been some omissions from the minutes of the previous meeting. It was agreed that the minutes would be circulated amongst members once the amendments had been made.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PROJECTS TO SUPPORT PUPILS IN RECEIPT OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING AS A RESULT OF LOW INCOME

Pupil Premium Children School Admission Policy

Clive Haines, Schools Leadership Development Manager, told the Forum that the proposals had been discussed at the primary and secondary school cluster groups. The feedback showed that primary schools were of the belief that the proposed changes were better suited to secondary schools, due principally due to the community values associated with a primary school environment. Secondary schools questioned at the cluster groups were supportive, but raised concerns at how school transport for disadvantaged pupils would be funded. It had been agreed to set up a working group of officers and secondary school headteachers to look at the cost and funding implications and for a briefing paper to be presented.

Clive Haines confirmed that all schools in the Royal Borough had had an input and been consulted, as all schools had a leadership representative at the cluster groups. Overall the feedback had been positive. The proposals were to be discussed further at a forthcoming BASH meeting and a working party would be set up, although there was currently no timeframe for this. Cllr Del Campo stated she was more comfortable with the proposals being implemented at secondary level, although she added that the concerns she had expressed previously remained. However she said it was important that the modelling and risk analysis was carried out.

Regarding a question from Cllr Coppinger about schools that had a Pupil Premium admission criterion, Clive Haines stated that these did not include, and made no reference to, school transport. Therefore the admission policies for these schools would need to be amended if the proposals were to be adopted across the board.

Years Pupil Premium Project

Lindsay O'Connell informed the Forum that 14 schools and five nurseries were now involved with the project, which was an increase. All had submitted baseline data and been booked onto CPD courses. All schools had been given the opportunity to attend what had been branded as 'nosy network' meetings, where staff would visit other settings to speak to their counterparts and learn of good practice.

Lindsay O'Connell stated that a bespoke CPD menu had been created, so that schools and nurseries requiring assistance were able to pick and choose where they needed help. There had been a perception that asking for help had been a sign that the school was doing something wrong.

Clive Haines told Members that the data showed an increase in nine percentage points relating to attainment by disadvantaged children. At Key Stage 1 attainment levels had been maintained in reading and writing and had improved in maths, which indicated the Early Years Project had had a positive impact. It was noted however that attainment levels were not as good at Key Stage 2. The full results were due to be discussed at a forthcoming Cabinet meeting.

It was clarified that none of the nurseries involved in the project were LEA funded, and that they were all linked to schools in deprived areas of the Royal Borough.

Pupil Premium Network Meetings

Clive Haines told the Forum that there was an intention for Pupil Premium to be the focus of a longer term three-year strategy, rather than a one-year strategy. It had been noted that national recommendations regarding interventions often did not work at schools in the Royal Borough that had small cohorts of Pupil Premium children. Some schools only had one or two Pupil Premium children attending and instead interventions needed to be made on an individualised basis. Pupil Premium children tended to do better at Key Stage 4, which was thought to be because they had greater choice of subjects and could study subjects they found more interesting.

The Forum was told that the Champions Network meeting would be taking place the following day. Meetings were well attended and Champions would go into other schools to look at examples of good practice.

REPORT ON THE QUALITY INCLUSION MARK FOR SCHOOLS IN RBWM

Helen Huntley, an inclusion consultant, introduced the item and explained to the Forum that schools were able to apply for an inclusion mark, where the schools would be accredited for their inclusive practice. Governors, headteachers and teachers, SENCOs, support staff and parents would all be quizzed on that school's inclusivity, and lessons would be observed. Some pupils would also be questioned; they would be chosen specifically, with some having special needs and others not. The adjudication panel would include a SENCO and/or headteacher from another school in the Royal Borough. So far eight schools had been awarded the mark, three were due for inspection in March and six more later in the year. All of the schools to be judged hitherto had been awarded the mark.

Helen Huntley said the process had provided a good celebration of inclusive practice and this information had been freely shared. Schools which had considered putting themselves forward for the mark, but did not think they were ready, were asking for SEND reviews to help prepare for the mark. A development plan would be put together to work towards this.

As none of the schools to be inspected so far had been rejected for the mark, there were still concerns as to how to have conversations with a school that was not considered to be inclusive, and also if it should be made public that a school had been rejected in its application for the mark. It had not yet been decided if schools to be awarded the mark should be re-inspected again in a few years' time. On the other hand, some schools had raised concerns

that they might become regarded as a 'honeypot' for children with special needs due to the inclusivity of the school, when there was no desire for this to happen. Helen Huntley suggested that greater transparency in terms of highlighting which schools had a high proportion of EHCP pupils may help, and discussions were taking place with the CYPDS to look at the feasibility of this. The Ofsted framework showed that the organisation looked favourably on schools that could demonstrate good inclusivity.

It had been decided not to rank a school's inclusivity and give out, for example, gold, silver and bronze awards; a school either succeeded in being awarded the mark or it did not.

The Chairman asked what could be done to reverse the situation where certain schools felt they were a 'honeypot' for those with special needs. Helen Huntley said greater funding and transparency were important; some schools had said they had a large number of children with special needs, but the data did not support this. Officers were working with the CYPDS team to boost transparency and relay to parents that being an inclusive school was good for pupils.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The dates of forthcoming meetings were confirmed as follows:

June 24th 2020

October 20th 2020

February 9th 2021

The meeting, which began at 5.00 pm, finished at 5.42 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....