

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 15 MARCH 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Eileen Quick (Chairman), Marion Mills (Vice-Chairman), Nicola Pryer, Lynne Jones and Edward Wilson

Also in attendance: Councillor Natasha Airey and Paul Loudon

Officers: Kevin McDaniel, Hilary Hall, Andy Carswell and Clive Haines

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hollingsworth. Cllr Jones was attending as a substitute.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received. The Chairman informed Members that Overview and Scrutiny Panel members now needed to declare an interest if they had been whipped by party whips prior to the meeting. No such declarations were received.

### MINUTES

The Part I minutes of the meeting held on February 6<sup>th</sup> 2018 were approved as a true and correct record.

## STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION - REVIEW OF THE 2016/17 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Director of Children's Services highlighted the fact the report focused on the progress against the outcomes set by Cabinet in March 2017; Ofsted judgements of schools in the Royal Borough; overall performance of pupils in 2016-17; progress of Disadvantaged children; challenges relating to inclusion; and tracking participation of 16 and 17 year olds.

Regarding the outcomes identified by Cabinet, Members were informed that three of these targets had been met. The only one not to be met was improving the Key Stage 2 ranking to 75<sup>th</sup> or better for Disadvantaged pupils achieving age related expectations. The Royal Borough's ranking had improved from 104<sup>th</sup> to joint 99<sup>th</sup>. The Director of Children's Services stated that there had been significant improvements relating to achievements by Disadvantaged pupils, but this reflected the same progress as at other local authorities.

The Director of Children's Services said the target of 86 per cent of schools being rated Good or Outstanding had been met, although this was slightly below the national average of 89 per cent. However no schools were rated Inadequate and there were nine rated Requires Improvement. Members were informed that the schools requiring improvement were a mixture of faith schools, maintained schools and Academies; the Council continues to focus on working with these schools to improve their rating.

Members were told that the Early Years Foundation Stage ranking for Disadvantaged pupils achieving a Good level of development had improved to 114<sup>th</sup>, past the target of 120<sup>th</sup>. Significant progress had been made in terms of improving attainment rates of Disadvantaged pupils. The target to increase the proportion of 16 and 17 years olds known to be in employment, education or training to 81 per cent had been met, with a rate of 81.2 per cent.

Regarding overall performance of pupils, the Director of Children's Services informed Members that every assessed group in the Royal Borough was achieving above the national benchmark. This placed the Royal Borough in the top 20 per cent of local authorities in England. The Director of Children's Services said young people and schools should be commended for this achievement.

Regarding the progress of Disadvantaged pupils, the Director of Children's Services stated that although good year-on-year progress had been made in a number of areas, the Royal Borough was still behind the national average and ranked in the bottom half nationally compared to our Disadvantaged pupils in England. It was acknowledged that more needed to be done to help Disadvantaged pupils; however Members were reminded that these figures came at the end of the first year of a three year plan. A 12 per cent improvement in attainment in phonics was highlighted, along with an increase in Early Years benchmark ranking from 144<sup>th</sup> to 74<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding Action Plans, the Director of Children's Services said that a decision had been taken to match Pupil Premium funding for Early Years. Members were told that 20 settings had been identified for providing Early Years support, although the numbers cared for varied and some settings provided for large numbers of children. A summer school for Disadvantaged children had been piloted last year, which had received positive feedback, particularly in relation to the way parents had been engaged with.

Members were informed that in 2015-16 there were nine permanent exclusions per 10,000 pupils. In 2016-17 this had increased to 12. The Director of Children's Services informed Members that this was above the national average; however full national figures relating to exclusions would not be available until July. Concerns over the increase in permanent exclusions had been noted by the Ofsted chief inspector, particularly with regards to pupils' inclusivity at schools. School governors and headteachers were being asked to consider carefully any fixed-term exclusions to ensure interventions are effective as a way of alleviating these concerns. Members were informed that there had been an increase in the number of children being home schooled, which is another indicator of inclusion challenges for young people.

The increase in exclusions had contributed towards the £1.5million deficit on the High Needs Block. It had therefore been agreed by the Schools Forum for a 0.5 per cent contribution to be made to the Transformation Fund in order to improve pupil inclusion rates. The Director of Children's Services said that pupil inclusivity remained an area for concern.

The number of 16 and 17 year olds known to be in education, employment and training had increased, with £55,000 being spent on tracking this information. The research revealed one additional pupil who had not previously engaged with any services, while a further 19 were revealed to be doing different things to the courses their families thought they were studying.

Cllr Jones asked about pupils requiring Action Plans who were based outside of the 20 identified settings. The Schools Leadership Development Manager told Members that these 20 settings had three or more pupils based there; there were other settings which had fewer than three pupils on Action Plans and these were monitored. They had the same access to support as the 20 settings but did not participate in group work in the same way as the larger settings.

Cllr Wilson asked if there was any data on how children in care performed, particularly with regards to progress. Members were told that attainment levels were monitored as this was how performance was measured by Ofsted. The Director of Children's Services said that all children in care are included in the figures for each cohort. Individual reports on pupil progress were collated through the Council's Virtual School, with each child having a personal education plan. Funding of £900 per pupil is provided for all children in care but the amounts needed for each individual varied; for some, £900 was sufficient whereas in other cases that

amount needed to be far higher in order to ensure that child was making progress. Members were told that the Virtual School supports an individual review process to support this.

Due to the relatively small cohort of pupils in the Virtual School, statistical analysis was difficult. Members were informed that pupils were more likely to become children in care in their teenage years. This had led to an increase in post-16 pupils in the Royal Borough securing GCSE qualifications. It was agreed that a paper on performance of children in care should come to the October Panel meeting, when a comparison between the two previous years' sets of data could be made.

The Chairman noted the increase in Key Stage 4 pupils who were being home educated and asked if their exam results were included in the figures for the Royal Borough. Members were informed that the Council had no authority to ask what the pupils were being taught and to get assurance they were receiving an adequate education. Parents could contact their local exam centre to enter their children into exams and their results would be captured this way. The Council's only statutory responsibility was to maintain a list of pupils who were being home schooled. In the Royal Borough all home educated families are offered an annual meeting to review the education provided if the parent wanted, and take up is variable. Members were informed that data relating to the periods of time children spent being home schooled was available. The Lead Member for Children's Services informed the Panel that home schooling was being considered by the Local Safeguarding Board with regards to risks that home schooled children were potentially exposed to, and ensuring their inclusivity to the National Curriculum. Members noted that there were many examples of children being in and out of school and having sporadic periods of home tuition.

Members were informed that the attainment of Disadvantaged pupils had been discussed in length at the most recent meeting of the School Improvement Forum. The Lead Member for Children's Services stated that although improvements had been made, there was a recognition that more needed to be done. This would be discussed again at the following week's Cabinet meeting.

Cllr Jones asked for monitoring of SEND pupils to be added to future reports. The Chairman stated that a progress report had been asked for and the Director of Children's Services said this could be discussed at a future meeting. It was noted from the data pack appendix that the cohort being reported on included 200 pupils with some identified level of additional need and a further 70 had Education, Health and Care Plans. A third of pupils with an EHCP were placed in schools outside of the Royal Borough.

Regarding figures on primary school pupil attainment, it was noted that for the purpose of the statistics Middle schools were included within the three tier system were counted as secondary schools. The Schools Leadership Development Manager informed Members that schools in Windsor had created a transition curriculum for pupils in Year 4 who were progressing from First/Junior schools to Middle schools, which it was hoped would aid attainment for pupils in a Middle school environment.

Cllr Wilson asked if Officers were content with the number of schools that had been rated Good as opposed to Outstanding, while acknowledging that no schools had been rated as Inadequate. The Director of Children's Services stated that Ofsted had recently changed its frameworks relating to how Outstanding schools were reported and stated his disappointment that this change did not more clearly reflect how many schools within the Royal Borough were Outstanding. Regarding a school that was rated Requires Improvement, the Director of Children's Services informed Members that the school had seen a large number of applications from outstanding candidates who were applying for the post of headteacher, both from within and outside of the Royal Borough. This had been attributed to the level of support being given to the school in spite of its rating. The Director of Children's Services stated the Council had smaller levels of resources compared to a number of years ago, but he was confident there was sufficient resource to support schools rated as Requiring Improvement, regardless of their type.

Regarding information to 16 and 17 year olds in education, employment and training, Members were informed that the Council's statutory duties were limited to reporting the figures. It had been decided during the last year and next year to once again co-ordinate the data collection and use data matching tools in order to get a clearer picture of what pupils were doing once they left school.

Cllr Wilson stated that the report to Members had been excellent and there were several positive aspects mentioned in it. He added however that more needed to be done to improve attainment levels for Disadvantaged pupils.

**It was unanimously RESOLVED that Members:**

**i) Noted the report**

**ii) Approved the priority outcomes in table 5 for academic year 2017-18, which were:**

- **Increase the percentage of Good and Outstanding schools.**
- **Improve the local authority ranking of disadvantaged pupil attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage.**
- **Improve the local authority ranking of disadvantaged pupil attainment in Key Stage 2.**
- **Increase the proportion of 16 and 17 year olds known to be participating in education, employment or training.**

**iii) Requested a report on validated attainment and progress data for academic year 2017-18 in March 2019**

**iv) Approved the expenditure of £55,000 for 2018/19 and £45,000 for 2019/20 to continue to track the participation of 16 and 17 year olds through existing budgets.**

#### FINANCE UPDATE

The Director of Children's Services informed Members that the only item in the Finance Update of significance to Children's Services was the change in Desborough College's status to a standalone Academy, having been released from its current Trust arrangements. The outstanding debt in relation to this would be repaid to the Council by the Department for Education as part of the transition for the Academy.

Cllr Wilson stated that in future it needed to be clearer how Council money was being spent in relation to Academies.

The contents of the report was noted by Members.

The Chairman asked if Members had any topics they wished to be raised at future meetings. Cllr Wilson said he would like the topic of Alternative Provision to be discussed, and asked for clarification on issues relating to exclusions.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 7.43 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....