

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 29th April 2014 at 6.30pm in Meeting Room 3, Darby House, Telford, TF3 4JA.

PRESENT: Councillors M. Ion (Chair), G. Green, J. Loveridge, J. Pinter, C. Turley and Co-optees S. Ali and S. Rayner.

Attending: J. Collins, Assistant Director Education & Corporate Parenting; S. Jones, Scrutiny Officer. Also present Cllrs. K. Guy and N. Dugmore.

CYPSC-41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs. A. Mackenzie, T. Hope and Co-optees A. Atkinson, R. Aveley, M. Ward and Cabinet Member Cllr. P. Watling.

CYPSC-42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC-43 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The Chair welcomed the Assistant Director to the meeting to provide reports in response to questions arising at the meeting in January on the validated education results for the borough. Responses to Members' questions had been circulated as Appendix A and the Chair invited the Assistant Director to talk through the reports focussing on interpreting the information presented in the tables, the predicted attainment for children in care (CiC) and the Securing School Improvement Protocol.

The Assistant Director (AD) presented reports on the following areas:

1. Ofsted Categories

Tables showed the percentage of schools in Telford and Wrekin in each Ofsted category compared to other West Midlands authorities and the all England average.

All Schools: Telford & Wrekin ranked 4th in the table of West Midlands LAs and the all England average (7th) for the percentage of schools rated Outstanding or Good. Only Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Solihull were better.

Primary Schools: Telford & Wrekin ranked 8th just below the all England average. Worcestershire was ranked top and Sandwell, ranked 11th for All Schools, was second. Telford & Wrekin was below the all England average but not significantly below (78.5% compared to 79.5%) in terms of Ofsted inspections (not attainment).

Secondary Schools: Telford & Wrekin was ranked 2nd of West Midlands authorities behind only Herefordshire and above the all England average ranked at 8th. This was very pleasing, especially considering that when the National Challenge was introduced 5 or 6 years ago the majority of secondary schools were around or below floor standard, so the uplift was very significant.

The following information was provided in response to questions:

- Data was based on Ofsted inspection reports to the end of last term and for all types of school including academies.
- The key determinant for ranking was schools rated Outstanding or Good. This methodology was used by the Chief Inspector and used in national reports. The Chair noted that if schools rated Inadequate were included in the determinant Telford and Wrekin would be higher up the table.
- The Ofsted ratings for secondary schools in Telford and Wrekin were: Outstanding – Adams Grammar, Newport Girls' High, Thomas Telford; Good – Abraham Darby, BRJ, Burton Borough, Charlton, HLC, Lakeside, Madeley, Sutherland, Wrockwardine Wood; Requires Improvement – Ercall Wood, Phoenix. Data had not been disaggregated into local authority maintained schools and non-maintained schools and this could be provided but would show a mix across types.

2. KS2 Schools Below Floor

Tables showed schools below floor in 2011, 2012 and 2013 i.e. schools below the national threshold for the % of children expected to achieve:

- Level 4 or better in Reading, Writing and Maths combined (English and Maths pre-2013), and
- 2 levels of progress in each of Reading, Writing and Maths (or English and Maths pre-2013)

In 2011, Millbrook, Queenswood and Short Wood were below floor. Measures had been put in place at Short Wood where things had turned around and improved from 37% achieving L4+ combined in 2011 to 64% in 2012 so the school was no longer below floor in 2012. Millbrook had improved by 2012 but was still below floor and category 3 although standards were now accelerating. There had been an unusual issue with the publication of Maths results at Ladygrove in 2012 which meant a 0 score was recorded for L4+ English and Maths and the school had fallen unexpectedly below floor. Ladygrove was still below floor in 2013 and the results indicated there was a particular problem with Maths. Queenswood was below in 2011, had made good progress to rise above in 2012 but had unexpectedly dipped back below in 2013 with only 29% achieving L4+ R/W & Maths. There were some specific circumstances which accounted for the dip which no longer existed and from the latest monitoring attainment was expected to rise to mid-high 60s% in 2014. Dawley was only 1% below floor in 2013 with a small cohort of 17 which meant a small number of children could make a big statistical difference, and because the school had been below floor at the time of inspection it had been rated Inadequate.

The following information was provided in response to questions:

- In terms of emerging themes which put schools at risk, it was often situations out of the ordinary or beyond the school's control that were most likely to have a contributory impact. A list of such situations was included in the School Improvement Protocol (Section 4, Strand 5) including significant changes in the senior leadership team, significant staff absence or vacancies, building work (which was worrying for the BSF programme), reorganisation or merger, unusually large pupil admissions etc. as indicators of schools needing support
- Schools must fall below the threshold in all indicators to fall below floor standard. This means a school could be below the threshold in one or more category but not below floor because they are above in other categories. It was possible for a school to be below 60% on attainment but above on levels of progress or (more likely) to be above 60% on attainment but below on levels of progress which may indicate a school is coasting.
- Regarding who a school would turn to if they see a problem on the horizon, intervention could be instigated in two ways. School Improvement is a traded service and schools can buy into the core service or pay for specialist advisors, but if the School Improvement team sees an issue with poor results they intervene on behalf of the Council. The floor standard is one indicator - but not the only one - that would lead to intervention. Some schools are above 60% attainment but progress is poor and School Improvement would go into these schools to look at progress and keep a watching brief.
- In response to a question from a non-Committee member about efforts to increase the number on roll and support for small schools (where a small number of pupils has a disproportionate statistical effect): the committee would be aware from the recent review of primary school places that it was not possible to increase the number on roll where there are physical constraints although across primary schools as a whole numbers lower down were increasing and larger cohorts would come through. Small schools are supported by larger schools and the authority brokers support from the local teaching college so for example, a good English teacher from a larger school could be trained to offer training to teachers in smaller schools. Schools with similar challenges are paired up to support each other, for example to transfer NLE or ESL skills to schools with a significant number of ethnic children. Newport Girls' High had done a good piece of work with Phoenix on high performers.
- Comparisons with statistical neighbours are not used any more but could be provided. None of the West Midlands authorities are statistical neighbours.
- Using Queenswood as an example, the type of action that would be taken was that the school would be put in category 3. The authority would put in intensive support and challenge and there would be half termly meetings chaired by a School Improvement Senior Advisor which would also include a local authority

finance officer, HR advisor and data collection officer. A Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) would be put in place, and in the example used, a maths consultant would be put in to look at baseline information and levels of teaching to identify trends which indicate where there are issues. The maths teachers could be sent to other schools to look at the teaching and the pupils work to see how things are done and the level expected, and take this back to their own school – often the quality of teaching is the issue. Progress on the RAP Plan is monitored and reported back at the half-termly meeting which are minuted, and progress is expected at each stage. An anonymised example of a visit report could be provided to Members if required.

- In terms of the projections for 2014, none of the schools below floor in 2013 were anticipated to be below floor in 2014 barring unforeseen circumstances. Schools Requiring Improvement were being monitored and they were confident they would be above floor and were working towards no schools below in 2014. There had been some discussion nationally about changes to floor standard but none had been made for 2014.

3. KS4 Schools Below Floor and results by School Type 2013

Tables showed:

- a) Schools below floor standard in 2011, 2012 and 2013 i.e. below the national threshold for the % of pupils expected to attain 5 or more A*-C GCSE passes including English and Maths and 3 levels of progress in each of English and Maths
- b) KS4 results for 2013 by type of school and the average for maintained schools, academies and the CTC. There were no significant variations between maintained schools and academies.

The following information was provided in response to questions:

- Schools needed to be below all thresholds to be below floor. There had been a concern that schools had focused on getting borderline pupils over the C grade threshold at the expense of progress of other pupils so new measures had been introduced in 2011 to assess levels of progress. As a result Sutherland had fallen below floor in 2011 which had been a shock but they had pulled back above by 2012. Phoenix was below floor in 2012 and 2013. It has been made clear to them that there was no excuse for this and they were now confident that Phoenix would be above the 40% floor in 2014. Lakeside was below in 2013 (34%) and was predicted to achieve 41% at best but there was a risk of dipping below because of borderline pupils and this was not good enough. The Heads would say that Lakeside and Phoenix's ability to achieve good grades had suffered from the opening of Abraham Darby and Madeley Academies which were the preferred choice of parents. Parental preferences should level out as all schools get better.
- There was a proviso about the predicted results for 2014. The Secretary of State had changed the way exam results would be recorded for league tables from 2014. Students have multiple choices of when to take exams and in future the first time a pupil takes an exam will be the recorded result for the league tables. The Heads of Wrockwardine Wood and Burton Borough had said students who had been prepared for early entry and would be entered as planned but this would distort the

league table results – for example, Wrockwardine Wood was likely to achieve 66% but the recorded result would be 36% which would technically be below floor.

- In terms of schools in the “local authority family” there are 14 schools in total including the City Technology College. Five are maintained schools i.e. funded via the local authority (2 community schools, 2 foundation schools and 1 voluntary aided school) but the authority is represented on the Multi-Academy Trust Board so the 3 MAT schools could be deemed part of the family. (There are actually 4 schools currently in the MAT)

4. Children in Care (CiC) Trend Data and Predicted Outcomes for 2014

- a) Trend data for CiC - A table showed the average point score for Telford and Wrekin CiC across KS2 and KS4 measures compared to all children and all non-CiC in Telford and Wrekin for 2011, 2012 and 2013 and the all England average for CiC 2013. Results at KS2 showed the average CiC score was significantly lower than for all children and the gap had widened between 2012 and 2013. In 2013 L4+ combined for CiC was 13% compared to 74% for all Telford and Wrekin children and 45% CiC national average. However there were small numbers in the cohorts (11 in 2012, 15 in 2013) so results of individual children could make a big statistical difference. KS4 CiC results in 2012 were particularly good - 46% had gained 5 or more A*-C grades including English and Maths compared to 61% for all Telford and Wrekin children. This had dropped to 22% in 2013 but remained above the national average attainment of CiC at 20%.
- b) Predicted outcomes at KS2 - there were 26 in the year 6 cohort. Ten (39%) have a SEN statement and were therefore less likely to achieve the expected standard. Nine of the remaining 16 (35%) were predicted to achieve L4+ combined. Three were borderline L3-L4 and would have additional intervention. If they all achieved L4 the results would be in line with national progress. However, things could easily tip the other way for example a placement breakdown could disrupt progress. Eleven (40%) were expected to attain L3 i.e. below national expectations. Three were not expected to sit the tests. It was important to be mindful that the trauma of early childhood experienced by many CiC meant they were starting from a much lower level than non-CiC. It would be interesting to see the levels of progress of the children expected to attain a Level 3.
- c) Predicted outcomes at KS4 – there were 28 in the cohort of which 21% were expected to achieve the national expected standard which would be inline with national results for CiC for 2013 but was still not good enough. 50% were expected to achieve 5 A*-G GCSEs and 64% expected to achieve at least one A*-G GCSE. 4 were in special provision and it was unlikely they would be entered for the exams.

The following information was provided in response to questions:

- Clarification of whether the number of CiC used for the predicted outcomes included children in schools outside the borough would be provided after the meeting.

- Regarding the distribution of CiC across schools, most schools have one or two. The question is why CiC cannot do well if a school only has one or two to boost - but schools with a higher concentration of foster carers in the area and higher numbers of CiC have been able to develop effective practice, for example Old Park where the designated teacher uses the Pupil Premium to good effect. No schools inhibit progress, but despite the fact that all schools have a designated teacher some CiC can get overlooked so there is a network for designated teachers to share practice.
- In terms of how the authority supports designated teachers, they are brought together to share best practice. The Pupil Premium grant has been increased and has been used to train designated teachers on how to use the Pupil Premium more effectively to close the attainment gap.
- The trend data and predictions for CiC did not include levels of progress measures but this information could be supplied.
- The Chair said it was the first time predications had been provided to the committee and it was very useful and the AD said it could be provided every year.

5. Role and Impact of Virtual Head

The Virtual Head provides a strategic lead to raising the profile and attainment of CiC. Appointment to the post would be confirmed as part of the current restructure following the voluntary retirement of the post-holder. In addition, new posts had been created in the restructure for a CiC Lead Teacher and Data Tracking Officer to support the Virtual Head and to drive up standards for CiC. There is also a plan to appoint 2 additional CiC Inclusion Mentors. The expectation is that all school age CiC should be known to the Virtual Head – there would be 200-300 maximum so the Virtual Head should be able to carry information in their head. Once the new structure was in place the Virtual Head should have a greater impact.

The following points were explored in discussion:

- The Chair wanted to know whether the authority has a strategy for which schools CiC attend so they have the best support for their needs. The AD said out of borough placements are driven by safety issues or if the child is exhibiting challenging behaviour requiring specialist provision which is not available locally in which case the driver is the residential provision. In the past social workers did not always check schools near the out-of-borough foster care placements but this was changing. Within the borough all schools have CiC as an admissions criterion (2 are selective schools). The authority can try to influence choices but it is up to foster carers (as it is for other parents) to decide which school the children go to but these issues are raised via the foster carers' network. If a foster carer has school-age children the foster child usually goes to the same school as part of normal family life. It is not entirely within the remit of the authority as it is about making the whole experience of the child in care as normal as possible. As to whether there is a grading system for Designated Teachers, there is not but the AD

would take this back to consider.

- In terms of raising the expectations of children in care, the progress data is important and they try to raise expectations in the children themselves. This can happen with stable placements but the children can sometimes take a step backwards if they are affected by adverse factors. The key is knowing who all the children are and making sure they are treated like other children – for example foster carers ask them about their day at school, buy them books etc. – normal things that parents do for their children which make a difference.
- The Chair said provision and access for children in care to education was a national issue and that the best interests of the child should be put first, over the wishes of the foster carers, and he suggested the authority should take a more strategic approach. The AD this was being done in some places for example if a school went into special measures a risk assessment was done on whether it is in the best interests of the child to remain in the school or to be moved. The Chair said this was reactive and a more proactive and strategic approach should be taken with earlier intervention.
- Mr. Rayner said there were a disproportionate number of children in care with statements and they need to look at the progress of the statemented children and ask if they are getting as good an education as possible. If they are in a special school which is in special measures then that is a concern.

6. Trend Data by Ethnicity

Tables showed the average point score across KS2 and KS4 measures by ethnic group for 2011, 2012 and 2013 and the national average by group for 2013. The group that was most challenged was the Pakistani group which was below the average for Telford and Wrekin and below the national average for the same group. The figures were in the light of knowing this is a priority group and having had interventions in place.

The following points were explored in discussion:

- In terms of the type of interventions, examples were TCAT and New College had piloted a supplementary school to support Pakistani children at the top end of primary and secondary level. HLC had focus groups working around Pakistani learners. Other schools had recruited Teaching Assistants from Pakistani backgrounds.
- The reasons why the Pakistani group was most challenged were difficult to know. It could be to do with the relationship between schools and the home – some (a small number) have drifted away from school and switched off so there is a need to change mind sets and attitudes. Dr. Ali said there could be attitude issues with a particular section of the community but not with all people with a Pakistani background. A small number of men travel to Pakistan to find wives and if the wife cannot speak English it can create a gap for children who live in a non-English speaking home. There may also be cultural differences and children copy the

cultural aspirations of their parents.

- The Chair said that based on data from College Ward, a Pakistani boy is four times more likely to be unemployed at age 19 than non-Pakistani boys, five times more likely to be in a low paid job and ten time more likely to be in the criminal justice system. The statistics were down to a very small number of families.

7. Securing School Improvement Protocol

The Protocol had been circulated as Appendix 1 of the report. Due to time pressure there was limited time for questioning and the Chair suggested members e-mail questions to the Scrutiny Officer to request a response.

There was one further question which referred to the table in section 2 which showed the number of primary, secondary and Special/PRU schools by local authority category. Mr. Rayner was concerned about the number of PRU/Special schools in category 3 and 4. The AD said there were two schools in category 1, three in category 2, one in category 3 and two in category 4. The school in category 3 had just been inspected by Ofsted and rated Good and the expectation was that it would be raised to category 2 next year. The local authority categories sometimes reflect the Ofsted rating but can be different because local intelligence is used as part of the overall picture. For example, there was a primary school rated Good by Ofsted but School Improvement were aware of underlying issues so the school was in local authority category 3. Evidence amassed by the School Improvement Team over the year contributes to the category and SATs results are the final determinant.

The Chair said some important issues had been raised during the meeting and the committee would come back to them at a future meeting.

CYPSC-44 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair updated members on the following points:

- The committee's report on the planning and provision of primary school places had been deferred from the April cabinet to allow more time to prepare the Cabinet response and was due to be presented to Cabinet on 15th May.
- The review of youth unemployment had already held a series of meetings. It had previously been discussed that a FOI request would be sent to either the main contractors or DFE about the work programme outcomes in Telford and Wrekin, but the Chair had decided that before resorting to FOI, the main contractors (Serco and ESG) would be invited to a future meeting to answer questions, or to provide a written submission for the committee for the review. Further meetings would be held with the Chair of the LEP and one for the committee to pull together the evidence on each strand of enquiry and start to formulate recommendations.
- The work of the committee on the care placement strategy, leaving care grant and care placement budget had been selected by the Scrutiny Management Board for submission to the Centre for Public Scrutiny for the 2014 Good Scrutiny Awards.

A copy of the submission had been circulated by e-mail and the Scrutiny Officer explained that the work had been selected to showcase the impact that scrutiny can have which was reflected in the excellent endorsements provided by the Chair of the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Board and the missing children force lead from West Mercia Police. The shortlist would be announced on 19th May.

- The Chair announced that he would be standing down as a Councillor from 2015 and as Chair of the CYP Scrutiny Committee at the end of this municipal year in May 2013. The new Chair would be appointed at Annual Council at the end of May. Dates for future meetings of the committee would be confirmed as soon as the new Chair was appointed.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....