

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee 1
November 2016, Meeting Room G3-G4 Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way,
Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors: S. Barnes, J Francis, K Guy (Chair), N Lowery, J. Pinter and Co-optees, Sue Fowler, Carol Morgan, S. Osman, S. Rayner

Also Present: Cllr G Reynolds

In Attendance: Rebecca Carey - Teaching and Learning Specialist - Assessment and ICT, Jim Collins (Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting), Andy Cooke - Service Delivery Manager SEND and Inclusion, Michelle Parker - Quality Assurance Specialist.

CYP SC-13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors J. Jones, K Sahota, K Tomlinson, Co-optees C. Healey; and Group Manager SEND EPS - Simon Wellman -

CYP SC- 14 Declarations of Interest

None

CYP SC-15 Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee held on the 21 July 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CYP SC-16 Primary School Performance

The Assistant Director: Corporate Parenting and Education provided an introduction to the current education agenda, informing the Committee of the numerous changes that had been implemented around tests that children were expected to take; SATS, GCSEs and the assessment process had all changed significantly. There were also a number of potential structural changes proposed for the future, including the role of local authorities. At the current time, there was uncertainty and a lack of clarity around future expectations; the White Paper 'Education for All' had been withdrawn, another White Paper was anticipated in December, and there were also other issues on central Government's agenda, such as grammar schools.

The Committee noted that there had also been a change within the Council, with the completion of a restructure in September 2016, in which a number of key Service Delivery Managers had left the Council. The new team was introduced to the Committee.

The Committee received the report on primary school performance which provided an update on the new primary curriculum introduced to all schools in England in September 2014.

Alongside the curriculum an Interim Framework for assessment at KS1 and KS2 had been introduced, which included:

- Removal of national curriculum levels
- Introduction of scaled scores tests at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2
- Introduction of a new Teacher Assessment framework (Working towards, At or At greater depth)

The report identified some of challenges of the new curriculum such as the removal of levels that had required schools to create and use new models of tracking student progress. The Committee noted that the new curriculum had been designed to be more technically challenging with a greater emphasis on the technical aspects of language and those pupils assessed in May 2016 had had to adapt to a changing curriculum part way through their primary education.

The Primary Accountability document for 2016 detailed that the headline measures for the 2016 primary performance tables would be:

- At least 65% of pupils meet the expected standard in English reading, English writing and mathematics OR
- The school achieves sufficient progress scores in all English reading and English Writing and Mathematics.

A Summary of Assessment at Key stage 1 and Key stage 2 and attainment was provided, which showed the figures for Telford and Wrekin in Reading, Mathematics, Writing, Science and Phonics against the national figures.

It was noted that, 53% of children in England met the expected standard across all three subject areas this year at key stage 2; last year 80% of children met the expected standard when assessed using the old curriculum. In Telford and Wrekin 54.9% of children met the expected standard at the end of key stage 2. The gender breakdown was also provided.

The Committee noted the introduction of the scaled score for SATs tests, and the numbers of schools that had reached floor target this year. In summary; of 52 recorded primary schools in Telford and Wrekin, only the special schools and one other were below the required standard. Telford was ranked third in the table for the West Midlands (only just behind Solihull and Warwickshire).

The Committee asked about the interim framework and the expected timescale for further changes to the system. It was noted that there had been indications from central Government that the framework would stay in place across all stages for the school year at the least.

One of the significant changes noted by the Committee was the new progress scores in addition to attainment scores and the effect of progress scores which could reduce or increase a school's overall attainment rating.

The progress scores used data that had already been built up by schools in preparation for SATS. It was suggested that schools were having to rethink their policies and consider how to

make best use of data to make a difference for students. Feedback was being sought by the Council from staff and schools on the changes to the system and support was being provided by the school improvement team, ensuring that the local needs of schools were being met by a bespoke service.

CYP SC-17 Telford and Wrekin Assessment Summary Update of Telford and Wrekin Schools' Performance Key Stages 2 and 4 Compared with Regional and National

The Committee received the report on Telford and Wrekin Schools' performance key stages 2 and 4 which provided an update on the performance of schools and measures to support their improvement.

The Government's headline accountability measures for primary and secondary schools were outlined in the report. It was highlighted that Schools would be given a progress score for their Year 6 cohort to show whether they had made more or less progress between KS1 and KS2 than other pupils nationally with similar starting points.

For secondary schools progress measures were outlined: Attainment 8, Progress 8, Attainment in English and Maths (A*-C), and English Baccalaureate (EBacc) entry and achievement. It was reported that 327 schools nationally had opted in for Progress 8 performance measurement last year; which meant that those schools would have a two year comparison data; the remaining schools would only have this year's Progress 8 data.

It was emphasized that the new measures of schools' performance in 2016 meant a considerable transition for schools and it had caused many schools to feel vulnerable. It was suggested that the progress measure was a good innovation but there was a distinct disadvantage for any child who changed schools, particularly at secondary school level, because a new starting point for their progress had to be identified and the starting point had to be attainment level, not stage. It was acknowledged there were high levels of mobility in Telford and Wrekin, which meant like for like could not be effectively judged.

It was reported that there were new Government Floor Standards for schools' performance in 2016 and principles outlined by which schools would be judged as 'coasting schools'.

The Committee noted the Telford and Wrekin secondary schools' average Attainment 8 score per student was 49.3. This was an increase from 48.1 in 2015. The average attainment 8 score for T&W schools was higher than the regional value (49.1) but lower than the national (49.9) and only four other West Midlands LAs scored higher. The average attainment scores for the specific subject and English Baccalaureate elements were also outlined in the report

In T&W the average Progress 8 score was - 0.15, regional was - 0.7 and national - 0.03. The average progress score for English was -0.28, below regional (-0.10) and national (-0.04). The average progress score for mathematics, -0.22 was also below both the regional (-0.08) and the national (-0.02)

Attainment in English and mathematics, 58.2% of Year 11 pupils attaining at least A*-C grades in both subjects, is lower than regional (59.9%) and national (62.8%) comparators.

The Committee acknowledged that there was a lack of consistency in data available for calculating attainment; it was not the same across the board; some schools had 2 years' worth of data by opting into Progress 8, therefore double counting was unavoidable.

A new support protocol, agreed with primary, secondary and special schools, which placed each school within one of three levels, was outlined in the report. The levels judged schools to be securely good or better; schools where results had dipped slightly and required some monitoring; and schools that required closer monitoring and support. The new support protocol was the outcome from a review by the Council of how it was supporting schools and it was the intention that the protocol would provide a more realistic view of schools, such as its leadership, monitoring; and importantly tailored support and greater challenge where needed. Holy Trinity school, for example, had been judged at level 3 and during the course of a year of more intensive support and challenge, the results had picked up.

The School Improvement Team had found a lot of schools to have quite a low morale. In one school there had been a cluster of unfortunate circumstances which had resulted in serious concern and it was receiving intensive support and monitoring. As a small authority, the new progress measure and system were challenging. A particular challenge, noted by the Committee, was the foreseen effect on disadvantaged children that the dis-establishment of vocational subjects would likely have. Schools were having to rethink how to help children that were disadvantaged and EAL.

It was agreed that at the February meeting of the scrutiny committee, the School Improvement team would be able to provide more specific performance detail.

CYP SC-18 SEND and Education, Health & Care Plans

The Committee welcomed the report presented by Andy Cooke, the Service Delivery Manager SEND and Inclusion (Education & Corporate Parenting) on Telford and Wrekin's implementation of the Children and Family Act (2014) with particular reference to Special Educational Needs and Disability.

The Committee noted that the new strategy for SEND was in the process of being co-produced with key partners and importantly the Borough's families and young people. It recognised the Council's broader challenges around finance and sustainability. The Strategy was due to be launched at the next meeting of the SEND governance board, Aiming High, on 17th November 2016.

In October 2014 Telford & Wrekin published the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer in accordance with the SEND Code of practice (2014). The Committee noted that the Local Offer set out in one place information about provision available in education, health and social care for children and young people across the Borough who had SEN or were disabled, including those who did not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Feedback on the Telford & Wrekin's Local Offer from the Department for Education had been positive and a report had been produced "You said, we did" showing how officers had responded to comments from parents about the content and presentation of the website

and that much progress had been made with schools rebadging “school offers” as “SEN Information Reports” to match the Code of Practice requirement.

The Committee noted that since 1st September 2014, the authority no longer issued a ‘statement’ for a child with special educational needs but instead an ‘Education, Health and Care Plan’. It was reported that approximately 1200 children and young people had a Statement of Special Educational Needs and or Education, Health and Care Plan in Telford and Wrekin. Nationally 2.8% of the population had a statement of SEN/EHCP compared to 3.3% in Telford and Wrekin. A number of contributing factors could explain the figures such as local funding arrangements which meant that children in Telford and Wrekin required a statement/EHC plan to access high need funding whereas this was not always the case in other Local authorities; Telford and Wrekin had been less stringent in its decision making on requests for statutory assessments and issuing statements/EHC plans once a statutory assessment had been completed. There was now an effort to ensure thresholds were being applied more rigorously by a robust assessment panel. The Committee noted that further work would be required to understand why Telford had a higher amount of children/young people with a statement of SEN/EHCP.

Following the SEN reforms the timescale for completing a statutory assessment reduced from 26 to 20 weeks. The report provided performance data of statutory assessments completed within 20 weeks from January to October 2016.

The Committee noted the Council’s poor performance in completing EHC plans within the statutory timelines but contributing factors had been recognised and included embedding a new statutory process that involved greater co-production with families and schools, late submission of advice from across education, health and care providers and limited data tracking. It was reported that nationally many local authorities were facing similar challenges in meeting the 20 week target; data indicated that on average 60% of EHC plans were finalised within the deadline across England during 2015 – although in comparison Telford’s data stood at 18% highlighting a local weakness.

The Committee was reassured that significant action had now been taken in order to improve performance. The SEN team has undergone a restructure and moved from social care into education services. A new SEND group manager had been appointed and a recovery plan to support timeliness put in place.

The number of new Education Health Care Needs Assessment requests received year to date, with comparative data for 2014 and 2015 calendar years was presented to the Committee. The significant increase in requests following the implementation of the Children and Family Act 2014 was noted; in particular that 18% had been initiated by parents. This was a route to assessment that hadn’t been available before. The Committee was reassured that there was signposting in place for requests that had been rejected and feedback with appropriate next steps that should be taken to meet a child or young person’s needs.

In line with requirements of the SEN reforms, it was reported that:

- 22 young people with a learning difficulty assessment (LDA) required transfer to an EHC plan by the 31st August 2016 which was completed on time
- all statements of SEN needed to be transferred to an EHC plan by March 2018; Telford and Wrekin was on target to meet the deadline. It was noted that informally many authorities reported significant concern about both the ultimate deadline for completion in 2018 and ability to undertake transfer assessments in 20 weeks.

It was agreed that further data on meeting the deadlines would be provided to the committee at the meeting in February.

The Committee noted that joint commissioning arrangements were required to cover services for 0-25 year old children and young people with SEN or disabilities, both with and without EHC plans. The need to further develop joint commissioning approaches in Telford and Wrekin was highlighted. Key partnerships had been established between the local authority and health providers but a commissioning approach to SEND between services required further development. The Committee asked what an EHC plan would look like for people over the age of 18. It had been recognised that for post 16 years, students had educational as well as social care needs and the new willow tree centre at TCAT was highlighted as an example of good provision, this was offered in conjunction with adult social care.

It was reported that Ofsted and CQC had begun its five-year inspections of local areas to look at implementation of 2014 reforms. The Council and its partners would be preparing for the inspection, including completing self-assessment, communications, managing the inspection and gathering the evidence from children, young people and carers. It was noted that the Council was addressing identified weaknesses, plans were in place and progress was being made and it was anticipated that this would be acknowledged by Ofsted.

In terms of future challenges and actions, it was reported that there was a large and growing demand for special school and alternative provision. The current high needs budget was not sufficient to meet the continued demand and annual increase for specialist educational provision. In order to resolve the potential budget gap; robust commissioning and joint problem solving with the school and further education community was being undertaken.

The Committee noted that demand was high for special school places, most of the schools were full and provision could not be found with the Borough. There was a danger that the Council would have to consider independent provision. It was a national issue that was becoming more and more challenging. The difficulty for the Council was the lack of resource to meet parental expectation. It was noted that one option may be to review thresholds.

It was agreed that following the meeting, the team would present some figures on funding per student together with comparative data on the resource allocated by Telford and Wrekin compared to neighbouring authorities/ statistical neighbours on

the different types of support provision, and looking at how demand had changed. Data on independent school places was also requested.

CYP SC-19 Work Programme 2016-17

The Chair outlined the work programme and noted provisional future meeting dates; it was agreed by Committee members.

The Meeting ended at 7.53 pm

Chairman:

Date: