

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 3 MARCH 2014 FROM 7.00PM TO 8.00PM**

Present:- Pauline Helliar-Symons (Chairman), Ian Pittock (Vice-Chairman), Parry Bath, Ken Miall, and Bob Wyatt

Also present:-

Judith Ramsden, Director of Children's Services

Martin Baker, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement

Brian Grady, Head of Strategic Commissioning

Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer

The Chairman congratulated Judith Ramsden on her recent appointment as Director of Children's Services.

Judith mentioned that Felicity Budgen had been appointed as Head of Safeguarding and Social Care, and that Martin Baker would be leaving at the end of March. His role as Head of Learning and Achievement will be filled by Alan Stubbersfield on an interim basis for six months.

Martin was thanked for the contribution he had made.

44. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 January 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following corrections:

- Minute 40 – in the fourth paragraph, the last line should read - '*..set up centres of excellence*';
- Minute 40 – in the seventh paragraph, the end of the first sentence should read '*...some of the able children were not being stretched and encouraged to apply.*'

45. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Andrew Bradley, Karen Knight (Parent Governor Representative), Sam Rahmouni and Shahid Younis.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

47. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

48. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

49. UPDATE ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITY

The Committee received and considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 6 to 10 giving an update on the new arrangements for the provision of services for children and young people who have special education needs (SEN) and disabilities, and the new statutory requirements of the Children and Families Bill which, will be necessary from September 2014 once the Bill is enacted.

The key proposals are:

- To work jointly with health and social care to commission services to deliver integrated support for children and young people with SEN aged 0- 25;
- Provide a coordinated assessment and a new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans for each child. The EHCs will replace SEN statements in schools and Learning Difficulty Assessments in further education and training;
- engage with local partners to publish a 'local offer' of SEN services and provision;
- Consult with children, young people and their parents, and cooperate with a range of local providers across education, health and social care to deliver the new system.
with

Judith Ramsden stated that this is the biggest change in provision in the last 40 years.

In response to Members' questions, Officers indicated that the initial referral process would be similar the current system, and the family and young people would be more involved in obtaining the required support set out in the EHC.

Members asked for update reports at future meetings on the following aspects:

- The outcome of the pilot process to trial the new system;
- 'Local Offer' – the draft of the 'local offer' and the outcomes of the consultation;
- The document setting out the new protocol and standards for effective transition;
- Personal Budgets

RESOLVED: That the report giving an update on the new arrangements for the provision for Special Education Needs and Disability be noted, and that updates be provided on the aspects listed above.

50. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND OFSTED REPORTS

School Performance

The Committee received and considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 11 to 33 giving details and analysis of the overall results for Wokingham schools across the whole age range of assessments, tests and examinations at the end of the academic year 2012/13.

Martin Baker explained that this report updates the provisional report presented to the Committee in September 2013, set out on Agenda pages 20 to 33, and now gives the national comparator assessment information for each stage of education provision, as set out on Agenda pages 14 to 19. He drew attention to the table on Agenda page 12 which showed that:

- Early Years/Foundation stage – below national average
- Year 1 Phonics – below national average
- Key Stage 1 - above national average
- Key Stage 2 – above national average
- Key Stage 3 – no national data published
- Key Stage 4 (GCSE) – above national average, but largest performance gap nationally for pupils eligible for free school meals
- Key 5 (A Levels) – similar to national average

Comments were made as follows:

Early Years Foundation Stage- This is the first year of the new assessment which shows some concern in that that literacy is the weakest area, followed by maths. Improvement in these areas is the focus of the Early Years Team in their work with schools, settings and childminders.

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check -The number of children who meet the appropriate standard is below the national average and the Team is working with schools to improve this.

It was suggested that phonics does not work for all children, but Officers indicated that this new measure of whether children grasp the basics of phonics was being looked at by Ofsted.

Ian Pittock mentioned that he had heard at a dyslexia organisation training session that Wokingham is the worst authority across the south east at identifying dyslexia at primary level; there seem to be no incentives to do so. Would this have relevance in the phonics scores? Officers indicated they were not aware of that and had not heard it from other sources, such as parents and schools, so they would investigate.

Key Stage 1 - The results above national average show improved attainment in Science, and Speaking and Listening

Key Stage 2 –The results show an improvement of 2% from 2012 and increased percentage above the national average.

There is still a significant gap in achievement for those pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their peers. Overall performance in both groups has improved, but the gap has widened. Officers indicated that addressing this issue across key stages is a priority focus of the work of the School Improvement Team. Judith Ramsden mentioned that shortly she will be meeting with the Department for Education (DfE) and colleagues from other authorities in the SE region to demonstrate the approaches that are being taken to narrow the gap. She will report back to the Committee.

Members were aware of the work being done and that it was the current Year 5 children who should show the most progress as a result of the additional support being given.

Key Stage 4 – The results show considerable improvement, particularly with those achieving 5 A*-C grades, including Maths and English, rising from 65.7% to 70.6%. However, although free school meals pupils improved their performance by 4.8%, the performance gap widened. Wokingham has the largest attainment gap nationally.

Members asked whether schools are ensuring that all those eligible are registered for free school meals. If they are not, this could affect the figures as a wider range of FSM pupils may include higher achieving pupils.

Officers indicated that the reported figures are in relation to the achievements of those pupils at the school, some of whom will not be resident in the Borough. There is no information about Borough pupils who attend schools outside the Borough.

Some Members indicated that the majority of secondary aged pupils in their wards attend schools in adjoining authorities, eg: Edgebarrow and Ranelagh in Bracknell Forest; and Yateley School, in Hampshire. They asked if the test and exam result information for those schools in adjoining area where Wokingham pupils attend could be provided to the Committee. Judith Ramsden said that there may be a capacity issue in providing such information, and she would investigate. However, members said that they needed this information out of interest for their own residents, and fully understood that this Authority could not be held accountable for other Authorities' results. The Chairman said that she had already had discussions with the previous Head of Learning and Achievement, Richard Stanley and he had agreed to publish these results on that basis; however, since he had left, the message had not seemed to be passed on. The matter had therefore already been accepted and officially agreed

Key Stage 5 – the DfE is moving towards a different measure of achievement at post 16, specifying measuring particular subjects. Achievement has reduced marginally, but is similar to the national average. It was noted that 50% of Wokingham's post 16 young people are educated outside the Borough, typically at Bracknell & Wokingham College, Farnborough College and Reading College.

Ofsted Reports

The Committee received and considered a report set out on Agenda pages 34 to 42, giving summaries of recently published Ofsted reports for the following schools:

- Nine Mile Primary – overall rating 2 'good', previous rating 2 'good'
- Shinfield St Mary's C of E VA Junior School– overall rating 2 'good', 3 'satisfactory'
- Earley St Peter's C of E VA Primary – overall rating 3 'requires improvement', previous rating 3 'satisfactory'
- Robert Piggott C of E Infant School – overall rating 2'good', previous rating 1 'outstanding'
- St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School – outcome of first monitoring inspection following judgement in September 2013 that the school required improvement – further actions suggested.

In relation to Earley St Peter's Primary, it was noted that although the school was judged as 'requiring improvement', the Inspector had commented that that leadership and management were good, and the new Headteacher had established an accurate view of what needed to be addressed. Martin Baker said that the new Headteacher was an interim appointment, but that they had agreed to stay on as it would be difficult to sustain progress unless there is stability in leadership and management.

In relation to Robert Piggott Infant, it was noted that the rating had gone down to 'good', with attainment in writing remained weaker than other areas, and achievement was not outstanding overall.

Martin Baker said that there was a particular challenge around maintaining an 'outstanding' rating under the new inspection regime, as the requirements on attainment and achievement were set very high.

In relation to St Dominic Savio it was noted that the Inspector had said that support from local authority had started to bring about improvements.

RESOLVED: That the School Performance and Ofsted reports be noted.

51. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee received and considered the sections of the Balanced Score Card relating to the following headings: Keeping Children Safe; Narrowing the Gap; and Opportunity for All.

The Committee noted that one indicator was marked as red – 7b ‘Safeguarding: % of core assessments completed within 35 working days’ – but that as no further core assessments were awaiting completion this indicator would not be reported in future. It had been superseded by the new indicator -7 – ‘Safeguarding: % of assessments completed within 45 working days’ - which reflects system where initial and core assessments are combined which has been in place since September 2013.

In answer to a question in relation to indicator 8 – ‘Looked After Children: % of children who have had three or more placements within the year’ - Judith Ramsden said that the initial placement was not include in the counting; moving on from the initial placement would count as number one. She went on to say that not all placements are to the detriment of the child; some of the moves are to a final placement, but these are still counted as a placement for the indicator. These could be a move back to live with parents or family, or a move to live with adoptive parents before the adoption process is completed. Corporate Parenting Board receives more detailed information.

Members were pleased to note that in indicator 15 – ‘Youth Offending: rate of re-offending’ - the rate showed a reduction on the previous year’s figure. Judith Ramsden said that this was a reflection of the well-established processes that were now in place.

RESOLVED: That the Children’s Services Performance Indicators be noted.

53. COMMITTEE’S FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Forward programme of work set out in Agenda pages 48 to 54 and agreed to the following amendments:

- 7 July - add the Children’s Social Care Annual Report
- 7 July - add an update on the Children and Families Bill/Act
- 29 September - add update on the Children and Young People’s Engagement Strategy
- Move the Narrowing the Gap progress report from July to September.

These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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