

Report of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

There were two significant pieces of business at the last Scrutiny meeting.

The first was an update on the recent recruitment and retention strategy: this is succeeding. There could be up to five applications from Australia, where our recruitment agency will interview them followed by a Skype interview in Britain; if any are appointed they will be given the same re-location support that is given to people who move within Britain. Apart from these, both recruitment from British people, and retention have improved, and there were only a dozen posts left to fill at the last count. The cost of this strategy will be well outweighed by better retention, and one strand of this which is appealing to staff is that there is now a better career structure with more training and support for promotions.

The second important piece of business was to receive a draft report from the Task and Finish group (which consisted of the whole committee) on its work on the support given to all schools in the Borough, regardless of their status. The Director of Learning and Achievement had summarised the findings, which also included a few points taken from the activities in Hertfordshire and Southend (however, in the main it was not thought that these were examples which would work in Wokingham). The draft report will now be run past leading Head Teachers to gather any more views they have (although it has been remarkably useful to have had three of them attending the Task and Finish group meetings) and then the ultimate draft emailed to committee members for any final comments. It will then be sent as a recommendation to the Executive member for Children's Services.

Apart from this we had our usual Ofsted reports (this time on Bearwood Primary School and Bulmershe). Other performance indicators had not changed since the last meeting since there has been no new data.

A new agenda item in the forward programme is to receive a visit from the Police who will be coming to the next meeting in July to talk about their MASH work - Multi-Agency Sharing Hub, in other words the ways that different partners are working together in Wokingham to share information on children needing protection."

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