

Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Monday 24 November 2014 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
Councillor Lisa Rajan
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Anne Kirby
Councillor James Okosun
Councillor Kath Whittam
Councillor Kieron Williams
Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer

OTHER MEMBERS

PRESENT:

OFFICER & Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care.
PARTNER Robert Rees, Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum (interim) ,
SUPPORT: Lewisham Southwark College

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were no apologies for absence. Councillor Anne Kirby gave apologies for arriving late.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

2.1 There were no urgent items of business.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

5. REVIEW: ATTAINMENT GAP - LEWISHAM SOUTHWARK COLLEGE

- 5.1 The chair introduced the purpose of the review and then invited Robert Rees, Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum (interim), to give an overview of the work of Lewisham Southwark College and address the review questions, which asked how the college:
- ensure as many young people as possible attain 5 good GCSEs
 - enable school leavers to access education, employment or training
 - provide a diversity of educational programmes so all young people can maximise their achievement & progress - including young people with special educational needs or who might have a range of aptitudes
- 5.2 The Vice Principal explained he came in as part of the recovery team in February and will remain until the new principal is settled in. Last November Ofsted graded the college "inadequate", after a moderation process. The vice principal said the college is moving away from inadequate and they are expecting a new inspection in the spring. There is a new emphasis on English and Maths teaching; several colleges have recently been down graded by Ofsted because of this new focus in their assessment process. He reported that there has been a root and branch review of the place of English and Maths in the curriculum. He explained that many students come to the college after 11 years of failing at English and Maths and want to concentrate on vocational subjects so our task is about re-engaging them in a more practical context to ensure they have these crucial skills for employability. He organised a conference on teaching English & Maths, and introduced higher level teachers who train and mentor.
- 5.3 The Waterloo campus is the main hub in Southwark. Lambeth Southwark College is a vocational college – and does not do A levels. Students are preparing for employment or further education and the college do entry level provision up to higher levels. The college caters for about 9,000 adult students, from introductory return to learn programmes up Foundation Degrees and HND, as well as full and part time learning for ESOL. Half the college's students are mature students, often over 30 years old, and for ESOL a significant number are over 40.
- 5.4 The chair commented that there is a strategic link between the college courses and the council administration's manifesto commitment to guarantee education, employment or training for every school leaver in Southwark.
- 5.5 The Vice Principal responded that since he came into post the college have been developing a strategic plan with both boroughs. Stephan Gaskell leads on economic development for Southwark Council and he regularly visits the college -

there is a focus on construction, tourism, health and creative arts, which the college is borderline “Outstanding” on. Hee reported that these are all growth areas for the college.

- 5.6 He explained the college provide a pre GCSE education and students supported include those who are disengaged, school phobic, and some of the brightest young people.
- 5.7 A member asked about links with local secondary schools and the Vice Principal responded the college do not have as many relationships in Southwark as the college do with Lewisham schools, and this may be to do with the history of provision and less ties with the local authority; Southwark has many more Academies. It was suggested that the college linked with Southwark Headteachers Executive.
- 5.8 A member commented that she had contacted the college and tried to get advice and support for her autistic child, but she found the college completely unapproachable as a parent and she had to go elsewhere. The Vice Principal responded that one of the areas he has focused on was recruitment and selection at the introductory day so that students could be supported and given additional learning support. The member emphasised the importance of a named person and the importance of this as a parent of an autistic child. The vice principal said that the college does much better with this cohort, though he did not discount her experience. He said if she came to the day now she would get a named support member of staff.
- 5.9 The Vice Principal was asked about the Bermondsey site and he explained that this had been sold to and this helped fund the Waterloo site.
- 5.10 A member then asked about ESOL provision and the Vice Principal explained this was delivered at the Camberwell site during the day, Waterloo site in the evening, Lewisham had mixed provision. He explained the college support students from entry level up to level 2; people frequently come and study English with the college for a couple of years and then progress to vocational courses .
- 5.11 The Vice Principal was asked about apprentices and he explained the college had over 1300 last year, and this increased recently to 1,500 or 1,600; the college are doing much better than most places. He was asked about success rates and he responded this was not great, however this was showing an improvement. A member asked about apprenticeship quality and the Vice Principal explained that there has been a forensic analysis of people on programmes - for example counting the number of teaching assistants, training and progression . Concerns about poor pay were raised and he agreed that given apprentices can be paid £95 per week the college do want to see investment and commitment in their learning and development. On going support was discussed and the Vice Principal explained that apprentices can return to college for continued learning and employment support, however if the apprentice does not secure a job at the end it is considered a failure. A member asked about current numbers and the Vice Principal said he would get back with this information.
- 5.12 The chair thanked him for his contribution and requested the college fill out the

online survey to assist the Attainment gap review.

RESOLVED

The college will fill out the scrutiny survey and provide more details on the number of pupils:

- with a learning disability
- in supported employment

Scrutiny will provide an introduction to Head-teachers' Executive to improve links with secondary schools.

6. REVIEW : ATTAINMENT GAP - EVIDENCE FROM THE SCHOOL SURVEY

6.1 The chair and project manager fed back on the Headteachers Executive Conference they had attended. A keynote speech had been given by Professor Steve Strand on Attainment of working class white boys and he had offered to provide some academic papers to support the review.

6.2 Members asked for feedback on the headteachers views on the review and the project manager said that the headteachers had suggested focusing on achievement – which encompasses 'progress' and 'attainment'. They had particularly advised this given the changes underway to the testing and exam regime, which is moving to 'norm' referencing rather than 'criteria' referencing. This means the attainment of children will remain a constant proportion of the overall cohort. Members raised concerns about schools losing a focus on attainment, given its importance to children's career and educational life chances, and the importance of raising the attainment to tackle inequality & deprivation. A member highlighted the lower levels of attainment in Southwark's estates and the importance of tackling this.

6.3 A survey has been sent out via email and about 12 schools had completed the survey. This will soon be distributed online to aid ease of completion. Members offered to contact schools to increase engagement and it was agreed that the committee would do this once the online form had gone out for a couple of weeks.

RESOLVED

An online version of the scrutiny survey on the Attainment Gap will be sent out electronically by the Headteachers' Executive, with two weeks to complete. Following that members will contact schools to encourage completion.

7. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) - FOLLOW UP WORK

7.1 Rory Patterson, Director, Children's Social Care, briefly presented the follow up

paper on young peoples' involvement with the CSE strategy. He highlighted that often young people do not see themselves as victims.

- 7.2 The Director commented that raising awareness and concern about CSE has had an impact on the use and availability of secure accommodation as now secure accommodation is being used to home victims to keep them safe. He reported that when he recently inquired about a secure place for young person there was none available. He explained that formerly this accommodation was usually used only for offenders, and using this type of accommodation for victims raises issues both of availability, suitability and the appropriateness of locking up victims, even if it is for their own protection.
- 7.3 A member asked if the availability of secure accommodation is reaching crisis and noted that every May she gets nominated to a Secure Accommodation Panel - but it never meets and she would hate something to be missed. She queried what would trigger a meeting of the Panel. The Director reported that two units have closed recently so there is a significant loss in capacity, alongside this there is the rise in demand due to CSE. Providers are struggling with the welfare needs of CSE victims, and although more are becoming geared up, providers can also say no.
- 7.4 A member commented on the media coverage and that Birmingham Council announced in the media that 130 odd children were CSE victims. The Director commented that this is probably not too much for a city that big. A member commented that there was a tension between communication, the media and the sensitivity of the subject.
- 7.5 The chair reported that the cabinet had endorsed all the scrutiny recommendations and these will now go to the safeguarding board. They had all been accepted at cabinet, and there was not much discussion. The chair highlighted the recommendation for Patchwork, and commented that as this is an innovation tool the company may well be willing to lower the prices as an innovator for research. The Director commented that Southwark is keen to innovate and referred to MASH, which he reported Southwark pioneered and which has now been recommended nationwide.
- 7.6 Members agreed the report was very interesting, but disturbing, particularly the views on violence. The committee were keen that the council contributes to a cultural shift in values. A member referred to the scrutiny recommendation to raise the profile of CSE and commended the Mental Health day used by a CCG in East London and the link with radio station Rezz.
- 7.7 The chair referred to the work plan commitment to conduct a further look a Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation.

RESOLVED

Request more information on the CCG day on Mental Health and link to Rezz as an example of good practice.

Report back on oversight of secure accommodation and in particular the remit and meeting arrangements of any panel or committee with this responsibility.

There will be a 'scrutiny in a day' of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

8. FREE HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS - SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

8.1 The project manager said there was a considerable amount of material on this subject generated by previous iterations of the committee and asked if any members would be interested in going through this and starting to draw conclusions, and Councillor Kieron Williams volunteered.

RESOLVED

The scrutiny project manager will provide Councillor Kieron Williams with a summary of evidence to assist with drafting a report.

9. WORK-PLAN

8.1 The chair reported that she has requested copies of any Serious Case Reviews, to be considered by the committee alongside the Safeguarding report. A member suggested getting more information on Schools and safeguarding. Lambeth do a checklist which is very useful, particularly for governors. Members suggested speaking to frontline practitioners and Norman Gould from Bacons School was recommended.

8.2 It was reported that the autism strategy has been delayed and the consultation is not signed off yet. The SEND process was discussed and Members commented that the website looked rapidly put together. Every school has to have something and include Southwark's local offer. Parents now decide how to use funds and these do not have to be spent on the school; there is now a procurement process. The committee commented that a report with progress on milestones and lessons learnt from pilots would be helpful. It was reported that the Lambeth SEND development process has been very good.

8.3 A focus group for adoptees has been organised for 27th November.

RESOLVED

The next meeting will receive the Annual Safeguarding report, alongside Serious Case Reviews. The Director of Children's Social Care will consult with scrutiny on options for publication.

The details of the consultant involved with the Lambeth SEND process will be circulated to Southwark officers as an example of good practice.

Scope out further work on Safeguarding and how to involve practitioners in scrutiny.

Request a SEND report to be considered alongside the Autism Strategy.