

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 20 May 2015

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Membership

Reserves

All members of the Council.

(The Annual Council Assembly on Saturday 16 May 2015 will agree the size and composition of the committee and appoint the chair and vice-chair. The political groups will formally nominate to places on the committee.

Education representatives

Martin Brecknell, Church of England Diocese
Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer, Archdiocese of Southwark
Abdul Raheem Musa, Parent Governor Representative
George Ogbonna, Parent Governor Representtaive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information

You have the right to request to inspect copies of minutes and reports on this agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

Babysitting/Carers allowances

If you are a resident of the borough and have paid someone to look after your children, an elderly dependant or a dependant with disabilities so that you could attend this meeting, you may claim an allowance from the council. Please collect a claim form at the meeting.

Access

The council is committed to making its meetings accessible. Further details on building access, translation, provision of signers etc for this meeting are on the council's web site: www.southwark.gov.uk or please contact the person below.

Contact Shelley Burke on 020 7525 7344 or email: Shelley.burke@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Eleanor Kelly

Chief Executive

Date: 12 May 2015



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 20 May 2015

7.00 pm

Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Order of Business

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2.	NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT	
	In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.	
3.	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS	
	Members to declare any interests and dispensations in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
4.	MINUTES- 27.04.2015	1 - 3
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 27 April 2015.	
5.	SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS - 2015/16	4 - 6
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	DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.	

Item No.

Title

Page No.

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

**DISCUSSION OF ANY CLOSED ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START
OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.**

Date: 12 May 2015



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 27 April 2015 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Gavin Edwards (Chair)
 Councillor Anood Al-Samerai
 Councillor Jasmine Ali
 Councillor Catherine Dale
 Councillor Karl Eastham
 Councillor Tom Flynn
 Councillor Rebecca Lury
 Councillor Johnson Situ
 Martin Brecknell

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle – Cabinet Member of Adult Care, Arts and Culture.

OFFICER SUPPORT: Shelley Burke – Head of Overview & Scrutiny
 Norman Coombe – Head of Corporate Team
 Stephen Douglass – Head of Community Engagement
 David Quirke-Thornton – Strategic Director of Children's and Adult Services

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rosie Shimell and Adele Morris.

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

2.1 There was no business which the chair deemed as urgent.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES (02.02.2015) & (09.03.2015)

4.1 **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 2 February 2015 and 9 March 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

VIDEO RECORDING OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

<https://vimeo.com/126296510>

5. RENTS FOR COUNCIL PREMISES

5.1 **RESOLVED:**

To request a schedule of premises and their rent levels

To invite Community Action Southwark to present their paper to a future meeting

To request a paper from the Head of Community Engagement for a future meeting

6. HOME CARE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

6.1 Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle (cabinet member for Adult Care, Arts & Culture) and David Quirke-Thornton (Strategic Director of Adults' and Children's services) attended the committee to discuss the home care procurement strategy

7. RESPONSES TO STAFF EMAIL

7.1 The committee reviewed the summary of responses to the chair's email to staff and agreed to consider the following topics for future work:

- The council's use of consultants
- Housing policy for care leavers (children's and housing sub-committees to work together)
- IT (unless already covered in Audit & Governance Committee work programme)

- Digital
- Empty homes (housing sub-committee to lead)

8. CALL-IN ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 **RESOLVED:**

To review the call-in arrangements and make recommendations to the Constitutional Governance Panel

9. HEALTH OF THE BOROUGH REPORT

9.1 **RESOLVED:**

The report was agreed by the committee

Meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

CHAIR:

DATED:

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 20 May 2015	Meeting Name: Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Report title:		Scrutiny arrangements for 2015/16	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Head of Overview & Scrutiny	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Terms of reference

1. To note the size and composition of the overview & scrutiny committee, as agreed by annual council assembly on 16 May 2015.

Establishment of scrutiny sub-committees

2. In accordance with procedure rules, to appoint three scrutiny sub-committees.

The committee should agree the size and composition of the sub-committees, including establishing a sub-committee with responsibility for crime and disorder.

Political groups are entitled to the same number of reserve members as the number of seats they have on each sub-committee.

Size and composition of sub-committees in 2014-15 was:

Scrutiny Sub-Committee	Lab	Lib Dem	Total	Chair/ Vice chair
Education & Children's Services	4	3	7	Lib Dem / Lab
Healthy Communities	4	3	7	Lab / Lib Dem
Housing & Community Safety	4	3	7	Lab / Lib Dem

Co-opted members were:

Education & Children's Services – Church of England and Roman Catholic Diocese representatives, two parent governor representatives, one head teacher representative

Housing & Community Safety – one representative each from Homeowners' Council and Tenants' Council.

Appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs

3. To appoint chairs and vice-chairs of the three scrutiny sub-committees.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Proportionality

4. Seats on committees and sub-committees must be allocated in accordance with the four principles of proportionality contained in sections 15, 16 and 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. When making appointments, committees (in appointing sub-committees) have a duty to give effect to the following principles, as far as is reasonably practicable:
 - (i) That not all the seats on a committee or sub-committee are allocated to the same political group;
 - (ii) That the majority group must have the majority of seats on each committee or sub-committee;
 - (iii) Subject to (i) and (ii) above, it must be ensured that the proportion of each political group's seats of the total number of seats on "ordinary committees" reflects as closely as possible their proportion of seats on full council; and
 - (iv) Subject to (i) to (iii) above, the proportion of each political group's seats on each committee and sub-committee reflects as closely as possible their proportion of seats on full council.

Note: This rule applies to all committees, sub-committees and joint committees, except for licensing committee and community councils.

Scrutiny sub-committees

5. Sub-committees are not "ordinary" committees and are each considered individually for the purposes of proportionality. So far as it is reasonably practicable to do so, the allocation of seats on each sub-committee should bear the same proportion to the number of the seats held by that group on the council.
6. The most proportionate allocation will depend on the number of members of the sub-committee. The table below shows the most proportionate arrangement for individual sub-committees:

Size of sub-committee	Lab	Lib Dem	Con
Nine seats	7	2	0
Eight seats	6	2	0
Seven seats	5	2	0
Six seats	5	1	0
Five seats	4	1	0
Four seats	3	1	0

7. Members can agree an allocation that is disproportionate, provided no Member votes against this. In previous years, the committee has varied the size and numbers on each sub-committee to provide for greater cross-party representation.
8. The constitution specifies that the appointment and composition of scrutiny sub-committees be considered by the first meeting of overview and scrutiny committee.

Appointments to seats

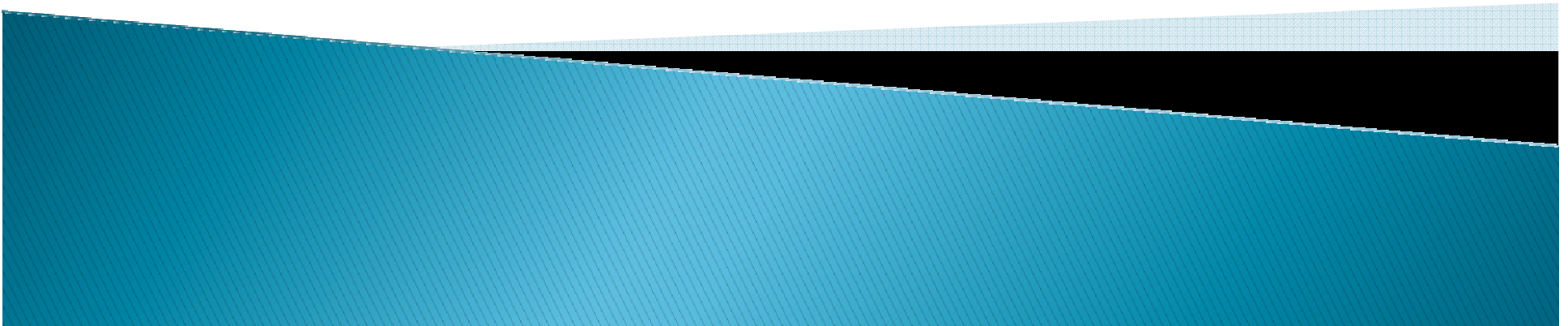
9. Section 16(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides that it is the duty of the authority or committee to exercise their power to make appointments to a body as to give effect “to such wishes about who is to be appointed to the seats on that body which are allocated to a particular political group as are expressed by that group”.
10. There is no requirement that a seat allocated to a particular group can only be filled by a member of that group. Therefore groups have the discretion to allocate seats as they wish, including to a member of another group.

Background papers	Held at	Contact
Agenda – Annual Council Assembly, 16 May 2015	160 Tooley Street London SE1 5LX	Ian Millichap Constitutional Manager Tel: 020 7525 7225

Audit Trail

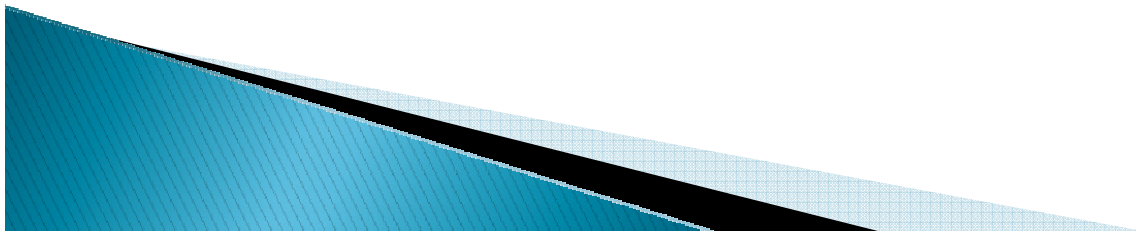
Lead Officer	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	
Contributors		
Version	Draft	
Dated	May 2015	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Included in the report
Cabinet Member	N/A	

OSC Work Programme 2015-16



What we did last year...

1. Procurement
2. Free, Swim & Gym - (continue to monitor?)
3. 11,000 new homes - (continue to monitor?)
4. Cycling Strategy
5. School Places



What we did last year...

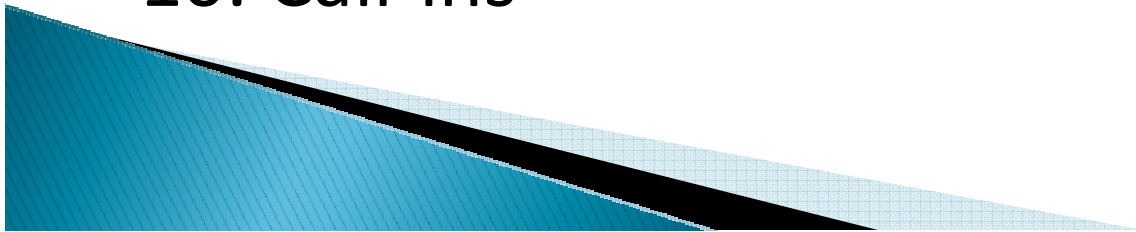
6. Casework systems

7. Regeneration schemes

8. Cabinet Member interviews

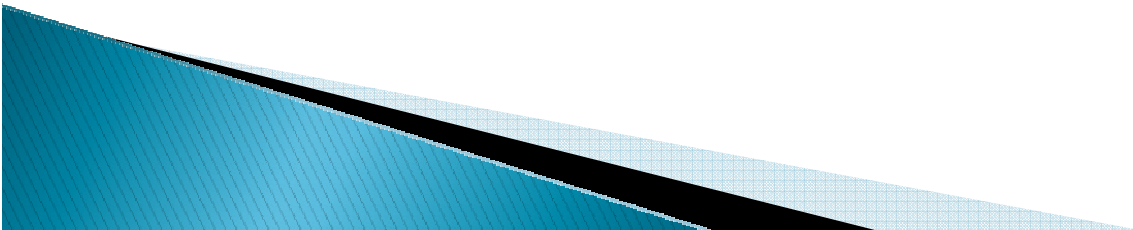
9. Budget Scrutiny

10. Call-ins



Unfinished . . .

1. Council rents for voluntary and business premises
2. School place planning



Innovations...

1. Live Webcasting



2. Survey of council staff

Southwark Council Overview and Scrutiny - ideas for scrutiny

1. What issue would you like to suggest that Overview and Scrutiny investigates? (please give a

There is no requirement for you to provide your name and contact details if you do not wish to. However, if you do wish to provide details for this issue, please give your details below. All personal information provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

2. Name:

3. Email address:

4. Telephone:

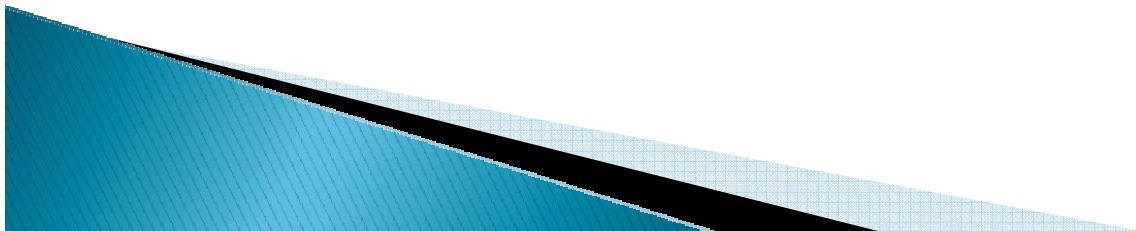
Thank you for taking the time to provide this information. Please press "Done" to send this information.

From the staff survey...

1. The council's use of consultants
2. Housing policy for care leavers (children's and housing sub-committees to work together)
3. IT
4. Council's approach to digital
5. Empty homes (Housing sub-committee to lead)

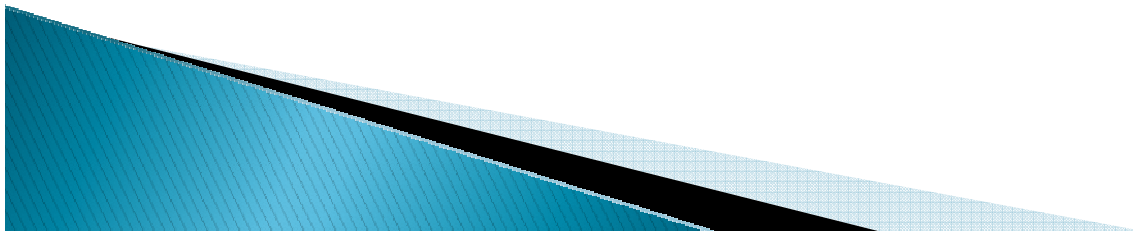
This year... suggestions

1. Right to buy for housing associations/forcing councils to sell in “expensive” areas (work with housing-sub)
2. Council rents for voluntary and business premises (continued)
3. Approach to digital
4. IT systems
5. Underpayment of national minimum wage in Southwark



Other innovations?

1. More team working?
2. How should we change cabinet member interviews?
3. Budget Scrutiny?



Narrowing the Achievement Gap draft report

May 2015

Education and Children's Services scrutiny sub-committee

www.southwark.gov.uk



DRAFT

**NARROWING THE ACHIEVEMENT
GAP**

Report of the 2014/15 Education and Children's
Services Scrutiny Sub-committee

May 2015

The logo for Southwark Council features a large, stylized, cursive letter 'S' on the left. To the right of the 'S', the word 'Southwark' is written in a smaller, cursive font. Below 'Southwark', the word 'Council' is written in a simple, sans-serif font.

Southwark
Council

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1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee decided to conduct a review on Narrowing the Attainment Gap in June 2014.
- 1.2 The starting point was raising educational attainment and promoting positive outcomes for all children in the borough. This review aimed to positively impact on delivering the council plan commitments to :
- ensure that 70% of students at every secondary school get at least 5 good GCSEs.
 - guarantee education, employment or training for every school leaver in Southwark.
- 1.3 The sub-committee initial discussions considered the concept of 'attainment', which is presently defined as 5 'good' GCSEs, which means 5 or more GCSEs graded C – A*, including English & Mathematics. Presently 65.2% of Southwark pupils attain 5 or more good GCSEs.
- 1.4 It was noted that while some children experiencing ethnic, gender, economic, social or emotional deprivation or discrimination are underachieving because of disadvantage, other children may not gain 5 good GCSEs for other reasons, for example special educational needs. Whatever a child's ability or aptitude it is still important to ensure that all children progress and reach their potential.
- 1.5 The Headteachers' Executive recommended focusing on achievement – which encompasses 'progress' and 'attainment'. They particularly advised this given the changes underway to the testing and exam regime, which is moving to 'norm' referencing rather than 'criterion' referencing. This means the grade attainment of children will remain a constant proportion of the overall cohort. They also said that many schools invest heavily in all their children and as a result children with significant disadvantages or challenges do make progress, and they would like this to be fully recognized.
- 1.6 The sub-committee was clear that attainment must remain an important focus, given its importance to children's educational, career and life chances, and that narrowing the attainment gap between disadvantaged groups is vital to tackling inequality and deprivation. However the sub-committee also wanted to ensure that the bottom 30% is equally well catered for and able to realise their full potential, and have access to a range of opportunities to progress.
- 1.7 The sub-committee particularly examined the provision for children at risk of poor educational and employment outcomes, including Looked After Children, Permanently Placed children, children experiencing particular ethnic and socioeconomic disadvantage, children & young people with emotional, social or behaviour problems and children & young people with special educational needs (SEN).

- 1.8 The review reframed its focus to look at the broader concept of 'Achievement' in schools. The report looks at how schools, and the wider system, can narrow the *attainment* gap between the most disadvantaged pupils and their counterparts; while ensuring that all children *progress* and reach their full potential, particularly those with special needs.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 The sub-committee used a variety of methods to gather evidence including officer reports; a survey of schools on attainment; a survey of school leaders on integration, a school field visit; a report and presentation from Lewisham Southwark College; engagement with the Headteachers' Executive; evidence from Southwark Youth Council; research papers on BME achievement; research & presentations on raising the attainment of white working class children; and a presentation from an organization working to support the educational needs of Permanently Placed children.

- 2.2 Officers provided reports on the following:

- Overview of Children in Care
- Schools performance update
- 16 Plus Progression and Performance
- Changes to the curriculum and the exam and testing regime – with specific reference to its impact on disadvantaged & less academically inclined young people
- A detailed report on the performance of children in care and the current education, training and employment support given.
- A report on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability (D) provisions (SEND) which came into force on 1st September

- 2.3 Southwark Youth Council attended to give their views on the review.

- 2.4 Members of the sub-committee attended a meeting of the Headteacher's Executive to discuss the review.

- 2.5 The Annual Headteachers' Executive Conference was attended, including a presentation by Professor Steve Strand on White Working Class British and Minority Groups. The following papers by Steven Strand were then circulated:

- BERA Insight Ethnic Achievement
- The White British-Black Caribbean achievement gap: tests, tiers & teacher expectations

- 2.6 Further research on White Working Class achievement was then considered:

- A Select Report: Underachievement in Education by White Working Class Children

- A research report and presentation from Lambeth Council : White Working Class Achievement – A study of barriers to Learning in Schools by Feyisa Demie and Kirston Lewis
 - A research proposal and presentation from education researchers Edna Mathieson and Peter Chester, who along with others, set up the Southwark Community Education Council and the 'Widening Horizons' outpost at the London School of Economics for Southwark young people.
- 2.7 A report and presentation was received from Lewisham Southwark College
- 2.8 A survey looking at how schools closed the achievement gap was sent to the 103 Southwark Secondary, Primary, Nursery and Special Schools. 17 schools responded.
- 2.9 A survey was handed out to attendees at the Headteachers' Executive conference asking about the impact of the wider social determinates of well-being on children's academic progress . This asked for examples of good and poor integration. Two responses were received.
- 2.10 A field visit was undertaken to Bacon's College to look at their work integrating therapeutic services so they contribute to the emotional wellbeing of the whole school.
- 2.11 A Policy Seminar was held on 14 April 2015 to discuss the findings of an earlier draft of this report, and other reports by the sub committee. This event was well attended by senior teachers, parent governors , senior managers, education officers and researchers.

3 Context: Southwark schools, Further Education provision and the role of the Local Authority.

Local Authority and Schools

- 3.1 The role of the Local Authority in education has decreased over the last several years. There is now an increasingly autonomous school system, with rising numbers of Free Schools and Academies, and more power delegated to Maintained Schools. The introduction of Pupil Premium is the main method by which the achievement gap is narrowed for disadvantaged children.
- 3.2 The council still maintains key responsibilities and its statutory responsibilities include duties to secure sufficient places, assist parents in finding a school place of their choice, tackling underperformance, ensuring the education of Looked After Children (LAC) and identifying and supporting children with special educational needs (SEN). The council provides support to schools through the early help, special education, and school improvement teams – for example in addressing poor attendance, education for excluded children and for Looked After Children.

School Provision – overview

- 3.3 There are 103 Southwark schools: 72 primaries, 18 secondary, 8 special and 5 nursery schools.
- 3.4 Most of the primary schools are maintained by the local authority with 6 academies (Dulwich Hamlet Junior, Globe, Goose Green, Harris Peckham Park, Redriff, John Donne) and 3 free schools (Southwark Free School, Judith Kerr, Harris Peckham).
- 3.5 Most of Southwark's secondary schools are Academies, some stand alone and others part of Academy chains: Harris Academies sponsor four schools; Ark two schools, the Church of England two schools and the Catholic Church two schools. There are also three voluntary aided & council maintained Church of England & Roman Catholic schools and one Free school, which has recently opened.

Overview of School Performance – current attainment and progress

- 3.6 We have generally high achieving Southwark Schools.

Primary

- 3.7 *Attainment* At Key Stage 2 (year 6 primary school) Southwark schools are above the national average with 77 % of pupils achieving level 4 in English and Mathematics combined. Southwark schools are in the top quartile nationally for reading, maths and the new grammar punctuation and spelling tests.

- 3.8 *Progress* Children at KS2 are expected to make 2 levels of progress from the end of Year 2 to end of Year 6. In 2013 91% (88%) pupils achieved expected progress in reading, 93% (92%) writing and 91% (88%) in Mathematics. This puts Southwark in the top quartile for progress levels, out performing national average, as shown in brackets.

Secondary

- 3.9 *Attainment* 65.2% of pupils attained 5 or more good GCSE (A* - C grades at GCSE including Mathematics & English), an improvement of 6.4 percentage points from 2012 (58.5%). Results have significantly improved over the last two years and are now above National Average (60.8) and slightly above London (65.1%)
- 3.10 *Progress* 78.3% of pupils made the expected progress between KS2 (end of Year 6) and GCSE's in Mathematics (a 3.2 percentage point increase on 2012) and 80.1% in English (a 5.1% percentage point increase on 2012). This places Southwark above national average and statistical neighbours.

Further Education provision

- 3.11 The committee did not examine the provision and performance of local 6th form colleges in depth, however it did consider the Further Education provision that young people not on an academic pathway would access. Children with Special Education Needs are more likely to access this provision.
- 3.12 There were concern with the diversity and adequacy of the local offer post 16 for children not on an academic pathway. Most local 6th form colleges do not offer vocational courses as they do not have the facilities. The largest local provider of vocational courses, Lewisham Southwark College (formally LeSoCo) has been judged inadequate overall, although with pockets of good performance, and the college was invited to submit a report and attend a meeting. There are some other alternatives: the local Independent Specialist College, Orchard Hill, is judged 'outstanding' and NASH is judged 'good'. Bromley College is judged 'good' and all are used by local young people.

4 Changes to the exam and testing regime

4.1 The government has changed the secondary examination and testing regime. The following changes will be delivered through a three year implementation programme which began with the National Curriculum in 2014 and will be followed by progressive implementation of new GCSEs and A' levels in 2015/16/17.

4.2 The key changes are:

- GCSE will remain as the level 2 standard but will be completely revised.
- At 16 performance will be judged on Students' achievement across eight subjects
- GCSEs will be graded using to 'norm' referencing rather than 'criteria' referencing
- There will be a significant reduction in number of qualifications.
- Vocational and work-based learning will be re-defined around applied and tech level routes for 16-19 year olds.

GCSEs and Key stage 4

4.3 GCSEs from Sept 2015 very much resemble the old O level qualifications. Assessment will be at the end of the two year course (May or June of year 11) and will be assessed through written examinations that are externally marked by the exam boards.

4.4 Grading will be numerical 1 to 9 with 9 being the highest grade and an 'ungraded' level. No decision has yet been made as to where the "pass" (currently C or above) boundary will be set.

4.5 There will be four measures of performance :

- Students' progress across eight subjects between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage This will show how they have performed and the average of all students' progress will create the school's result. This will be called the *Progress 8* measure.
- The school's average grade across the same suite of eight subjects. This will be called the *Attainment 8* measure.
- The percentage of students achieving a pass grade or higher in English and Maths
- The percentage of students gaining the EBacc, which will continue in its current form.

4.6 GCSEs will be graded using to 'norm' referencing rather than 'criterion' referencing. This means the attainment of children will remain a constant proportion of the overall cohort. In a criterion-referencing system work of a certain standard gets the same grade every year, whereas in a norm-

referenced system the number of candidates gaining each grade is kept the same each year, even if their performance is improving.

- 4.7 The Headteachers' Executive advised that given the move to norm referencing, and the importance of judging schools on their performance in enabling all children to reaching their potential, that it is increasingly important that the schools are judged on both progress and attainment. They suggested that the council updates its aim to reflect this.

Recommendation 1

The exam and testing regime is changing along with the measure of attainment. When the council updates its council plan to reflect these changes it is recommended that new targets are set using both Attainment 8 and Progress 8 to measure school performance.

5 Achievement and provision for disadvantaged children

Pupil Premium

- 5.1 Pupil Premium is the main method by which schools are given additional money to ensure the achievement gap is narrowed for disadvantaged children.
- 5.2 Schools receive the funding for each child registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.
- 5.3 Children who have been in local-authority care for 1 day or more also attract £1,900 of pupil premium funding. Funding for these pupils does not go to their school; instead it goes to the virtual school head (VSH) in the Local Authority that looks after the child.
- 5.4 Schools also receive directly a higher rate for each pupil who has left Local Authority care because of one of the following:
 - adoption
 - a special guardianship order
 - a child arrangements order
 - a residence order

Narrowing the Attainment Gap School Survey

- 5.5 17 schools completed the survey: one nursery school, 11 primary schools, 4 secondary schools and one special school.
- 5.6 They were asked 6 questions:
 - I. What are the key groups of pupils needing extra help that your school has identified?
 - II. What are the gap(s) in achievement that you are you trying to narrow?
 - III. What specific options have been identified to improve attainment for each group of pupils and what has been achieved?
 - IV. What evidence do you have that outcomes have improved?
 - V. How are you using the Pupil Premium for each disadvantaged child to improve attainment?
 - VI. How can your school contribute to Southwark Council's commitment to guarantee education, employment or training for every school leaver in Southwark?
- 5.7 Schools identified the following children as the key groups needing extra help, listed in approximate order of number of times mentioned:
 - White British children, particularly: boys, those with poor language skills, challenging behavior, poor attendance, apathy/ low aspirations.
 - Black Caribbean children
 - Pupils with social and emotional difficulties
 - Pupils with special needs / SEND

- Children on Free School Meals / economically disadvantaged
- Children who need to learn English as an Additional Language (EAL), particularly those children from single parent households and/ or with emotional & social needs
- Looked After Children- on a Care Plan or a Child in Need
- More able children
- Travelers
- Young carers
- Asylum seekers / refugees/ Children with no recourse to public funds

5.8 Schools said they were using a range of methods to narrow the gaps in achievement, these included:

- Use of classroom and school data
- Improving school teaching
- Individualised learning plans making use of data with targeted interventions – often in a cycle of 6 weeks
- Learning mentors to enable children to overcome blocks to learning, obtain study skills, build confidence and aspirations
- EAL classes
- Targeted Homework clubs, Saturday and Holiday classes
- One on one support for children with SEND
- Additional support for English and Maths (particularly English)
- Expert teacher behavior support
- In school counselling, buying in CAMHS, art psycho-therapy and therapeutic storytelling
- Development of emotional, social, motivational and study skills
- Whole school emotional, social and behaviour interventions
- Enrichment activities – art, trips, music etc.
- Links with business and careers advice
- Work with parents to support their child's study at home, parenting programmes, parental literacy classes, initiatives to promote parental involvement with school.
- Interventions to deal with absence
- Work to address social issues affecting children
- Programmes to enable carers to study at home

5.9 The sub-committee looked at the needs of for five groups in more depth: Looked After Children, Permanently Placed Children, Children from disadvantaged socioeconomic and ethnic groups, White Working Class Children and children with emotional, social or behavioral problems.

Looked After Children (LAC)

5.10 Southwark has a dedicated Looked After Children (LAC) Education Team that exists to support the highest possible education outcomes for Southwark's looked after children. Southwark's LAC Education Team builds relationships with schools, social workers, carers and multi-agency professionals. Working collaboratively in multi-agency contexts, the team maintains a focus on the educational needs and aspirations of the looked after child. Education

Advisors hold schools to account for pupils' education attainment and progress.

- 5.11 Southwark is a diverse borough and has a relatively high number of looked after children compared with other boroughs. Southwark had 339 children on the LAC Education School list in 2013/14 and 263 children continuously in care for 12 months. 60% of children attend schools out of the borough.
- 5.12 Most pupils enter care at low starting points. Depressed attainment levels on entry to care may be attributable to (i) pupils missing education (ii) care histories (iii) the impact of coming into care (iv) the weighting of this cohort towards special educational needs.
- 5.13 The national incidence of all statemented pupils is 2.8%. According to DfE published data, the Southwark LAC incidence is 34.6%, higher than London LAC (29.6%) and England LAC (28.5%).

Attainment of Looked after Children at Key Stage 2 (Year 6 end of Primary)

- 5.14 Attainment. 2012/13, fifteen Southwark pupils were included in the DfE measure of LAC KS2 attainment making meaningful interpretation problematic given each Southwark pupil is worth over 6%. Southwark LAC performed lower than London LAC (percentage gaps: reading 1, writing 12, GPS 5, maths 12). The attainment gap with all Southwark pupils remains relatively similar at 16% for reading and 30% for maths.
- 5.15 Progress. 85% of the Southwark LAC cohort achieved 2 levels of progress in reading, 75% in writing and 81% in maths.

Key Stage 2 outcomes, DfE published data 2010/11 to 2012/13 (attainment ?)

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13				
	Southwark LAC	Southwark LAC	Southwark LAC	All England LAC	London LAC	All Southwark	Gap with ALL Southwark (%)
No of eligible pupils	10	15	15	2290	290	2736	
L4+ English/reading	x	71%	71%	63%	72%	87%	-16
L4+ writing	N/A	71%	57%	55%	69%	84%	-27
L4+ GPS*	N/A	N/A	50%	45%	55%	78%	-28
L4+ maths	x	57%	57%	59%	69%	87%	-30
Exceeding LAC national average							

Attainment and Progress of Children at Key Stage 4 (GCSE)

- 5.16 In 2012/13, 26.7 % of Looked After Children (LAC) achieved 5 good GCSE's Outcomes for Southwark LAC in all key attainment measures are higher than outcomes for all England LAC and all London LAC. Since 2009, attainment in English and Maths at GCSE grades A* to C has risen year on year.
- 5.17 Southwark LAC attending secondary schools in Southwark achieved higher than the 60% of children who attend schools outside of the authority. Pupils that are placed out of borough are furthest adrift from age-related expectation. Here the attainment gap increased to only 23.1% attaining 5 good GCSEs.
- 5.18 Years 10 and 11 represent the largest group of newly-looked after young people and here the gap with age-related expectation is greatest. Looked After Children are placed out of borough as more specialist foster care placements are sought to manage most complex needs.

Key Stage 4 outcomes, DfE published data 2010/11 to 2012/13

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13				Gap with ALL Southwark (%)
	Southwark LAC	Southwark LAC	Southwark LAC	All England LAC	London LAC	ALL Southwark	
No of eligible pupils	40	30	45	4870	790	2346	
5+ GCSE A* - C	50%	31%	42.2%	36.6%	38.9%	85.1%	-42.9
5+ GCSE A* - C inc Eng & ma	26.2%	x	26.7%	15.3%	20.8%	65.2%	-38.5
A-C Eng & ma	26.2%	x	28.9%	15.1%	21.9%	66.7%	-37.8
Exceeding England LAC and London LAC outcomes							

- 5.19 The sub-committee discussions with officers highlighted the better outcomes for the 40% of LAC children educated in Southwark and concerns with the adverse impact caused on a child's education when they are moved out of

the borough. Officers acknowledge this and said they were seeking more local foster placements for more challenging young people, however there will also be a few children that need to be moved out of the borough for their safety:

Recommendation 2

Continue to prioritize finding more local foster & care placements, particularly when it is needed most at year 10 & 11, given the adverse impact moving has on a child's education.

Permanently Placed Children

- 5.20 The sub committee had a presentation from PAC UK on meeting the educational needs of Permanently Placed children. Permanently Placed children include children who are Adopted, have Special Guardianships, Residence Orders, are Fostered, Looked After or otherwise permanently placed.
- 5.21 The presentation from PAC UK was requested following a workshop with adoptive parents. A number of attendees were members of a local adoption peer network and they raised concerns about the quality of some school's support for adoptive children and their families and the importance of this.
- 5.22 DfE data released in 2014 showed that at key stage 2, educational outcomes for Permanently Placed children are more similar to Looked After Children than the general population. This is likely to be because of the attachment issues caused by grief, loss and the often traumatic experiences the permanently placed children have experienced in their early lives; 70% of those adopted in 2009-10 entered care due to abuse or neglect. According to PAC-UK, even children placed at a very young age can experience significant difficulties at school, perhaps due in part to their adverse in-utero experiences.
- 5.23 PAC UK reported that there is a lack of recognition of permanently placed children's needs; many school staff do not understand contemporary adoption, and perceive adopted children as 'lucky', and their early experiences as things 'they won't remember'.
- 5.24 Permanently Placed children do attract significant funding through Pupil Premium; however families need to identify their child to the school as this is not automatic. The Policy Seminar breakout group on the review noted that schools need to be adequately equipped to deal with the stigma of adoption with awareness and sensitivity.
- 5.25 The Policy Seminar also emphasized the importance of regular reviews for adopted children, and regular communication between the school and the

parents/carers, particularly to discuss where funding will spent. They emphasized the of empowering adopted parents to have more choices and giving them a voice in the process.

- 5.26 PAC –UK reported that there is often a lack of understanding about Permanently Placed children’s needs; attachment is not addressed in teacher training, and few staff have thought about the impact of trauma and loss. There is a clash of culture in some instances, as the strategies which support Permanently Placed children to thrive sometimes require schools to examine their values, beliefs and behaviours at a systemic level e.g. in their approach to behaviour management.
- 5.27 PAC-UK explained that whereas Looked After Children have robust structures to monitor, champion and meet their needs these same Designated Teachers and Virtual Schools have no remit with permanently placed children, even though they have vital understanding about attachment and trauma.
- 5.28 PAC –UK recommended a whole school approach by providing training for all school staff on contemporary adoption, attachment and the impact of trauma and loss. The training offers a framework within which children’s difficulties can be understood, and provides evidence-informed implementable strategies.
- 5.29 They also provide child-focused and school-focused systemic consultations for groups of school staff, in which schools can develop their good practice. This can include developing supervision for school staff to manage the emotional impact of working with children with high levels of emotional needs.
- 5.30 PAC-UK advised that this approach can be beneficial for many of the children at school, as around 40% of children are insecurely attached to their parents or their primary care givers. A better understanding of the how to meet the emotional and learning the needs of children who have been traumatized, experienced loss or grief, or have attachment needs can improve the behavior, academic progress and emotional wellbeing of the whole school.
- 5.31 Both the adoption focus group and PAC-UK spoke about the impact that difficulties at school can place upon children and families. Compared to the general population Looked After Children are eight times¹ more likely to be permanently excluded from school and are more likely to be absent from school. The disruption and stress this causes families can be a contributory factor in placements breaking down.
- 5.32 PAC UK recommended identifying an Adoption Advocate within each school, in a role analogous to that of Designated Teacher. PAC-UK facilitates an Adoption Advocate Network, in which groups of committed local schools can share good practice and develop resources.
- 5.33 Sub-committee members noted that some schools are aware of these issues and very able to cater for children with attachment issues, suffering from trauma, or who have experienced grief or loss and this was acknowledged.

- 5.34 Officers commented that most Southwark children are adopted outside of the borough, so working directly with Southwark schools would not impact directly on those children, however it was agreed that improving support for Permanently Placed children in Southwark would benefit children placed locally.
- 5.35 At the Policy Seminar the breakout group recommended that Southwark children placed outside of the borough be supported for as long as the adopter requires. They said that the voice of adopted families should be at the heart of the adoption journey and emphasized the importance of working in partnership with adoptive parents.
- 5.36 The scrutiny School Survey, while only a relatively small sample, did identify Looked After Children as a priority group, however no school identified Permanently Placed children as a key group. Schools did, however, frequently identify children with emotional difficulties as a key group and a significant number had integrated emotional wellbeing, behavior support, and therapeutic services into their school model.

Recommendation 3 & 4

Ensure the needs of Permanently Placed children are highlighted to schools, alongside the training programme provided by PAC –UK

Link the expertise of the LAC team to local schools with Permanently Placed children.

Children from disadvantaged socio-economic & ethnic groups

- 5.37 Officers provided data on different ethnic groups achievement

% achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C including English & maths

Ethnic Group	2012			2013		
	LA	National	Difference	LA	National	Difference
White	54.6	58.7	-4.1	61.4	60.4	1.0
Mixed	61.1	60.0	1.1	68.2	62.7	5.5
Asian	69.8	63.4	6.4	67.2	64.9	2.3
Black	59.2	55.3	3.9	65.8	58.7	7.1
Chinese	78.6	78.8	-0.2	81.8	80.1	1.7
All Pupils	58.8	59.1	-0.3	65.2	60.8	4.4

- 5.38 The lowest achieving groups are White and Black children, however this data does not account for socio-economic status.

- 5.39 The committee received evidence from Professor Steve Strand. His study explored the size of ethnic, gender and social class gaps in achievement at age 14 and asked what factors might account for ethnic achievement gaps.
- 5.40 He found that primarily policy needs to focus on social-economic deprivation and that for most minority groups, high levels of socio-economic deprivation can account for the achievement gaps. He welcomed Pupil Premium. However his research found that Black Caribbean students are distinctive, since socio-economic status (SES) can not account for their achievement gap and they are the only ethnic group making less progress than White British students aged 11-14. This was also true of relatively advantaged Black Caribbean students, particularly boys.
- 5.41 He identified that Black Caribbean students were systematically under-represented in entry to the higher tiers of national tests at age 14 and this could not be accounted for by prior achievement or a wide range of other factors.
- 5.42 He also identified problematic school discipline trends for Black Caribbean students and wrote that it is well established that the odds of Black Caribbean students being permanently excluded from school are twice as high as the odds for White British students, and that the odds of Black Caribbean students being statemented or at School Action Plus for Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) are 2.3 times higher than for White British students.
- 5.43 Professor Steve Strand therefor recommended that schools should monitor and review ethnic patterns in disciplinary actions and the ethnic composition of sets and tiers of entry to GCSE examinations.

White Working Class Children

- 5.44 The other group Steve Strand recommended paying particularly attention to was White working Class pupils, girls as well as boys.
- 5.45 The sub-committee considered a recent Select Committee report on the 'Underachievement in Education by White Working Class Children'. The report referred to recent finding by Ofsted which identified that White British children eligible for free school meals are now the lowest-performing children at age 16, with only 31% of this group achieving five or more good GCSEs.
- 5.46 The sub committee went on to consider research conducted by Lambeth Council on White Working Class Achievement, and local education researchers, Edna Mathieson and Peter Chester, who set up Southwark Community Education Council (SCEC), a supplementary education charity which provides additional support to local children and, their parents.
- 5.47 The sub-committee heard that the attainment of White British pupils is polarized by social class to a greater extent than any other ethnic group. White British pupils from managerial and professional homes are one of the

- highest attaining groups, while White British pupils from working class homes are the lowest attaining group.ⁱⁱ
- 5.48 The research by Lambeth Council was considered to be particularly applicable as the demographic is so similar to the borough of Southwark. It was conducted in 2010 and based upon 16 Lambeth schools. The study examined data and used proven research methodologies to explore the view of pupils, teachers, parents, headteachers, and governors. The report confirmed the under achievement of white working class children and identified the following as key issues: A Lack of parental aspiration, A lack of engagement with children's schooling, Marginalisation and a perceived loss of culture, The impact of poverty on white working class children's achievement, The impact of unsuitable housing stock on achievement, Low literacy levels and language deprivation, and a lack of targeted support.
- 5.49 The Lambeth Council research and the educational researchers evidence particularly highlighted that white working class parents often do not see their pivotal role as educators and the importance of their engagement with their child's education, and this can be compounded by parents own poor literacy and language and past poor experiences in school. Therefore they consider work with parents to be very important.
- 5.50 Sub-committee members highlighted the importance of aspiration, particularly given how changes to the global economy have adversely impacted on what was the traditional white working class – there are now few secure, reasonably well paid, low or semi skilled jobs.
- 5.51 Sub-committee members also highlighted the importance of targeted language support for white working class children and adult education literacy classes for parents. This is different than the extensive provision of English as an Additional language (EAL) by schools for children whose first language is not English. The research noted that children accessing this can by year 6 have a better grasp of English than their white working class peers as they have had the advantage of a wider vocabulary in their mother tongue to draw upon and so a richer language heritage.
- 5.52 The researchers further noted the importance of cultural transmission and that 'Education cannot compensate for society'ⁱⁱⁱ. They quoted Professor Mongon on the importance of a holistic approach to addressing the problem of working class underachievement:
- "it's not single factors which make a difference, but as many contributors to the success of children from low income families as possible.....child, family, school, neighbourhood, community....having people around them that believe in them, encourage them, challenge them, support them."*
- 5.53 The education researchers advised that the research report produced by Demie and Lewis provides an invaluable blueprint which Southwark could utilise as a point of departure to conduct further research. They highlighted the following recommendations, noting that many of these points are already enshrined in Southwark's policies and practices:

- strong and inspirational leadership by the headteachers;
- sustained high levels of expectation for all pupils, parents and teachers;
- the promotion of an inclusive curriculum, which raises aspirations and, importantly, meets the needs of white working class pupils (and their parents);
- development and maintenance of close links with parents and increasing community support, which earns the schools the trust and respect of parents;
- effective use of data and rigorous monitoring systems which track individual pupil performance;
- good and well targeted support for white working class pupils through extensive use of teaching assistants and learning mentors;
- critically, sustained and continuous effective support for language development amongst white working class pupils;
- co-ordinated support for the transition between primary and secondary sectors;
- celebration of cultural diversity, including working class culture, and a strong commitment to equal opportunities.

5.54 The education researchers , Edna Mathieson and Peter Chester recommended that the Local Education Authority and the corresponding services of Southwark Council together seriously address the under achievement of White Working Class students . As part of this Pupil Premium could be a valuable funding option. They offered to conduct a research project free of charge.

Recommendations 5 & 6

- 5 Bring the research of Lambeth Council, and the Southwark Education Community School education researchers insights, on white working class attainment to the attention of local schools through the education department and the Headteachers' Executive.
- 6 Assist schools in improving the provision for low income and deprived parents, in recognition of their pivotal role in children's education, particularly in areas where there is a high disparity of wealth. In particular take measures to assist schools engage parents, and improve the provision of parental literacy classes and community education. Take steps to assist families in housing need, especially the needs of displaced children whose families have had to move to access housing.

Children with emotional, social or behavioral problems

5.55 Children with emotional and social problems were consistently flagged as a group in need by the survey, and sometimes as another vulnerability alongside social disadvantage, such as being white working class, or needing to learn English as an Additional Language, or having no recourse to public funds. Challenging behavior, poor attendance, apathy or lack of engagement or aspiration was another linked theme.

5.56 These were popular interventions to address these issues:

- Individualised learning plans making use of data with targeted interventions – often a cycle of 6 weeks
- Learning mentors to enable children to overcome blocks to learning obtain study skills, build confidence and aspirations
- Expert teacher behavior support
- In school counseling, buying in CAMHS, using the services of Place2Be, art psycho-therapy and therapeutic storytelling
- Development of emotional, social, motivational and study skills
- Whole school emotional, social and behaviour interventions
- Work to address social issues affecting children
- Enrichment activities – art, trips, music etc.

Bacon's College – Case study

5.57 Two fields visits were made to Bacon's College to review their Student Services; Student Services uses therapeutic and targeted interventions to address the social, emotional and mental health needs of the most disadvantaged students who attend the college so that students are supported to thrive academically and personally.

5.58 There is a large dedicated team led by assistant head Norma Gould, who is both a qualified counsellor and trained teacher. The staff team includes professional counsellors, a Parent Support & Attendance officer, and a trained social worker who takes on the role of Family Support & Child Protection officer, a range of mentors, including an academic mentor, and a Personal Wellbeing / PSHE Coordinator who leads the Emotional Wellbeing programme. The team is supported by a full time administrator. Student Services works closely with the Heads of Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 and with the pastoral teams they lead.

5.59 415 students received some form of targeted intervention from the Student Services team between September 2013 and July 2014. The figure of 415 students represents about 38% of the College's cohort, meaning two in every five of Bacon's College students have received support from the Student Services team last academic year.

5.60 Student Services work in a number of ways. One of the most important is through a cycle of weekly meetings of the Integrated Support Panel (ISP) for those children most at risk, about one in ten or 12% of the total cohort. This meeting ensures that the Key Stage Assistant Headteachers along with

members of their pastoral teams meet with Student Services and SEND staff to plan and review the interventions provided for these students.

- 5.61 Counselling is provided to about 10% of students, and this cohort includes a significant number of socially disadvantaged students and children with SEN
- 5.62 Other interventions included pastoral or academic mentoring, integration (for students new to the college) and reintegration programmes for those who have been placed temporarily in alternative provision, targeted attendance work, and individual personal development coaching with sixth-form students.
- 5.63 There are also a range of group provisions included the targeted group programmes provided to different subsets of students including the Mentivation Young Leaders' workshops (Year 7–10 boys), the 'Aiming High' Identity workshops (for students who are able but underachieving) and the Personal Development workshop programme for students in the Sixth Form.
- 5.64 There is a successful Peer Mediation service delivered by 6th formers who are trained and supervised by Southwark Mediation Service.
- 5.65 The school undertakes a range of more extensive safeguarding work with around 63 children. A qualified social worker has recently been appointed to this role and this work involves meeting with young people and their parents in most cases, with a number being referred to a range of specialist agencies including Southwark and Lewisham CSC (Children's Social Care), Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP), the Specialist Family Focus team (SFFT), the Families First team (FFT), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Early Help Service (EHS).
- 5.66 The school is proactive around Child Sexual Exploitation, social media and young people at risk of gang involvement.
- 5.67 The school reported that the expectations for schools around safeguarding have increased significantly, with schools expected to be more vigilant and proactive. In addition the Principal, John Martin, reported that more children are presenting with social, emotional and behavioural problems.
- 5.68 The assistant headteacher has written about the role of schools in helping young people navigate the complexities of adolescence and the positive role integrated therapeutic services can play in creating a school that is more able to respond to the educational and developmental needs of students.^{iv}
- 5.69 The Principal emphasized the importance of emotional wellbeing as a core value for the school as this provides the safety that children need in order to be able to learn. He evidenced the significant increase in attendance, improvement in behaviour and better rates of academic progress as demonstrating the Student Services programmes contribution to pupils' educational success.

Recommendation 7

Promote Bacon's College good practice in providing a whole school approach to wellbeing and use of therapeutic and targeted interventions to address the social, emotional and mental health needs of the most disadvantaged students, particularly to ensure the bottom 20% make good progress.

6 Integration between schools and other services

- 6.1 The sub-committee sought out evidence of the quality of integration between schools with council, health and other services by raising this with the Headteachers' Executive at meetings, at their conference through a questionnaire and on the field visit to Bacon's College. Pupil Premium is the main method by which schools are given additional money to ensure the achievement gap is narrowed for disadvantaged children.
- 6.2 The support given by the Local Authority education department team of advisors was praised and considered effective.
- 6.3 The school nurse provision was also praised by both Bacon's College and a survey respondent. It was described as effective and praised for utilizing a simple geographical model with clear communication with schools.
- 6.4 Parental services were also praised and it was noted that if one parent accesses this service then this has a good ripple effect with other parents at the school; there was a call for more positive parenting strategies.
- 6.5 Communication between social care and schools was picked up as an area of concern by both Bacon's College and a survey respondent. Changes to local social care delivery was reported as having caused disruption, however officers said the move to cluster arrangements would improve local communication between social work teams and schools. Communication with social workers was described as 'inconsistent' and 'variable' – sometimes it could be good, but was not always reliable and Bacon's College reported that on occasions the school was not informed of important issues impacting on pupils.
- 6.6 Communication with CAMHS was also picked up as an area of concern. A survey respondent said there were 'too many social workers and CAMHS workers to be dealt with for children / SENCO / Leaders in schools'. Norma Gold recommended that there was a dedicated link person so relationships could be established between CAMHS and schools. This was so trust and understanding could be built up, particularly around referrals.
- 6.7 Concerns were raised about access to adequate social work and CAMHS, with both survey respondents raising concerns that not all families were receiving the quality social and family support they needed.

- 6.8 Concerns were also raised that children needed to reach a very high threshold to receive support from CAMHS, which was described as 'decimated' by recent cuts. The sub-committee heard in a presentation on Child Health Services that there is a concern about the top tier of Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) nationally and that there was a big demand locally for paediatric acute mental health crisis beds, with children having to access beds outside of London on occasions. The sub-committee heard evidence from the NHS Southwark's Clinical Commissioning Board (CCG) that there is a growing pressure nationally & locally and the CCG is seeing an increase in demand since the changes in commissioning. The CCG are conducting an analysis into why this is happening.
- 6.9 The recently published report 'Future in mind: Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing' concluded that there is emerging evidence of rising need in key groups. Services are seeing increasing rates of young women with emotional problems and young people presenting with self-harm. The report's data and audits reveal increases in referrals and waiting times, and this was particularly true for vulnerable children and families. The report said that providers are reporting increased complexity and severity of presenting problems. Changes to commissioning and the lack of clarity and accountability for child mental health service were sited as a problem. Following the reports publication the recent government budget allocated £1.25bn money to mental health to improve provision for young people.^v
- 6.10 The need for better communication between schools and the Police, Housing, Probations Service was also highlighted by schools, with families waiting years for resolution of visa problems and housing issues.
- 6.11 Survey respondents advised that CAMHS and Social Workers be based in schools to deal with the small but significant number of children who need these services. Some schools (such as Bacon's College – see above case study) and respondents to the school survey had taken steps to provide some counseling, therapy and social work provision in-house.

Recommendations 8,9 & 10

8 Improve the consistency and communication by Social Work teams to schools by ensuring that schools have a consistency link. Look at the deployment of school nurses as an example of good practice – schools praised the simple geographical model and clear communication lines.

9 Improve communication between schools, Housing, Probation Services and the Police.

10 Invest in further provision of CAMHSs and ensure that there is one consistent CAMHS link person for every school.

7 SEND: Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability (D) provisions for children & young people

- 7.1 The Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability (D) provisions (SEND) set out in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, came into force on 1st September 2014. This legislation represents the biggest change in SEND legislation for 30 years. The reforms extend provision from birth to 25 years of age and extend rights and protections to young people by introducing a new Education, Health and Care plan replacing SEN statements. Professionals will also provide more tailored support to families, providing help and assistance as appropriate and relevant to needs. The main changes are
- To place families, parents and young people at the heart of the changes using a 'person centered' approach;
 - A co-ordinated assessment leading to an outcome focused integrated Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) from 0-25 years;
 - An EHCP that offers statutory protection for the provision identified and redress to the SEND tribunal from 0-25.
 - Jointly commissioned services between the Local Authority (education, social care adults and children's) and health;
 - A Local Offer setting out all services available to families, children, parents and young people with SEND from 0-25 and how services are accessed across Education, Health and Social Care.
 - The right to request a personal budget for services identified in the EHCP, extending choice and control;
 - Bringing all schools, nurseries and Further Education providers under the same SEND legislation and responsibilities (including academies and free schools)
 - Increased access to information, advice and support for parents, carers and young people aged 0-25.

The Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and the Local Offer

- 7.2 The SEN team has designed a new assessment process and EHC plan, in conjunction with social care and health colleagues. 43 consultation sessions were held with parents, carers and young people, involving 513 consultees providing input to the development of the EHC plan and the content of the Local Offer; however concerns were raised that parents and carers in work had not had sufficient opportunity to contribute.
- 7.3 To date 22 EHC Plans have been finalised within the 20 week period, and 31 are at the last stage of finalisation. Thirty three plans are in the co-production stage. Officers reported that initial feedback from parents on the new process is very positive.
- 7.4 In addition to the new process, the Local Authority must transfer all existing statements to EHCPs within 3.5 years. Southwark has over 1,500 statements to transfer. The priority for this year is Year 11, sixth formers moving on and year 5. In addition many young people with Learning Difficulty Assessments post 16 will also request an EHCP to continue in education.

- 7.5 The council must provide information about all of its services for children and young people with SEND in one accessible place: the Local Offer. Southwark's Local Offer is now available at www.localoffer.southwark.gov.uk. The Local Offer provides information for parents, young people and professionals on all aspects of SEND from 0-25. Information can be found on Education, Health & Wellbeing, Care, Housing, Transport, Employment, Benefits and Information, Advice & Advocacy. Officers reported that Young People have requested a dedicated site for young people, and this is being developed. The sub-committee commented that the website would benefit from more extensive information, particularly on post 16 options for employment, apprenticeships and traineeships.

Recommendation 10

Ensure that the Local Offer website covers the full range of training and apprenticeships for all young people, particularly young people with special needs and support available

8 Lewisham Southwark College and Further Education provision

- 8.1 Lewisham Southwark College (formerly LeSoCo) is the main and largest provider of post-16 education and training across both London boroughs and is one of the biggest colleges in London with 17,000 students, 650 staff and an income of nearly £38m. The College's provision is wholly vocational, occupational or professional and is aimed at getting people in to work. The College operates across a wide educational spectrum and supports young people and adults from pre-Entry Level through to Level 5 (equivalent to the second year of an honours degree) and includes provision for people with learning disabilities and difficulties.
- 8.2 Lewisham Southwark College was formed in August 2012 (as LeSoCo) with the merger of Southwark and Lewisham Colleges. The college was judged as "inadequate" overall following an inspection by Ofsted in December 2013. It was judged inadequate for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and was inadequate in the provision of English and maths. Following that the college has been re-inspected twice, and both times Ofsted has found "insufficient improvement for learners". At the time of writing this report, 30 March 2015, the college received a further highly critical Ofsted report that rated overall effectiveness as inadequate. This is a huge concern to the committee.
- 8.3 An interim leadership team is in post with a permanent Principal due to start in summer 2015. The Interim Vice Principal attended a sub-committee meeting in November. He explained that one of the reasons for the inadequate rating is Ofsted's new emphasis on English and maths, and a number of colleges have been downgraded using this new assessment framework. He said the college is now working on improving this area, in particular. The college is focusing on construction, tourism, health and creative arts, which the college is borderline "Outstanding" on. These are all growth areas for the college.
- 8.4 The college reported strong partnerships with the Local Authority and Lewisham Schools, but that links were less strong with Southwark schools, and that this might be because more are academies.
- 8.5 The committee raised concerns with the quality of Apprenticeships, and the number of young people completing these and gaining employment at the end. This was a concern of the Ofsted re-inspection in November 2014, who returned to the previous inspection's finding that too few apprentices achieve their qualifications and complete their programmes within the expected time. Ofsted said that this remains the case and they continued to be concerned. They found that the numbers of apprentices who achieve and complete their programmes successfully are increasing slowly, as are the numbers that achieve within their expected time-scale, but these remain too low.^{vi} The college reported that it had over 1300 apprentices last year, and this increased recently to around 1550. The sub-committee emphasized the importance of quality programmes and high standards; given apprentices can be paid only £95 per week it is important there is investment and commitment to their learning and development.

- 8.6 The sub-committee and officers raised concerns with the diversity of the post 16 vocational offer, particularly given the poor performance of Lewisham Southwark College over the last couple of years, however officer advised that 6th Forms often struggle to offer vocational courses as they lack the facilities.

Recommendations 12, 13 & 14

Southwark Council works with Lewisham Southwark College to improve its provision of quality apprenticeships.

Improve the diversity of the post 16 year offer for young people by investing in widening the provision at local sixth forms, where possible, and ensuring that young people, parents and carers fully understand the range of alternative options and are well supported in transition.

Southwark Council must develop an exemplary further education offer for current and future students of Lewisham Southwark College as a matter of urgency, particularly considering the impact such a poor offer has on local learners. Moves should be made to develop plans to improve the opportunities for local learners focused on defining what a 'good further education offer' looks like by; working with the funding agencies, providers and others key stakeholders to develop this.

9 Conclusion and policy seminar feedback

- 9.1 A policy seminar was held on 14 April to discuss the findings of an earlier draft of this report, and other reports by the sub committee. A presentation on the report was given by the Principal of Bacon's College on the school's focus on wellbeing. The Principal particularly emphasized the need to tackle the lack of progress of a residual 20% of students and the effectiveness of Bacon College's programmes in ensuring this cohort do make considerable academic and personal progress by addressing the underlying emotional and social issues.
- 9.2 Following the presentation a breakout group was held on the draft report and the finding and the groups was asked to pick out three points. This was very well attended by headteachers, senior health and social care managers, elected members and parent governors.
- 9.3 The policy seminar breakout group firstly affirmed the reports focus, and Bacon's College good practice in improving the wellbeing and behavior of students by addressing the mental health, emotional and social needs of young people, particularly in ensuring good progress for the most disadvantaged young people. The recommendation to take a proactive approach to mental health by adopting Bacon's College best practice was supported, as was the need for better integration and links with CAMHS.
- 9.4 The policy seminar secondly emphasized the importance of engaging low income parents and the wider community in facilitating a learning community, and addressing the adverse impact poor housing has on education. Housing deprivation and the importance of parental literacy and engagement were identified as issues in the Lambeth Council report the sub-committee considered on raising the achievement of white working class parents.
- 9.5 In particular an elected member noted that Southwark families are being displaced and moving out of the borough, sometimes to take up an offer of larger housing. Children are then travelling a long way as they do not want to change schools.
- 9.6 The importance of working with low income parents, particularly in places where there are high levels of wealth disparities, was emphasized. The report of the Headteachers' Executive on Summer Loss was noted, whereby children of poorer parents do not participate in the same level of enrichment activities over the holidays. The pivotal role of parents as informal educators and the wider community in promoting a learning culture, beyond the learning day was highlighted. A quote in the longer report from Professor Mongon on the importance of a holistic approach to addressing the problem of working class underachievement was referred to:

"it's not single factors which make a difference, but as many contributors to the success of children from low income families as possible.....child, family, school, neighbourhood, community....having people around them that believe in them, encourage them, challenge them, support them."

Practical examples suggested included parental literacy classes and Millwall football club being more engaged with community education.

- 9.7 The third issue the policy seminar highlighted was the importance of a good Further Education offer and improved transition. Participants emphasized that a good quality Further Education would offer Southwark young people a richer menu to inspire and motivate them to achieve, beyond the narrow focus on academic attainment offered by most 6th forms. It was noted that without a good offer young people are at risk of becoming disillusioned and demotivated.
- 9.8 Transition between primary and secondary, and later to Further Education, employment or training was highlighted as a time when young people are particularly at risk of becoming disengaged from education and training.
- 9.9 The three main points identified by the policy seminar were:
- Focus on children's & young people's wellbeing, emotional health and social issues to improve behaviour and academic progress.
 - Engage low income parents, and the wider community, in facilitating a learning community, and address the adverse impact poor housing has on education.
 - A better Further Education offer is vital to inspire, motivate and effectively address the learning, training and employment needs of young people not on an academic pathway. Transition support is crucial, as young people are at risk of disengagement when they transfer to secondary, and then Further Education.

10. Summary of recommendations

- 1 The exam and testing regime is changing. When the council updates its council plan to reflect these changes it is recommended that new targets are set using both Attainment 8 and Progress 8 to measure school performance.
- 2 Continue to prioritize finding more local foster & care placements, particularly when it is needed most at year 10 & 11, given the adverse impact moving has on a child's education.
- 3 Ensure the needs of Permanently Placed children are highlighted to schools, alongside the training programme provided by PAC -UK.
- 4 Link the expertise of the LAC team to local schools with Permanently Placed children.
- 5 Bring the research of Lambeth Council, and the Southwark Education Community School education researchers insights, on white working class attainment to the attention of local schools through the education department and the Headteachers' Executive.
- 6 Assist schools in improving the provision for low income and deprived parents, in recognition of their pivotal role in children's education, particularly in areas where there is a high disparity of wealth. In particular take measures to assist schools engage parents, and improve the provision of parental literacy classes and community education. Take steps to assist families in housing need, especially the needs of displaced children whose families have had to move to access housing.
- 7 Promote Bacon's College good practice in providing a whole school approach to wellbeing and use of therapeutic and targeted interventions to address the social, emotional and mental health needs of the most disadvantaged students, particularly to ensure the bottom 20% make good progress.
- 8 Improve the consistency and communication by Social Work teams to schools by ensuring that schools have a consistency link. Look at the deployment of school nurses as an example of good practice – schools praised the simple geographical model and clear communication lines.
- 9 Improve communication between schools, Housing, Probation Services and the Police.
- 10 Invest in further provision of CAMHSs and ensure that there is one consistent CAMHS link person for every school.
- 11 Ensure that the Local Offer website covers the full range of training and apprenticeships for all young people, particularly young people with special needs, and that the site details all employment support available.
- 12 Work with Lewisham Southwark College to improve its provision of quality apprenticeships.
- 13 Improve the diversity of the post 16 year offer for young people by investing in widening the provision at local sixth forms, where possible, and ensure that young people, parents and carers fully understand the range of alternative options and are well supported in transition.

14 Southwark Council must develop an exemplary further education offer for current and future students of Lewisham Southwark College as a matter of urgency, particularly considering the impact such a poor offer has on local learners. Moves should be made to develop plans to improve the opportunities for local learners focused on defining what a 'good further education offer' looks like by; working with the funding agencies, providers and others key stakeholders to develop this.

Members of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee who led this review:

Elected members:

Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
 Councillor Lisa Rajan (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Evelyn Akoto
 Councillor Anne Kirby
 Councillor James Okosun
 Councillor Kath Whittam
 Councillor Kieron Williams

Education representatives:

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 Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer
 Abdul Raheem Musa
 George Ogbonna

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Julie Timbrell

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 PAC-UK: Dr Emma Gore Langton
 Professor Steve Strand
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 Southwark Youth Council
 Bacon's College: Principal John Martin & Assistant Headteacher Norma Gould
 Compass School Southwark (Secondary)
 Bethlem & Maudsley Hospital School
 Nell Gwynn Nursery School
 Comber Grove Primary School
 Redriff Primary School
 Ilderton Primary School
 St Michael's Catholic College (Secondary)
 Notre Dame RC Girls' Secondary School
 City of London Academy –Southwark (Secondary)
 St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Walworth
 St. Johns' Roman Catholic Primary School
 Grange Primary School
 Albion Primary School
 St John's Walworth Church of England Primary School
 St John's and St Clement's Church of England Primary School
 Surrey Square Primary School
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 Liz Britton, Manager, Priority Learners
 Stephan Gaskel, Head of Strategy and Partnerships

References

ⁱ PAC UK A good Practice Guide for Schools, page 10, quoting Department for Children, Schools and Families 2009

ⁱⁱ Denis Mongon: Educational attainment - White British students from low income background. Research paper for Ofsted's 'Access and achievement in education 2013 review'

Denis Mongon: Successful leadership for promoting the achievement of white working class pupils
<http://www.teachers.org.uk/files/successful-leadership-summary.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Basil Bernstein's statement (Karl Mannheim Professor of Education, University of London),

^{iv} Chapter 3, 'Keeping the school in mind', Therapeutic Practice in Schools Volume Two: The Contemporary Adolescent: A Clinical Workbook for counsellors, psychotherapists and arts therapists.

^v Future in mind, Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Department of Health 2015
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414024/Childrens_Mental_Health.pdf

^{vi} page 3 Ofsted Follow up re-inspection report November 2014

Southwark's Adoption Service draft report

May 2015

Education and Children's Services scrutiny sub-committee

www.southwark.gov.uk



1 Summary

How is Southwark's adoption service doing, from the perspective of a child in our care, of an adopter, and of a taxpayer?

Changes in national adoption policy present significant opportunities for Southwark's adoption service to improve outcomes for children in our care, to help more people adopt successfully, and to streamline service delivery.

Specifically, recent moves to a) speed up the adoption process, and b) remove race-related restrictions on prospective adopters can, if implemented thoughtfully, improve outcomes for our children and help us create a more efficient service.

Data shows that the Southwark adoption service is already making significant progress but not enough and not quickly enough. This review sets out some further steps that will improve outcomes for all our stakeholders and position Southwark as a model for others to follow.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Adoption has undergone a significant transformation following the release of the Narey Report in 2012. The implications for local authorities, their partners and children in care can be found in the government-published documents 'An Action Plan for Adoption: tackling delay', and 'Further Action on Adoption: finding more loving homes'.
- 2.2 The aim of the reforms is a faster and less complex adoption process where age, race or secondary issues like being a smoker would cease to be a barrier for prospective adoptive parents.
- 2.3 The scrutiny committee's concern is what this has meant for children in our care. Close examination of the 'adoption scorecard' containing the information that must be sent to central government suggests that the local authority is improvement bound. The role of the scrutiny committee is to get underneath the quantitative data of the scorecard and find out how we were doing from an adoptive family's perspective and the perspective of a child in care. We also obtained the views of an outside expert. The following report is based on the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny's review into the adoption process in Southwark in 2014/15.

3 Children in our care

3.1 Compared to national rates Southwark has a high rate of referrals; as at October 2014 these stood at 3200. There are 3000 children in need and 330 children with a child protection plan.

3.2 There are 537 children in care and the breakdown of placement types is

- 78% of children in care are placed with foster parents
- 9% are living in residential settings
- 5% are living independently
- 9% of children leaving Southwark's care were adopted.

3.3 Educational outcomes

- 31% have a SEN (national average is 3%)
- 92.8% average attendance (96.8% primary)
- 60% are in schools outside of Southwark
- 26.7% achieved 5 good GCSE's (Southwark average is 65.2%)

Evidence gathering

4 Scrutiny session with service representatives

In October 2014 a scrutiny session took place with Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Social Care and Alasdair Smith, Head of Adoption Service. A verbatim account of it is available. The key points are

4.1 Following the introduction of the adoption performance 'Scorecard' the council ran a successful adopter recruitment campaign which resulted in the number of approved adopters increasing from 21 to 29. This increase, of more than one third, is encouraging, but the base number of adopters in one of Britain's largest Boroughs is still very low.

By the end of 2014/15 (31 March 2015) Southwark will have achieved 39 adoptions. This is the highest number of adoptions when compared to the seven London LAs which were recently inspected under the new Ofsted Single Inspection regime.

4.2 The average time taken between a child entering care and moving in with her/his adoptive parent is 676 days. Performance has been improving over last five years and the latest results show improvement of 60 days. The trend is still more than 100 days short of the government's 547 day target and 30 days short of the national average. The next published Scorecard (2012/15) will show a more significant improvement. Timeliness is expected to drop to approximately 550 days, very close to the Government threshold.

Looking at 2014/15 timeliness alone Southwark was in target at 431 days:

- 4.3 The average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family has shown improvement. Matching in 2013/14 took 46 fewer days than previous years.
- 4.4 8 out of the 33 children took longer than 200 days to be matched with an adopter. All were White British (5 boys and 2 girls) except one who was White and Black African. In 2014/15 6 children were matched in under 100 days and 2 of these were matched in one month.
- 4.4 The volume and proportion Number and percentage of children where the permanence decision has changed away from adoption has been increasing for the past three years. Southwark's 2010-13 3-year average was 14% which is above the national average result of 9%. 2013/14 annual performance shows a 15% reversal rate and confirms that performance is in decline
- In 2014/15 Southwark has seen 9 cases where the permanence decision has changed away from adoption. This is down on 2013/14 results which showed 11.
- 4.5 Number and percentage of children aged over 5 who are adopted is below average. While Southwark's 3-year average figure has improved from 1% to 2% it is still below national and statistical neighbour averages. At the end of September 2014, 4 out of 22 children adopted were age 5 or over (18%). In 2014/15 there have been 8 children aged over 5 who were adopted (22%). Performance is improving, but Southwark is below comparators.
- 4.6 At the end of September 2014 11 out of 22 (50%) children adopted were from BME backgrounds.
- 4.7 There is an under representation of different ethnic groups amongst adopters with a shortage of prospective adoptive parents from black, minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 4.8 Given the diversity of the borough, Southwark could be a shining example of transracial adoption. The service is targeting their marketing materials to attract more adopters from varied backgrounds.

In 2014/15 just over ¼ of all adoptions were transracial which officers evidenced to demonstrate to evidence that family finders understand that ethnicity considerations alone should not prevent an otherwise good match between a parent and child. Southwark also dispels the myths and promotes transracial adoption on their website.

- 4.9 The average time between a child coming into care and moving in with its adoptive family needs to be lower. An improvement of 60 days will be crucial to a baby or toddler. Legislative changes mean that families can now foster to adopt and the Council is looking into enabling this.

5 Focus group with adoptive parents

A focus group with eight adoptive parents and representatives of the scrutiny subcommittee was held on December 2014. The reports from the participants were mainly positive, but here we focus on what can be improved. A detailed note of the meeting is attached. The key findings are as follows

- 5.1 Concern about "assessment cheating". New adopters are only coming into the system to complete assessment and training once they have 'registered' as adopters in the induction process.
- 5.2 Two adopters (one with Southwark) were concerned that they had at least three social workers (one of which was a social work manager). Both felt they would have benefited from more continuity.
- 5.3 One adopter had been in the process since April and has not been matched
- 5.4 Matching issues on the lines of race: one applicant said that she had been turned away from Southwark four years ago because she was the "wrong colour", and that even now she has been ruled out of adopting a mixed race child, in a neighbouring borough, because she and her children are all white.
- 5.5 Adopters from Southwark say that there are not many mixed families in the borough and that families tended to be matched in keeping with the family's ethnicity.
- 5.6 One adopter proposed networks to support 'black, white and mixed adoptions'.
- 5.7 The Life Story Books were criticised for taking too long to compile. One adopter reported that her child's book took over a year to put together and when it arrived it had "inappropriate language". It also contained details of the birth mother's last name, an obvious safeguarding issue.
- 5.8 Post adoption support was seen by those who have successfully adopted as very good.
- 5.9 Training on adoption was seen as very good when delivered by people who had experience of adoption. Examples of training delivered by a woman that had her child adopted out were given.
- 5.10 One family thought that the training given by social workers was "valuable stuff" but the delivery was dry and hard to follow.

- 5.11 One adopter explained how her experience of her child's schooling exposed a need for teacher training on the needs of adopted children. She said that all schools should have a better understanding of the issues that can confront children who have been adopted. Other adopters agreed with this.
- 5.12 It was felt that the scenarios used throughout the assessment and training process were designed to put people off adopting. There was a recognition that people needed to be prepared for dealing with difficulties but one participant felt there needed to "be more balance", and a number of people recommended more stories from adopters; which are frank on the challenges and difficulties, but also spoke of the joys.
- 5.13 Social media has changed the way in which 'contact' is perceived. One adoptive parent said 'Facebook has changed everything'. Adoptive children will find it easier to track their birth parents through social media.
- 5.14 All the adopters praised support immediately after adoption, with alternate weekly visits from the child's and parents' social worker. However the three year mark can be when support drops off. Dealing with school is hard, and parents commented they found it hard to access support packages. More training of teachers on the needs of adoptive children and the type of support available was recommended.

6 Scrutiny session with representative from PAC – UK

The subcommittee had a presentation from PAC UK on meeting the educational needs of Permanently Placed children. Permanently Placed children include children who are adopted, have Special Guardianships, Residence Orders, are fostered, Looked After or otherwise permanently placed.

A scrutiny session was held with PAC UK in January 2015. Details of the session are attached the key points were as follows:

- 6.1 Education outcomes for Permanently Placed children are more similar to Looked After Children than the general population. This is because of the attachment issues caused by grief, loss and the often traumatic experiences the permanently placed children have experienced in their early lives; 70% of those adopted in 2009-10 entered care due to abuse or neglect.
- 6.2 According to Pac UK, even when adopted at a very young age children with histories of trauma present with poorer levels of academic attainment.
- 6.3 Permanently Placed children do attract significant funding through Pupil Premium, however families need to identify the child to the school as this is not automatic. Yet attachment is not addressed in teacher training, and few staff has thought about the impact of trauma and loss.

- 6.4 Looked After Children have robust structures to monitor, champion and meet their needs these same Designated Teachers and Virtual Schools have no remit with permanently placed children, even though they have vital understanding about attachment and trauma.
- 6.5 PAC –UK recommended a whole school approach by providing training for all school staff on contemporary adoption, attachment and the impact of trauma and loss. The training offers a framework within which children’s difficulties can be understood, and provides evidence-informed implementable strategies.
- 6.6 They also provide child-focused and school-focused systemic consultations for groups of school staff, in which schools can develop their good practice. This can include developing supervision for school staff to manage the emotional impact of working with children with high levels of emotional needs.
- 6.6 PAC-UK advised that this approach can be beneficial for many of the children at school, as around 40% of children are insecurely attached to their parents or their primary care givers . A better understanding of the how to meet emotional and learning the needs of children who have been traumatized, experienced loss of grief, or have attachment needs can the improve behaviour and academic progress and emotional wellbeing of the whole school.
- 6.6 Both the adoption focus group and the PAC-UK spoke about the impact that difficulties at school can place upon children and families. Compared to the general population Looked After children are eight times more likely to be permanently excluded from school and are more likely to be absent from school. The disruption and stress this causes families can be a contributory factor in placements breaking down.
- 6.7 PAC UK recommended identifying an Adoption Advocate within each school, in a role analogous to that of Designated Teacher. PAC-UK facilitates an Adoption Advocate Network, in which groups of committed local schools can share good practice and develop resources. They also recommended ensuring that the Looked After Children’s teams a educational officers expertise is utilised for the needs of permanently placed children, as they have experience in supporting the education of children experiencing the similar issues.
- 6.7 The scrutiny School Survey, while only a relatively small sample, did identify Looked After Children as a priority group, however no school identified Permanently Placed children as a key group. Schools did , however, frequently identify children with emotional difficulties as a key group and a significant number had integrating emotional wellbeing, behaviour support, and therapeutic services into their school model.

7 Policy Seminar with stakeholders

On 14th April 2015 a policy seminar was held to discuss the draft report and findings with a range of stakeholders, including an adoptive parent from the peer support network "We Are Family", committee members, adoption frontline staff and senior managers. The following range of issues were discussed:

- 7.1 A housing strategy is required for prospective adopters to provide suitable accommodation.
- 7.2 Schools need to be equipped to deal with the stigma of adoption with awareness and sensitivity. Regular reviews are needed for adopted children, and there should be regular communication between the school and the parents/carers, particularly to discuss where funding will spent.
- 7.3 Policy should affirm the positive role of same sex and transracial adopters who were willing to take on older children.
- 7.4 The voice of adopted families should be at the heart of the adoption journey. The service needs to work in partnership with adopted parents. Southwark children placed outside of the borough need to supported for as long as the adopter requires and their needs should be highlighted.
- 7.5 A recommendation is needed to ensure adopted parents are empowered to take more choices and to give them a voice in the process.

8 Conclusion

The scrutiny committee valued the opportunity to discuss the changes in the adoption service and the subsequent performance information on the adoption scorecard with practitioners , senior children's services managers and adoptive families.

The adoption service has already implemented changes in the way it works as a result of this review.

Notwithstanding the ethnic diversity of Southwark, the national trend of black children being less likely to be adopted is prevalent here too.

In the UK black children are three times less likely to be adopted than white children. Southwark has responded by targeting more black families to come forward to adopt. What may be necessary is a closer look at how children's services have adapted to culture change required to deliver the results required by the new processes of adoption.

But there is more to do: a dialogue is needed at every level of children's services on how we can let prospective adoptive families know that that ethnic considerations will not prevent an otherwise good match. What matters is that Southwark is more

concerned in finding loving stable homes as quickly as possible for children that come into our care.

The discussion with PAC UK was also useful and supports the views of the adoptive families that met with the scrutiny committee. The committee will use the findings to inform the review on education and achievement.

It would also be useful to see what the aspirations for these children are. Scrutiny may wish to test some of this thinking

9 Recommendations

The review has highlighted many things that make Southwark adoption a positive and successful service. However it has also provided evidence to enable the council to further improve its service.

The goal should be to make Southwark a shining example by delivering a fast, safe adoption service, the best in the country.

- One that actively encourages people to adopt by balancing the challenges of adoption with the joys of adoption , and utilizes the experiences of adoptive and birth parents to do this
- One that completes all assessments in six months and follows this up by actively matching
- One that prioritizes the timely creation of life story books with due regard to sensitivity and age appropriateness of material, particularly when dealing with difficult issues and the ability of children to track birth parents through social media
- One that is not blind to national and ethnic differences but is not transfixed by them either
- One that places the voice of the adoptive parents at the heart of the services, empowers them to make more choices and gives them a voice throughout the process
- One that supports children and families all the way through the process, and throughout the adopted child's education
- One that puts in place provisions to support permanently placed children in schools, and monitors the long term educational outcomes of all permanently placed children, both in and out of Southwark schools
- One that pioneers new forms of best practice for contact in the digital age, balancing risk with opportunity

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- 1. The latest 2011/14 Scorecard shows 9% of children leaving Southwark's care were adopted. This is a 3% improvement on the previous Scorecard.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-15****AGENDA DISTRIBUTION LIST (OPEN)****NOTE:** Original held by Scrutiny Team; all amendments/queries to Shelley Burke Tel: 020 7525 7344

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