

Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Monday 27 November 2017 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Karl Eastham
Councillor James Okosun
Councillor Catherine Rose
Councillor Kath Whittam
Martin Brecknell
Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer

OTHER MEMBERS

PRESENT:

OFFICER SUPPORT: Nina Dohel, Director of Education
Terry Segarty, Head of Standards
Bridget Nichola, CCG Designated Clinical Officer for SEND
Kate Moriarty-Baker, CCG Director of Quality and Chief Nurse will be attending for representing health.
Yvonne Ely, Head of SEN & Inclusion, Children's and Adults' Services
Shirley Walker, Head of Service Children with Disabilities, Transitions, Out of Hours and National and Specialist CAMHS Social Workers
Julie Timbrell, scrutiny project manager
Sunil Chothi, Independent Sen advocate
Mrs Helen Poyton, Chair of Southwark primary Headteachers

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were apologies for absence from Councillor Samantha Jury – Dada.

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

2.1 There were no urgent items of business.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

5. SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE

Nina Dohel, Director of Education, and Terry Segarty, Head of Standards, presented highlights from the draft 'Best start in life -Southwark School standards report 2016-17', circulated with the agenda.

The chair then invited comments and questions from the committee:

- It would be beneficial if we could track the number of care leavers on the Council apprenticeship program.
- How are the new arrangements for the virtual headteachers going? The Director responded that there will be a report by the virtual headteachers.
- Some groups of children and young people are under achieving; what are we doing to tackle this? The Head of Standards commented that Early Years is important and also ensuring there is a wide and broad curriculum so we are engaging all children from different backgrounds. It is also working out the barriers to progress for individual children. There can sometimes be a few and identifying what these are can best be addressed by schools through tracking progress.
- A member commented that the report very much focuses on a level and raised concerns that the council is not focusing on BTECs and more vocational courses post 16. The Director commented that this report is focusing on national benchmarks. The data set is harder to grasp for other qualifications – though the council could explore this. Presently officers are dependent on DFE data. To get other data officers would need to establish agreements with education providers and colleges.
- Members raised concerns about schools unfairly removing or encouraging young people to leave to keep the exam rate statistics high. The officers said that schools do have a range of practices at end of a year, such as interviews and advice. Members pressed the point and asked if concerns had been raised about young

people coming under pressure to leave. Officers said that they would follow that up, however they have not had to do that with any families. Members asked if it would be possible to compare data on admissions and completion rates. Officers confirmed that they could look at that.

- Do you share good practice between schools? Officers do have strand of work looking at this and there is good formal and informal sharing. One of Southwark's strengths is headteachers willingness to share. The council have also documented particular pieces of work on key stages, such as phonics.
- What about variations across Multi Academy Trusts? Trusts will look at these themselves. Members could invite them to attend.
- What about the more able? School do share good practice and Ofsted measure progress: all children are expected to progress and some are expected to make accelerated progress.
- What about the technical and other professions? The Director responded that the Secondary headteachers network, SASH, and the council are working on the Southwark Skills Strategy with headteachers. This issue does exercise our headteachers as they do want a range of options for young people post 16. This was a subject that a previous scrutiny review focused on helpfully.

6. UPDATE ON SCHOOL FUNDING

The Director of Education reported the picture is looking better than the original proposal but still a real term reduction. Members said this was significant. There is problem about transfers between high and low needs .Members commented that the small marginal increase provided post-consultation is not a good picture, particularly given the other pressures schools are facing and we ought not to be grateful.

The Director of Education was asked about the problem with recruitment. She responded that it is getting increasingly hard to recruit. There is a move to get younger, less experienced teachers. There are more freedoms on pay however these do not necessarily translate into an increased ability to retain and recruit, which is not all about pay: research shows that people can get paid a lot but still leave.

7. ADMISSIONS

This item was postponed.

8. EDUCATION HEALTH AND CARE PLANS (EHC)

This session will look at the process for developing EHC plans in Southwark, bringing together representatives from education, health and social care to see how this important joint working benefits children and young people with EHC plans. The following contributed to the discussions:

- Bridget Nichola, CCG Designated Clinical Officer for SEND
- Kate Moriarty-Baker, CCG Director of Quality and Chief Nurse will be attending for representing health.
- Yvonne Ely, Head of SEN & Inclusion, Children's and Adults' Services
- Shirley Walker Head of Service Children with Disabilities, Transitions, Out of Hours and National and Specialist CAMHS Social Workers, Children's and Adults' Services
- Nina Dohel, Director of Education
- Sunil Chothi, Independent Sen advocate
- Mrs Helen Poyton – Headteacher, Chair of Southwark primary Headteachers

The following issues, comments and questions were raised in the roundtable:

- The Head of SEN & Inclusion said that the service had formally been working with the Parent & Carers Forum, and now they have a parent consortium guiding the work.
- The service is focusing on one page plan, and has received good feedback on this approach.
- It is harder to transfer plans from the old SEN format to the new ECHP as they are difficult to move well.
- We have a good Local Offer that is easy to find on a smartphone - (with a youth offer sitting alongside that).
- Previously the Local Offer was for 0-19, now 0-25. The 16 to 25 segment has been most challenging: colleges have found it befuddling but are getting on board.
- The volume of work has gone up.

- Developing outcomes is one thing but delivering them is another.
- The Headteacher commented that the council is doing great work, however the problem is the funding gap to do this work well as we have many children with high needs and expectations. Resources are not keeping pace with demands.
- Independent Sen advocate commented that the e partnership work and also pace of doing transfers is very good in Southwark.
- Do we have sufficient provision in mainstream and specialist provision? The short answer is no; we do not have enough in borough places. We do have a capital plan which will enable a rebuild of Cherry Gardens School and an autistic free school. Both will have a nursery. Our local authority and academy school do an excellent job and do very well.
- Do we have plans in place for advocacy? This is a tricky issue particularly when young people hit 16 as then they have ownership of their plan, but not always mental capacity and parents are often much invested in caring role. We do have advocate for young people.
- How do you evaluate the plans with children and parents? Officers said an independent expert contacts people every year. It has showed increased satisfaction. An online survey is there but we found ringing people works well
- What happens when a plan is agreed? The plan is costed and then officers look at the funding band. Southwark puts this down so it is clear. The Headteacher this is good and we break down our provision further in school. The school puts in £6,000 per child.
- What about the therapeutic support for Looked After children that might come up? There is a lower threshold for CAMHS. If needed officers would fund this.
- Independent Sen advocate noted Southwark quantified plans in bands. He asked if there are challenges over the hours required as this can be a disputed area. Officers said these are often detailed in the plan. Officers said that they do sometimes go though mediation (a formal process) as a prelude to a possible tribunal. This does sometime look at this issues and usually finds a resolution.

- There was a comment that the e-learning course for professional was useful. Officers were asked if they had thought about opening this up to families.

9. WORK-PLAN

The work-plan was noted.