

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT 7PM ON  
29 JANUARY 2018  
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors J Goodwin (Chairman), S Barkham, R Bisby, G Casey, A Ellis, A Iqbal, D Over (Vice Chairman), J Johnson, B Rush, E Murphy, B Saltmarsh  
Peter Cantley, Education Co-opted Member  
Susie Lucas, Parish Councillor Co-opted Member  
Al Kingsley, Co-opted Member  
Rizwan Rahemtulla – Co-opted Member

**Officers Present:** Gary Perkins Assistant Director, Education  
Lou Williams Service Director for Children’s Services and Safeguarding  
Paulina Ford Senior Democratic Services Officer

**37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dowson and Councillor Mahabadi. Councillor Ellis attended as a substitute for Councillor Dowson and Councillor Murphy attended as a substitute for Councillor Mahabadi. Education Co-opted Members Flavio Vettese and Liz Youngman also submitted their apologies. Peter Cantley was in attendance as substitute for Liz Youngman.

**38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations of Interest or whipping declarations.

**39. MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**40. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISIONS**

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

**41. OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AGED 5, 7 AND 11 YEARS IN 2017**

The Assistant Director, Education introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on standards of attainment and rates of progress made by children in Peterborough Infant, Junior and Primary schools in the 2017 Early Years and National Curriculum assessments 2017.

The Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members of the committee commented that online results had shown that some rural schools were not performing as expected compared to some inner city schools. Members were informed that specific data concerning outcomes of rural schools could be provided. All schools across Peterborough were offered the same support whether they were rural or inner city schools, or governed by a Trust Board or Governing Body. The Local Authority had a team of Improvement Advisors who provided advice and guidance to all schools if needed.
- A Vulnerable Group working party had been established which looked at data trends. The group that performed the best compared with the national average were the group of students with Special Educational Needs. Children with English as an additional language were also closing the gap quickly compared to the national average and were performing well. There were still challenges around the outcomes for white British children with pupil premium and resources were being targeted at this group to provide support in this area for improvement.
- There were many challenges in Peterborough and there had been improvement at KS2 in maths in 2016/2017. There were many schools who had performed well and should be congratulated.
- In 2016 the outcomes for reading had been particularly disappointing. Schools on their own could not bring about the necessary improvement. A Vision for Reading had been launched across the city and it was hoped that through the Reading Pledge the enjoyment of learning through reading would improve. Copies of the Reading Pledge and Vision for Reading were handed out to Members of the Committee to take away.
- Schools that did not take up support from the Local Authority were probably receiving support from their own Trust. Regular discussions took place with Head Teachers to look at the support offered to schools from the Local Authority to ensure the right support continued to be provided. All schools taking part in targeted support programmes from the Local Authority were benefiting.
- Members sought clarification as to how scalable the targeted intervention Programme was. Members were informed that the intention was that the schools benefiting from the Targeted Intervention Programme would be chosen as lead schools to work with other schools entering the programme so that a system of school hubs would be set up and therefore not always reliant on Local Authority officers.
- Parents, carers, elected members, schools and the Local Authority needed to work together to improve outcomes. Outcomes in schools were dependent on the quality of teaching and if children were ready to learn. The School Readiness Programme and Vision for Reading would support children in readiness for school.
- The role of the Local Authority in school improvement was much more limited now and the Schools Standards and Effectiveness Team had issued 12 Letters of Concern and 2 Formal Warning Notices to schools. All schools had produced robust action plans and some schools had School Improvement Advisors working in the schools. Those schools which were still demonstrating some concerns would be visited by the Regional Schools Commissioner and discussions would be had as to whether the governance arrangements would need to be changed.
- Peterborough had a unique set of challenges compared to other local authority comparators.
- Members commented that some schools had a better SEN provision than others and therefore more children with SEN needs went to those schools which in turn lowered that schools outcomes. Members sought clarification as to whether the SEN outcomes could be separated out to show what the true outcomes of the school were. Members were informed that every school had the facility to separate the outcome data but it was important to note that a school should not only be judged on its attainment outcomes. The more powerful outcome for schools who specialise in working with SEN children would be the progress that was made from the starting point of learning to the end point.

- It was noted that despite the complexity of Peterborough there were some outstanding schools in the city who had made excellent progress.
- Outstanding practice in one school may not necessarily be replicated in another as each school had different challenges. The schools in Peterborough worked in collaborative groups of three and the sharing of information is led by the schools with an overview from the Local Authority.
- It was not possible to compare outcomes prior to 2016 and the outcome data had shown a decline in 2017. The schools that the Assistant Director, Education had worked with had worked hard on reading outcomes which had shown an improvement. It should be noted that reading and maths are tested and writing was teacher assessed. 10% of the schools were monitored for writing and teacher assessments and whilst some changes were suggested the overall judgement was that the teacher assessment was accurate.
- Members commented that it would be interesting to see the whole school journey from primary to secondary school over the whole period that a child was in school. The officer advised that it might be difficult to obtain the information as it would be difficult to identify children who had gone through the whole system from start to finish.

### **AGREED ACTIONS**

1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and agreed to support Elected Members and Officers in their work to support and challenge schools to improve standards of attainment and rates of progress for children in Peterborough Infant, Junior and Primary schools.
2. The Committee requested that the Assistant Director, Education provide outcome data for different groups when available during the latter part of the spring term and that outcome data be provided for rural schools in particular.
3. The Committee also requested that the Assistant Director, Education investigate if it would be possible to provide value added results for children who had attended the whole school system from start to finish.

### **42. EDUCATION REVIEW - UPDATE REPORT**

The Assistant Director, Education introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the progress made on implementing the recommendations contained within the Education Review report previously presented to the Committee on 7 September 2017.

The Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Currently there were two teaching schools in Peterborough and two more were in the process of applying to become teaching schools and there was likely to be more. The critical mass would be measured by effectiveness. Teaching schools were a relatively new concept in Peterborough and would take time to become effective. An appeal had gone out to schools to work with the existing teaching schools as the Strategic School Improvement Fund was only obtained through teaching schools and this was the only way additional funding would come into the city.
- The School Improvement Board had not been as effective as it should have been and would need to be redefined with an updated role. The new Service Director for Education would be in post by February and would provide the lead role in redefining the School Improvement Board. Details of this would hopefully be in place by Easter.
- The design of the Strategic Board for Education would be overseen by the Service Director for Education. There may be two boards, one to oversee the strategic work of both Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough and focussing on the long term vision and then an operational board to oversee Peterborough and the current situation and lessons that can be learnt. The Service Director for Education would decide once in post.

- Concern was raised about the timescale of the actions and how long it would be before an improvement in outcomes was seen. Members were advised that no time had been wasted and plans could be implemented rapidly. Since 2016 Early Years outcomes had shown an improvement. The aim of the action plan was to close the national average gap.
- The Virtual School had been heavily invested in and the number staff had increased. The quality of work undertaken by the Virtual School had improved significantly over the past three years and the improvement in outcomes being achieved by children in care had been encouraging.

Councillor Ellis seconded by Councillor Murphy recommended that Cabinet look at alternative options for funding and organisation of the Education Service and improvement in education.

The recommendation was put to the vote (5 in favour, 5 against, 1 abstention) there being an equality of votes the Chairman used her casting vote and voted against the recommendation. The recommendation was therefore defeated.

### **AGREED ACTIONS**

1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and support both Elected Members and Officers in their efforts to support and challenge schools to improve outcomes for children and young people in Peterborough.
2. The Committee requested that a monitoring report on the Education Review Action Plan be provided to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

### **43. "SUCCESS FOR ALL" PARTNERSHIP - UPDATE REPORT**

The Assistant Director, Education introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the impact so far of the partnership agreement between Peterborough City Council and "Success for All".

The Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- "Success for All" provided children with a happy, secure and inspired environment to learn at their best. Learning opportunities should be challenging and "Success for All" provided this environment.
- Some Members were concerned that "Success for All" were using an American industrialised system for collecting data. Members were informed that this was not the case and the system was tailored to the needs of individual schools, however there was a consistency of approach between schools but this could be seen as an advantage.
- It was noted that there was a low up take from schools who used "Success for All". Members were informed that this was due to a number of reasons. The reasons provided from various schools included the following:
  - The school was about to become an academy so the timing was not right.
  - The school had recently changed the curriculum and did not want to change again.
  - Could not afford it.
- It was too early to see if there had been a positive impact on outcomes.
- Members sought clarification on what "Success for All" were offering that the Local Authority could not offer. Members were informed that the Local Authority would not have the resources available and that "Success for All" were offering text and staff resources that the Local Authority could not offer.
- One Member of the Committee was aware of three primary schools who were using "Success for All" and they were having a very positive experience and positive impact and wanted to know what more could be done to increase the take-up. Members were informed that a repetition of what had been done before could be done again, this included:

- Inviting schools to a conference and workshops jointly led by “Success for All” and the Local Authority
- Show schools the kind of resources and materials that were being used by “Success for All”
- The offer of funding or part funding.
- Take schools to schools outside of the authority who were using “Success for All” to talk to teachers and students.

There would be a slot for “Success for All” at the next Local Authority briefing for Head Teachers.

- Success for all did work in other authorities but it was unknown what the success rate was.
- Members requested that “Success for All” attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide an update on the impact of their work in Peterborough schools. Members also suggested that a Head Teacher from one of the schools using “Success for All” also attend the meeting.

Councillor Over seconded by Councillor Bisby recommended that the Committee did not support the second part of the reports recommendation which was to “support Officers in continuing their work with the “Success for All” organisation”.

The recommendation was put to the vote (2 in favour, 0 against, 8 abstentions). The recommendation was agreed.

### **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and requested a further report on the work of the “Success for All” organisation at a future meeting and invite Head Teachers from schools using the organisation that have had both a positive impact and a less positive impact of using “Success for All”.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** not to support Officers in continuing their work with the “Success for All” organisation”.

## **44. SCHOOL READINESS PROJECT**

The Assistant Director, Education introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on progress made through the School Readiness Project. The Committee were advised that the project was a vital piece of work and would have long lasting benefits and had been put in place in response to Head Teachers concerns at the low levels of attainment when children began school.

The Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Schools were being encouraged to forge links and work in partnership with their feeder preschool settings as this link was crucial. The Early Years Foundation curriculum began at the age of three not at the age of five.
- The Vision for Reading had been launched and would be promoted widely including through libraries. The purpose of the Vision for Reading was to promote excitement in reading and there were various ways that this was going to be done. Vivacity and the National Literary Trust were linked very closely with the Local Authority all of which were raising the profile of reading through the Vision for Reading. One Primary School had purchased a double decker bus and was using it as their library which was very exciting for the children. Vivacity were purchasing a book bus to take around the city.

- Members congratulated the Assistant Director, Education on the initiative and wanted to know if the publicity for the reading campaign would continue. Members suggested visiting the local shopping centres as well as Queensgate and Hampton and were informed that this was the intention when promoting the Vision again. Children's Centres would also be included.
- Members were informed that a business lunch had been held in the Mayors Parlour where twenty local businesses had been invited to pledge to work with the council on the Vision for Reading. Some businesses had also pledged funding.
- Members sought clarification as to the support being offered to people and children who were living in temporary accommodation to ensure they were ready for school. Members were informed that the Local Authority was compiling information on children who were in temporary accommodation including where they were living, which school they were attending and how old they were. Once the information was compiled appropriate action would be taken.
- Members suggested that parents of children who were not in an Early Years / preschool setting could be provided with the necessary tools and information to assist in preparing their children at home for school. Also more could be done to ensure these children were given the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the school settings prior to attending school for the first time. Members were informed that leaflets on such information was put in public places to make parents aware of what was available to them. Some primary schools had already taken the initiative to open their schools in the summer school holidays to allow those children who were new to the area the opportunity to go into the school prior to the mainstream school cohort starting to familiarise themselves and their parents with the school.
- Concern was raised about the transfer of documents to Primary schools from the preschool settings and that it did not happen on all occasions. Members were informed that there was sometimes a misunderstanding around Special Educational Needs at Primary Schools when children transferred from the preschool setting and felt that nothing had been done at the preschool setting. The issue was that parents needed to give permission for the information to be passed on to the Primary School. Discussions were taking place to see how this situation could be overcome.
- There were many good examples of preschool settings and these could be used as case studies for best practice.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and support Elected Members and Officers in their work to support and challenge schools to improve the attainment of children in Peterborough.

## **45. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with a record of recommendations made at the previous meeting and the outcome of those recommendations to consider if further monitoring was required. The following comments was made with regard to the recommendation responses:

- Education Review. Members noted that the council had done considerable work in addressing issues relating to the impact of high mobility rates in some schools providing a more stable and settled environment and this was to be congratulated.
- Peterborough Reading Strategy 2017-2020. Members commented that the some Councillors had not received invitations either to the Mayors Business Lunch on 29 January or to the launch at schools on 1<sup>st</sup> February however the response to the recommendation mentioned that Elected Members had been invited. The Lead Officer in attendance advised that he would ensure the invitation for the 1<sup>st</sup> February event would be resent to all Councillors.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to consider the response from Cabinet Members and Officers to the recommendations made at the previous meeting, as attached in Appendix 1 of the report and agreed that no further monitoring was required with regard to the Reading Strategy and that further monitoring reports would be received with regard to the Education Review Action Plan on a quarterly basis.

### **46. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Forward Plan and where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and requested further information on the following decisions:

Paston Reserve Primary School – New School build project – KEY/15MAY17/04. Members questioned why the Lead of the Council was listed as the decision maker and not the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University. The Senior Democratic Officer to find out.

### **47. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018**

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2016/17 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

## **ACTION AGREED**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the work programme for 2017/2018.

### **48. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

20 February 2018 – Joint Scrutiny of the Budget Meeting

The meeting began at 7.00pm and finished at 9.15pm.

CHAIRMAN

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