

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 JANUARY 2017

Present: Councillor Richard Cook (Chairperson), Councillors Boyle, Chaundy, Gordon, Murphy, Dianne Rees and Lynda Thorne

Co-opted Members: Carol Cobert (Church in Wales representative)

49 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Heather Joyce, Patricia Arlotte and Karen Dell'Armi

50 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

51 : MINUTES

The minutes of the 6 December 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson subject to an amendment in minute 45, bullet point 3.

52 : CARDIFF SCHOOL'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Cabinet Member for Education), Nick Batchelar (Director – Education and Lifelong Learning, Angela Kent (Head of Achievement and Inclusion) to the meeting.

The Chairperson also welcomed Nic Naish (Headteacher - Greenway Primary School) and Lorraine Feltstead (Headteacher – Meadowbank School) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she said wished to thank staff for all their efforts and hard work which led to the dramatic improvement in the rankings.

Members were provided with an overview of Performance as outlined in the Appendix A.

Both Headteachers advised Members that in their view there have been good improvements over the last 3/4 years, there has been a big turnaround in schools in the last 5 years and the current picture is positive, particularly in primary schools.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members asked what is being doing to address poor teaching and leadership and were advised that quite clearly high quality teaching and good leadership is important. If that is not happening it has to be identified and discussed. It is important that School Governors are involved and that there are good support structures in place.

- Members queried the further improvement needed in schools where teachers' expectations of pupil achievement remains low and were advised that there have to be cultural changes, but it will take time. In a lot of schools the problem is leadership as opposed to teaching.
- Members queried what direct action can be taken if schools stubbornly refuse to improve and whether the change in leadership is having as positive an impact as anticipated. Officers advised that in relation to one of the schools the leadership has remained consistent for the last two years and that during that time there have been huge changes and improvements made. There is still a great deal of work to be done, however, with specific reference to behaviour the number of exclusions has severely decreased. The other school is due to close at the conclusion of the summer term and pupils will then transition to the new school.
- Members were advised that special schools were not referred to in the report as there is not a comparable pupil performance reference point. Lorraine Felstead advised that Headteachers of special schools are trying to put in place a data collection exercise to try and establish some comparators that can be used.
- Members expressed concern that the various schools referred to in the report had not been identified as they believed that the information was in the public domain and therefore they should be; whether those schools are performing well or not.
- Members were advised that the Numeracy and Literacy tests were now only to be used diagnostically.
- Members referenced the widening attainment gap and the information provided; name the capacity of Cardiff schools to meet less complex needs without a statement is improving, and whilst the proportion of pupils with statements is not increasing each cohort of pupils tends to have more complex needs than the previous cohort. Members were advised that the gap does widen in the secondary phase, children with complex needs are being taught in mainstream education and it is important that a more specialist resource base is being developed.
- Members queried whether School Action and School Action Plus interventions are working and whether staffing levels are adequate and where advised there is an ongoing process of identifying and meeting the needs of young people entering school and the Additional Learning bill proposes far reaching changes in care and provision.
- Members made reference to the scatter graphs provided and noted the difference in performance between eFSM pupils and nFSM pupils in both primary and secondary age groups; with the better results being in the primary age group. Members were advised that the scatter graphs can exaggerate the differences between primary and secondary. Mr Naish advised that schools need to provide experiences to help young people achieve their goals; it is not only about the quality of the teaching but about the experiences the school can offer.

- Members asked whether the New Curriculum for Wales will have any impact on standards in Cardiff Schools. Officers advised that the New Curriculum will provide both opportunities and challenges and that schools must be prepared for the changes. It is an ambitious programme and it is accepted that there has to be a co-ordinated approach when working on the New Curriculum.
- Members referred to the reduction in the proportion of A level teaching in Cardiff judged to be excellent or outstanding from 2015 to 2016 and were advised that greater consistency across schools is an ongoing challenge and to improve outcomes the quality of the teaching and learning has to be improved. Alps data is currently used to monitor the quality of delivery. A number of schools are also working in partnership to provide students with access to certain subjects.

AGREED – That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to relevant Cabinet Members, Directors and officers thanking them for attending the meeting on 10 January and to convey the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

53 : DIRECT PAYMENTS - DRAFT CABINET REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sue Lent (Cabinet Member – Early years, Children & Families and Deputy Leader), Tony Young (Director, Social Services) and Denise Moriarty (Strategic Lead Planning Officer) to the meeting.

The Chairperson invited the Cabinet Member to make a statement in which she referred to the good progress that has been made in respect of Direct Payments, particularly with reference to children.

Members were provided with a presentation by Denise Moriarty

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members sought clarification as to what other areas were Direct Payments available and were advised that there were no limitations; the code of guidance states 'to enable them to meet their care and support needs'.
- Members were advised that Diverse Cymru are in a position to submit a tender.
- Members sought clarification of the process for independent challenge and were advised that the process would be transparent and contained within the contract.
- Members were advised that the value of the current Direct Payment Support Service is approximately £700,000 per annum.
- Members were advised that currently Swansea Council are using an in-house model, all other Councils are using external providers.

- Members noted that value for money and care of the individual are important and the importance of being able to recruit high quality Personal Assistants. Officers advised that there is quality assurance. The contract period is 3 years with the option to extend for 3 further years if the provider is delivering the best value, quality of service and cost.
- Members noted the current contract offers two separate hourly rates; £10.02 for a PA and £11.96 for an Agency and that these did not meet the current Foundation Living Wage. Officers advised that it did need clarification.

AGREED – That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to relevant Cabinet Members, Directors and officers thanking them for attending the meeting on 10 January and to convey the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

54 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is on Monday 13 February 2017 at 9.30 am.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg.