21. MINUTES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director’s Oral Report

Andrew Christie updated the Committee on the following areas:

- Comprehensive Spending Review - a reduction of 28% of the budget over four years had been announced. The reduction was front loaded so that the majority of the savings had to be made at the beginning of the four year period. The Council was waiting for further details on the reductions on how the budget formula would be applied and the announcement was expected between 2 and 9 December. Children’s Services was heavily funded by grant provision and the Chancellor had mentioned that the grants would be rolled into one so the department needed to know what this would mean for its budget.
- Shared Services - a proposal on shared services of school improvement and support with Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea would be going to Cabinet by January. Headteachers were being briefed on the proposals and a small group,
with representatives of the headteachers on it, had been set up to discuss the proposals.

- **Jack Tizard School** – a new hydrotherapy pool had opened at the school. Andrew Christie was pleased that the school planned to extend the use of the pool beyond the school day for other children to use. The School was setting up a Trust Fund and was fundraising to meet the cost of this additional provision. This was an excellent example of partnership working between the school, the Council and the PCT, which had given funding to the pool.

- **PCT** – the health service was going through a round of change with consortia of GPs being set up to commission health services. There were plans for one consortium for the Hammersmith and Fulham area. The existing PCT was being re-organised to cover Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster, to manage the transition to GP commissioning. Sarah Whiting had been appointed as Chief Executive of the PCT. Discussions would take place on how to continue with the successful existing arrangements.

- **Changes to Housing Benefit Allowance** – Councillor Needham asked whether any risk assessments had been done on families in respect of the changes in the housing allowances which could prompt families to move. Andrew Christie responded that the changes had yet to be settled and planning was taking place on the potential impact on families in the borough. An assessment on children’s care needs for the families affected would be done and the department would work with colleagues in housing and adult services. Part of the assessment would be to look at the education of the children in the family.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

(1) the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 September 2010 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings, subject to the amendment to minute number 16, page 7, under the paragraph headed Safer Neighbourhood and Policing, to replace the words “another Councillor” with “Councillor Belinda Donovan”;

(2) progress with implementation of the recommendations of the Committee be noted; and

(3) the Director’s report be noted.

22. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Adam.

23. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In respect of agenda item 4, Ofsted Inspections Summary Report, the following personal interests were declared:

- Councillor Elaine Chumnery as her daughter attended Greenside Primary School.
• Councillor Peter Graham as he was a governor of William Morris Sixth Form.
• Councillor Caroline Needham as she was a governor of Flora Gardens Primary School.
• Sue Fennimore as she was a governor of Canberra Primary School.

24. OFSTED INSPECTIONS SUMMARY REPORT

Jan Parnell, Head of School Improvements and Standards, introduced the report, which covered the 15 Ofsted inspections that took place between September 2009 and June 2010. She highlighted each school’s excellent achievements, as detailed in the report, including the following key points:

• Fulham Cross Girls School – the school received an outstanding judgement. The results of the school were a tribute to the excellent leadership. There was now a federation with Henry Compton School and it was hoped that this would raise the achievements in the latter school.
• Normand Croft Community School for Early Years and Primary Education – this was a good school with a good capacity to improve. Good leadership had secured improvements across the school.
• Fulham Primary School – the school was judged as satisfactory. The results at the school continued to improve above the floor standards. There were an increasing number of lessons of good or outstanding standards.
• James Lee Nursery – the nursery was graded outstanding. The Ofsted inspectors said that the Headteacher gave a remarkable leadership and had a strong governing body.
• Canberra Primary School – this school was judged as satisfactory but it was noted that it had come out of special measures.
• Greenside Primary School – the school received a satisfactory judgement. There were newly appointed governors at the school and there had been a marked improvement in Key Stage 2 results. The school was being supported by a steering group that was monitoring progress.
• Miles Coverdale Primary School – the Council and the school were disappointed on the satisfactory grade given and had challenged this. The school was working hard and there were areas of good practice.
• New Kings Primary School – the school received a satisfactory grade. This was an increasingly popular school which had excellent support for pupils with hearing impairments.
• William Morris Sixth Form – the sixth form received an outstanding judgement. Many pupils started the sixth form with very low levels of attainment and progress, with many pupils going on to attend the best universities.
• Queensmill – an outstanding judgement was given to the school. It had a national and international reputation for excellence with strong leadership. One of the strengths of Hammersmith and Fulham was the specialist provision in the borough.
• Bentworth Primary School – the school received a good grade. It continued to build its capacity at all levels for community provision.
• Flora Gardens Primary School – a good judgement was awarded to the school. It was also another increasingly popular school. It took on a bulge
class this year, offering additional places due to the shortage of primary school places.

- Sulivan Primary School – the school received a good grading. The Ofsted inspection had arrived just when the new headteacher had come into post. The school tackled issues such as attendance with imaginative ideas.
- The Bridge Academy – an outstanding result had been awarded. The Academy had a fantastic record over the years with pupils gaining at least one GCSE or equivalent, which was a real achievement for them. It had national and international reputation for best practice. Seamus Oates, Headteacher, commented on the support of the local authority over the years. The Bridge was a unique concept for local authorities and its model had begun to develop with Westminster in respect of a partnership agreement. The academy delivered alternative education. A teacher from the Bridge spoke on the academy’s environment that sustained support for staff, parents and pupils and ensured it gave the best opportunities. She was proud of the team which gave pupils additional chances of receiving an education.
- St Mary’s Catholic Primary School – the school received a good result. There was a new headteacher at the school. It was reported that since the Ofsted Inspection, the school received a church inspection which was judged to be outstanding.

Jan Parnell outlined the areas to be developed which included attendance, consistency of good quality teaching and consistency in assessment to support learning. She reported that all schools had good or outstanding features with very effective leadership and management with the support of the community. The schools were leading examples of best practice for London and also nationally.

Canberra Primary School
Laura Dickson, Headteacher of Canberra Primary School, spoke on how the school had come out of special measures. After a long period of instability the school had gone into special measures in 2008. The headteacher joined in 2009 and assessed the school, finding that 65% of teaching was inadequate, the school was disengaged with the community and there was low morale. However the community wanted to be engaged and the majority of the school were hard working. Staff recruitment and retention was a key factor for the school and it was important to keep the staff who wanted to stay and develop and give them responsibility across the school. The main thing that children wanted when asked was to feel safe and this was paramount to the school.

Attendance levels increased at the school due to the staff’s efforts and the team recognised it could achieve great things. The staff focused on English, maths and science; the results for science increased to 86% which was the best results the school had ever seen. Lesson observation and support programmes were part of every day practice. Issues were tackled across the whole school so everyone had a part to play. Punctuality of the pupils was key and it was ensured that pupils attended in the correct uniform. The school worked with families and introduced initiatives, such as staff on the school gates to support them. The school was receiving a higher profile such
as appearing on Children in Need and was in the press for taking part in National Writing Day. Laura Dickson noted that the school recognised what was still needed to be done but it had made a real difference to the children’s lives.

Sir William Atkinson, Executive Headteacher of The Phoenix Canberra Schools Federation also spoke about the school, acknowledging the excellent work that Laura Dickson and the staff had done and the significant and meaningful achievements. The school’s team had built good foundations for the school and it was now borderline good with some outstanding features. Sir William thanked the Council for its support and for providing partnership for the right level of support for the community.

In response to a question from Councillor Chumnery on how the governing body worked with the school, Laura Dickson commented on their incredible support. The governing body was federated with Phoenix High and it had helped to get external support into the school. Andrew Christie noted that one of the powers of the Local Authority was to appoint an interim executive board when a school went into special measures, which in this case helped the school get into a position to be able to be federated with Phoenix High.

The Chairman asked whether the community was supportive of the school from the start. It was reported that there had been a lot of instability and change but the community was brought on board and built trust with the school. The school was very fortunate to have staff already there who wanted to work with the team. In reply to the Chairman’s question on the involvement of the pupils, the Committee was informed that Ofsted spent a lot of time with the pupils and they liked to attend school because they enjoyed it and also because of the teaching. The parents also contributed to the improvements. The school reached out to the community to make it feel welcome to contribute to the school and its development. Very few families used to come to school events however the events were now fully attended, such as a recent Eid celebration, which was a testament to how far the school had come with community engagement.

Councillor Needham asked for more information on the type of support the school received and was told that one of the ways the Council supported it was by bringing in specialist consultants for particular areas, such as an EAL (English as an additional language) consultant to work with the high numbers of EAL pupils.

The Committee and guests were invited to ask questions and give comments, and the following was noted:

**Governor Training**
One of the Chair of Governors pushed for better courses for training for governors, as they were not educational experts and training was important for them. It was an area that needed to be concentrated on, for example holding different courses and at different times of the day and evening. It was suggested that if a course was not available for governors then maybe they could attend training organised for teachers. Jan Parnell noted that the department would look at the pattern and range of training.
Drafting of Policies
The amount of paperwork needed to be done was raised by one of the Chair of Governors, noting that there should be a clearer generic formula for the drafting of the different policies needed for schools. He noted that the annual drafting of policies by the governors was bureaucratic and clearer guidelines were needed. A Headteacher responded that the Department of Education had a good website which provided useful guidance on policies. She noted the value in talking to the staff about the policies and the process of developing the policies were important, in particular the safeguarding policy. Another Chair of Governors noted that the headteacher and staff at her school drafted the policies, not the governors.

Retention of Staff
Another issue raised was retaining good staff. The Chair of Governors at Bentworth noted that the school’s Ofsted took place just after two members of staff had moved to other schools. The school had some difficulty in retaining good quality staff as they moved on for higher positions with higher salaries. It was asked if there was a policy for retaining good teachers. Jan Parnell responded that the department did a good job to support the NQT (newly qualified teachers) development programme, which many local authorities had now disbanded. The retention of staff who were several years into their career was harder to manage as progress of staff was something to encourage. Andrew Christie noted that ways to provide opportunities for staff could be looked at but maybe not in terms of pay due to budget reductions.

Councillor Needham asked about the impact on schools for teachers being trained in schools rather than universities. Andrew Christie responded that the details of this proposal was not yet known but there were good models for such an approach so an open mind was needed at this stage.

Primary School Results
Councillor Graham noted that none of the primary schools considered that evening received an outstanding result and asked whether this was significant. He was told that this was only a sample number of primary schools and there were outstanding primary schools in the borough. Small schools which had only one form of entry faced challenges. Schools were also constrained by the size of the school site. The results of Key Stage 2 showed there was a change in performance in primary schools and it was expected to continue to rise. Michael Pettavel referred to last year’s Ofsted results and 8% of primary schools received a satisfactory result, 43% received good and 49% received outstanding, which fitted in with the national statistics. He noted that primary schools performed a multitude of tasks and as Ofsted sometimes focused on these different tasks it made it harder for primary schools to score highly.

The Chairman noted that the Headteacher from Miles Coverdale Primary School was unable to attend and had sent her apologies, but he wanted to ask why the Ofsted grading had been contested by the school and Council. Jan Parnell responded that this related to the issue of attendance, where it was felt that other schools had been more leniently graded on this than Miles Coverdale. Andrew Christie commented that he had visited the school that
day and the attendance had already improved from 93% to 95%, so progress had been made already.

In response to Councillor Chumnery’s questions on primary school receiving a satisfactory grade twice in a row, it was reported that this happened but what needed to be mindful of is where schools received a notice to improve. Andrew Christie noted that the Secretary of State was looking at this area of schools being judged as satisfactory in successive inspections and the soon to be published White Paper might address this. It could also look at the role of the local authority and its intervention powers where schools were not improving. Councillor Graham referred to page 24 of the report relating to Greenside Primary School as he felt that it sounded pessimistic about it receiving a good grading. He was informed that the school had a very strong and experienced governing body which were rigorous with their questioning about the school’s performance. A principal advisor was working with the school and was looking at improvements.

Secondary Schools
In reference to the comment in the third bullet point on page 17 of the report relating to Fulham Cross Girls School, Councillor Umeh asked how the school encouraged the pupils to contribute their community. The Headteacher replied that this comment related to where families were not happy for girls to be out in the community so this was approached in a more internal way. A co-ordinator for local events had been appointed to work with the pupils. The school contributed to the local community through local charities and by holding international events.

Attendance
Attendance for Hammersmith and Fulham primary schools was at the lowest level in London (although just below the national average) and this was looked at by the School Improvements and Standards team. The team were keen to learn from colleagues in respect of ways to improve attendance figures and a task group had been set up to look at this.

Councillor Crofts questioned why attendance was so low and was told that there were a number of particular families who needed to be addressed as they continued to have issues with attendance. Best practice on ways to improve attendance at schools needed to be shared. Councillor Donovan referred to a text messaging service to parents which helped with attendance. Jan Parnell also referred to the Education Welfare Team which worked with schools on attendance. The local authority had established an attendance “task force” which would enable schools to share good practice in this area. Schools were no longer required to set attendance targets.

Councillor Needham referred to poor transport links and busy roads which contributed to attendance problems and noted the impact of the walking bus. Jan Parnell commented that the walking bus had been a success but unfortunately had not been maintained. Information had been sought on the walking bus, such as what worked and what issues arose.
The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. He also thanked St Mary’s Catholic Primary School for the invitation to hold a future Committee meeting at the school.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Committee recommend that the training courses available for governors be looked into in order to be more flexible, such as holding the courses during the day and the evening and looking at other available courses.

Action: Jan Parnell

25. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN 2010-11

The agenda items scheduled for the next meeting were as follows:
- Revenue Budget and Council Tax
- School Performance 2010
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA)
- Paediatric Audiology Services
- Education Merger with Westminster

The Committee was informed that the first meeting of the Task Group Review on Oral Health in Children would be held on 30 November 2010 and its membership was Councillor Needham, Councillor Marcus Ginn and Councillor Peter Tobias.

RESOLVED THAT:

The work programme be agreed.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 17 January 2011.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 8.25 pm

Chairman  

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