

Education and Children's Services Select Committee Minutes

Tuesday 11 June 2013

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Donald Johnson (Chairman), Caroline Needham (Vice-Chairman), Elaine Chumney, Tom Crofts, Charlie Dewhirst, Matt Thorley and Mercy Umeh

Co-opted members: Eleanor Allen (London Diocesan Board for Schools), Michele Barrett (Headteacher Representative), Sue Fennimore (Parent Governor Representative), Nadia Taylor (Parent Governor Representative) and Philippa O'Driscoll (Westminster Diocesan Education Service Representative)

Other Councillors: Helen Binmore (Cabinet Member for Children's Services) and Georgie Cooney (Cabinet Member for Education)

Officers: Laura Campbell (Committee Co-ordinator), Andrew Christie (Executive Director of Children's Services), Helen Cross (Bi-Borough 14-19 Adviser), Neil Elkins (Service Manager Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service), Glen McLean (Children's Rights Manager), Mike Potter (Head of Commissioning (Early Intervention & Workforce Development)), Karen Tyerman (Director of Commissioning), Elly Wilson (Business Support Officer, LAC and Care Leavers)

1. MINUTES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT

In respect of the Director's Oral report, the following significant interests were declared:

- Councillor Georgie Cooney as she was a governor at Cambridge School.
- Sue Fennimore, where Canberra/Phoenix Federation was mentioned, as she was a governor at the school.

They considered that this did not give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests and, in the circumstances it would be reasonable to participate in the discussion and vote thereon.

Update to Actions

In relation to actions from the previous meeting, the Committee was updated on the following:

- Secondary school appeals - the appeals process had not completed and data was still being gathered. Information had to be sought from schools which took time to gather. The information should be available in July and would be sent to the Committee Co-ordinator to send out to the Committee. This information would also be included in the secondary booklet.

Action: Ian Heggs

- Academy Commission – it was thought that there might be a briefing note covering the suggestions made in the academies commission report, which would be sent to the Committee for information. If this was not possible a report would be considered at future meeting.

Action: Ian Heggs

- Oral Health Task Group – it was not possible to provide another graduate trainee to work on oral health however the work was carried forward by Claire Robertson and Katie Wright from Public Health and Children's Services provided support from an officer in the localities family support team working with Claire and Katie. In respect of the discussion with Public Health England, it was noted that oral health was on its agenda but there was nothing to report about any particular projects.

Director's Oral Report

Andrew Christie updated the Committee on the following:

- Social Care - A Chief Social Worker for social workers had been appointed and a launch event was held to meet with some social workers. A graduation ceremony was to be held for social workers qualifying for the step up programme. Negotiations were taking place with an organisation that approached the local authority about establishing the scheme called Front Line in the borough, which was the equivalent to the Teach First programme for social care.
- Canberra/Phoenix Federation – the federation had agreed to transfer the Canberra governance to ARK, so from the beginning of the next academic year Canberra would be a primary school sponsored by ARK. The Interim Headteacher, Michael O'Grady had been appointed as Headteacher.
- Ofsted – Cambridge School and St Paul's CE Primary had received an Ofsted inspection and was found to require improvement. The local authority was working with the schools to make sure support was in place. The Committee discussed Cambridge School going from being an outstanding school to requires improvement and it was noted that the Ofsted report would be considered at a future meeting which would include this information. William Morris Sixth Form and Wormholt Park Primary had also received an Ofsted visit and had been graded as good.
- A principal lead advisor for school improvement had been appointed.
- Children's Centres – in light of the new inspection arrangements the 16 centres had been clustered into 6 centres so they would be ready for the next round of inspections.
- Adoption Reform Grant – the proposals on the allocation of funding would be presented to the tri borough steering group and a briefing note would be sent to the Committee.

Action: Steve Miley

A member of the public referred to a recent case of parents being charged with their child's death, who had been found starving and malnourished. He asked what steps could be taken by schools in respect of dealing with children who were hungry. Andrew Christie responded that court proceedings were in process so not all information relating to this case was yet known. The child had died from an assault but the full details were not yet known. The role of schools was crucial and this case would be subject to a serious case review where lessons could be learnt from this case.

Recommendation Tracker

It was requested that an update be given on the recommendations in progress, in particular the recommendation relating to the list of schools where large numbers of the borough's pupils attended outside H&F to be produced to help the Borough Youth Forum engage with harder to reach young people.

Action: Officers listed in recommendation tracker

RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) the minutes of the meeting of the Education and Children's Services Select Committee held on 16 April 2013 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings;
- (2) progress with implementation of the recommendations of the Education and Children's Services Select Committee be noted; and
- (3) the Director's report be noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Belinda Donovan and Councillor Harry Phibbs.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of the Director's Oral report and the Careers Education and Guidance Services in Hammersmith and Fulham Schools report, Sue Fennimore declared a significant interest where the Canberra/Phoenix Federation was mentioned, as she was a governor at the school. She considered that this did not give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests and, in the circumstances it would be reasonable to participate in the discussion and vote thereon.

In respect of the Director's Oral report Councillor Georgie Cooney declared a significant interest as she was a governor at Cambridge School. She considered that this did not give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests and, in the circumstances it would be reasonable to participate in the discussion and vote thereon.

4. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee welcomed Councillor Harry Phibbs and Councillor Matt Thorley onto the Committee.

RESOLVED THAT:

The membership and terms of reference as agreed at Annual Council on 29 May 2013 be noted.

5. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTEEES

RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) the appointment of the statutory co-optees be noted; and
- (2) Michele Barrett be re-appointed as the Headteacher Representative.

6. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor Caroline Needham be appointed as the Vice Chairman.

7. VIEWS OF CHILDREN IN CARE, CARE LEAVERS AND THEIR PARENTS

Neil Elkins, Service Manager Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service, presented the report. There was a brief power point presentation which highlighted the statistics of the results of the children in care and care leavers surveys. Glen McLean, Children's Rights Manager, also attended to present the views from the young people. It was reported that the care leavers' satisfaction results were almost all consistently lower this year. There were a number of reasons that resulted in the lower results, such as housing issues relating to high costs and less resources. The service worked with housing associations such as for temporary housing for a targeted group of young people and supported some young people through the Halo scheme. There were many young people in rent arrears and there was a lot of pressure to write off these arrears which caused tension and some of the responses reflected this.

The Looked After Children (LAC) responses however were almost higher in each category. It was reported that 98% were happy with their placements which was a remarkable response.

A session was held before the meeting at 6pm with Members of the Committee and some young people in care to discuss their views of being in care, to give Members a chance to hear first hand the views of the young people and their experiences.

The Committee discussed the report and the feedback from the session and the following was highlighted:

Cobbs Hall

There was some dissatisfaction with young people that the building was shared with the youth offenders services which was being looked at. It was also reported that arrangements for messages being taken at the reception would be strengthened.

Staffing

There had been high levels of staff sickness in the team, which would be looked at; reasons for this could be due to leadership and demands of the work. It was also noted that the skills mix in staff needed to be looked at as apart from the manager, all staff were unqualified and there was a complexity of issues that they faced. It was noted that all staff worked hard in the team.

The loss of a dedicated Connexions worker and access to a benefits advisor was intended to be reintroduced as part of the tri-borough service. However there was still access to people to give advice.

Mental Health

There were high incidents of mental health and although there was not a designated mental health worker, there was access to this support. As outlined in paragraph 5.6 of the report, a Co-production project had been initiated to address young people with mental health needs working alongside commissioners in partnership with Rethink Mental Illness.

Birthdays

The issue of social workers remembering birthdays was raised yearly and a monthly reminder would be put in place to help resolve this issue.

Funding

One young person had raised concern that funding would stop when they turned 18 rather than at the end of the school year; she was concerned that she would not be able to stay in foster care while she studied for her A Levels. It was noted that this would be discussed with the individual however there was the possibility of converting foster care to lodging arrangements subject to the agreement of the foster carers, to allow the young person to remain during studies.

The difference in funding levels in the three boroughs was mentioned and it was noted that this was being looked into.

Careers and Education

As part of the discussion with the young people, it was noted that not all wanted to go to university. There was support in schools for other career opportunities such as networking with companies and courses. There was also a lot of support available from the local authority which the young people were becoming more aware of through the help of the Corporate Parenting Board spreading the message. A lot of work was being done on a bi-borough and tri-borough basis such as peer mentoring.

A member suggested that the local authority looked at ring fencing opportunities with large employers in the borough to help open up opportunities for young people in care. It was reported that the economic development team had worked on schemes which were open to care leavers. There would be a bi-borough apprenticeship recruitment event on 26 June all day at the Isaac Newton PDC where named young people had been invited which would involve employers with live vacancies. The Chairmen referred to Plotter which was a government backing commercial opportunities scheme which could be looked at.

Glen McLean commented that H&F was one of the only boroughs that had a framework for rewarding young people with incentives and accreditations for work.

Feedback to Surveys

Focus groups would be run with groups of young people who had responded to the surveys to discuss the responses. Following the Committee's suggestion at a previous meeting, prizes had been offered this year for responses which helped to improve the number of responses received.

The Chairman thanked officers for the presentation and the young people for attending the session held before the meeting.

8. CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE SERVICES IN HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM SCHOOLS

Sue Fennimore declared a significant interest in this item where the Canberra/Phoenix Federation was mentioned, as she was a governor at the school. She considered that this did not give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests and, in the circumstances it would be reasonable to participate in the discussion and vote thereon.

Mike Potter, Head of Commissioning (Early Intervention & Workforce Development) introduced the report, noting the key change was that the duty to provide careers guidance had moved from the local authority to schools.

The Committee received a presentation from Stuart Ross, Rebecca Stewart and Keisha Walker from Phoenix School on the model the school had used over the past few years to gain the Investors in Careers kite mark. The presentation highlighted the students' benefits from the award and what the accreditation involved. As part of the model at the school, the pupils had access to a number of different opportunities such as looking at apprenticeship schemes, job interviews, vocational courses, enterprise days, careers fair, university mentors, work with local businesses, guest speakers, visits to colleges and much more. By applying for the kite mark, the school was able to learn a lot about the pupils, staff and local community; it was able to identify staff with particular links that could be used and invited members of the local community to talk to the pupils. The school was able to show pupils other career options as well as the university option. Work placements were

found for 100 pupils and it was reported many got jobs through these placements.

Nafsika Atta from CfBT Education Trust was also in attendance and reported that the majority of schools in H&F commissioned a service from the trust and it met annually with the schools to ensure they met the needs of the cohort. The trust gave independent and impartial advice as required by the new duty. The schools who did not commission the trust's service commissioned the service from other providers.

It was noted that Ofsted was looking at careers guidance in schools and its report should be available in the summer.

In response to question on whether any other schools had been awarded the kite mark, it was reported that Woodlane High School had the kite mark and Fulham Cross Schools did have the accreditation but it needed to be reassessed. Stuart Ross suggested that if other schools wanted to apply for the kite mark accreditation, they would be happy to help and advise the schools.

One member asked how schools managed gender expectation in respect of employment and careers and it was reported that Phoenix High looked at different options and initiatives for the pupils, such as holding IT workshops aimed for girls.

Following a question on how Phoenix High measured the success, it was noted students were tracked through an annual questionnaire and the results of the careers guidance and education service would not be immediate but real changes would be seen in the following years. Year 11 pupils were currently leaving school knowing a lot more information about their options. A member asked how it was ensured that pupils when choosing their options at school were not limiting their career choices later on due to these options selected. It was reported that information was included in the options booklet and there was also a careers software for pupils that generated a number of jobs that could be suitable for them.

It was reported that information on pupils careers education and guidance needs was fed back to the governing body, and at Phoenix High, the governing body had created a sub group for governors to make sure the school established as many links with the community that was available and that all pupils had a pathway. The school ensured pupils left to contribute to society and the wider economy.

The Chairman commented that work paths in the curriculum were critical and it was noted that vocational courses played a role in widening the careers choices for pupils. Students at Phoenix High were kept up to date with information relating to the labour market, such as in which sector more jobs were available in. Information on careers was shared such as using specific notice boards in schools and information was given to form tutors to pass on.

The Committee thanked the guests for attending and for their presentation.

9. THE PUPIL PREMIUM SCRUTINY INQUIRY

The Committee considered the interim report of the Pupil Premium Task Group. It was noted that the final report was scheduled to go to the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 15 July and then would come to the Committee at its September meeting.

Councillor Dewhirst, Chairman of the Task Group, thanked Helen Cross and Michael Carr for their support to the group. The Task Group met last week to discuss its proposals with officers.

It was noted that some schools received significant funding for pupil premium (PP) and there was a variety of schemes used.

One issue identified in the review was how much governors knew about the use of PP and one member noted that at her school there was a PP co-ordinator who worked on the allocation of PP to make sure pupils did not fall behind; narrowing the gap in achievement was crucial.

It was noted that Ofsted now asked about the use of PP during inspections.

Concern was expressed over the identification of those pupils who received free school meals (FSM), as members had been told that those pupils could not be identified. However it had been reported that when going on school trips, those pupils on FSM received a packed lunch from the school which identified them to other pupils. It was asked that this be looked at.

It was reported that at the primary headteachers conference, one of the break out sessions discussed PP and 35 different schemes were reported. This information would be shared with the Task Group.

The final report would include case studies, highlight best practice, include a checklist for schools to use to help them identify the best way to spend the funding and also include online resources that were available.

10. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN 2013-14

The items scheduled for the next meeting on 17 September were:

- Health Item
Representatives from the CCG and the NHS Commissioning Board to be invited to discuss their plans for 0- 5 years provision.
This item will also cover the new responsibility of Public Health for health services which include monitoring immunisation, school nursing, and the public health agendas of obesity and oral health, sexual health and teenage pregnancy. The Public Health team would confirm the exact areas to be covered shortly.
- Strategic Plan for Children (*tbc*)
- Report by the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board on Safeguarding in H&F
- Review of Localities

- Executive Response to the Recommendations of the Pupil Premium Task Group.

One of the members requested that items on accessing mental health support and speech and language services, as included in the work programme, be included as part of the health item at the September meeting or as part of a report at another meeting. Officers would be contacted in order to look into this request.

Action: Committee Co-ordinator

Borough Youth Forum Event

The Committee and the Borough Youth Forum have arranged an event on Thursday 27 June at 6pm in Committee Room 1, which would involve workshop style sessions to give a chance for the young people and members to engage in an informal setting to discuss various issues. Other scrutiny committee members have also been invited. The BYF have decided that they would like to focus their discussions on cyber bullying and skills young people expect to require to be successful in the future.

RESOLVED THAT:

That the work programme be agreed.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 17 September 2013.

Meeting started: 7.05 pm
Meeting ended: 9.15 pm

Chairman

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