

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Wednesday, 13th March, 2019.

Present:- Councillors Sharif (Chair), Kelly (Vice-Chair), Brooker, Matloob, Minhas, D Parmar and Strutton

Education Voting Co-opted Members:- Paul Kassapian

PART 1

44. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Preston Brooker declared a non-pecuniary interest in all agenda items in that he was a governor of Church Mead and Ryvers Schools, a member of the Foster Panel and the Joint Parenting Panel.

Councillor Paul Kelly declared a non-pecuniary interest in all agenda items in that he was employed at LHSPA in Britwell.

45. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th February 2019

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2019 be approved as a correct record.

46. Action Progress Report

Resolved: That

1. details of the Action Progress report be noted;
2. it be noted that a timescale had yet to be agreed for the implementation of the recommendations of the Children's Centres Task and Finish Group.

47. Member Questions

One written Member question had been received.

Councillor Brooker clarified that he wished officers to identify which schools still had spaces available in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 in September 2019.

Members commented that this question had been asked on a previous occasion but an answer had yet to be received.

Resolved: That the written answer be circulated to Members.

48. School Standards

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Members received a report and presentation which provided an overview of education outcomes in the Slough Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage 2 (KS2), Key Stage 4 (KS4) and Key Stage 5 (KS5). In considering patterns of achievement for schools and groups of pupils, there would be improved strategic planning.

Following the presentation by the Service Lead, School Effectiveness, Members asked questions and sought clarification on a number of issues which were duly responded to including:

- the impact of Academies on the figures. Members requested clarification on this aspect; the officer responded that the LA does not examine differences in outcomes between academies and maintained schools
- whether any adjustments had made to address the impact on 'white disadvantaged girls', the group that appeared to be most affected. The officer advised that the School Improvement Board considered the data and set the priorities. The gaps between 'disadvantaged' and 'not disadvantaged' were quite small in Slough and the fluctuation in figures could be explained by the small cohort. A report outlining the initiatives in relation to 'disadvantaged white British students' was requested. The officer responded that the council does not provide school improvement support in this context and it is for schools to decide their own priorities. However some local initiatives such as the Local School Improvement Fund meant that some groups of schools have been working together to work on initiatives that would impact on this cohort.
- The Progress 8 scores at both selective and non-selective schools were above the national average and the outcomes at KS4 were positive.
- Clarification on EHCP was requested together with details on the number and the number of challenges to the plans received. Members requested that a report on this issue be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel;
- An explanation of the 30% reduction in performance of the 'Asian Pakistani' cohort from KS2 to KS4 was sought and Members were advised that the assessment measures at each key stage were completely different and could not be compared and also the figures referred to were in the same year. It was therefore not accurate to state that there is 30% reduction in outcomes for the Asian Pakistani cohort between KS2 and KS4. The progress 8 performance measure is more appropriate indicator of progress over time, but even there caution is required as the cohort at KS2 would not be the same cohort at KS4. The performance of this group was, however, above the national average at KS2 and KS4
- It was acknowledged that Headteachers aimed to ensure that all pupils made progress over time.

In response to a question in relation to Wrexham School and the further decline of the Progress 8 score, the officer advised that whilst he could not discuss individual schools, this school had recently been judged as 'Good' by

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Ofsted and worked well with the local authority. Broad reasons may be due to a change in methodology this year from previous years, and because some schools did not enter children for all Progress 8 subjects;

- Consideration to be given as to whether a Part II update may be required in the future if there were concerns in relation to a particular school.

The officer reported that the local authority has a good relationship with schools. This assisted in providing better support as facilitators in the school system.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

49. School Place Planning Update

The Panel received a report which provided an update on current school expansion projects, the latest pupil projections and proposals for meeting future demand, as set out in the School Places Strategy 2018-23.

The Principle Asset Manager outlined the content of the report and highlighted that both birth data and inward migration to Slough influenced place planning. Schools were currently accepting pupils over the planned admission numbers.

A Member expressed concern in relation to Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) stating that good practice guidance indicated that children with SEN should not be placed in a school with a PRU as it could be damaging to their health and wellbeing. This was also contrary to the Council's five year plan. In response, the Panel was advised that Haybrook College had at least six facilities in different buildings and SEN pupils were not in the same classes as those from the PRU. However, some classes may currently be combined in Littledown School but the new Mila Centre will remove the need for such integration.

The Panel considered the intake of Slough students by both Langley Grammar and Slough Grammar Schools and questioned whether any priority was given to Slough pupils. The officer responded that Cabinet had focussed on this issue in 2014 and that Langley Grammar school was currently accepting an additional thirty pupils from Slough. In contrast, the Council did not provide Slough Grammar School with funding as it had not given preference to Slough pupils. Members requested details of the percentage of Slough children in each of the borough's grammar schools.

The Panel questioned whether there was adequate provision of school places given the new housing developments and regeneration in the area and sought reassurance that the number likely to be required in the future had not been underestimated. The officer advised that previous experience as well as the results of a detailed survey of 500 properties every five years was built in to the forecast figures. He undertook to raise Members concerns with the Director of Children, Learning and Skills.

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The Panel noted that some schools appeared to be oversubscribed whilst others were undersubscribed. Whilst this may be due to popularity of certain schools with parents/carers, Members indicated that it would be useful to have a discussion on the reasons for this at a future meeting.

Resolved: That the School Places Strategy 2019-23 and the principles for managing school places set out within the Strategy be noted.

50. Recruitment and Retention of School Teaching Staff

The Panel received a report which provided an overview of the national and local picture in relation to the recruitment and retention of teachers.

The Service Lead, School Effectiveness, outlined the content of the report and in response to a question from the Panel advised that there had been no progress on the proposal suggested several years previous that temporary accommodation be built for teachers.

The Education Co-opted Member advised that the recruitment and retention of high quality staff was a major concern. Whilst a number of issues including the status of the profession, teacher workload and pupil behaviour impacted on recruitment and retention, many in the profession regarded it as a vocation. The quality of some supply staff could be poor and the use of such staff was also a significant cost to a school.

The Panel expressed support in terms of raising the profile of the borough's academic success and to link this with the success in business. Celebration and promotion of the borough's successes in education may attract quality teaching staff.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

51. Forward Work Programme

Resolved: That:

(1) the School Improvement Programme be included on the 2019/20 work programme;

(2) the following items be included on the programme for 17 April 2019 meeting:-

- Implementation of SEND Reforms (including data on EHC plans)
- Slough Children's Services Trust Annual Report
- Attendance service - latest trends and unauthorised absences
- Joint Parenting Panel - quarterly update (if sufficient time otherwise defer to following meeting).

52. Members Attendance Record 2018/19

Resolved: That the Members Attendance Record for 2018/19 be noted.

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53. Date of Next Meeting - 17th April 2019

17 April 2019

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.34 pm and closed at 8.30 pm)