

Ambitious Plymouth

Monday 19 October 2015

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Beer, in the Chair.

Councillor Bowie, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Bowyer (substitute for Councillor Downie), Dann, Sam Davey, Deacon, Jordan, Mrs Nicholson, Singh and Tuohy.

Co-opted Representatives: Edith Bayley (Statutory Co-opted Representative) and Clare Hamon (Non-Statutory Representative).

Apologies for absence: Councillors Downie and Riley.

Also in attendance: Jayne Gorton (Lead Officer), Judith Harwood (Assistant Director for Learning and Communities), Councillor McDonald (Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Public Health), Julie Reed (Principal Admin Officer), John Searson (Head of Education and Learning) and Lynn Young (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 10.10 am and finished at 11.18 am.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

22. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Councillors in accordance with the code of conduct.

23. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2015 are confirmed as a correct record.

24. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

25. **EDUCATION PAPER/PLYMOUTH LEARNING PARTNERSHIP**

Judith Harwood (Assistant Director for Learning and Communities), John Searson (Head of Education and Learning) and Councillor McDonald (Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Public Health) submitted an Education paper.

Members were advised that Plymouth City Council were working with other partners (predominantly the Plymouth Learning Partnership (PLP)) to produce a cohesive vision for education for the city, which would not be completed until December. This report contained the highlights of the paper.

Following members' questions it was reported that –

- (a) education goalposts were constantly changing, and teachers faced new challenges every academic year;
- (b) teaching levels had been replaced with assessment for learning;
- (c) education budgets had remained static for several years and were now reducing;
- (d) the number of Primary schools rated 'Good' by Ofsted had fallen this year, this was in part due to the inspection cycle;
- (e) a number of schools who had received a poor Ofsted inspection two years ago were due to be inspected again this year. The PLP had worked with these particular schools to ensure they would receive an improved inspection from Ofsted;
- (f) one particular Primary school, graded 'Inadequate' by Ofsted (and now placed in special measures) whose Headteacher had recently died were being helped through this difficult transition period;
- (g) a number of subject 'hubs' were available in the city, and examples of good practice was shared amongst schools, although this exchange of information and advice was voluntary, and not all schools participated;
- (h) education resources were targeted at schools who were of concern to the Local Authority;
- (i) four schools had been identified as a cause for concern (no school in Plymouth was currently 'coasting' as the definition was subject to consultation and would not be applied until 2016) and each had been asked to provide an action plan to demonstrate how they intended to improve their performance;
- (j) a school would be classed as 'coasting' if it had fallen under the 'coasting' criteria for all of the three years 2014, 2015 and 2016;
- (k) a small number of Plymouth schools were potentially at risk of 'coasting', based on data from 2014 and 2015;
- (l) a number of factors contributed towards a school being classed as 'coasting' and included the transient nature of its pupils, and high numbers of EAL (English as an Additional Language) and SEN (Special Educational Needs) pupils;
- (m) although Academies were no longer under Local Authority control, they could

be challenged on poor performance;

- (n) members of staff in the Education Department were working closely with Sir David Carter, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for the South West, who in turn reported directly to the Department for Education (DfE);
- (o) Ofsted needed to see evidence that Local Authorities challenged all under-performing schools;
- (p) approximately 100 Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) who had trained in Plymouth had started a job in the city at the start of this academic year;
- (q) NQTs were able to access any Continual Professional Development (CPD) taking place in the city;
- (r) any NQT who was unable to secure a job was able to obtain a contract through Supply Plus (a unique supply and recruitment agency set up with the support and advice from local Head Teachers) to enable them to remain in Plymouth and complete their training;
- (s) teacher training was now more school based to enable student to gain experience alongside experienced teachers;
- (t) a number of teachers aspired to be a Headteacher, although the same people may not necessarily aspire to be the head of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) or an Executive Headteacher;
- (u) the role of Executive Headteacher had been in existence in Plymouth for a number of years;
- (v) there were currently a number of Headteacher vacancies, and 12 Headteachers were due to leave their post this year;
- (w) the Deputy Headteacher of a school often applied for the post of Headteacher if and when it became vacant, or in some circumstances a teacher from a local school applied;
- (x) a number of acting Headteachers were currently in post; every Headteacher had the opportunity to receive training from the Human Resources Advisory Team, and had access to a mentor;
- (y) all governing bodies had been reconstituted in the past 12 months, and schools were encouraged to conduct audits, and accept government intervention and plans;
- (z) more free childcare places for disadvantaged children had been located, although more places needed to be identified to cope with the demand which would be seen following the increase in free childcare provision.

The Chair thanked Judith Harwood, John Searson and Councillor McDonald for their report.

26. **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - PERFORMANCE INDICATOR UPDATE**

Following a discussion with Members, it was agreed to defer this item to the December meeting.

27. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel discussed the draft work programme for 2015 – 2016 and agreed to recommend to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board the following items for inclusion –

- (1) Corporate Performance Report – K14, K15, K19, K45, K27a/b;
- (2) scrutiny review in to early years childcare provision.

28. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.