

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 19 September 2018

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Beer, in the Chair.

Councillor Murphy, Vice Chair.

Councillors Buchan, Mrs Johnson, Samantha Leaves, Morris (substitute for Councillor Winter), Rebecca Smith and Tuohy.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Winter.

Also in attendance: Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children & Young People), Judith Harwood (Service Director for Education, Participation & Skills), Jo Siney (Head of Special Education Needs and Disability), David Bowles (Head of Education, Participation and Skills), Alison Botham (Director of Children's Services) and Helen Rickman (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 2pm and finished at 4.25pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel 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.

16. **Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the code of conduct the following declarations of interest were made –

Member	Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Sam Leaves	Minute 19	She is the parent of a child with special educational needs.	Personal
Councillor Mrs Johnson	Minute 19	She is a Governor at Compton School.	Personal
Councillor Rebecca Smith	Minute 19	She is a Governor at All Saints Academy.	Personal
Nicky Williams	Minute 19	She is a parent Governor at High View Primary School and on the Board of the Plymouth Teaching School Alliance.	Personal

Councillor Sam Leaves	Minute 19	She is an employee of the NHS.	Personal
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17. **Minutes**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2018 as an accurate record subject to the following change:

Minute 11 'School Readiness': should refer to the committee being supplied with the thresholds document for children's social care.

The Chair highlighted that this had been included on the work programme for discussion at a future meeting.

18. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

19. **Report regarding Support for Young People with Autism Spectrum Condition and SEND in Transition to Adulthood**

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children & Young People), Judith Harwood (Service Director for Education, Participation & Skills), Jo Siney (Head of Special Education Needs and Disability) and David Bowles (Head of Education, Participation and Skills) presented the report.

Members were informed that support for young people with Autism Spectrum Condition and SEND was complex and focused upon multi-agency involvement and a personalised approach for each young person. Change in organisations and their 'offer' for young people was continually revised and revisited to ensure that adequate services and support were in place to maximise outcomes regarding independence, housing and education.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- (a) minutes from the Plymouth Autism Partnership Board would be provided to Members;
- (b) information included in the report was generated from the school census data for Plymouth schools; there were currently 23 young people, aged 15-18, placed out of the city that were receiving an education, and 21 young people, aged 15-18, who had an identified special educational need that were home educated. Of the 23 young people placed out of the city, this was for a variety of reasons including parental choice, because of a complex learning requirement that was met within a specialist provision or because of a specialist health need including visually impaired or hearing impaired young people who were better supported at a specialist provision; children placed out of the city

for educational need was not simply because of lack of capacity in Plymouth schools;

- (c) of the 1196 young people in Plymouth identified with SEND, 434 young people also had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Members were informed that all young people would be provided with help regarding transitioning into adulthood regardless of a EHCP however schools were obliged to support young people with SEND; the Council had a contract with Careers South West to work with young people who were most at risk of falling out of the system;
- (d) Members would be provided with a breakdown of data detailing how many of the city's looked after children had special educational needs and were impacted by the transition to adulthood, as well as those with an EHCP;
- (e) care plans for young adults with severe complex needs who were transitioning to adult services were discussed with multi agencies, the individual and their family at the earliest opportunity; support was also provided to parents with respect to the mental capacity act, power of attorney and guardianship however this was not provided whilst the individual was supported in Children's Services;
- (f) further information regarding the transition to adulthood regarding mental health services would be provided to Members;
- (g) currently the local authority worked with Parent Carer Forum and the Young Send Group in order to ascertain the satisfaction of the young people identified with SEND; officers were assessing this to see if an integrated approach affected the speed or success of outcomes;
- (h) Members would be provided with thresholds for children and adolescents with mental health needs as well as young adults;
- (i) Members would be provided with the numbers of emergency placements requested for young people making the transition to adulthood;
- (j) Members would be provided with the numbers of young people identified with SEND that use the service.

The following recommendations were agreed:

1. for the Committee to be provided with the minutes from the Plymouth Autism Partnership;
2. for further information to be provided regarding the numbers of how many looked after children had Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and were impacted by the transition to adulthood;
3. for additional information to be provided regarding the transition protocols for Health Services, specifically regarding mental health;

4. for further information to be provided regarding how many young people identified as having SEND go on to access the services;
5. with thresholds for children and adolescents with mental health needs as well as young adults;
6. Members would be provided with the numbers of emergency placements requested for young people making the transition to adulthood.

20. **Headline Performance Data**

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children & Young People), Judith Harwood (Service Director for Education, Participation & Skills) and David Bowles (Head of Education, Participation and Skills) presented the report.

Members were informed that the data provided in the report represented information from 2017; figures for 2018 would be available in February 2019 along with Plymouth's performance against the national picture and regional/ statistical neighbours. Key themes arising from the report included the trend of disadvantaged pupils underperforming and being disadvantaged by the system, the difference between the performance of boys and girls and the emerging trend that Plymouth's performance remained below the national picture. The lack of funding from Government for Plymouth's schools, the complexities surrounding Multi Academy Trusts and the powers of local authorities were also highlighted.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (a) the performance of children in schools was affected by the workforce and the skills and resources available to teachers; it was considered that Plymouth's funding for children was approximately £300 less per child than in other parts of the country;
- (b) Members would be provided with a briefing upon the role of the Regional School's Council and an offer would be extended to the Regional School's Commissioner to attend a future meeting of the Education and Children's Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) local authorities had a statutory duty as a champion for all children regardless of if they were taught in a maintained school or multi academy trust. The Council had the responsibility of challenging academies on standards that were required in special needs and disability, inclusion, safeguarding and access of children to a balanced curriculum; this was done via an integrated approach with the Plymouth Teaching School's Alliance;
- (d) the escalation of concern into action relating to failing schools under a multi academy trust was complicated by the overall responsibility of the Government, other than the local authority;
- (e) literacy standards was one of the key areas in Plymouth where children were below the national average with regards to the early years and foundation

stage;

- (f) Members would be provided with benchmarking with like authorities in future reports;
- (g) recruitment challenges were deemed to be greater than the challenge posed by the retention of teachers/ head teachers in Plymouth;
- (h) Members would be provided with benchmarking data with similar authorities in relation to the different types of school, including Grammar and Studio;
- (i) Plymouth City Council was looking to create an early years centre of excellence in order to provide a strong base for support and advice for parents and teachers; it was acknowledged that the use of digital devices by parents at home may be having a detrimental effect upon a child's performance at school however it was considered that some parents may not be aware of this. It was highlighted by a Member that it was not the use of the technology by parents, but the lack of quality time with children that may be to blame;
- (j) Members would be provided with a briefing report upon the Progress 8 measure;
- (k) future reports would include information upon children in receipt of the pupil premium, specifically with regards to key stage 4 and 5

The following recommendations were agreed:

1. for the committee to be provided with benchmarking information with like authorities, specifically with regards to a similar make-up of schools, including Grammar and studio schools, including readiness for school information;
2. for the committee to be provided with a briefing paper regarding the role of the Regional School's Commissioner and for an invite to be extended to her to attend a future meeting;
3. for future reports to include information regarding the pupil premium, specifically in regards to key stage 4 and 5;
4. for a briefing to be circulated to Members on the Progress 8 measure;
5. for information to be provided to Members regarding military children's performance;
6. for the feasibility of holding a select committee review into the governance issues surrounding the Plymouth Studio School to be investigated.

21. **Torbay Children's Services Update**

Alison Botham (Director of Children's Services) and Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) provided Members with an update on Torbay Children's Services.

Members were advised that the briefing was in relation to the recent inspection in Torbay however the scrutiny function of the contents of the report was the responsibility of Torbay. It was highlighted that the judgement of children's services remained almost completely unchanged as being inadequate however the adoption performance had changed to 'good'.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (a) the Children's Improvement Board, a multi-agency forum, was in place to address issues and monitor performance; going forward this would be chaired by Alison Botham;
- (b) with regards to the recruitment of social workers and their being retained, Plymouth was rated better than the national average; this was not affected by the link with Torbay Council;
- (c) there was continued confidence that there was no detrimental impact upon Plymouth in linking with Torbay to support their children's services.

Members noted the update.

22. **Work Programme**

Members noted the work programme and agreed to include the Raising School Standards Action Plan.

23. **Tracking Resolutions**

Members noted the tracking resolutions document.