

Ambitious Plymouth

Monday 8 December 2014

PRESENT:

Councillor Bowie, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Beer, Vice Chair.

Councillors Sam Davey, Jarvis, Jordan, Sam Leaves, Mrs Nicholson, Parker-Delaz-Ajete, Riley, Singh and Tuohy.

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

Also in attendance: Jayne Gorton (Lead Officer), Councillor McDonald (Cabinet for Children, Young People and Public Health), Julie Reed (Business Manager), John Searson (Principal Leadership Adviser) and Lynn Young (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.00 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.

32. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

33. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2014 are confirmed as a correct record.

34. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

35. **PLYMOUTH EDUCATION CATERING SERVICES - LOCAL AUTHORITY TRADING CO-OPERATIVE COMPANY**

Members were advised that the report for this agenda item was not yet available and was deferred until a meeting later in the municipal year.

36. **SCHOOL STANDARDS REPORT**

John Searson (Principal Leadership Adviser), and Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Public Health), provided members with a

summary of the SATs, GCSE and A Levels results for 2014. Members were advised that the data used to produce the report was provisional and unvalidated.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the Key Stage 1 results were final, and the Key Stage 4 and 5 results were provisional;
- (b) results for primary aged children were similar to those of last year;
- (c) Plymouth's results for five year olds were two percent below the national average and had been five percent above last year; national results had increased by eight percent this year and the gap between Plymouth's results and national results was now wider than last year;
- (d) the percentage of five year olds who had reached a 'good level of development' (GLD - having the essential skills, knowledge and understanding to be ready for starting the national curriculum) had increased by one percent on last year;
- (e) 16 percent more girls than boys in Plymouth reached a 'good level of development', which was in line with the national gender gap of 17 percent;
- (f) school judgements were moderated and teacher assessments challenged if necessary by the Local Authority;
- (g) Early Years settings received 'no notice' inspections from Ofsted; 89.6 percent of Early Years settings inspected had been graded as 'good' or better, two percent lower than last year;
- (h) the number of Early Years settings judged 'inadequate' had increased as Ofsted had raised their expectations of the standard of education and teaching that three and four year olds received;
- (i) Early Years settings that were failing were supported by the Local Authority, and placed on a six month improvement plan; if they did not improve within that timescale their Early Years funding was removed. Funding had been removed from one setting within the past 12 months, and several settings had been placed on an improvement plan with some achieving a 'Good' at re-inspection;
- (j) the Year 1 Phonics Test measured the ability of six year olds to decode text using phonics; results had improved by four percent this year, lower than the national improvement. 74 percent of the city's seven year olds had passed the Phonics Test, which was in-line with the national average;
- (k) Key Stage 1 results had improved or were the same as last year, which mirrored the national results; however Plymouth's results were already below national averages;

- (l) significant improvements had been seen this year in the standard of reading, which had improved by more than the national improvement, along with writing and maths;
- (m) areas for improvement included the attainment of more able pupils and standards in writing, particularly for boys where there was a nine percent gap in reaching the national gender average;
- (n) there had been an improvement in reading at Key Stage 2, with an increase of three percent at L4+;
- (o) the test for grammar, punctuation and spelling had changed this year, with an increased focus on spelling;
- (p) the biggest gaps in relation to national averages were those for more able pupils achieving above expectation (L5) especially in writing but also in maths. The biggest gender gaps were in writing with boys being eight percent behind the boys' national average and girls with a 10 percent gap compared to the girls' national average;
- (q) achievement of two national curriculum levels of progress was the expectation for all pupils from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 (a period of four years). Progress in Plymouth was broadly in-line with national averages but was three percent below in writing;
- (r) Key Stage 2 results were disappointing which had been exacerbated by national rises this year;
- (s) secondary schools had always provided a range of academic and vocational pathways that were well matched to their learner's needs. This year a number of changes had been made to the rules governing GCSE courses and the national reporting arrangements, which had impacted on schools with a wide vocational syllabus. The changes included –
 - ending course work in English;
 - ending marks in English for the student's ability in speaking and listening;
 - harsher exam board moderation of controlled assessments completed and marked in schools;
 - BTEC qualifications now counting as just one exam;
 - early entry results used in performance tables;
 - reducing the number and breadth of qualifications that count in the performance tables;
- (t) last year's results were just above the national average. This year, using the old methodology, Plymouth's results were five percent below the national average. Using the new rules, Plymouth's 5 x GCSE A*-C (including maths and English) result was four percent below the national average. Secondary schools had now adapted their qualification pathways to ensure significant improvements for next year;

- (u) boys were furthest from the national gender averages, at six percent below, with girls two percent below;
- (v) Key Stage 5 results had shown a small improvement in the grades achieved per entry but there was a fall when comparing the number of A Level qualifications each student achieved. The majority of students achieved the grades required for further study or employment;
- (w) the achievement of Free School Meals pupils had not been affected, currently Plymouth's Free School Meals gaps were all less than the published national gaps. Primary schools had been given a detailed analysis of their Free School Meal gaps;
- (x) the number of primary schools graded as 'good or better' had dropped steadily throughout the year, this figure now stood at 76 percent;
- (y) a combination of results was used to create the 'floor standard' at Key Stage 2. School cohorts needed to exceed the threshold of 65 percent (achieving a L4 in reading, writing and maths) and reach national average progress levels in each subject. Plymouth's primary school results showed that four schools were considered to be 'below floor standard' which represented six percent, an increase of three percent on last year. There was an expectation that schools that failed to meet the 'floor standard' or who were placed in category after an inspection would be transformed through academy sponsorship;
- (z) the city's educational performance in 2014 had raised a number of concerns. The Plymouth Teaching School Alliance (PTSA) now provided school to school support to ensure that schools tackled performance issues effectively. The Local Authority had been working in partnership with the PTSA for over a year and the schools that had been supported during this period had made significant improvements on their 2013 results. A shared 'aspiration plan' was being developed to ensure that performance concerns were addressed in collaboration.

In response to members' questions it was reported that –

- (aa) it was difficult to identify in which area of the city the students lived, as catchment areas were no longer used in the city;
- (bb) half of Plymouth primary schools participated in the 'Talk for Writing' scheme, whereby pupils' writing was developed through talk and discussion, which in turn helped to improve their vocabulary and motivation to write;
- (cc) there had been an increase in the number of men working in early years settings, which could result in a positive impact on the performance of boys;
- (dd) boys were slower to develop academically than girls;
- (ee) a change in national policy had resulted in a negative impact on the city's exam results;

- (ff) money was available in the Schools Forum Budget to provide support for improving the performance of the city's schools;
- (gg) the validated Key Stage 4 results would be published at the end of January 2015.

The Chair thanked John Searson and Councillor McDonald for their report, and recommended that a one day review on exam results is held after their publication.

37. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The panel noted the new Terms of Reference for Ambitious Plymouth.

38. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel noted its work programme and agreed to recommend to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board that –

- (1) the 'Plymouth Education Catering Services – Local Authority Trading Co-operative Company' agenda item is added to the Work Programme for 30 March 2015;
- (2) 'School organisation/Published Admission Numbers (PAN)' is added to the Work Programme for 30 March 2015 – members will receive this update in report format;
- (3) the 'Youth Services' agenda item for the 19 January 2015 meeting is amended to reflect that members will received this update in report format.

39. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.