

# Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday 28 November 2018**

## **PRESENT:**

Councillor Mrs Beer, in the Chair.

Councillor Murphy, Vice Chair.

Councillors Buchan, Goslin, Mrs Johnson, R Smith and Winter.

Co-opted Representatives: Mrs Nicky Williams (Parent Governor Representative)

Absent from the meeting: Councillors Sam Leaves and Tuohy.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.45 pm.

Also in attendance: Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) Neelam Bhardwaja (Service Director for Children and Families); Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Judith Harwood (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills), David Bowles (Head of Education) and Amelia Boulter (Democratic Adviser).

*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.*

## 24. **Declarations of Interest**

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Councillor Johnson	Minute 28 and 30	Governor at Compton School and a Trustee at Operation Encompass	Personal
Councillor R Smith	Minute 28 and 30	Governor at All Saints Academy	Personal
Councillor Winter	Minute 28 and 30	Governor at Marine Academy Plymouth	Personal
Nicky Williams (Parent Governor Representative)	Minute 28 and 30	Board Member of Plymouth Teaching School Alliance	Personal

## 25. **Minutes**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting of 19 September 2018 with an amendment to the attendance list to include that Councillor Goslin was present at the meeting.

26. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

27. **Ofsted Update - verbal**

Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Neelam Bhardwaja (Service Director for Children and Families) were present for this item. It was highlighted that –

- (a) the inspection had highlighted the strengths and improvements to be made;
- (b) strengths include -
  - progress made since last inspection in 2014;
  - assessment undertaken had improved;
  - engagement with children and young people;
  - timeliness of assessments.
- (c) areas for improvement include –
  - the recording of supervision;
  - smarter plans to include timescales and accountability for tasks.
- (d) they looked at each service area with a focus on caseloads;
- (e) the virtual school and SEND was also part of the inspection. Ofsted were assured that investment was appropriate and driving forward improved outcomes for children. They also look at the assurance and compliance around the most vulnerable children in education.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- (f) they expect to receive the draft full report within the next 10 days and have 3 days to check for factual accuracies before being published in the public domain;
- (g) there were 284 children currently being home educated, this number fluctuates week by week and had tripled in recent years but this was in line with national trend. They regularly check the quality of education and work closely with parents to ensure that it is appropriate for the child;
- (h) if a child excluded from school and meets the category for the local authority to place then they would not be home schooled because they would look to place the child at another school;

- (i) if a looked after child was subject to a care order then the local authority has the parental responsibility and therefore would not opt for home education.

The Committee noted the verbal update and requested the Ofsted Report to be provided at a future meeting.

## 28. **Children's Services Business Plans and Budgets**

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Judith Harwood (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills), Neelam Bhardwaja (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families) and David Bowles (Head of Education) were present for this item and referred to the report in the agenda.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- (a) the SEND Strategy covers the needs of the child and within the new framework they had worked with parents on the presentations within different social situations and family life. They did not go into detail within the business plan because the detail is contained within the SEND Strategic Plan;
- (b) this business plan sets out how they work with schools that have the accountability and responsibility on how they respond to Ofsted. They do however work very closely with schools and the business plan would not reflect the changes to the Ofsted framework;
- (c) the Pledges do not exactly match the priorities for the department but sit with in the area that was the best fit;
- (d) the legislation sets out that all local authorities have the duty to be the champion of all children's outcomes irrespective of the schools they attend;
- (e) through Careers SW they have the STEM Ambassador Programme and receive funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and higher education for the next STEPS Programme. Fifteen secondary schools were involved with the LEP and were ensuring that the offer would be available for all young people;
- (f) the extent that early years was represented within the business plan was through attainment outcomes within the early years foundation stage. Early years was not detailed within the business plan and as part of the next refresh would look at the 30 hours provision. Children Centres would sit within commissioning strategies;

- (g) they had not attempted to list all of the statutory functions within the business plan but focused on the priorities. SACRE if included would sit under attainment and raising aspirations;
- (h) the supported placement includes 4 to 5 very young people that they could not find placements for given their complexities of their behaviour. This resulted in the local authority having to create placements and around the clock staff for a period of time at a cost of £980k. One placement was jointly funded with the CCG costing the local authority £50k a week;
- (i) a recently published report on the mental health needs of young people highlighted that 25% of young people under the age of 18 years had the upper end of CAMHS. This group of young people were also evident within the looked after population along with other factors such as the toxic trio of domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health. Also intergenerational issues had impacted on children being kept safe within their own family unit. They were working with early help services with targeted support to prevent these young people coming into the system;
- (j) around 10 years ago Plymouth had one of the fastest falling school enrolments within the country and then 6 years ago had the fastest rising enrolment. They were reviewing secondary spaces to meet the needs of the primary children coming through the system;
- (k) the local authority was supportive of the UTC being developed because of that particular STEM need within the city at that time but to note that there were STEM opportunities within secondary schools;
- (l) they were undertaking a lot of work on a peninsular basis and working with Young Devon to create placements for 16 plus young people. They try were possible to look for in-house, then a local placement but failing that would look further afield;
- (m) children in Plymouth can choose a school in Saltash likewise children in Saltash can choose a school in Plymouth. The law requires each local authority to have sufficient places for children who were resident within that local authority area;
- (n) they were looking at how they work with the family differently to stop repeated child protection plans.

The Committee to receive a report on the work undertaken to reduce child protection plans.

29. **Children, Young People and Families Social Worker recruitment and Social Workers' case loads**

Councillor McDonald (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Neelam Bhardwaja (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families) were present for this item and referred to the report within the agenda.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- (a) that the team manager would have an awareness of experience, expertise and resilience of each of the social workers within their team. However, they do have staff on long term sick but sickness levels within the service area was well below the target and had been for a sustained period of time. This was reflected by Ofsted who reported that staff morale was high, people felt supported and managers were supportive and visible;
- (b) workload meeting take place weekly and very month they review time taken off in lieu and extra hours of work. Some teams were working their contracted hours but those teams involved in court proceedings could work up to an extra 10 hours. This should not become the norm or expectation and they encourage staff to take the time off for recovery and for manager to have oversight of this;
- (c) the social worker as reported in the local press was an agency worker. The referral and assessment service was not functioning properly which resulted in a reorganisation of the service. They now have a robust system in place to deal with performance issues and there should be records in place on the action taken at that time;
- (d) they were working more proactively with each of the teams so that social workers could undertake the work that needs to be done and that other elements of the role could be undertaken by someone else with the team;
- (e) they commission ACE to undertake the active home visit and if concerns comeback around safeguarding they would send an Inclusion and Welfare Officer to visit the home. There was a provision within the law to work with either social care or the police if a child was at risk of harm but was pleased to report that there were no cases;
- (f) social workers often express which area they wish to specialise in but also request to work within another service area to broaden their experience and expertise;

- (g) they look at the child's journey through the system and management looks at the service area as a whole to manage the pressures across the service area.

The Committee noted the report.

30. **Plymouth Education Board**

Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation), Judith Harwood (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills) and David Bowles (Head of Education) were present for this item and referred to the report included in the agenda.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- (a) Higher Education (HE) had been included on the Board because they are our education partners that work with particular schools. This Board represents all sectors and phases of education and HE bring a different perspective to the discussion;
- (b) Ivybridge Community College is a school of choice for parents within the city because of the good Ofsted rating and specialities in sport. Ivybridge is also part of the WeST MAT which includes primary and secondary schools from Plymouth;
- (b) the Board was set up in September 2017 and throughout the summer term 2017 a working group was set up to establish the Board. 10 years ago and beyond the system was not fragmented because schools were maintained and there were very few academies and schools worked very closely together;
- (c) that a solution nationally was to bring in more MATs but there was a reluctance for MATs to come to the city as well as stand-alone academies entering into a MAT. There were definitely things we could do locally and have a role in developing MATs;
- (d) the Board would have the more strategic conversations and delegates work to the different groups attached to the Board;
- (e) the oracy project was funded by various sources throughout the city and an update on the oracy project can be provided to the Committee;
- (f) Torbridge Primary School has been issued with an Academy order following their recent Ofsted report. Action has been taken action to strengthen governance and to improve various aspects of the school. A recovery programme would be completed by the end of this week and were working closely with the Regional School Commissioner;

- (g) they operate a system where people can opt out but it's about making sure they want to be part of the conversation. All the sectors are represented on the Board and one of the biggest challenges for head teachers is the rotation of their representatives and ensuring that they work on the communications to keep the momentum.

Agreed that the Committee receive an update on the Oracy Project.

31. **Work Programme**

The Committee discussed items for inclusion on the work programme. The Chair highlighted a particular issue around the carrying of weapons and drugs in school. Following a short debate, Members felt that some of the issues raised were outside the remit of this Committee.

The Committee therefore agreed –

1. To add to the work programme bullying including how the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) is delivered across the city.
2. That a briefing paper is provided on number of incidents of weapons and drugs being brought into schools during the last year.

32. **Tracking Resolutions**

The Committee noted the tracking resolutions.