

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL  
25 APRIL 2017  
7.30 - 9.45 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Brossard (Vice-Chairman), Ms Gaw, Mrs Hamilton, Ms Hayes, Mrs McCracken, Skinner and Mrs Temperton  
Ms C Barrett, Children's Social Care Representative  
Miss V Richardson, Teachers' Representative

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Virgo

**Executive Member:**

Councillor Dr Barnard

**Also Present:**

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)  
Ian Dixon, Head of Targeted Services  
Nikki Edwards, Director of Children, Young People & Learning  
Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care  
Rachel Morgan, Head of Standards and Effectiveness  
Kashif Nawaz, Assistant Virtual School Head  
Councillors McCracken and Peacey

**41. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Virgo.

**42. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 11 January 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising from the minutes, it was reported that:

- The LSCB Chair had indicated that Councillor Mrs Birch or Councillor Mrs McCracken would be welcome to attend Board meetings from time to time to observe the proceedings. The Director undertook to circulate details of the meetings.

Further information from the DfE was still awaited as to the final amounts of specific grants payable in 2017/18 but the overall reduction was expected to be confirmed.

**43. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest, nor any indication that Members would be participating under the party whip.

**44. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

45. **Public Participation**

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

46. **Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel held on 8 March 2017 were noted.

47. **Annual Reports on the Work of the Virtual School 2014/15 and 2015/16**

The Panel considered the Annual Reports on the work of the Virtual School covering the years September 2014 to August 2015 and September 2015 to August 2016. The Virtual School had been established with the remit to ensure that looked after children (LAC) received appropriate education and achieved well.

The reports illustrated how the work of the Virtual School had continued to grow and develop over the last two years. There was a focus on improving educational outcomes for LAC as well as for Care Leavers, undertaken by putting in place high quality Personal Education Plans that had challenging and meaningful targets that were aspirational. Key activities of the service centred on the tracking of attainment, progress, attendance, exclusion, with early intervention to raise attainment and to reduce or remove barriers to education. Continuing to work in partnership with the teams around the children in care was very important, with an ongoing challenge to improve processes, systems and support so that impact could be more effectively measured, provision improved and outcomes raised.

Arising from questions and discussion, the Panel noted:

- The Letterbox Club scheme, which provided children aged 7 – 11 in foster care with a parcel of books, maths activities and stationery every month for six months, had not continued on the same scale but support was being received from local companies for an ongoing literacy programme.
- The Key Stage 1 results for the Bracknell LAC were excellent.
- The key role of the Designated Teacher for LAC in schools was recognised and the Panel was pleased to note the tendency for these to be senior members of staff, who were able to attend appropriate training, for instance on mental health, which could then be cascaded down to other staff.
- While there was a significant number of Care Leavers going on to higher education who continued to be supported, the Virtual School worked to develop the range of pathways available to young people in terms of courses, further education, apprenticeships, placements etc as well as employment in a chosen field.

The Panel congratulated Kashif Nawaz and his team on the achievements of the Virtual School. Similar information in relation to the Council's work with young carers would be of interest to the Panel and a report was requested for the agenda of a future meeting of the Panel.

48. **Summary Report of Examination and Test Performance in Bracknell Forest Schools during the Academic Year 2015/16**

The Panel considered a report that had recently been presented to the Executive setting out the school results for the academic year 2015-16 and the policy developments and priorities for the School Improvement Service. It was important to

note that the assessments at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 changed significantly in 2016 and no comparison could be made to previous years. Ofsted had further indicated that the tests and moderation had not settled sufficiently to rely on accurate comparisons to be obtained from the results expected in 2017.

A summary of the key outcomes showed:

- Early Years Foundation Stage – 74% of pupils achieved a Good Level of Development (national average 69%)
- Year 1 Phonics test – 84% of pupils achieved the required standard (national average 81%)
- Year 2 Phonics test retakes – 71% of pupils achieved the required standard (national average 67%)
- Key Stage 1 – 63% of pupils achieved the required standard in a combined score for reading, writing and mathematics (national average 60%)
- Key Stage 2 – 52% of pupils achieved the required standard in a combined score for reading, writing and mathematics (national average 53%)

Figures were also reported on the Pupil Premium Gap for each outcome. Disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their peers nationally and this continued to be a priority for the Borough.

Detailed figures were circulated showing Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results for each primary school in Bracknell Forest, colour coded in green for at least 10% above national average and red for at least 10% below national average. Key Stage 2 was where Bracknell was weaker in some areas, with 7 schools significantly below the national average for combined reading, writing and mathematics. The School Improvement team was working closely with these schools. Arising from questions, the Panel noted the local authority role in monitoring and intervention to ensure high standards, and the targeting of schools scoring poorly in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test.

The Panel received progress data showing the Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 progress in Reading, Writing and Maths for each school, highlighting those significantly above or below the national average. In respect of Secondary Schools, a sheet showing Key Stage 4 performance indicators was circulated.

The Panel was pleased to review all the results and note the work being undertaken to encourage culture change as well as improved teaching and learning in schools, to tackle underperformance and reduce the pupil premium gap. Although Ofsted produced national comparison league tables, Members sought some local comparison data.

#### 49. **Quarterly Service Report**

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the Quarterly Service Report for the third quarter of 2016/17 (October to December 2016) relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

In introducing the report, the Director highlighted two areas worthy of special attention. The Pay and Workforce Strategy, specifically in relation to the recruitment and retention of children's social workers was beginning to pay real dividends. There was a reduction in the vacancy rate, and a significant drop in the number of agency staff required resulting in a stable and skilled workforce on the frontline ensuring the continuity and quality of casework for children. This was a local trend which was not

reflected nationally. Secondly, the Department had engaged in a clear focus on school performance and children's readiness for school. This involved ensuring that every family that wished to access a place for a two year old was able to and working with system leaders on a learning improvement strategy framework. Inspirational leadership in areas such as curriculum and performance would lead to high quality education provision and improve educational outcomes.

The Panel received a presentation from the Chief Officer: Children's Social Care, outlining the activities of the branch in relation to looked after children (LAC) and those with Child Protection Plans. Although there were always peaks and troughs, the number of children on Child Protection Plans had risen over the last year to a high of 171. This had not been matched by the increase in the number of families affected.

An independent review of child protection plans in place had put forward a number of recommendations as to improvements which could be made. These related to such matters as more joint agency auditing; closer links with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH); a review of child protection monitoring plans; and a review of the Educational Safeguarding role. The Panel received answers to questions about child protection plans for unborns and for children at risk of child sexual exploitation.

The Panel received a colour version of the Inspection Outcomes for schools, including published reports up to April 2017. Also, Exclusion data relating to the Spring Term 2016 (and comparative figures for 2015) detailed for each school was circulated. Bracknell Forest was in the top quintile of schools for the fewest number of exclusions. Persistent disruptive behaviour remained the most common reason for exclusion; there were few exclusions for bullying as this was more often dealt with by other means. The Panel noted there was a correlation between the schools with a higher number of exclusions and those with poorer results.

#### **50. Disadvantaged Pupil Premium Summary**

The Panel considered a report summarising the Disadvantaged Pupil Premium which explained the funding, use and success of the Pupil Premium.

It was the responsibility of each individual school to decide how best to spend their pupil premium allocation and there was now a requirement (since November 2016) for each school to publish a strategy for their use of the pupil premium. This needed to include a summary of the main barriers to educational achievement faced by eligible pupils and how the pupil premium would be spent to address those barriers. A pupil premium review had been carried out in 13 schools and others were planned.

The report also contained examples of teaching aids produced to help schools draw up their strategies and make effective use of the pupil premium funding. The Panel noted that a school was accountable for its treatment of the pupil premium through the Ofsted reporting process.

#### **51. Transitions - Update on the Review of School Transfers**

The Panel received a report containing an update on the outcomes of the previous Overview and Scrutiny review of school transfers.

The educational landscape had changed substantially since the review carried out in 2006 and the report related how this had affected the position. The Panel noted the current practice in relation to transition and were informed that the Common

Assessment Framework (CAF) team was pro-active in supporting information sharing and through the early help hub identifying support with transition if required.

## 52. **Learning Improvement Strategy Framework**

The Panel considered a report presenting the Learning Improvement Strategy Framework approved by the Executive and noted the related role of Overview and Scrutiny.

The Council had a legal duty to promote high standards in schools and provide for the fulfilment of children and young people's potential. The Learning Improvement Strategy sets out how the Council would work in partnership with schools to achieve this. In particular the Strategy built on the existing good level of support for schools (as recognised in Ofsted reports) and contained a procedure to be followed when standards in a school were not good enough and the Council had a duty to intervene.

The Panel was provided with enlarged colour copies (in diagrammatic form) of the following documents:

- The Local Authority role in Monitoring and Intervention to ensure High Standards in all Schools
- Flowchart of the Process for Schools Causing Concern
- Flowchart of the Process for Academies

Arising from questions and discussion, the Panel noted:

- The process to identify schools on track to become or maintain a good or better ranking.
- The steps to be taken with schools falling below this rank, including early identification of when a 'Declaration of Concern' meeting with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors was required.
- The implementation of a Standards Monitoring Board (SMB) with an independent chair to review progress on improvement.
- The timescales for action at each step of the process.
- The enhanced role for The School and Children's Centre Performance Advisory Panel in monitoring improvement, for onward report to the Panel.

The Panel recognised the crucial importance of inspirational leadership and an excellent record of teaching and learning in the attainment of a good or outstanding outcome for schools. This in turn led to the best possible outcomes and the brightest future for all children.

## 53. **Executive Response to the Overview & Scrutiny Report on Child Sexual Exploitation**

The Panel considered a report setting out the response of the Executive to the review of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) carried out by the working group.

Of the 14 recommendations in the report, 13 had been accepted in full or in part. The Executive had accepted 6 recommendations in part only, owing to concerns about the additional burdens which would be placed on already stretched resources. The recommendation not yet accepted related to a request to the Named Doctor for Safeguarding on which a response was awaited. Officers were asked to follow this up.

The Panel thanked the Executive for its response.

54. **Working Group Update**

The Chairman reported initial activity on the working group being formed to review Early Intervention Services, including her attendance at a conference on Pupil Premium due to take place 16 June 2017. Councillors Ms Gaw and Mrs McCracken offered to accompany the Chairman on some school visits which were being planned.

55. **Executive Forward Plan**

The Panel considered and noted the scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

56. **Next Meeting**

The Panel noted that the next meeting, scheduled to take place on 7 June 2017, was likely to be postponed owing to the General Election called for 8 June 2017.

**CHAIRMAN**