

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL  
27 OCTOBER 2010  
7.30 - 9.45 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Ms Whitbread (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Beadsley, Dudley, Edger, Kensall, Mrs McCracken, Osborne and Phillips

Ms C Mitchell, Children's Social Care Representative  
Mr G S Anderson, Church Representative  
Dr P Josephs-Franks, Parent Governor Representative  
Miss V Richardson, Teachers Associations Representatives

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Mrs Ryder

**Executive Members:**

Councillors Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children and Young People

**Also Present:**

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny  
Andrea King, Local Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager  
Penny Reuter, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care  
Martin Surrell, Senior Advisor  
Bob Welch, Chief Officer: Learning & Achievement

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

The Panel noted the attendance of the following Substitute Member:

Councillor Edger for Councillor Mrs Ryder

**16. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Children Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 30 June 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

Minute 9: New South Bracknell Youth Facilities

It was confirmed that the Council would take delivery of a new Silver Bus shortly and it was expected that it would be operational in the New Year. The old Silver Bus had been used to provide temporary facilities while refurbishment of the Wayz Youth Centre was taking place.

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

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indications that members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

18. **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

19. **Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel**

The Panel noted the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP) held on 6 July 2010.

The Panel noted that this had been a public meeting, but expressed concern about the possible identification of the young people who took part in the CPAP training session. The Panel were informed that SILSIP representatives were always involved in the development and running of CPAP training sessions and surnames were never used. This had been considered sufficient protection in the past but the matter would be reviewed for future training sessions.

20. **Co-option onto the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

The Panel considered a report inviting them to consider co-opting on to the Panel Catriona Mitchell, Director of Kerith in the Community, as the children's social care representative.

The remit of the Panel included children's social care in addition to education and it was considered appropriate for the externally drawn membership of the Panel to reflect the scope of the Panel's work.

**RESOLVED** that Catriona Mitchell be co-opted onto the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel as a non-voting children's social care representative member for a term of four years.

The Chairman welcomed Catriona Mitchell to the Panel.

21. **Performance Monitoring Report**

The Chief Advisor: Learning and Achievement gave a presentation in respect of departmental performance with reference to the Performance Monitoring Report for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter (April to June) of 2010/11 with a particular focus on school performance, Ofsted inspection outcomes and provisional test results.

Eleven schools had been assessed by Ofsted during the 2009/10 academic year. These assessments had been carried out using the new inspection framework first introduced in 2009 which raised the bar in terms of what needed to be achieved by schools. The inspections had found the strongest features of specific judgements to include: care guidance and support, personal development and well-being, leadership and management and safeguarding. In terms of safeguarding all schools inspected were deemed to be satisfactory or better. Areas for development identified in some schools included: the use of assessments to ensure that all pupils were challenged, ensuring tasks matched pupil ability and ensuring that all pupils knew how to improve

and were challenged to do so. These weaknesses were not unique to Bracknell Forest and work was taking place with schools to tackle them.

Satisfactory progress had been made in the Early Years Foundation Stage Assessments. Some good successes had been made but the Department were not complacent and there was still room for improvement. Of particular note were the results of the combined Personal and Social Education Development and Communications language and Literacy Development which had risen from 50.8% to 52.5%. The gap between the weakest 20% of children and the average point score had narrowed by 0.6%. None of the Borough's Schools Had joined the boycott of Key Stage testing.

Key Stage 1 reading results had either been maintained year on year or had improved. Year on year Key Stage 1 results had increased at level 2 but were down by 2% at level 3. Compared to national results all Key Stage 1 writing results were either at or below the national average. Key Stage 1 mathematics results were in line with national average figures.

At Key Stage 2, 84% of pupils achieved the expected two levels of progress in English from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, a figure in line with national figures. In Mathematics 79% of pupils achieved the expected two levels of progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, this was lower than the national average of 83%.

Key Stage 3 results in English, Mathematics and Science were all above the national average. Key Stage 3 ICT results had increased by 5.7% compared to 2008/9 results.

Provisional Key Stage 4 results showed that the proportion of young people achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* - C including English and Mathematics had increased by over 5%. The proportion of young people achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C (not including English and Mathematics) had risen by over 13%. Analysis of these results had shown that this improvement had happened in all the Borough's Secondary schools.

Improvement priorities instigated for teaching and learning at Key Stages 1 and 2 focused on improving writing skills, improving teachers' use of assessments to better target teaching, improving pace and expectations in lessons at some schools, making better use of interventions for example one to one and small group tuition so that pupils can catch up quickly.

Improvement priorities instigated for teaching and learning at Key Stages 3 and 4 focused on work to narrow the gaps in performance of vulnerable groups, evaluation of the impact of intervention strategies at an early stage, securing appropriate progression and course choices at Key Stage 4 and into the sixth form or college and ensuring that all subject and middle leaders contribute fully to school improvement.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Workshops are being run with teachers to improve the teaching of writing and schools were encouraged to promote the writing of in-depth pieces of work and activities that involved writing for a wide range of audiences
- The possibility of training more secondary teachers to teach reading was suggested
- There were a number of schemes in place to encourage reading including Book Start and Every Child a Reader and it was queried whether libraries levied charges on overdue children's library books

- Pre-reading programmes had taken place with approximately sixty families in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Pre-schools and these had met with some success. The importance of encouraging children to read could not be overstressed
- All schools had processes in place to track pupil progress but there was no one standardised method used across the Borough
- The Education Team worked with schools to ensure that pupil tracking was good quality
- Further information detailing the publicity of the Play Rangers and Play Leader services would be circulated
- The school placed in Special Measures following a recent Ofsted inspection had been deemed to be making satisfactory progress following a subsequent monitoring visit. The Ofsted monitoring officer would be conducting further visits in November and during the Spring Term. The School would remain in Special Measures until after a successful re-inspection however, the judgement of the Monitoring Officer would be key to the school's exit from Special Measures
- The significant cut in Connexions' grant funding would make meeting its targets challenging. More details of the work taking place to refocus service delivery and target services more effectively would be circulated
- The Schools Job Evaluation process was taking longer than anticipated and more details would be circulated
- The number of pupils excluded from school in the past was half that of the previous year, 7 compared to 14 in 2009/10
- The figures in the table pertaining to staff sickness rates would be recalculated
- The Marvellous Me project involved Year 6 pupils writing letters to their new Year 7 Teacher telling them about themselves
- Details of the schools involved in the Year 6 to Year 7 Transition programme would be circulated

## 22. **Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2009/10**

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Business Manager presented the annual report of the LSCB for 2009/10.

The report provided an assessment of local safeguarding arrangements, set out actions taken in response to case reviews, assessed the LSCB's discharge of its functions including the assessment of the effectiveness of policies and procedures, detailed local safeguarding achievements and challenges and provided feedback to and challenge to the Children and Young People's Trust. In addition the report would be used to challenge the Children and Young People's Trust and their commissioning framework to ensure that both were fit for purpose.

During the period covered by the report, several areas of the LSCB's work had been noted as being examples of regional or national good practice and had lead to the LSCB being invited to present some of its activities at regional meetings and a national conference.

Challenges that had been identified by the LSCB included:

- The number of children experiencing bullying
- The need to enable early identification and support of children at risk of sexual exploitation
- The need to redesign safeguarding training in light of national developments and increased local demand

- Active promotion of the use of the Common Assessment Framework and the Integrated Care Pathway by all sectors of the children's workforce
- The need to reduce social and health inequalities for disadvantaged children
- Ensuring reductions in resources did not negatively impact on the identification of safeguarding needs and monitoring and supporting families

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- The death of any child or young person up to the age of 18 years old was reported to the LSCB regardless of the reason for the death. The Child Death Overview panel would then investigate each case individually.
- Of the nine deaths reported to the LSCB eight had been defined as not preventable. The outcome of the investigation into the ninth death was not yet available
- The LSCB would be discussing their concerns about the high number of children and young people reporting that they had experienced bullying with the Anti-Bullying Group in the New Year
- Deadlines for work aimed at reducing bullying had been extended due to the extension of anti-bullying work beyond schools and the unexpectedly high number of venues that needed to be dealt with
- A significant amount of work had been undertaken with schools, and secondary schools in particular, to improve their record keeping
- Arrangements for children who have gone missing have been reviewed and changes implemented including the introduction of interviews of all children who had gone missing on their return home
- The Munro Review was expected to impact on the work of the LSCB but details would not be available until the New Year
- Funding restrictions meant that it would not be possible to fully subsidise Level 2 training for voluntary, community and faith groups. There had been a significant increase in the demand for safeguarding training, to some 9,000 requests in the last year
- Every agency coming into contact with children in Bracknell Forest is asked to complete and return a self assessment of their work. These are then analysed by the LSCB support team. Of the completed self assessments examined over 90% were considered to be either good or excellent. Follow up visits were made to those groups where the self assessment return gave rise to concerns
- Individual support was offered to voluntary groups who found completing the self assessment difficult
- Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action were providing support to organisations implementing the LSCB's Safeguarding Toolkit

The Panel thanked the LSCB Business Manager for the hard work of the LSCB and a comprehensive report.

## 23. **Inspection of Children's Services**

The Panel received a report detailing the outcome of the unannounced inspection of Bracknell Forest's contact, referral and assessment services that took place in August 2010.

The inspection took place over two days and included interviews with staff in the duty team and reviews of cases, supervision files and case records. At the end of the inspection feedback was given on areas of priority action.

Although the inspection provided only a snapshot of work it did demonstrate that a significant amount of good practice was taking place and showed that staff morale was high and many areas of strength and satisfactory practice had been identified. Nonetheless, the department was not complacent.

The inspectors had identified some areas for development however these were considered to be relatively minor and included:

- Lack of clarity over whether or not children and young people were seen alone when assessments were carried out
- A small number of initial assessments carried out by Family Support Workers were not fully identifying all needs
- Inconsistent, or not fully established, use of the common assessment framework
- A lack of clarity between the recording of contact and referrals
- A potential blurring of boundaries between the social worker and managerial role in those instances where assistant team managers held cases. This final development area had been strongly challenged by the department as all assistant team managers were supported in turn by their managers.

An action plan had been put in place to address these concerns and a meeting with the Executive Member for Children and Young People, to assess the progress made towards completing the actions would take place in the first week of November

The most significant piece of work contained within the action plan was to improve people's use of the Common Assessment Framework. A Co-ordinator with responsibility for developing this piece of work was already in post.

The Panel congratulated all officers involved in the contact, referral and assessment services on the high quality of their work and the outstanding inspection results.

#### **24. 'Grow Our Own' Project Update**

The Panel received a report providing an update on the progress of the Grown Our Own service since operational activity began in Bracknell Forest in February 2010.

It was noted that the Year 1 Annual Targets had been revised upwards and the Panel were provided with updated figures for the number of people provided with assistance for the period February to present:

- 256 had received information, advice or guidance (Annual Target of 350)
- 86 had attended skills based training (Annual Target 80)
- 35 had progressed into employment (Annual Target 35)

The Panel noted the report.

#### **25. Delivering the 14-19 Education Entitlement**

The Panel received a report providing an update on the progress made in respect of the implementation of the 14-19 education entitlement.

The Panel were informed that although it was no longer a requirement to make provision for diplomas the Education Authority wanted to ensure that there was a sufficiently broad range of opportunities to allow all 14-19 year olds to progress educationally.

Although uncertainty over the future of diplomas had resulted in a lower than initially expected take up rate, a situation that was mirrored nationally, significant progress had been made in the broadening of education provision. Revenue funding for Diploma courses was still in place but there was no indication yet of whether this funding would continue. To encourage the take up of Diplomas the Government had given local authorities an additional £1,000 for each student studying a Diploma course but it was unclear if this would continue.

Three diploma courses were currently available: Hair and Beauty, IT and Business Administration and Finance. A further five Diplomas: Creative and Media, Engineering, Construction and Built Environment, Society Health and Development and Sport and Active Leisure were under development. The planning for these courses had been completed. The facilities were in place and it was expected that the courses would run even if they were not run as Diplomas.

## 26. **Working Groups Update**

The Panel received a report providing an update on its Working Groups.

### Safeguarding Children

The scope of the review had been considered and key documentation received. The Working Group had met with the Director of Children, Young People and Learning, key staff and a range of partners. A meeting with representatives from the NHS would take place on 28 October.

Officers were thanked for the time they had given to support the review.

### School Meals

The Member Reference Group looking at the take up and organisation of school meals in Bracknell Forest had visited five schools to date. The Group had gathered a significant amount of information and it was expected that a report would be brought to the next meeting.

## 27. **Overview and Scrutiny Progress Report**

The Panel considered a report outlining the activities of all the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Commission and summarising significant national developments in overview and scrutiny.

The Panel noted:

- i. Overview and Scrutiny activity over the period February to August 2010 set out in Section 3 and Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.
- ii. The developments in Overview and Scrutiny set out in section 4 of the report.

## 28. **Work Programme 2011/12**

The Panel considered a report containing the indicative work programme for the Children, Young People and Learning Panel for 2011/12.

The Panel agreed its 2011/12 work programme without change for commending to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for adoption and expressed a wish to establish working groups to look at:

- School record keeping
- Common Assessment Framework
- The provision of school places, school admissions and the School Admission Appeals process

The Panel noted that the Commission would determine which work would be done in light of the resources available.

29. **Executive Forward Plan**

The Panel noted the forthcoming items relating to Children, Young People and Learning on the Executive Forward Plan.

**CHAIRMAN**