

Lancashire County Council

Education Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 12 March, 2013 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'D' - County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Mrs Pat Case (Chair)

County Councillors

Mrs R Blow	A Jones
K Brown	A Kay
W Cropper	Y Motala
Mrs S Derwent	S Riches
C Evans	T Winder

Co-opted members

Mrs Janet Hamid, Representing Parent Governors (Secondary)
Fred Kershaw, Representing CE Schools
Kenvyn Wales, Representing Free Church Schools
John Withington, Representing Parent Governors (Primary)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were presented on behalf of CC K Bailey and CC C Wells.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest in relation to matters appearing on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2012

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2012 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Minutes of the special meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee held on 25 January 2013

Resolved: That the Minutes of the special meeting held on 25 January 2013 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5. Programme of Meetings 2013/2014

Resolved: That future meetings of the Committee be held at 10.00am in Cabinet Room 'C' at County Hall, Preston on the following dates in accordance with the decision of the Full County Council on 13 December 2012:

Tuesday 16 July 2013

Tuesday 5 November 2013

Thursday 16 January 2014 (Budget)

Tuesday 11 March 2014

6. Elective Home Education - the operation of the revised EHE policies since their introduction in April 2012

Mr Stott, Director of Universal and Early Support Services from the Directorate for Children and Young People introduced a report regarding the operation of the revised EHE policies since their introduction in April 2012 following the review in Autumn 2011 of the procedures which also took into account the recommendations from the 2009 Overview and Scrutiny EHE Task Group.

It was reported by Frances Molloy, Directorate for Children and Young People, that documentation used by EHE officers to contact parents and to collect and record information had been revised following the implementation of the new procedures to reflect the changes and to be more 'customer friendly.' A new website was available containing a range of information for home education families found via 'Your Lancashire – Educating Your Child at Home' at the following address:

http://www3.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/atoz/a_to_z/service.asp?u_id=388&tab=1

Members noted that a survey had recently been carried out by members of the Lancashire Home Education Forum Group which had elicited 36 responses. To a question asked about improvement since the introduction of the new procedures, two thirds of respondents commented that the situation had improved whilst just over a fifth weren't sure. The outcome whilst being generally positive indicated that there was still work to be done to ensure that the service was valued by all those who chose to home educate their children.

It was reported that Lancashire was now recognised as having good practice on EHE and had received a number of requests from other local authorities to discuss how the new procedures were developed and being implemented and that Graham Stuart MP, Chair of the House of Commons Education Committee was 'pleased Lancashire has made such progress and is helping to mentor other LAs'.

Members commented on the report as follows:

- That currently there was no legal requirement for home educators to notify the Authority of their intention to home educate but that more open relationships with home educators were being developed.
- That school education was always a route open to home educators at any point if they so wished

Resolved: That the report setting out how the arrangements for supporting families who home educate had progressed over the past twelve months be noted.

7. Children in Care - Educational Progress

Mr Stott, Director of Universal and Early Support Services from the Directorate for Children and Young People presented a report which provided updated information on the new procedures and strategies now in operation for improving the educational achievement and progress of Lancashire's Children Looked After (CLA) both within Lancashire and those educated outside Lancashire, as measured by performance in National Curriculum Key Stage attainments and GCSE results in Summer 2012. The attainment data presented demonstrated comparative performance with other authorities and with attainment in previous years and showed that in some measures the attainment of Lancashire CLA had improved significantly in 2012.

It was noted that there was an improvement in the gap between the attainment of Children Looked After and children not but that the gap needed to be narrowed further. At Key Stage 4, information taken from the Department for Education (DfE) and Pupil Education Plans (PEPs) showed that similar progress had been made by CLA educated in or out of the County but that substantially more CLA educated in Lancashire achieved 5 GCSE grades A*-C than CLA educated outside the County. Through PEPs schools had more responsibility for the progress of CLA and to 'push' CLA to ensure the gap in attainment narrowed.

In considering the data presented at the various Key Stages members commented as follows:

- The Local Authority needed to train Foster Carers, Residential Workers, Social Workers and Designated Teachers for CLA to be aware of the educational needs of CLA in order to improve their attainments and achievements
- School Governors also had a responsibility to 'push' CLA
- Bullying in school of CLA which led to attendance problems was of great concern and needed monitoring
- A request was made for information on the attainment of children and young people who fell under the remit of the Lancashire Youth Offending Team for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting
- A request was made for information on out of county placements of CLA to be brought to a future meeting of the committee

- Members welcomed funding by the Authority for Personal Education Plan Allowances of up to £600 for any CLA who was identified as underachieving

Resolved: That

- The report on updated information on the educational achievement and progress of Lancashire's Children Looked after be noted.
- A report on the attainment of children and young people who fall under the remit of the Lancashire Youth Offending Team be brought to a future meeting of the Committee
- A report on the attainment of CLA in out of county placements be brought to a future meeting of the committee.

8. Update on the current Lancashire County Council position on Academies

Mr Stott, the Director of Universal and Early Support Services from the Directorate for Children and Young People presented a report setting out the County Council's current position in relation to academies within Lancashire which updated the information provided to the Committee at its meeting on 6 November 2012.

In Lancashire it was noted that:

- 24 schools had converted to become an academy – 20 secondary schools and four primary.
- 21 were 'converter' academies equating to 87.5% of all Lancashire academies and 3 were sponsored academies equating to 12.5% of all Lancashire academies.
- A further 2 primary schools were in the process of converting of which 1 was to be a sponsored academy.
- Lancashire had just less than 1% of all academies open in England.
- The first free school, which was previously an independent all through school, opened in September 2011 in West Lancashire.
- The first studio school opened in September 2012 in East Lancashire. This was a newly created school.
- There was currently one University Technical College (UTC) which had a funding agreement with the DfE and planned to open in September 2013 in East Lancashire.
- The total number of all types of school in Lancashire is 567. Of these 484 are primary schools, 82 secondary schools, one is an all through school and one is a 14-19 school. This equated to less than 1% of primary schools in Lancashire being academies and 24% of secondary schools being academies.

- There were a higher number of free schools wishing to open in neighbouring councils such as Wigan and Blackburn with Darwen, which might impact on Lancashire schools.

In considering the report members of the Committee raised the following points:

- Regarding conversion to academy status, the DfE now focused on a school's Ofsted category rather than whether it fell below the floor standard
- Once a school had converted to an academy, the Authority ceased to maintain it financially
- In response to a query regarding whether there was a move to the possible outsourcing of functions such as Human Resources and the existence of an 'Operational Arrangements Working Group', Mr Stott undertook to look into this and report back outside the meeting
- Headteachers with concerns regarding Human Resources, now provided by One Connect Limited (OCL), had been provided with an email link to senior officers in OCL to help with any issues.
- A school's financial situation was not a factor in converting to academy status

Resolved: That the report setting out the County Council's current position in relation to academies within Lancashire be noted.

9. A summary of the results at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 at Lancashire and District level.

Mr Stott, the Director of Universal and Early Support Services from the Directorate for Children and Young People, presented a report on the validated data giving the overall attainment of pupils in Lancashire schools at the end of Key Stages 2 and 4. The results had been analysed at District level and showed progress over the past four years.

With regard to the 2012 Key Stage 2 results it was noted that in Lancashire the overall attainment had risen by 5% when compared with 2011 and was 1% above the national average at 81% and that attainment in 9 districts was above the national average of 80% of pupils attaining level 4 or above in both English and mathematics.

With regard to the Key Stage 4 results it was reported that overall attainment in Lancashire remained similar to 2011 and was around 1% above the national average. Attainment was above the national average in 9 districts in Lancashire and had increased in 6 of the 12 districts: Chorley, West Lancashire, Burnley, Rossendale, Wyre and Hyndburn but had fallen elsewhere. The greatest fall in attainment was in South Ribble and Lancaster but whilst attainment in Burnley was the 13% below the Lancashire average, the rate of improvement was better than the Lancashire and national average and the gap in attainment narrowed.

In considering the results the following comments were made:

- The data included every child on schools' rolls
- Overall attainment in Lancashire was around 1% above the national average which was welcomed by members
- The aim was to narrow the gap between attainment and areas of deprivation in Lancashire

Resolved: That the report setting out the overall attainment in Lancashire schools at the end of Key Stages 2 and 4 based upon validated data be noted.

10. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business for discussion at the meeting.

The Chair, County Councillor Mrs Pat Case, thanked the co-opted members representing outside organisations on the committee, her county councillor colleagues and officers for the work they had done as this was to be her last meeting before standing down as a county councillor at the forthcoming county council elections in May 2013. The Deputy Chair, County Councillor Mrs Sheila Derwent also offered her thanks as she too was standing down.

On behalf of the members, County Councillor Tony Jones thanked the Chair and Deputy Chair for all the work they had done over the past years.

11. Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 16 July 2013, at 10am at County Hall, Preston.

I M Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston