

Lancashire County Council

Education Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 29th October, 2019 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Munsif Dad BEM (Chair)

County Councillors

A Cheetham	D T Smith
S Clarke	D Stansfield
B Dawson	P Steen
A Kay	M Salter
J Mein	J Purcell
J Molineux	B Yates
E Nash	

Co-opted members

Mrs Janet Hamid, Representing Parent Governors
(Secondary)
Simon Smith, Representing RC Schools
Dr Sam Johnson, Representing CE Schools
Mr John Withington, Representing Parent Governors
(Primary)

County Councillors Yates and Purcell replaced County Councillors Wakeford and Gardiner respectively.

County Councillor Munsif Dad, the Deputy Chair of the committee, chaired this meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Jimmy Eaton, and Kenvyn Wales.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2019

Resolved: The minutes from the meeting held on 22 July 2019 be confirmed and as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Lancashire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Partnership - Ofsted Revisit Preparation

The Chair welcomed Sarah Callaghan, Director of Education and Skills and Dr Sally Richardson, Head of Inclusion to the meeting.

The report sets out the preparation for the forthcoming Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) re-visit due to take place by the end of October 2019, including the production of a self-assessment. In presenting the report, the committee noted that out of the twelve areas of concerns identified during the Ofsted inspection in November 2017, the following five areas of concern still required improvement:

1. The transitioning from primary school to secondary school;
2. The quality of the Education Health and Care Plan's (EHCP);
3. The needs of the offer to local areas;
4. The neurodevelopment pathways; and
5. The educational outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

To improve these areas, members were informed that a task group had been formed to help scrutinise these areas and to make improvements.

Responding to the report, the following key issues were raised by the committee:

Members raised concerns about the Education Health Care (EHC) plans. Among the concerns raised were;

- The EHC plans not following a child during the transition period between primary and secondary school;
- The lack of EHC plans in place for a child during nursery and before the child enters mainstream school;
- The shortage of Education Psychologists; and
- The results of the EHC plan quality audit outlined in the report.

Responding to these concerns, members' were informed that this was an improving picture and changes had already been made to address these concerns. These included implementing a new Electronic Information System to record all the information coming into the local authority on a child to ensure it is all recorded centrally, engaging more with early years to ensure additional assessments are being carried out on a child at nursery level and the training of additional Educational Psychologists.

Addressing the concerns of the results of the auditing of the EHC plans, the committee were informed that the quality of the EHC plans had already substantially improved.

Additional concerns were raised by the committee on the access to CAMHS in Lancashire. In response, members' were informed that additional investment had been made to address this and the number of mental health workers available had been increased.

Recognising that the level of exclusions in Lancashire were too high, members' were informed that work was continuing to reduce the number, such as carrying out additional work to identify a child's individual needs an early stage to ensure a plan is in place to address those needs before an exclusion is warranted.

Resolved: That;

- i. The information presented on the preparation for the forthcoming re-visit by Ofsted and the CQC be considered; and
- ii. The feedback on the self-assessment attached at Appendix 'B' of the report be discussed and agreed.

5. Supporting Pupils at Special School with Medical Conditions: Task Group Update

The Chair welcomed Dave Carr, Head of Service Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well), Ellen Smith, Policy, Information and Commissioning Manager, Lesley Tiffen, Senior Commissioning Manager at the Fylde Coast Clinical Commissioning Group and Sarah Darbyshire from West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group to the meeting.

The report provided an update on the progress made by the multi-agency Special Schools Nursing Task and Finish Group against the recommendations made by the Children Services Scrutiny Committee in respect of special school nursing provision in Lancashire. In presenting the report, the committee noted that a joint action plan had been developed for the Special Schools Nursing Task and Finish Group which detailed the progress made on each of the recommendations and the next steps.

Responding to the report, the following key issues were raised by the committee:

Members' expressed concerns on the training being provided to health and education staff, specifically around the funding for the training and where parents or carers could go for advice or to raise their concerns about the training being provided. Responding to these concerns, members' were informed that the funding for the training was still under discussion and that a Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) had been appointed to each of Lancashire's district as a point of contact for parents or carers. It would be the DCO's responsibility to capture any of the concerns a parent or carer and to feed it back into the appropriate Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

In terms of the level of support that has been identified in producing the policy, members' were informed that that the policy had been developed by taking into account the best practices from other areas.

Regarding the views on the policy by headteachers, members' were informed that there were three headteachers who were members' of the Special Schools Nursing Task and Finish Group and who have actively engaged with other headteachers, including circulating the draft policy to obtain their views through the Lancashire Special School Head Teacher Association (LASSHTA).

In response to a query on the timescales for the finalising of the policy, members were informed that although there were no current timescales on when the final version of the policy would be signed off, the task group was anticipating that the draft policy would be finalised early in 2020.

Members' raised concerns regarding the six schools who had failed to respond to the data gathering exercise conducted by the task and finish group. In response, members were informed that the three headteachers who are on the task and finish group had tried a number of times to obtain a response from these schools which included raising it at various groups, emailing them and personally contacting them but the schools had so far failed to respond. Responding to this, members' requested that the committee be provided with details of those schools to support the service in obtaining responses.

Resolved: That;

- i. The progress made to date against the recommendations and the proposed ongoing activity against the project plan be noted; and
- ii. The feedback on the draft policy be discussed and agreed.
- iii. The committee be provided with the names of the schools in the Lancashire area to encourage responses to the data gathering exercise questionnaire.

6. Education Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20

The Chair presented to the committee the work programme for the 2019/20 municipal year.

The work plan for the Education Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 municipal year was presented to the Committee. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 22 July 2019.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report and work plan presented be noted.
- ii. An additional meeting of the committee be held in February 2020 to discuss the attainment data for Lancashire's schools; and
- iii. The following additional topics be included on the work plan ;
 - a. Child Poverty – impact of pupil premium on attainment and impact of mentors funding for armed forces families;
 - b. Physical Education;
 - c. Maintained Nurseries (update following Cabinet report in December 2019);

d. Parking outside schools; and

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee is due to be held on 3 March 2020 at 10.30am in Cabinet Room C at County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston