

Lancashire County Council

Education Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 16 July 2013 at 10.30 am in The Duke of Lancaster Room (Formerly Cabinet Room 'C'), County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Cynthia Dereli (Chair)

County Councillors

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| A Barnes | C Henig |
| P Buckley | S Holgate |
| Mrs S Charles | D Lord |
| A Cheetham | S Perkins |
| C Crompton | M Perks |
| B Dawson | A Schofield |

Co-opted members

Mrs Janet Hamid, Representing Parent Governors
(Secondary)
Miss Teresa Jones, Representing RC Schools
Mr Kenvyn Wales, Representing Free Church Schools
Mr John Withington, Representing Parent Governors
(Primary)

County Councillor S Holgate replaced County Councillor Dr M Hassan and County Councillor A Schofield replaced County Councillor K Iddon for this meeting only.

1. Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair, Membership, Terms of Reference and Programme of Meetings

It was noted that the Full Council at its Annual Meeting on 23 May 2013 had appointed CC Cynthia Dereli as Chair of the Committee, and that the Urgency Committee on 24 May 2013 had appointed County Councillor Mrs Susie Charles as Deputy Chair of the Committee, for the remainder of the 2013/14 municipal year.

The Full Council also agreed the constitution of the Committee on the basis of 13 County Councillors, (6 Labour members, 1 Liberal Democrat member, 5 Conservative members and 1 independent member), plus five co-opted voting members. The following nominations of County Councillors (13) to serve on the Committee for the following year had been submitted to the County Secretary and Solicitor by the respective political groups:

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| A Barnes | C Dereli |
| P Buckley | Dr M Hassan |
| Mrs S Charles | C Henig |
| A Cheetham | K Iddon |
| C Crompton | D Lord |
| B Dawson | S Perkins |
| M Perks | |

The following co-opted voting members (5) would serve on the Committee:

Miss T Jones - Representing RC Schools
 Mr F Kershaw - Representing CE Schools
 Mr K Wales - Representing Free Church Schools
 Mrs J Hamid - Representing Parent Governors (Secondary)
 Mr J Withington - Representing Parent Governors (Primary)

Resolved: That:

1. The Committee note the appointment of County Councillor C Dereli and County Councillor S Charles as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.
2. The membership of the Committee following the County Council's annual meeting be noted.
3. The Terms of Reference of the Committee as presented be noted.
4. That future meetings of the Committee be held in accordance with the programme of meetings as agreed by the full County Council on 13 December 2012, in The Duke of Lancaster Room (formerly Cabinet Room C) as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| 5 November 2013 | 10.00am |
| 16 January 2014 | 10.00am |
| 11 March 2014 | 2.00pm |

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr F Kershaw.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

The following declaration of interest was noted:

- County Councillor C Henig declared a general non-pecuniary interest in that her husband was a secondary school governor

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2013

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2013, subject to clarification being made on the number of schools in Lancashire, be noted and signed by the Chair.

5. Summary of the framework for the inspection of local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement

A briefing session for all members of the Committee on the key features of the Ofsted framework for the inspection of local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement and highlighting the main areas of focus for inspectors had taken place before the start of the meeting.

Any further questions that members might have on this subject were to be passed through to either the Chair/Deputy Chair or officers. Members were encouraged to attend the briefing 'Welcome to the Directorate' on 12 September 2013 at 1.30pm in the Council Chamber.

Resolved: That the Ofsted framework for the inspection of local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement be noted.

6. Achievement of pupils eligible for Free School Meals in Lancashire

Mr Stott, Director of Universal and Early Support Services from the Directorate for Children and Young People introduced a report on the achievement of pupils who were eligible for Free School Meals at Lancashire and District level at the end of Key Stages 2 and 4. The report also outlined the strategies which were being deployed to raise achievement for this group of pupils.

It was reported by Mr Hewitt, Head of Quality and Continuous Improvement from the Directorate for Children and Young People, that the local authority had worked in partnership with schools to raise the achievement of these pupils and that great focus had been placed on this both nationally and locally. In 2011 additional funding known as the Pupil Premium was provided to schools to enable them to support FSM pupils who had been registered for free school meals at any point in the last six years. The value of the Pupil Premium had risen year on year and the current value was £900 per pupil per year. All schools had identified strategies to support the learning of their FSM pupils and were monitored on the achievement of this group of children and their use of the funding.

It was noted that attainment of FSM pupils in Lancashire at the end of their first year in school had risen to 46% in 2012, a rise of around 6% on the previous year. Attainment of FSM children in the Early Years Foundation Stage had risen by 13% in the last three years but remained 2% below the national average.

At the end of Key Stage 2 the proportion of FSM pupils reaching level 4 or above in English and Mathematics rose to 66% in 2012 and was in line with the national level.

At the end of Key Stage 4, however, attainment in 2012 of FSM pupils in Lancashire was below the national average despite a slight improvement in results over the past three years. In 2012 attainment of FSM pupils rose in five districts with the highest increases in Preston, West Lancashire and Fylde and the largest decreases in Lancaster and Pendle. The lowest attainment was in Lancaster, Burnley and Pendle. It was noted that there was therefore a need to work with schools in these areas to accelerate improvement in attainment.

It was reported that the Best Start Programme created by the County Council which had preceded the Pupil Premium, had had a major impact on raising achievement of FSM pupils – over the past three years the County Council had made available £5 million which enabled Children's Centres to work with primary schools to support FSM pupils and their families to make the most of educational opportunities available to them. Whilst this programme would cease in 2014, schools would be able to use their Pupil Premium funding to commission family support from Children's Centres. (Ofsted inspections looked at how schools spent the Pupil Premium).

In considering the report, members of the Committee made the following comments:

- What the level of confidence was that all children who were entitled to FSM were in receipt of it. Mr Stott responded that the County Council had undertaken a data matching exercise with District Councils to identify families in receipt of Housing Benefit and had then assumed eligibility of FSM and a sum of around £1/2 million had been secured for the Pupil Premium. It was acknowledged that some families did not claim FSM automatically. (Mr Stott undertook to find out exactly how many Districts had signed up to data sharing with the County Council and inform the Committee of the number).
- What type of monitoring processes were in place in between the years at Key Stage 4. These were explained to be:
 - The Authority worked with the majority of schools to look at targets set for a particular group of children and to ensure they were appropriately identified
 - The Authority ensured schools used the toolkits provided by Ofsted – schools had to publish the way they were using the Pupil Premium and the impact it was having was identified in performance tables
 - The Authority worked with particular schools where progress was identified as a particular issue
- In response to a query regarding concern that the Pupil Premium was being used correctly, Mr Stott responded that it was down to individual Head teachers as to how the Pupil Premium was used but that it was important mechanisms were in place to ensure that it was monitored correctly

- Concern was expressed that there might still be stigma attached to claiming FSM but it was suggested that in the electronic age (children, for example, checking in for dinner via thumbprint), there was little reason to believe that this might be the case although some parents might not like accepting 'charity.'
- The issue of nutrition was raised – the packed lunch versus FSMs was an ongoing debate and it was suggested that in the current economic climate it was unlikely that there would be a move to FSM for every child in the primary sector in the near future
- Information on the attainment of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and first generation economic migrant pupils was requested to be brought back to the Committee – to be incorporated into the Work Plan for the coming year.
- In response to a query regarding the limited progress made in raising the achievement of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4, it was suggested that in 2012 this had been affected by the way in which English GCSE had been marked but that other exam results had been as expected. It was acknowledged, however, that there was a gap in attainment of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4 and that this needed addressing.

Resolved: That the report on the achievement of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals at Lancashire and District level at the end of Key Stages 2 and 4 be noted.

7. Educational attainment and achievement of Children Looked After by Lancashire Authority

Sue Parr, Head of the Virtual School for Children Looked After (CLA) introduced a report which set out the educational achievements and attainment of school age pupils who are CLA by the Authority at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 4. The report also outlined the successful strategies which are deployed to raise achievement for this group of pupils.

It was reported that assessment information at national and local level had indicated consistently that the achievement and attainment of CLA pupils is well below the performance of their peers. Lancashire's Virtual School for Children Looked After worked in partnership with schools and Children's Social Care to raise the achievements and attainment of these pupils. The Virtual School provided training on promoting the education of CLA for: Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, Foster Carers, Residential Workers in Children's Homes and Designated Teachers for CLA in schools.

In 2011 additional funding (known as the Pupil Premium) was provided to schools to enable them to support any pupils who were in care, or had entered the care within the previous six months. The value of the Pupil Premium has risen year on

year and the current value is £900 per pupil per year. All schools are monitored on the achievement of this group of children and their use of the funding.

Lancashire Authority also funds the 'Care Matters Grant ' of £180,000 for CLA (held by the Virtual School) to assist in promoting the educational achievements and attainment of Lancashire's CLA through a Personal Education Plan Support Allowance (PEPSA) for any CLA who is identified as underachieving.

It was noted that there were approximately 1400 CLA in Lancashire, that around half were in the east of the County and that 960 were of school age. Members were presented with the 2012 results of CLA and their predicted results for 2013. With regard to the Primary cohort, Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment and achievements rose significantly in 2012 and were predicted to continue to rise. At Key Stage 4 in 2012 there had been a 4% improvement in achievement and attainments on 2011 (although still 2% below the national average) but the prediction was that this would rise in 2013.

The level of training the Virtual School had provided, for example for Foster Carers, Governors, Designated Teachers for CLA had had an impact on attainment and services were now more aware of both their responsibilities to CLA and the funding streams available to them. It was noted that one of the successes of the Virtual School was considered to be getting everybody on board as corporate parents and 'pushing' for CLA.

Every CLA had a plan for educational and social targets. The Personal Education Support Allowance (PEPSA) had supported 496 CLAs who were identified as underachieving and funding had been used to catch up on essential skills such as Literacy and Numeracy, 1 to 1 tuition and ICT learning packages. Social Workers could also apply for funding to be used for activities outside school such as sport or music and this funding was available not only for underachievers but also for those CLA Gifted and Talented. Each residential children's home had an educational champion.

It was also reported that the number of Lancashire CLA going to university in 2012 had increased from 11 to 35.

In considering the report, members made the following points:

- Whether there was an opportunity for a child to have direct input into their Personal Education Plan (PEP) via the Personal Education Review (PER). Sue Parr responded that recently Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) would look at a plan carefully and involve a child in the review and that IROs were now able to present Achievement Awards direct to children at the review not just for educational achievements but also for those made outside school and that this was an ideal opportunity for boosting a child's confidence.
- Members welcomed having an educational champion in residential children's homes and were impressed by the extraordinary progress made

by the County Council through cultural change in this area and offered their congratulations to those officers involved

- A request was made for attendance figures for Key Stage 4 CLA and Sue Parr undertook to provide members with these. Regarding attendance, CLA children themselves indicated that they preferred not to move school, even if they had to have a placement move - this was now taken into consideration and could have an effect on the figures.
- A request was made by the Chair for a Bite Size Briefing on the Virtual School for CLA and how to become a corporate 'pushy' parent to be arranged for all County Councillors.

Resolved: That:

- i. The report on the educational achievements and attainment of Children Looked After by Lancashire Authority at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 be noted.
- ii. Sue Parr, Head of Virtual School for Children Looked After, be thanked for the progress made in this area.

8. Work Plan 2013/14

The Committee was invited to identify topics for consideration at future meetings in order to form a work plan for the coming year.

Topics already suggested for inclusion or inherited from the pre-elections committee were: post-14 education and training; and apprenticeships.

It was proposed to establish a Task Group to consider FSM pupils – attainment and the Pupil Premium. Membership of the Task Group would reflect proportionally the make-up of the Council though non-elected specialists could also be included and those with a particular interest in the subject.

Other suggestions made by members of the Committee were as follows:

- Report on the findings of the Task Group to consider FSM pupils – attainment and the Pupil Premium - to be brought to the November meeting of the Committee
- Achievements and attainment of Gypsy/Roma/Traveller pupils
- Achievements and attainment of 1st generation economic migrant pupils
- Young People falling under the Lancashire Youth Offending Team (YOT) – request for attainment data around that cohort
- Nutritional issues

- Missing Children (how identified and monitored by data)
- HR Resources for schools
- Special needs schools and the particular challenges they face eg travel arrangements
- Unvalidated data sets of exam results to be brought to the November meeting of the Committee followed by the validated data in the new year, followed by the possibility of focussing on progress in English and Maths
- Factual report on support services for governing bodies to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. (Governor Services are a traded service to those schools who wish to buy their services in).
- The impact of the issue of the Summer 2012 English GCSE exam results which affected the whole gamut of schools
- The Chair flagged up an interest in pre-decision scrutiny

Resolved: That:

- i. A Task Group be established to consider FSM pupils – attainment and the Pupil Premium
- ii. A Work Plan be compiled for the coming year and presented at the next meeting, based on the above suggestions.

9. Urgent Business

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

10. Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 5 November 2013, at 10am at County Hall, Preston.

I M Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston