

Lancashire County Council

Education Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 10th September, 2018 at 10.30 am
in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present:

County Councillor Christian Wakeford (Chair)

County Councillors

M Dad	E Nash
L Beavers	J Potter
A Cheetham	D T Smith
S Clarke	D Stansfield
B Dawson	P Steen
A Gardiner	C Towneley
A Kay	P Williamson
J Molineux	

Co-opted members

Mr Kenwyn Wales, Representing Free Church Schools
Mr John Withington, Representing Parent Governors
(Primary)

County Councillor Phillipa Williamson replaced County Councillor Jayne Rear for this meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Janet Hamid, Mr Ian Beck and Dr Sam Johnson.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2018

Resolved: The minutes from the meetings held on 25 June 2018 be confirmed and as an accurate record and signed by the Chair

4. The Journey of a School Causing Concern and the Impact on Services

The Chair welcomed Steve Belbin, Head of Service School Improvement; Mel Ormesher, Head of Service Asset Management; Debbie Ormerod, Admissions Manager; Alison Mitchell, Schools Advisor; David Graham, Head of Service SEND; and Kevin Smith, Financial Advisor; to the meeting.

The report presented provided an overview of the key services involved in the situation where there was a school causing concern. The majority of Lancashire's 631 schools were successful and were self-managing with strong leadership. 91% of Lancashire schools were judged to be good or better and were above the national average as well as the North West average and placed Lancashire second against its statistical neighbours.

However, it was reported that there were a number of reasons why a school might be in difficulty. These were typically due to concerns about standards of achievement, school finances, personnel reasons, a fall in the number on the school roll, or those raised by parents. In the rare instances where these issues could not be resolved internally, the Local Authority reacted proactively to address matters, working with Governors, head teachers and senior leaders.

LCC had five categories of criteria for support which were used to identify schools requiring improvement.

Members were advised that there were a growing number of secondary schools judged to require improvement and a growing number of schools facing financial difficulty and subsequently required personnel support.

Members enquired what measures were in place for schools to make sure the support they had received was successful and if concerns had been raised to the School Leadership Team (SLT) and governors, what powers did LCC have to intervene at that level to overcome these issues. It was reported that LCC had a statutory duty to intervene and could discover concerns through head teacher appraisals. There was also a Standards Intervention Challenge Board which monitored the performance of all schools.

There were concerns raised over what was being done to support ethnic minority children especially those whose first language was not English and what support there was for teachers. Members were reassured that there was a team in place which dealt with ethnic minority achievements. There was various support in terms of language, on-line resources, and training for the schools. There was also a team of bilingual consultants to work with the groups. It was suggested that students who studied a second language at university could work voluntarily with schools. This would assist the schools and enhance the education of the students.

The Committee was informed that there was a bespoke programme of support for each school. The authority was mindful of each schools needs and the capacity

each school had to handle the support provided. An advisor was appointed to work with a school and work with it during its journey of provided support and make sure the right support was in place. Consultant support was provided to work with individual teachers.

Members were informed that primary schools were good at transition planning to secondary schools for children with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) and allocating support for the children's needs across to the secondary schools. Children with EHCPs were a priority.

The Committee was assured that teachers were well supported and that every new teacher that came into the profession had a programme of support. It was also vital to ensure teaching assistants were fully trained.

Members enquired if there was any learning that could be taken from other authorities. It was pointed out that most authorities had disbanded their advisory services or had gone to a school to school support model. However, LCC currently had a service challenge which was looking at best practice across other authorities.

In relation to applications for new housing developments, it was reported that the School Place Planning Team carry out an initial assessment on the impact of each development and the number of developments in a certain area. This was a statutory consultation process. If there were no opportunities for expansion or the development was not large enough to put forward a request for a new school site then potentially the authority could put forward an objection to the developments.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report presented be noted.
- ii. A request for a task group looking at school improvement for schools facing challenges be presented to the next meeting of Internal Scrutiny Committee for approval.
- iii. Further consideration be given to potential targeted support from local councillors with officers for under-subscribed schools or where there were signs a school may be having difficulties.
- iv. An annual report be presented to the Education Scrutiny Committee on school admissions and schools causing concern.

5. Education Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19

The work plan for the Education Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year was presented to the Committee. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 10 July 2018.

It was proposed to hold a further Education Scrutiny meeting in January 2019 focusing on school attainment.

It was also proposed to hold a bite size briefing for all members on any upcoming potential policy/legislation changes in education.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report and work plan presented be noted.
- ii. A further meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee be arranged for January 2019.
- iii. A bite size briefing be arranged for members on any upcoming changes to education policies/legislation.

6. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

7. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee is due to be held on Tuesday 13 November at 10.30am, Cabinet Room C, County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston