

Lancashire County Council

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Tuesday 22 February 2022 at 10.30am in Committee Room 'A' - The Tudor Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

J Berry	N Khan
S Barnes	J Mein
A Cheetham	J Purcell
A Gardiner	M Salter
S Hind	A Sutcliffe
T Hurn	R Swarbrick
S Jones	R Woollam

Co-opted members

County Councillor Andrew Gardiner replaced County Councillor Barrie Yates and County Councillor Jenny Purcell replaced County Councillor Stephen Clarke for this meeting only.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr John Withington.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

County Councillors Cheetham, Khan, Malik, and Mein declared non-pecuniary interests in item 4, as they were governors of schools in Lancashire.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2022

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Lancashire Schools - Attainment Priorities Overview

The committee received a presentation and a report from Delyth Mathieson, Head of Service Education Improvement and Kevin Smith, Head of Service Schools Finance, which provided an overview of the context of education provision and the COVID-19 pandemic, the steps taken to improve outcomes

across Lancashire, proposed strategies to improve outcomes including COVID catch up, Ofsted inspection outcomes in Lancashire schools and settings since the start of the 2021-22 school year, and an overview of attainment and progress.

Comments and queries from the committee were as follows:

- It was noted that all Lancashire schools had received funding. They were looking at how to use the funding and how to evidence how it was used.
- With regards to the catch-up funding, members were informed that schools were required to keep evidence for match-funding, but it was not known exactly what evidence was needed. It was felt that the lack of clarity would impact on full utilisation of the grant. Officers were in the process of resolving these concerns but could not provide a definitive answer as the Department for Education (DfE) had not provided the set criteria on evidence collation.
- It was explained that large-scale schools have more experience at match-funding and required less support. Smaller schools required support from Lancashire County Council's finance or education teams. The county council embraced the diversity in each school across Lancashire and recognised that a 'one size fits all' approach was not appropriate.
- It was highlighted that schools collaborated on ideas and shared best working practice through the Lancashire Schools Forum. Best practice methods were also shared by the county council's education officers through the school's portal and a weekly bulletin.
- Lancashire County Council worked with other north-west authorities, as it was national funding and a national issue. Officers and schools were in regular contact with the DfE, and schools were encouraged to feed directly into the DfE. Officers worked closely with head teacher representative groups and from this, strong feedback was given during calls with the DfE of good engagement.
- It was clarified that the Lancashire Education Partnership Board was a group of head teacher and health representatives, along with various other services from Lancashire which worked in a multi-agency way. The five locality groups were in the process of being established and included constituents and officers to address local challenges. Information would be circulated to the committee.
- A request was made for officers to share regular updates with members regarding which and how schools were progressing spending the funding, to reduce the risk of any un-used money being taken back by the government.
- The National Tutoring Programme was most accessed in areas of deprivation. Of the 75 schools accessing the subsidised EAL tuition, in 70% there was higher than average number of pupils claiming Pupil Premium. All the pupils undergoing the tuition had English as an additional language. The programme continued in 2021-22 and the pupil's progress was tracked by a nationally recognised EAL assessment framework.

Additional support was put in place in terms of the East Lancashire Learning and Information Exchange, to support school readiness for children and families new to the United Kingdom and English schools.

- Members were informed that it was deemed too soon to identify a COVID catch-up timeframe. There were a number of positives from the pandemic within schools, such as ICT capabilities improved. The impact of different ways of working for the children and young people would be measured by education officers over the coming years.
- Officers suggested that for members who wanted more information about the change to the Ofsted framework and how Ofsted work, there would be a bitesize briefing set up to allow for the appropriate amount of time needed to go into detail.
- Overall numbers of education settings in Lancashire in the 'Good' or 'Outstanding' categories were not available as it was explained that these changed daily as inspections happened and reports were published. Although, members were assured this was the vast majority of schools and there were only a small number which did not achieve 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Officers were working with these schools to improve.
- It was reported that a decline in Ofsted rating was not directly attributable to COVID-19. There were many reasons why a school during an inspection would achieve a lower rating than previous.
- It was noted that Ofsted provide schools with one day's notice before an inspection.
- Members expressed concern about Early Years settings and school readiness. Officers explained that this was being picked up through locality groups. They were working proactively with social care and health colleagues to promote uptake and ensure that children were accessing the 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Early Years settings.
- The committee asked for the figures instead of percentages of Children Looked After accessing Employment, Education and Training (EET). Of the 1% of care leavers which were not in EET, and it was not known where they were, it was explained that this was often because they had moved out of the area.

Members thanked Delyth and Kevin for the presentation.

Actions:

- The composition of the five locality groups be circulated to the committee once established.
- The figures of Children Looked After not in EET be shared with the committee.

Resolved: That;

- i. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee considered the information as presented.

- ii. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills give consideration to write to the school clusters with a view to highlighting the support available to schools in relation to the COVID Catch Up Funding.
- iii. A bitesize briefing be held regarding Ofsted inspection changes.

5. Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22

The committee considered a report which provided information on the work programme for the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

The topics included in the work programme were identified at the work planning workshop held on 5 July 2021 and at subsequent scrutiny committee meetings.

It was noted: That;

- Andy Pratt, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on 16 March 2022, as part of the Road Safety rapporteur's presentation.
- Members requested for 'Child Poverty' to be moved from the additional topics on to the work programme.

Resolved: That the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22 be noted.

6. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted the next meeting of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee would take place on Wednesday 16 March 2022 at 10:30am in Committee Room 'C' – The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston