

## **EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 5 November 2014

### **Present:**

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P. (Chairman)  
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Teresa Ball, Kevin Brooks, Alan Collins,  
Mary Cooke, Judi Ellis, Alexa Michael and Keith Onslow

Joan McConnell  
Darren Jenkins, Mylene Williams and Tony Wright-Jones  
Jo Brinkley, Adil Ghani and Alison Regester

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Stephen Wells, Portfolio Holder for Education

### **30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kathy Bance MBE and Councillor Kevin Brooks attended as her substitute.

Apologies for absence were also received from Mary Capon.

### **31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Declarations of Interest made at the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 were taken as read.

### **32 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30TH SEPTEMBER 2014 AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

In considering matters outstanding from previous meetings, the Chairman noted that work continued with the RC Archdiocese of Southwark around the potential to establish a six form of entry Roman Catholic secondary school in the Borough.

Significant progress had been made in moving to a fully online schools admissions process and an update on this and on work to move to a fully online free school meals application process would be provided to the next meeting of the Education PDS Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 be agreed and that matters outstanding be noted.**

**33 QUESTIONS TO THE PDS CHAIRMAN FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING**

No questions had been received.

**34 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING**

No questions had been received.

**35 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE**

The Portfolio Holder gave an update to Members on work being undertaken across the Education Portfolio.

Work to develop the Education Portfolio budget for 2015/16 was underway and would be informed by a number of meetings with members of the public and residents' associations in November 2014. There continued to be a significant issue with the Bromley Adult Education College budget which was currently showing a predicted overspend of £260k for 2014/15.

The demand for primary-level pupil places across the Borough continued to be high, and it had been identified that a significant increase in secondary provision would be required across the Borough in future years. Work was ongoing with La Fontaine Academy to identify a suitable permanent site for the bi-lingual primary school. A new planning application had recently been submitted for Harris Primary Academy Beckenham, and a planning application for Harris Primary Academy Shortlands would be considered at the meeting of Plans Sub-Committee No. 4 on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Bullers Wood School had recently applied to the Secretary of State for Education to establish a six form of entry boys' secondary school in the Bickley area which was expected to receive a response in Spring 2015.

Work to develop the alternative provision offer in the Borough for young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties was ongoing. The purchase of Beacon House had been approved by the Council's Executive on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014, with the expectation of developing a provision which offered a wide variety of vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and 5 to both male and female pupils identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A consultant had now been appointed to review the condition of Beacon House and identify the works needed to deliver a high quality learning environment.

A conference would take place with Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors of Bromley Schools in November 2014 to consider how pupils with special educational needs and disabilities could best be supported in mainstream education. Work continued to review the use of the Phoenix Centre, Hawes Lane to ensure the provision of high quality initial assessment and ongoing

support for children and young people with special educational needs into the future.

A conference would take place with Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors of Bromley Schools in November 2014 to consider the new educational landscape which was developing to support academies and the role of the Local Authority. The Portfolio Holder would also be meeting with Local Authority Governors shortly to promote further inclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream settings.

**RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder update be noted.**

**A) UPDATE ON UNDER PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

**Report ED15111**

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report that provided an update of recent Ofsted and school improvement activity across the Borough. Since September 2014, there had been Ofsted Inspections of Poverest Primary School, Worsley Bridge Primary School and Blenheim Primary School. In its Ofsted inspection, Poverest Primary School had been rated as 'Good', with its early years provision rated as 'Outstanding'. The result of the inspections of Worsley Bridge Primary School and Blenheim Primary School had not yet been published. The Ravensbourne School had received an Ofsted Inspection on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014, and had been rated as 'Good'.

Members were advised that 51% of Bromley Primary Schools had now converted to academy status, with 57% of all schools across the Borough now academies. It was expected that a majority of the remaining Local Authority maintained schools would convert to academy status by September 2015.

Intensive support was currently being provided to Mead Road Infant School by the School Improvement Service following the resignation of the former Head Teacher. Intensive support was also being provided to Holy Innocents RC Primary School by the School Improvement Service and a National Leader of Education through the Roman Catholic Diocese. A new staff team was in place at the school, which included a number of highly experienced teachers. Unvalidated data suggested that the school was now achieving good attainment results, and the school was working to move towards academy status as part of the Roman Catholic academies group.

An issue had been identified in the Chislehurst area around a number of junior schools that had chosen to become primary schools following conversion to academy status, with some infant schools no longer having associated junior school places. Work was being undertaken to address this issue and it was hoped that there would be a creative solution to address this problem to meet the demand for places.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Head of Schools, Early Years Commissioning and Quality Assurance confirmed that the Local

Authority had no statutory duty to provide support to academies but did seek to build links where possible. A meeting would be held with the regional commissioner in November 2014, and the outcome of this would be reported to the next meeting of Education PDS Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

**RESOLVED that recent Ofsted and school improvement activity in the Borough be noted.**

### **36 EDUCATION INFORMATION ITEMS**

The Education Briefing comprised three reports:

- Minutes of the Education Budget Sub-Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014
- Update on School Nurses Initiative
- Bromley Academy Programme and Free School Update

**RESOLVED that the Information Briefing be noted.**

### **37 PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP**

#### **Report ED15116**

The Committee considered a report providing an update on progress in implementing the recommendations of the School Governance Working Group which were endorsed by the Education PDS Committee at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

The School Governance Working Group met on 27<sup>th</sup> February and 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014, where a number of proposals had been developed to support the role of Local Authority Governor into the future, including recruitment, selection and training process for Local Authority Governors, the development of best practice and work to promote the benefits of Local Authority Governors to academy schools.

In considering the report, the Chairman noted the proposal to develop a formal selection process for Local Authority Governors. The Portfolio Holder for Education confirmed that the selection panels would include representation from both the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Education PDS Committee.

Recent activity to promote the opportunity to become a Local Authority Governor had identified 37 potential applicants with a wide range of experience and skills whose details had been provided to schools across the Borough. The benefits of schools appointing an Independent Clerk to the Governing Body were emphasised by Members, who agreed that the use of an Independent Clerk should be promoted to schools where appropriate.

At the Governors' Conference held in September 2014, it had been proposed that a Bromley Governor Association be established to support the development of strong governance across the Borough into the future. Work to develop this was being led by Bromley schools. Members noted that the National Governors Association offered a range of support and training opportunities to schools for both Governors and Clerks, and that a named Officer was available at the Local Authority for Bromley schools to contact with any specific concerns or queries.

**RESOLVED that progress made in implementing the recommendations of the School Governance Working Group be noted.**

## **38 EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

### **Report ED15112**

The Committee considered a report outlining the education outcomes for Bromley children in care for the 2013/14 academic year. The number of Bromley children in care had fluctuated over the year, showing a steady increase across all age ranges, but most significantly impacting the Bromley Virtual School across Early Years and Key Stage 1. The inclusion of the Year 12 and Year 13 cohorts, amounting to over 60 additional young people, had brought the total number of pupils in the Bromley Virtual School to over 230. The academic progress of all Bromley children in care was closely monitored by the Local Authority; however the reporting cohort for education outcomes for Bromley children in care was limited to those who had been looked after continuously for a period of one year between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

At Key Stage 1, 11 children formed the reporting cohort. Of these children, six had achieved Level 2 in Reading, Writing and Maths and seven had achieved Level 2 in Speaking and Listening. Three children had statements of special educational needs, and a further three had identified special educational needs without statements. At Key Stage 2, eight children formed the reporting cohort. Of these children, five had achieved a combined Reading, Writing and Maths score of 63%. Two children had statements of special educational needs, and a further three were at School Action Plus. At Key Stage 4, 27 young people formed the reporting cohort. Of these young people, four had achieved 5 GCSEs at A\*-C including English and Maths. 67% had identified special educational needs with 11 having statements of special educational needs. This equated to 41% of the cohort having a statement of special educational needs against a national figure of 2.8%. Many of these young people had achieved remarkable results, despite ongoing disruption or other issues, but some had not achieved the target grades set for them and work would be undertaken to identify the barriers these young people had faced and the additional support they would have valued during Key Stage 4.

In considering the report, a Member noted the increase in the number of kinship carers, which was an arrangement where the Local Authority had legal

responsibility for a child and placed them with a family member or friend who became their foster carer. The Head Teacher, Bromley Virtual School advised Members that these children and young people were supported in their attainment by the Bromley Virtual School. In cases of special guardianship, where a child lived with carers who had parental responsibility for them and was no longer the responsibility of the Local Authority, monitoring by the Bromley Virtual School was only undertaken on a short term basis.

A Member was concerned at the proportion of young people who had not achieved an A\*-C GCSE in English or Maths at Key Stage 4, as this could limit their opportunities for further education, employment or training. The Head Teacher, Bromley Virtual School confirmed that all but one of the young people who had not achieved an A\*-C GCSE in English or Maths at Key Stage 4 had now enrolled in a Post-16 functional skills course, with the intention being to transfer the young people with an appropriate level of ability into GCSE courses shortly.

In response to a question from a Member, the Head Teacher, Bromley Virtual School noted that some children and young people had regularly moved schools or had a high level of absenteeism prior to coming into the care of the Local Authority, which had delayed the progression of any Statement of Special Educational Needs. Work was being undertaken with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Service to ensure that Education, Health and Care Plans were developed for these children and young people to provide holistic support that met their particular needs as they progressed through education.

The Chairman thanked the Head Teacher, Bromley Virtual School and her colleagues for the excellent work undertaken to support the education outcomes of Looked After Children.

**RESOLVED that the education outcomes for Bromley Looked After Children for the 2013/14 academic year be noted.**

## **39 TRUANCY AND MISSING CHILDREN**

### **Report ED15113**

The Committee considered a report outlining the legal framework and the Local Authority's processes regarding truancy and children missing education.

Truancy in education was defined as absences from school that had not been authorised by the school and could include parentally condoned absences. Persistent absentees were defined as young people who had an absence rate of 15% or above, including both authorised and unauthorised absences. In 2013/14, overall absence for state funded primary and secondary schools had reduced by 0.7% from the previous year to 4.1%, and was lower than the national average of 4.4%. Persistent absence for state funded primary and secondary schools had reduced by 0.5% from the previous year to 3.6%,

which was lower than the national average of 4.1%. This compared favourably to a number of the Local Authority's statistical neighbours and surrounding boroughs. Illness continued to be the main reason for absence and Bromley Education Welfare Service had requested schools be more challenging when looking at illness.

The Education Welfare Service discharged the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to children missing education and holding parents to account for ensuring the regular attendance of their children at school. Children missing education was defined as all children of compulsory school age who were not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise, and who had been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time. When undertaking inspection of local authorities, Ofsted had broadened this definition to include those young people who were attending alternative provision, been permanently excluded, in receipt of home tuition due to medical needs, receiving elective home education or were looked after by the Local Authority. In Bromley there were currently 74 children and young people accessing alternative provision, 40 permanently excluded, 59 receiving home tuition, 111 receiving elective home education, and 197 looked after children.

To support the identification and monitoring of this cohort on a regular basis, the Local Authority had developed a Children Missing Education Policy which had been provided to all schools and partner agencies. As part of this policy, schools were expected to notify the Local Authority of any pupil that they intended to remove from their school roll prior to removal, as well as notifying the Local Authority of any pupil that had failed to attend school for 10 days and that they had been unable to trace. Partner agencies, health and voluntary organisations were also able to refer any child they believed to be out of education to an Officer within the Education Welfare Service who was dedicated to receiving Children Missing Education referrals. On receipt of a referral, this Officer would undertake all relevant enquires, including making contact with the family in order to support the child to re-engage with education, liaising with supporting agencies as necessary. Families and children who could not be traced were placed on a national database which was used by other local authorities to confirm if children reported missing had been identified within their authority.

In considering the report, Members were advised that schools were able to authorise leave for pupils in exceptional circumstances. There had recently been an increase in both secondary and primary schools requesting the Local Authority issue Education Fixed Penalty Notices in response to unauthorised leave, which were charged at £60 per parent per pupil missing education.

Further reports on children missing education and home education would be considered at the next meeting of Education PDS Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014. It was requested that the children missing education report include information on the proportion of Education Fixed Penalty Notices that were issued for persistent truancy and the effect that the Fixed Penalty Notices had on the school attendance of children and young people, as well as providing

details on the number of missing children in the Borough and the work that was undertaken to trace these children. It was requested that the home education report include information on the number of children being home educated across the Borough, including the age of these children and the level of support that was available to their parents and carers.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

**40 EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2014/15**

**Report ED15117**

The Committee considered the forward rolling work programme for the year ahead based on items scheduled for decision by the Portfolio Holder for Education and items for consideration by Education PDS Committee.

The Chairman advised Members that the Care Services PDS Committee had not yet agreed to establish a joint working group with Education PDS Committee on the effectiveness of Children's Centres and the Tackling Troubled Families Programme, and proposed that a working group of the Education PDS Committee be convened for 2014/15 to consider the effectiveness of Children's Centres. This was agreed by the Education PDS Committee and Member nominations were confirmed as Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP, Councillor Alan Collins, Councillor Mary Cooke, Councillor Judi Ellis, Mrs Joan McConnell and Mr Tony Wright-Jones.

Members were advised that the joint meeting of the Education and Care Services PDS Committee exploring child safeguarding would now be held on the earlier date of 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

The Chairman reminded Members that visits were regularly arranged for care homes and schools and colleges across the Borough and encouraged all Members and Co-opted Members to attend.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1) The Education Programme 2014/15 be noted; and,**
- 2) A working group of the Education PDS Committee be convened for 2014/15 to consider the effectiveness of Children's Centres, and for the membership to comprise Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP, Councillor Alan Collins, Councillor Mary Cooke, Councillor Judi Ellis, Mrs Joan McConnell and Mr Tony Wright-Jones.**

**41 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**



**RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it was likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**42 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30TH SEPTEMBER 2014**

**RESOLVED** that the exempt minutes of the Education PDS Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 be agreed.

**43 EDUCATION PART 2 (EXEMPT) INFORMATION ITEMS**

The Committee considered the Education Part 2 (Exempt) Information Briefing.

The Meeting ended at 8.22 pm

Chairman