

EDUCATION, CHILDREN & FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 15 February 2017

Present:

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P. (Chairman)
Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Kim Botting FRSA,
Alan Collins, Ellie Harmer and Chris Pierce

Joan McConnell
Emmanuel Arbenser and Mylene Williams

Also Present:

Councillors Ruth Bennett and Tom Philpott

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mary Cooke, Councillor Judi Ellis, and Alison Regester.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations of interest.

33 COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING REVIEW OF SUPPORT TO UNDER PERFORMING PUPILS

In advance of the meeting the Chairman had circulated a skeleton draft report for the Committees consideration. At the start of the meeting the Chairman explained that the vast majority of the draft report was descriptive, reflecting the statistical, written and verbal evidence that had been gathered at the meeting on 17th January 2017.

The Education Select Committee considered the recommendations that it would like to put forward following its enquiry into Underperforming Pupils.

In considering paragraph 5.12, Members noted that at the meeting they had requested more information on all the assessments carried out in pre-school settings before the end of the Foundation Stage, including the number of referrals for SEN. It was agreed that this should be a formal recommendation arising from the enquiry.

Recommendation 1: That further information be provided to the Education Select Committee concerning all the assessments carried out in pre-school settings before the end of the Foundation Stage, including the number of referrals for SEN as this is the group of children identified as not making the progress expected in the earliest stage of education.

In relation to paragraph 5.13, a Co-opted Member stated that she was “astonished” that there continued to be issues surrounding the sharing of information between pre-school and early years settings. The Co-opted Member noted that this had been an ongoing issue for a number of years and a solution should have been identified by now. Members of the Committee suggested that consideration should be given to liaising with colleagues in other Local Authorities in order to facilitate the development of a standard pro forma for the transition.

Recommendation 2: That more action be taken to facilitate and improve information sharing between pre-school and early years settings in order to smooth the transition process.

Recommendation 3: That more work be undertaken to help all parents understand the importance of giving consent for professionals to contact pre-school settings.

Again, in considering paragraph 5.15, Members expressed concern that there was no uniform process for sharing information as children and young people moved through the education system. Members agreed that more work should be done to develop a standard protocol and pro forma for information sharing.

Recommendation 4: That more work should be done to develop a standard protocol and pro forma for information sharing as children and young people progress through the education system.

Reflecting on paragraph 5.16, the Committee again discussed the importance of establishing robust systems to support pupils as they transferred from primary to secondary school. It was essential that accurate and correct information was shared between primary and secondary schools in order to provide a seamless transition for pupils and support their ongoing progress and achievement.

Recommendation 5: That robust systems be established to support pupils as they transfer from primary to secondary school ensuring that accurate and correct information is shared between the schools in order to provide a seamless transition for pupils and support their progress and achievement.

In relation to paragraph 5.17, Members suggested that the third sentence in the paragraph be amended to read “[t]here are a large number of *schools in Bromley* that had been judged...” as it was felt that this better reflected the position in Bromley. Members agreed that the Schools Partnership Board

should be asked to review support given to driving school standards in order to give all pupils every available opportunity.

Recommendation 6: That the Schools Partnership Board be asked to review support given to improving school standards in order to give all pupils every available opportunity.

During consideration of paragraph 5.19, Members agreed that improving the aspirations of indigenous groups who did not understand and appreciate the value of a good education was one of the key challenges. Members noted, with disappointment, that in recent years, nationally, there had been a great deal of emphasis placed on young people gaining a university education. Members felt that there was a need for apprenticeship schemes to be valued by both local communities and the national Government. It was noted that there were frequent stories in the national press concerning skill shortages in a number of industries and this needed to be addressed in order to ensure that Britain was competitive internationally. In addition to this it was important that companies gave more consideration to promoting apprenticeship schemes as this would attract more young people. It was also essential that parents and schools recognised the benefits of vocational training.

Recommendation 7: That signposting to non-university education be expanded in order to ensure that students are aware of the variety of career opportunities available through vocational training and to support parity of esteem between vocational and academic education.

Finally, in relation to paragraph 5.20 Members proposed to recommend that the Schools Partnership Board be the vehicle for coordinating the provision of careers advice across the Borough.

Recommendation 8: That the Schools Partnership Board be the vehicle for coordinating the provision of careers advice across the Borough.

In drawing to a conclusion, the Committee authorised the Chairman to review the written evidence that had been presented to the Committee during its enquiry in order to refine the report.

The Vice-Chairman suggested that the impact of the recommendations made by the Education Select Committee in the process of its enquiry into underperforming pupils should be reviewed within 12 to 24 months. It was agreed that this should be a formal recommendation from the Committee.

Recommendation 9: That a review of the progress made in implementing the Committee recommendation in this and other reports published in the municipal year be published in April 2018.

The Meeting ended at 7.20 pm

Chairman