

EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 10 March 2015

Present:

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

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

Also Present:

Councillor Stephen Wells, Portfolio Holder for Education

70 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Jo Brinkley.

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Julia Waldman, the new Head of Schools, Early Years Commissioning and Quality Assurance to the Education PDS Committee.

71 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP declared that he was a Governor at Bromley College of Further and Higher Education.

72 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27TH JANUARY 2015 AND THE JOINT CARE SERVICES AND EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEES MEETING HELD ON 25TH FEBRUARY 2015 AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2015 and the Joint Care Services and Education PDS Committees meeting held on 25th February 2015 be agreed and that matters outstanding be noted.

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

No questions had been received.

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

One oral question was received from Kerry Hood and is attached at **Appendix A**.

75 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

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

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. Applications from Bullers Wood School to establish a six form of entry boys' secondary school, and from Langley Park School for Girls and Langley Park School for Boys to establish a two form of entry primary school had been approved by the Secretary of State for Education. The Planning Inspector had considered the initial planning application for Harris Primary Academy Beckenham to establish a two form of entry primary school on the Manor Way site in February 2015 and had upheld the appeal.

Bromley College's Hospitality, Food and Enterprise Career College had officially opened on 26th February 2015. Significant additional funding had already been secured by Bromley College of Further and Higher Education to expand the Career College's offer.

The Secretary of State for Education had agreed proposals for the use of unspent Dedicated Schools Grant to partly fund the purchase and proposed refurbishment scheme for Beacon House which would provide a new high quality in-Borough alternative provision delivering a wide variety of vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and 5 to male and female pupils identified as having social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Officers were also working with the Department of Education to identify how Dedicated Schools Grant might be used more flexibly in future to fund one-off projects across the Borough where appropriate.

A very successful meeting had recently been held with Governors representing schools across the Borough to explore issues around Ofsted inspections. The new process to select Local Authority Governors was working well and a further round of panel interviews with prospective candidates would be held shortly.

Work was being undertaken to explore how the current education service offered by the Bromley museum to schools across the Borough might be developed, with a view to ensuring that Bromley pupils were not disadvantaged by any future changes to the museum service.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder update be noted.

A) UPDATE ON UNDER PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Report ED15056

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report that provided an update of recent Ofsted and school improvement activity across the Borough and outlined the standards achieved in schools across Bromley during the academic year 2013/14, based on an analysis of National Curriculum assessments and GCSE/GCE examination results from Summer 2014.

The overall percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development across all seven areas of learning at the Early Years Foundation Stage was 68% across all Bromley schools against a national average of 60%, with girls outperforming boys both locally and nationally. At the Early Years Foundation Stage, 51% of pupils in receipt of free school meals reached a good level of development, against 68% of pupils who did not receive free school meals, which was a gap of 19% against a national gap of 19% and an improvement of 5% on the previous year.

Across Key Stage 1 teacher assessments, Bromley's performance remained above the national average at all levels. At Level 2+, pupils who did not receive free school meals outperformed pupils in receipt of free school meals in all areas, however there was evidence of continued improvement in the last year with a decrease in the gap in reading, writing and mathematics. 82% of Bromley pupils now achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, which was 8% higher than the national average. 64% of pupils in receipt of free school meals had achieved the expected standard which was an increase on the previous year, but still showed a gap of 21% against a national gap of 16%.

Overall Bromley's Key Stage 2 attainment results were consistently above the national average at all levels. There was still a range of achievement across Bromley primary schools, however there was evidence that the gap between pupils in receipt of free school meals and pupils who did not receive free school meals was narrowing.

At Key Stage 4, the percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C grades including English and mathematics was above the national average, but had decreased 8% from the previous year against a national decrease of 4%. There had been a corresponding decrease in the percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C grades including English and mathematics who were eligible for free school meals in Bromley which had decreased to 37%, which showed a gap of 31% compared to 28% for the previous year and 26% nationally.

With regard to recent Ofsted and school improvement activity across the Borough, it was confirmed that since February 2015 there had been an Ofsted re-inspection at Bromley Road Primary School and an Ofsted monitoring visit at Worsley Bridge Primary School. Following these visits, Bromley Road Primary School had been rated as 'Good' and Worsley Bridge Primary School had been identified as making satisfactory progress.

In considering the report, the Chairman highlighted the 8% decrease in the percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C grades including English and mathematics from the previous year against a national decrease of 4%. The Head of Schools, Early Years Commissioning and Quality Assurance explained that a number of Bromley schools had been disadvantaged by changes to the list of qualifications which could be counted towards the attainment of 5 A*-C grades, and that there had also been a change to the early entry requirements for GCSE examinations which had disadvantaged some high achieving pupils. A Member underlined the need for schools across the Borough to be prepared to meet the changing requirements of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director: Education noted that fixed term exclusions were one of the tools used by schools to manage issues of pupil behaviour and support them to remain in mainstream education. It was important to ensure that schools continued to work with pupils to address identified issues and reduce the number of permanent exclusions. An increasing range of alternative provision was now available across the Borough which would better meet the educational needs of some pupils at risk of permanent exclusion in mainstream schools into the future.

Members were generally concerned at the gap in performance at Key Stage 1 between pupils in receipt of free school meals and those who did not receive free school meals. The Head of Schools, Early Years Commissioning and Quality Assurance agreed that it was important to have a greater understanding of the gap in performance at Key Stage 1, and that more data analysis would be undertaken which would be reported to the next meeting of Education PDS Committee. A Co-opted Member emphasised the value of being able to link Key Stage 1 performance to pupil's early years provision to assist early years providers in evidencing their quality. The Portfolio Holder for Education confirmed that providers could request this information from schools, and the Head of Schools, Early Years Commissioning and Quality Assurance noted that this information was not part of statutory reporting and could be difficult to obtain.

At the request of Members, further information on the performance of Bromley Schools, including a breakdown of GCSE results by ethnic group and the gap in performance at Key Stage 1, would be provided to the next meeting of the Education PDS Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The annual report on the standards of attainment and progress in Bromley schools during 2013/14 be noted;**

- 2) Ofsted outcomes for academies in Bromley be noted; and,
- 3) Ofsted outcomes for Local Authority Maintained Schools, including detail in respect of schools identified as underperforming, an outline of Local Authority support and challenge provided and a rating of risk be noted.

76 EDUCATION INFORMATION ITEMS

The Education Briefing comprised two reports:

- Minutes of the Education Budget Sub-Committee meeting held on 3rd March 2015
- Bromley Academy Programme Update

RESOLVED that the Information Briefing be noted.

77 YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET) AND STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN EET FOLLOWING THE INTRODUCTION OF RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE (RPA)

Report ED15064

The Committee considered a report providing an update on the provision of support for young people who were identified as not participating in education, employment or training (NEET) or being at risk of not participating in education, employment or training, and the strategies in place to increase the participation of young people following the implementation of the Education and Skills Act 2008, under which all young people aged 16 and 17 years would be required to participate in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 years from September 2013 and 18 years from September 2014. The Education and Skills Act 2008 also introduced duties on Local Authorities to promote the effective participation of young people in education, employment and training in their area and to make arrangements to identify young people not participating in education, employment or training.

The participation of young people aged 16 to 18 years in education, employment and training was recorded on a national database, from which statistical returns were provided to the Department for Education on a monthly basis around the number of young people who were not participating in education, employment or training or whose status was 'not known'. The monthly adjusted NEET performance for Bromley for December 2014 was 4.42% (4.5% of the cohort). This was very close to the average statistical neighbour performance of 4.1% for December 2014, and a significant improvement on the previous year where the monthly adjusted NEET performance for Bromley was 5.8%.

A number of strategies were in place to increase the participation of young people in education, employment and training in Bromley. This included improved tracking processes, such as door knocking, a targeted youth support programme and a range of tailored support programmes and employability activities delivered through the Bromley Education Business Partnership, including the Bromley Youth Employment Project (Phase 2). An action plan had been developed for 2014/15 to deliver additional activities to further reduce the number of young people whose participation status was 'not known' and the number of young people who were not in education, employment and training, and to increase the number of young people participating in full-time learning or employment with training.

In considering the report, Members were generally concerned that the Local Authority had no powers to require young people to engage with activities to support them into education, employment and training. The Youth Programme Manager confirmed that the Local Authority continued to work with young people to promote the benefits of participation. Leaflets had recently been distributed to all Year 11 pupils at Bromley schools to outline the opportunities available in education, employment and training. Further guidance was also available from a range of sources include the National Careers service, drop-in Information, Advice and Guidance sessions at sites across the Borough, and support provided by schools.

A Member highlighted that part-time education or employment was not included in the Raising of Participation Age formula, which was used by the Department for Education to measure performance in education, employment and training. The Youth Programme Manager advised Members that the Local Authority continued to support young people who were engaging positively with education or employment on a part-time basis, and that where possible the Bromley Education Business Partnership worked with employers to build on these opportunities, such as by introducing apprenticeships.

Further information including comparative data on statistical neighbours and baseline data for all young people across the Borough to support comparison with young people identified as not participating in education, employment or training would be provided to Members following the meeting.

The Chairman commended Officers for an excellent report.

RESOLVED that strategies for increasing the participation of young people in education, employment or training following the introduction of raising the participation age be noted.

78 ANNUAL ADMISSIONS REPORT

Report ED15065

The Committee considered a report providing an update on the administration of school admissions and highlighting issues identified during the admissions process for Reception and Year 7 intakes for the 2015/16 academic year.

The Local Authority had a statutory duty to ensure there were enough school places available for local children and young people of statutory school age. There had been a significant increase in the number of applications received by the Local Authority in recent years for primary school places in Bromley, with 4010 primary applications received for Reception for the 2015/16 academic year. The number of applications received by the Local Authority for secondary school places had been increasing since the 2012/13 academic year, with 3518 secondary applications received for Year 7 for the 2015/16 academic year. In addition to this, there had been an increase in the number of pupils moving into Bromley without a school place over the past three years with 610 in-year admissions received between 1st September 2014 and 1st January 2015.

In considering the report, the Chairman was pleased to note that 96% of primary applications and 95% of secondary applications had been made through online applications for the 2015/16 academic year, which represented a significant increase in online applications over the past three years.

There had been a slight fall in the proportion of applicants who received their first choice of secondary school for the 2015/16 academic year which was a result of an increase in the number of applications received, and Members generally discussed the need for parents and carers to take account of school catchment areas and admissions policies when applying for schools. There had recently been a proposal for a satellite grammar school to open in Sevenoaks, which might have implications for Bromley pupils if the two highly-selective schools based in the Borough chose to pursue similar schemes for their schools.

A Co-opted Member underlined the potential to expand Roman Catholic Primary Schools in the Borough where appropriate to make additional education provision available to parents and carers seeking a Catholic primary school for their child.

At the request of the Chairman, further information from the Fair Access Panel on the demand for in-year admissions places, and on the subscription levels and catchment areas of Bromley schools would be provided to the next meeting of the Education PDS Committee. The Chairman also requested that information be provided on the proportion of applicants who received their first choice of primary or secondary school in other London Boroughs.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Progress in the administration of applications be noted; and,**
- 2) Primary and secondary admissions received for Reception and Year 7 intakes for September 2015 and the actions taken to address continued increase in demand for school places be noted.**

79 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Report ED15069

The Committee considered a report providing information about elective home education in the Borough.

It was compulsory for every child of school age to receive a full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they might have. Over the past three years, there had been a consistent nationwide increase in the number of families choosing elective home education for all or part of their child's education. In the 2013/14 academic year, 171 pupils had been identified as receiving elective home education in Bromley. This was for a range of reasons including an elective home education ethos, lack of progress at existing provision, bullying or health issues.

The Local Authority had no statutory rights to inspect home education provision but continued to be responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people. Where a parent or carer chose to electively home educate their child, they were required to confirm their intention in writing to their child's Head teacher, who then notified the Local Authority. Once the Local Authority was notified, the Child Missing Education Officer would make initial contact with the family to ensure that they were fully aware of their education responsibilities, that the child had no unmet needs and that there were no safeguarding concerns. The Education Advisor would undertake a follow up visit within 2-10 weeks, and if this visit was deemed satisfactory, further visits would be made at approximate six monthly intervals. Should a family fail to engage with the Education Advisor and there was no evidence of a suitable education being provided to a child, the case was referred back to the Children Missing Education Officer to instigate a School Attendance Order. Students who wished to return to mainstream education from elective home education were supported via the Fair Access Protocol.

The Chairman noted the high proportion of secondary pupils receiving elective home education who had previously attended The Priory School. The Assistant Director: Education confirmed that some communities were culturally more likely to declare home education, such as the gypsy traveller community, but that Bromley schools worked with the families of all their pupils to support children and young people to remain in school.

In considering the reasons cited by some parents and carers declaring elective home education for the 2013/14 academic year, a Member underlined the high proportion of parents and carers who had stated that lack of progress, unhappiness at school or bullying were the main reasons they had chosen to declare home education. It was important to ensure that schools were aware of their responsibilities to address issues such as bullying and safeguarding, and where such issues were identified, pupils receiving elective home education should be supported back into mainstream education if appropriate.

In discussion, Members expressed serious concerns at the lack of statutory rights for the Local Authority to inspect home education provision, and emphasised the responsibility of the Local Authority to satisfy itself that a child's right to a suitable education has been safeguarded. The Assistant Director: Education highlighted that the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board had recently established an Education Safeguarding Sub-Committee, which brought together Safeguarding Leads from schools across the Borough and was well placed to explore potential safeguarding issues around elective home education. The Local Authority had also taken a lead role in forming the Association of Elective Home Education Professionals, a national organisation which was launched on 26th February 2015 and aimed to support local authorities to work together on elective home education issues, including safeguarding concerns.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The report be noted;**
- 2) The Education PDS Committee expresses its concern at the lack of information around elective home education and recommends that further research be undertaken to ensure the safeguarding of children and that elective home education is effective and in conformity with the Local Authority's duty as the safeguarding authority;**
- 3) A further report be provided to the Education PDS Committee in the 2015/16 municipal year.**

80 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EDUCATION PDS COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the annual report of the Education PDS Committee for 2014/15. It was noted that the annual report would be provided to the Executive and Resources PDS Committee on 12th March 2015 and to Full Council on 20th April 2015.

In discussion, the Committee agreed that the Chairman would update the annual report to include issues discussed at the meeting of Education PDS Committee on 10th March 2015 prior to its submission to Full Council on 20th April 2015.

RESOLVED that the annual report of the Education PDS Committee be approved.

81 EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2014/15

Report ED15072

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 the Education PDS Committee.

The Chairman requested that reports outlining further information on the performance of Bromley schools and school admissions for 2015/16 be provided to the next meeting of Education PDS Committee. The Chairman also requested that further reports on the Bromley Adult Education Service and elective home education be added to the 2015/16 Work Programme.

The Chairman noted that this was the final Education PDS Committee meeting of the 2014/15 municipal year and thanked all Members, Co-opted Members and Officers for their support to the Committee over the past year. Members of the Committee were requested to provide any suggestions for areas for scrutiny for the 2015/16 municipal year to the Chairman following the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Education Programme 2014/15 be noted.

82 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.

83 EDUCATION PART 2 (EXEMPT) INFORMATION ITEMS

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

84 ALTERNATIVE PROVISION: AUTHORISATION FOR CONTRACT AWARD

The Committee considered the report and supported the recommendations.

85 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED AND CHILDREN'S TRANSPORT CONTRACT AWARD

The Committee considered the report and supported the recommendations.

The Meeting ended at 9.09 pm

Chairman