MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 13 September 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Liz Johnston-Franklin (Vice-Chair), Chris Barnham, Andre Bourne, Helen Klier, Hilary Moore, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Alan Till, Gail Exon (Church Representative) and Monsignor N Rothon (Church Representative) and

APOLOGIES: Councillors Councillor Joyce Jacca, Kevin Mantle and Paul Maslin

ALSO PRESENT: Kate Bond (Head of Standards & Achievement), Sara Williams (Executive Director, Children and Young People) (London Borough of Lewisham), Emma Aye-Kumi, Jackie Jones (School Improvement Officer) and Michael Roach (Headteacher John Ball School)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2017

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2017 be agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

2. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

3. Responses to Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

No responses were due.

4. In-depth review: recruitment and retention of school staff - second evidence session

The Chair introduced the item and invited those Members that had attended the visits to schools to share their impressions of the visits.

It was noted that:

- Rose McNamee, Teach First, would not give verbal evidence. Instead Teach First had provided written information which was tabled.
- Paragraph 4.16 of the report should have read "… out of the country for more than **3 months**…" and not 30 days as stated.
- Views on branding or promoting Lewisham's schools differed between schools
- Bulge class financing was an issue for schools. Bulge classes attracted additional funding at the set up stage, then were funded on a per capita basis. The critical mass was helpful to smaller schools particularly.
- There was a trend across all Lewisham schools, both with or without bulge classes, of dwindling numbers in Years 4-6. This was thought to be due in part to Brexit and housing needs.

- Schools were already seeing pupils leave as a consequence of the decision to leave the EU.
- Members wondered whether efficiency savings could be passed on to teachers in the form of a pay increase.
- Some Members questioned the practicality of overseas checks and gave examples from their own experience of where it had been especially onerous or caused an impediment to timely recruitment. Officers reminded the Committee of the importance of child safeguarding. Officers clarified that the only cases where the council had any discretion over what checks to carry out were for existing staff that had been recruited before the requirement for overseas checks came into force. In these cases a risk-based approach was being taken. For all new recruits, the DfE guidance on overseas checks was being followed.
- Officers were keen to develop the Teach First's relationship with secondary schools.
- The Schools Direct Grant (salaried route into teaching) had been cut. Lack of subsidy made it difficult for schools to train and recruit teachers through this route.

It was RESOLVED that the contents of the report, the verbal evidence of Members who attended visits to schools and the written evidence of Teach First (tabled) be noted.

The Chair invited Members to draft proposed recommendations in advance of the next meeting, at which the Committee would consider a draft final report.

5. Lewisham Learning Partnership - legal status

The Executive Director for Children and Young People, Sara Williams, introduced the report, and was accompanied by Michael Roach, Interim Director of Lewisham Learning Partnership.

The following key points were discussed:

- The proposed governance structure of the Lewisham Learning Partnership appeared complicated to Members. Officers explained that the structure aimed to evolve existing arrangements and to enable the borough's 84 schools to be equal partners.
- The focus of the Lewisham Learning Partnership (LLP) was school improvement and high quality teaching practice. The structure could be revisited at a later date.
- There was some concern that separating the governance structure according to primary/ special/ secondary schools could risk integration. Officers gave reassurances that SEN was a theme that ran through all school improvement efforts but clarified that school improvement measures differed for special schools than mainstream schools and therefore it was important to consider special schools in their own right as well as teaching for SEN in mainstream schools.
- The committee heard examples of where the LLP had helped schools with preparation for Ofsted inspections and with peer reviews.
- Lewisham had been successful in securing a £10,000 grant to support maths teaching. Officers considered that this success was due to the Secondary Challenge already being up and running.

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6. Lewisham Music Service - implementation of new Trust arrangements

This item was taken after item 7.

Kate Bond, Head of Standards and Inclusion, introduced the item.

It was noted that:

- Members were extremely positive about the calibre of the performances given at Lewisham Music Service (LMS) events and encouraged fellow Members to attend.
- Looked After Children benefitted from reduced rates. Lewisham Music Service was a model of inclusion and wanted children who would traditionally not engage with the service to enjoy access.

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. Autumn Term school performance

This item was heard ahead of item 6.

Jackie Jones, Service Manager for School Improvement and Intervention, introduced the report.

The following was noted:

- The new grading system does not correspond to the old grades. A current grade 4 was considered to be somewhere between an old C and D.
- Although Lewisham Southwark College had not shared its results, Members who were privy to the results assured the Committee that the results were good.
- Problems with literacy affected the maths results, particularly for ESOL students.
- Members were positive about the EYFS provision in the borough.
- Officers gave assurances that the borough's schools were not excluding those pupils predicted to achieve low results in an attempt to skew the results, as had been reported in a neighbouring borough. Members were invited to speak to the Executive Director for Children and Young People if they had any concerns.
- Members asked to see the number of 'strong' passes (Grade 5 and above) in the annual report due for consideration at the March meeting, or sooner if the information is available.
- The phonics test could be unhelpful for fluent sight readers who would automatically correct words that look wrong rather than using phonics to sound out.
- KS1 phonics resits results at the end of Year 2 had not been reported.

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted. Officers were asked to include the number of Grade 5+ passes in the annual report in March, or sooner if the information is available.

8. Select Committee work programme

The work programme was discussed and it was noted that:

- Members should draft suggested recommendations for the in-depth review of recruitment and retention and submit them to the Scrutiny Manager by close of 13 October.
- Members were invited to attend the Public Accounts Select Committee (PAC) on 27 September at 7:30pm to consider the item on cost pressures in children's social care.
- Members were asked to submit their availability for a proposed visit to Lewisham Southwark College.
- Members were invited to submit to the Chair or the Scrutiny Manager their suggestions for a topic for the Mayor to speak about at the December committee meeting. Suggestions at the meeting included a forward look at challenges for the incoming Mayor, and a look back at his time as Mayor.
- The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 1 November at 7pm.

It was RESOLVED that the work programme report be noted. Members were invited to submit to the Chair or the Scrutiny Manager their suggestions for a topic for the Mayor to speak about at the December committee meeting.

9. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

No referrals were made.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chair:

Date:
