# MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL INCLUSION IN EDUCATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

**Monday, 5 July 2021 at 5.00 pm**

PRESENT:  Councillors Colin Elliott (Chair), Obajimi Adefiranye, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Caroline Kalu, Paul Maslin and Clive Caseley (PGR, Secondary Schools)

ALSO PRESENT: Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) and Cheryl Thorley (Business Support and Meeting Administration Apprentice)

## 1.     Confirmation of Chair

Resolved: that Councillor Colin Elliot be confirmed at Chair of the task and finish group.

## 2.     Declarations of interest

Clive Caseley (PGR, Secondary Schools) declared an interest as a Governor of Forest Hill School.

## 3.     Scoping report

**Cllr Elliott, Chair, introduced the item by providing an outline of the original proposal for a task and finish group (TFG) on digital inclusion in education.**

3.1 The intention of the proposal was to look into the levels of digital inclusion among those pupils most in need, with a view to improving their educational outcomes – particularly those who had been identified as underachieving prior to lockdown. The proposal was, among other things, for the TFG to support schools identify these pupils across a range of year groups.

3.2 It was suggested that the TFG could learn from the good practice that emerged during the pandemic to help support those children and young people that might need to complete more work at home as part of the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. This would include how to identify, implement and share best practice and how it would be evaluated as part of the recovery.

3.3 It was noted that the work of the TFG is timely and important as we are still dealing with the fallout from the pandemic and that it will help us understand how best to support schools and pupils going forwards. It was also noted that there is a link to similar work being carried out by the Mayor.

**The committee went on the discuss the scoping paper and potential areas to explore. The following key points were noted:**

3.4 Lewisham Learning (the Lewisham School Improvement Partnership) will be a key stakeholder to engage with for relevant information and data.

3.5 The TFG noted a number of potential queries for Lewisham Learning regarding: the plans for any unallocated laptops received through the recent

Government laptop distribution schemes; and the recent crowdfunding campaign for digital devices for Lewisham schools.

3.6 The TFG suggested also focussing on the technology that schools use and how this might be used to help alert teachers to pupils who may be having issues with digital access.

3.7 The TFG noted that there can also be variation in the ability and confidence of teachers to make the best use of digital technology in schools.

3.8 It was noted that the survey carried out earlier in the year by Lewisham Learning looking at the numbers of children with devices and internet access might have more detailed data.

3.9 The TFG noted a number of barriers to digital inclusion for children and young people, including: having space at home to study; relying on mobile phones for internet access; not having English as a first language; and schools' awareness of the best digital platforms for learning.

3.10 The TFG expressed a particular interest in looking at the support available for those children and young people who have been digitally excluded and are soon due to take exams.

3.11 It was noted that there were recently as many as 279,000 pupils self-isolating across England and even if the rules change it will continue to be an issue for some pupils and schools.

3.12 The TFG noted that it would be important to look at the ongoing issue of children lacking appropriate devices and access noting that schools will often have an insight into these issues from the problems that they see.

3.13 The TFG also suggested looking at the digital inclusion issues faced by children and young people in temporary accommodation.

3.14 The TFG noted the importance of families being made aware of any discounted internet tariffs available. It was noted that some parents can find it difficult to ask for help when they need it.

3.15 It was noted that research has shown that live online teaching is more effective and that the ability to switch to live online teaching was a key priority for schools that have been doing well.

3.16 The TFG also suggested looking into the possibility of community areas or support hubs for pupils without appropriate digital access.

3.17 The TFG suggested liaising with Youth First about their experience of digital inclusion in informal education.


**Resolved: that the scoping report, including the key lines of enquiry and the timeline for the completion of the group's work be agreed.**


The meeting ended at 5:40pm


Chair:
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Date: 

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