

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday, 29 October 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD - Islington Town Hall on Tuesday, 29 October 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present:	Councillors:	Vivien Cutler (Chair), Woolf (Vice-Chair), Graham, Jeapes, Ngongo and Williamson
	Co-opted Members	Mary Clement, Roman Catholic Diocese Zaleera Wallace, Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
Also Present:	Councillors	Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Executive Member for Children Young People and Families.
	Observers	Claire Ballak, Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

Councillor Vivien Cutler in the Chair

- 122 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (ITEM NO. 1)**
Apologies were received from Councillors Alice Clarke-Perry and Santiago Bell-Bradford.
- 123 **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (ITEM NO. 2)**
There were no declarations of substitute members.
- 124 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM NO. 3)**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 125 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (ITEM NO. 4)**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2019 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

The Sub-Committee noted that the analysis of data for four year trend data for targeted cohorts would be completed shortly.
- 126 **CHAIR'S REPORT (ITEM NO. 5)**
The Chair raised concerns that during an event held during Black History Month, a Headteacher had stated that, during an assembly given at their school, none of the children and few of the staff had heard about Windrush.

127 **ITEMS FOR CALL IN (IF ANY) (ITEM NO. 6)**

None.

128 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM NO. 7)**

None.

129 **EQUALITIES IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES - WITNESS EVIDENCE (ITEM NO. B1)**

1) The Committee received a presentation about projects and approaches being used in schools from Anthony Doudle - Head of School Improvement – Primary, Emma Simpson – Secondary English Consultant, Penny Kenway – Head of Early Years and Childcare, Tracy Smith – EY Lead for Teaching and Learning, Helen Cameron – Health and Well-Being Manager and Hamish Mackay – Head of iWork.

The following points were noted in the discussion:-

a) Exploring Islington Solutions to a national challenge.

- Schools were engaging positively with this agenda.
- When pupils attended school regularly they would learn and remember more.
- It was important to develop a pupil 'growth mindset'. Pupils might not be able to do things 'yet' but the more they practised or the harder they worked, the better they would get.

b) Equalities Reference Group

- A charter was being drawn up from the good practice in schools which had best engaged with parents and pupils from target groups.
- The Charter would be made available to the Committee once published.
- Best practice included:- staff standing at school gates to build relationships with parents, welcoming parents into school, workshops for parents, mentoring with children and celebrating all pupil achievement.

c) Bright Start Islington: The Early Years

- Experiences before two years of age made a big difference to future healthy development.
- The concern that only 61% of children who had access to early education took up the offer.
- A timetable of early childhood services during the school term was circulated. It was noted that community centres could be used to encourage families to use free services.
- Those families that were less likely to use these services needed greater support and there needed to be greater data analysis on which families were not accessing these services and why.

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- It was noted that children who were identified as having severe and complex social and emotional and/or special educational needs were often identified through social workers, health visitors. These children would not need a diagnosis to access free services.
- All families were contacted a number of times about access to early learning and it was known that low income groups could really benefit.
- It was accepted that there was need to persuade more about the benefits of early learning, particularly for those disadvantaged.
- There was a need to support BAME and refugee women who may feel uncomfortable accessing services due to language barriers.
- It was considered that parents could be approached with details of the importance of early learning during their children's health check. The Committee noted that Children's Services were putting together a strategic action plan and would be looking at how best to encourage families in need to use early help services.
- The Committee noted that there could be cultural pressure in some families for the mother to look after children in the early years and it may be necessary to work with these groups.
- There was an 84% take up of early learning for those aged 3 and 4. This meant that some children would go into reception with no pre-school experience. It was known that these children, or those that entered reception at an unusual time of year, were more likely to do poorly.

d) Whole Class Reading

- Whole class reading was being used in primary schools rather than guided reading from year 3 to year 6.
- Comprehension was modelled on the questions pupils would experience in the SATs test so children were prepared along the way.
- Content domains would be used to assess children and children were exposed to these domains all of the time.
- Teachers should be able to recognise those children with dyslexia and use professional strategies to aid comprehension.
- Questions about the text would vary depending on the level of the student so that a more able student may receive a greater depth of questioning.
- The domains were set out in national guidance sent out by the Standard Testing Agency.
- It was considered that the whole class reading was having a significant impact in closing the gap in KS2 reading attainment.
- It was noted that language would become entrenched in memory through repetition.

e) Reading Road Map

- Children could read their way around Islington and parents could become involved in this process.

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- Each road was a different genre and there were 25/30 titles based on their interests.
- More schools were buying new packs of books and schools and both schools and libraries were investing in titles.
- Education services were also looking at a pilot mini film festival with the British Film Institute using film texts. Films would be selected which were relevant to target groups.
- It was noted that this project built on the Summer Reading Challenge which was well attended and had proved to be a huge success.

f) 11 by 11

- 11 by 11 was a commitment to make available 11 cultural experiences for all children by year 11.
- Education services were currently trying to get high levels of participation at this stage and would be looking to evaluate in due course.
- Groups were being monitored to look at who was accessing which activities in order to target groups in the future.
- Cultural partners were mainly based in Islington, however out of Borough partners such as Southbank, British Museum and the Opera House were also about to be added to the list.
- Uptake would need to be monitored as there would be children who already had access to these experiences.

g) iTIPS in Islington

- The target groups were more likely to experience trauma and less likely to be able to self-regulate.
- The number of schools involved had gradually increased since 2016/17.
- Exclusions had dropped in the first pilot schools.
- The figures for fixed term exclusion rate for the TIPS primary schools in 2016/17 were higher than average but had fallen below average for the group of other primary schools in 2017/18.
- The proportion of pupils who were excluded at least once during each year did not fall by as much as the fixed term exclusion rates which could indicate that the project was having a more significant impact on preventing young people having multiple exclusions.

h) World of Work

- There was a commitment to ensure that all young people in Islington would benefit from 100 hours experience of the world of work by the age of 16.
- All headteachers had been invited to a World of Work event on the 29 November.
- Work experience was often the highest priority for young people.
- It was considered that Islington Council should lead by example as an employer and this would make it easier to encourage other employers to follow.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

2) Islington Trauma Informed Practices in Schools – Handout for Governors

RESOLVED that the handout be noted.

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EXECUTIVE MEMBER QUESTIONS AND UPDATE (ITEM NO. B2)

Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families presented an update for the Committee.

The following was noted in discussion:

- It was noted that the Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum would be mandatory by September 2020 and work was being carried out on delivering this.
- It was noted that officers were currently drafting the Executive response to the Scrutiny review of Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from School.
- It was hoped that resources would be pooled to deliver mental health support. The Executive member stated that issues were clearly evidenced and the outcomes would be closely monitored.
- The extension of the contracts for Lift, Platform and Rosebowl were required so that there would be no break in provision and to enable the service to look at having a longer term sustainable plan.

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QUARTERLY REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE (Q1 2019/20) (ITEM NO. B3)

Andrea Stark presented the quarter 1 performance report on progress against the relevant Corporate Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the relevant services within the People Directorate.

The following was noted in the discussion:

- 3.20 – It was expected that this indicator would move to green over the course of the year where the Motivational Practice model had made a significant impact. A further detailed update would be provided for the next meeting.
- 3.22 and 3.23 – These indicators would be closely monitored. Officers were currently working to deal with the limited supply of foster care and residential providers and a further, more detailed update would be provided for quarter 2.
- 3.6 & 3.9. A query was raised regarding the reasons for the discrepancy in direction of travel between these two indicators given the figures supplied. The Committee were advised that a response would be supplied.
- 3.5 – 3.9. There were some signs of improvement but all these indicators needed further work.

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- It was noted that in some cases academies were excluding more pupils than other schools. Officers were holding meetings with these schools and were confident that the academies could be encouraged to use other strategies. It was also noted that, where there had been exclusions in two schools, their results had nonetheless not increased.

RESOLVED

- a) that the report be noted;
- b) a response be given regarding the discrepancy in relation to CS PI Nos 3.5 and 3.9.

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WORK PROGRAMME (ITEM NO. B4)

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Chair