

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday, 26 November 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on Tuesday, 26 November 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present:	Councillors:	Cutler (Chair), Woolf (Vice-Chair), Jeapes, Ngongo and Williamson
	Co-opted Members:	Mary Clement, Roman Catholic Diocese Zaleera Wallace, Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

Councillor Vivien Cutler in the Chair

133 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (ITEM NO. 1)**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clarke-Perry and Bell-Bradford.

134 **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (ITEM NO. 2)**
None.

135 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM NO. 3)**
None.

136 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (ITEM NO. 4)**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 October 2019 be agreed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

137 **CHAIR'S REPORT (ITEM NO. 5)**
The Chair advised that members were visiting schools and other educational settings to gather evidence for the review of Equalities in Educational Outcomes. It was stated that a summary of the visits would be provided to a future meeting.

Mary Clement asked for it to be noted that she had not received invitations to the visits due to an administrative error.

138 **ITEMS FOR CALL IN (IF ANY) (ITEM NO. 6)**
None.

139 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM NO. 7)**
A member of the public asked how many schools in the borough had adopted the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education. In response officers advised that this would be investigated.

140

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

a) Data Update

Harry Donnison, QPMU Service Manager, presented educational outcomes data to the Committee. The data used four years of results combined; this provided a larger sample size which could be evaluated with a higher degree of certainty.

The following main points were noted in the discussion:

- Nationally, 28% of Black Caribbean early years pupils were eligible for free school meals. In Islington, this figure was 45%. Islington had an above average proportion of Black Caribbean pupils eligible for free school meals at every key stage.
- Nationally, 15% of White UK early years pupils were eligible for free school meals. In Islington the figure was double the national average at around 30%. This gap widened at Key Stage 4, with around 35% of White UK pupils eligible for free school meals, slightly more than double the national average.
- The Committee queried the reasons why the number of pupils eligible for free school meals changed over time. Officers explained that the overall number of pupils eligible for free school meals decreased between early years and the end of Key Stage 2. It was advised that early years pupils were more likely to be eligible for free school meals as their parents or carers were less likely to be working; as the parents of primary age children returned to employment their household income increased and, as a result, some were no longer eligible for free school meals.
- The Committee also noted that the number of pupils eligible for free school meals increased by approximately 5% between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. Officers explained that the pupil cohort changed between primary and secondary education as some Islington pupils moved to schools outside of the borough and some pupils resident in neighbouring boroughs began attending schools in Islington. A member hypothesised that some middle class families sent their children to prestigious schools outside of the borough and this impacted on the demography of the pupil cohort. Officers commented that this could be a factor, however the reasons for demographic changes over time were complex.
- Officers commented on the particular academic challenges faced by different demographic groups. The attainment of White UK pupils eligible for free school meals and Black Caribbean pupils was below the borough average. At Key Stage 1 White UK pupils eligible for free school meals were more likely to struggle with reading and writing, whereas Black Caribbean pupils were more likely to struggle with mathematics.

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- At Key Stage 4, both White UK pupils eligible for free school meals and Black Caribbean pupils tended to underperform across all subjects. However, for English and Maths the attainment gap between these groups and the borough average decreased between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. It was thought that this was due to schools prioritising English and Maths GCSE.
- There was a gap in attainment between boys and girls, with girls having a higher level of attainment than boys. This was the case for all pupils, however the gender attainment gap was even greater for White UK pupils eligible for free school meals and Black Caribbean pupils. At Key Stage 2 there was a 9.8% attainment gap between all girls and boys in Islington. For White UK pupils eligible for free school meals, this gap was 17.7%.
- Although White UK pupils eligible for free school meals and Black Caribbean pupils had lower levels of attainment than the Islington average, it was noted that Islington had a higher rate of attainment than the national average and, compared to national averages, these groups were performing well.
- In response to a question, it was advised that it was not possible to compare Islington's performance against the Inner London average as the Department for Education only published ethnicity data at a national level.
- A member queried the reasons why Black Caribbean and White UK FSM pupils in Islington experienced such a large attainment gap. In response, officers commented that the reasons were complex, however the impact of poverty and deprivation was considerable.

b) Evidence from Dr Antonina Tereshchenko, UCL Institute of Education

The Committee received apologies for absence from Dr Tereshchenko and noted that this evidence would be rescheduled for the next meeting.

The Committee noted the presentation slides. The Committee queried if the impact of setting pupils was as significant as parental influence and other social factors. It was advised that this could be explored at the next meeting.

A member of the public highlighted the best practice on attainment grouping referenced in the presentation slides, querying if these interventions were more or less effective in reducing the attainment gap than other interventions that impacted on social mobility. In response, officers advised that research on the effectiveness of interventions was not sufficiently nuanced to allow them to be ranked in this way.

The Committee thanked officers for their attendance.

141

ISLINGTON SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2019 (ITEM NO. B3)

Teddy Prout, Vice-Chair of Islington SACRE, introduced the report summarising the work of SACRE in 2018-19.

The following main points were noted in the discussion:

- The Committee noted the role of SACRE in developing the local Religious Education syllabus and in providing advice on religious matters to Islington schools.
- Over the past year SACRE had focused on embedding the new RE syllabus in schools. A series of educational resources had been launched to support teachers in delivering the syllabus.
- SACRE had a broad membership including representatives of local religious groups as well as non-religious groups such as Humanists.
- The number of pupils studying GCSE RE in Islington had increased over the past year, however this had to be considered against an overall national decrease, with the number of pupils studying GCSE RE significantly declining over several years. In response to a question, it was suggested that some schools did not focus on RE as it did not contribute to the English Baccalaureate.
- The Committee asked whether SACRE provided advice to schools on religious issues that could arise relating to Physical Education. In response, it was advised that SACRE had provided guidance on PE, collating advice from mainstream religious groups on possible issues arising.
- A member highlighted the religious discrimination faced by some young people and queried if SACRE worked with schools on religious bullying issues. In response it was advised that SACRE can provide advice and support to schools however it would be for schools to intervene and deal with such issues.
- A member of the public noted that Ofsted had revised its inspection framework and had removed the reference to "celebrating" diversity, instead opting to inspect whether diversity is "accepted and respected". It was asked if this had an impact on Religious Education in schools. In response, it was advised that Islington schools would continue to celebrate diversity, regardless of the revised Ofsted inspection framework.
- A member of the public highlighted the recent protests outside of a Birmingham school by religious groups campaigning against teaching children about same-sex relationships and transgender issues. The Committee asked if SACRE had engaged with local schools on these issues. In response, it was advised that SACRE could advise schools on any matter that impacted on religion or belief, and SACRE had undertaken discussions with local schools on Relationships and Sex Education, but had not provided formal guidance on this issue. However, it was emphasised that the teaching of RSE was required by law and, irrespective of individual beliefs, SACRE could not support breaking the law.

The Committee thanked Teddy Prout for his attendance.

RESOLVED:

That the work of Islington SACRE be noted.

142 **OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN AND OFFERED TO SCHOOLS (ITEM NO. B2)**

Sheron Hosking, Assistant Director (Joint Commissioning), and Helen Cameron, Health and Wellbeing Manager, introduced the report which provided an overview of the social and emotional mental health support available to young people in local schools.

The following main points were noted in the discussion:

- Preventative services were available to every child in every school. These included iTIPS (Islington Trauma Informed Practice) and IMHARS (Islington Mental Health and Resilience in Schools) which had now bedded in over the past four years. IMARHS reviewed school practices to identify areas for further development to ensure that young people and staff were well supported.
- Some schools bought in specialist mental health support services and resources from other providers.
- CAMHS provided all primary schools with a fortnightly clinic and all secondary schools with a weekly one. This had been well received by schools. The time could be spent either working directly with young people or working with staff on how to develop effective interventions and approaches. Several schools commissioned CAMHS to provide additional services.
- The impact of CAMHS was measured through a questionnaire completed by young people on how they felt about their experiences. This data indicated that young people accessing CAMHS had reduced anxiety and depression by the end of their intervention. The Committee requested that further data be provided on the performance of CAMHS services.
- Islington had secured Trailblazer funding to develop two new mental health support teams in Islington schools. These teams will support primary and secondary schools, the PRU and any other alternative provision providers in Islington, and will be located at two schools in the borough. The teams will provide an additional resource for carrying out evidence-based interventions with young people.
- Some services for young people accepted self-referrals and Islington had a growing digital offer, with young people able to access services online.
- Following a question, it was noted that some schools had mentoring services which provided additional support to young people.
- A member of the public asked if schools had appointed mental health and wellbeing champions. The officer responded that all schools had a senior member of staff appointed as their lead for mental health.

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Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Prevention classes were held for school staff.

- The Committee queried if the council held demographic data on those accessing social and emotional mental health support services. In response, they were advised that the council held some data on which groups were less likely to access services and this helped to inform how services were targeted. The Committee commented that it would be helpful for this information to be available to members.

The Committee thanked officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

143 WORK PROGRAMME (ITEM NO. B4)

Noted.

MEETING CLOSED AT 9.10 pm

Chair