

**SCRUTINY REVIEW – KNIFE CRIME, MOBILE PHONE THEFT ETC. –  
VISIT TO NEW RIVER COLLEGE LOUGH ROAD – FRIDAY 15 JANUARY  
2016**

Present: Councillors: Troy Gallagher  
Una O'Halloran  
Jenny Kay  
Caroline Russell  
Clare Jeapes  
Kaya Comer Shwartz  
Peter Moore – Scrutiny officer -Islington  
Catherine Briody – CSU Islington  
Nigel Smith – Headteacher New River College  
Bill Dimock – Assistant Headteacher, New River College

Nigel Smith welcomed Members to the College

During the visit the following main points were made –

- NRC is Pupil Referral unit that works with children, families and schools across Islington and works including with children at primary level
- The site in Lough Road is the main PRU site however there is a small satellite site at Elthorne Road and at present there is a small site at Golden Lane. The medical PRU caters for children who have medical or mental health difficulties
- There were 121 children on the school roll however officially the school only had provision for 108 children. These children come from all sorts of backgrounds and have highly individual needs
- Some of the children had been permanently excluded from Islington schools and some from neighbouring boroughs such as Camden and Hackney but whose families resided in Islington. In addition there were pupils nominally on the school roll who were attending alternative provision
- In response to a question it was stated that about 50% of primary pupils at the College are re-integrated into mainstream school and often health and care plans are put in place
- The College had in the past year achieved its best ever academic results
- There were also reception class children being referred to the PRU and some of these children exhibited difficult behaviour and family circumstances
- The PRU had received a good OFSTED inspection and the College had also received additional funding, reviewed on a yearly basis, to have an IFIT team which assists vulnerable young people

- The College had a dedicated safer schools officer and this is working well with the current officer working well with the school. The officer also assists the school with gang culture and has delivered talks about gangs and the College holds coffee mornings to foster relationships with parents and these were well attended
- Spot checks are carried out in the College to check that pupils are not carrying weapons and this helped to reinforce amongst some students that staff were ensuring the College was a safe place to be. In the last 4 years there had been 3 occasions where knives had been found
- It was stated that in the future a talk may be given to pupils by the Police armed response unit on the dangers of gangs, guns and knives and how the Police respond to these
- The profile of the College in terms of gender has changed and now one fifth of pupils were girls. Some of these were challenging and having a CAMHS worker had been really beneficial. However at present there is only one girl in the primary PRU
- The issue of girls in gangs is something the College also are trying to address
- Some schools in the borough tended to exclude more than others
- Some pupils were on alternative provision which meant that they spent time at organisations such as Spark Plug, but there is weekly contact
- COLAi kept their children dual registered and had pastoral support available at the school at COLAi and attended all the child protection meetings and there was a careers co-ordinator to identify pathways for the pupils
- In general pupils on alternative provision tended to be less successful at GCSE than those attending the College full time and alternative provision is usually used for more specialist 1:1 however if alternative provision placements broke down the pupils usually came back to the College
- Attendance at the College is difficult to manage and the College had a member of staff who worked across all sites to maximise attendance and some additional funding from MOPAC assisted in this
- It was noted that currently there were 12 pupils at the College on youth offending orders and this number fluctuated

The Chair thanked Nigel Smith and Bill Dimock and stated that if any Members had any further questions these should be notified to the Clerk who will take them up with the College