

## **Overview and Scrutiny OfSTED Subgroup**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2009**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Cox - In the Chair  
Councillors Judge, Keller, Parkinson, Tavernor  
Mr. D. Arnold

Kieran McDermott, Assistant Director of Children's Services (Manchester Education Partnership)  
Sarah Fuller, Service Improvement Programme/Intervention Manager

#### **Apologies:**

Councillor Fisher

### **CYP/OSG/09/06                      Minutes**

#### **Decision:**

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2009 as a correct record.

### **CYP/OSG/09/07                      Welcome to New Members**

The Chair explained the background and remit of the subgroup and welcomed Councillors Parkinson and Tavernor to the first meeting for the municipal year 2009/10.

Members were informed that the OfSTED subgroup looked at school inspection reports from a variety of schools to identify areas of good practice and trends in the performance of Manchester schools. The findings and comments of the subgroup about individual schools were communicated to the Headteacher of the school. A member commented that letters should be copied to the Chair of Governors to alert them to any concerns raised by the subgroup.

The Assistant Director of Children's Services (Manchester Education Partnership) informed members that a new OfSTED inspection framework would be introduced from September 2009. Members were reassured that School Governors would be provided with briefing notes and training on new assessment. The new framework introduced several key differences to the previous assessment:

- Schools would be expected to demonstrate that they had improved no matter how well they had performed in their previous inspections.
- The new framework has an increased focus on the progress made by different groups of learners. The emphasis on pupil progress and standard of attainment

would be measured of equal importance. The definition of achievement had been amended to include progress made and absolute attainment.

- Governance arrangements and Leadership would be assessed separately
- Arrangements to safeguard learners and promote equality and diversity would be scrutinised more closely
- Change in the frequency of inspections, if poor, they will be inspected more than every four years, if good, they may be inspected every six years.
- Providers will also be given shorter notice of inspection, between two and three weeks.

**Decision:**

To welcome Councillors Parkinson and Tavernor to the OfSTED Subgroup

**CYP/OSG/09/08            Terms of Reference and Work Programme**

**Decision:**

To agree the work programme and terms of reference for the OfSTED Subgroup

**CYP/OSG/09/09            OfSTED Inspection Reports**

The Sub Group looked at the OfSTED reports for: Abraham Moss High School, Parklands High School, Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit, St Chrysostoms CE Primary School, Sandilands Primary School and St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School.

The subgroup considered the reports in turn: -

**1.        Abraham Moss High School**

The school was inspected on 16 January 2009 and received an overall grading by OfSTED of 'Good'.

Members were informed that the school had a Contextual Value Added (CVA) Score of 1026, which was significantly above the average score of 1000. Members noted that this was an exceptional score but it was likely to decrease under the new inspection framework. The school achieved 36% pupils achieving 5 GCSE grade A-C in 2008 and were on target to achieve 39% in 2009, which was commended as an excellent achievement where the school had a high percentage of pupils with English as an additional language.

Members discussed the reasons for persistent absenteeism and noted that the rates of absence were significantly above national average at 11.1% with persistent absence at 13.3%. The SIP/Intervention Manager reported that this was not isolated to this school and absenteeism was reviewed on a case-by-case basis to establish the cause.

Members discussed the relationship between the school and Governors. It was noted that the school had strong leadership. Governors had a supportive but not challenging role in monitoring the priorities of the school and members emphasised the importance of ensuring the Governors were fully involved in evaluating the work of the school.

Members agreed that the school should be congratulated on the quality of its leadership and corporate approach. Members agreed to recognise and congratulate Abraham Moss High School as an example of good practice for promoting community cohesion. They noted that the proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds was over four times the national average (and that over 50 languages were spoken in the school); and that the proportion of students with learning difficulties was well above the national average. Members commented on how impressed they were during a recent visit, by the quality of inclusion throughout the school and how this should be seen as a model of good practice.

## **2. Parklands High School**

The school was inspected on 23-24 March 2009 and received an overall grading by OfSTED of 'Satisfactory'.

Members agreed that the school should be congratulated on its significant improvement since the previous inspection. In 2009 the school was on track to achieve 30% of pupils with 5 A-C grades at GCSE, which was in line with the national floor target and represented an improvement of 13% on the previous year.

The school had a CVA score of 976.9, which was below average. It was noted that the attainment levels of the school in the context of the CVA score would be an issue under the new inspection framework.

Members noted that attendance had improved by three percentage points but expressed concern that levels of absence at 17% overall and 24.9% for persistent absence were far too high. Members emphasised the need for the school to focus attention on reducing these levels.

It was noted that the range of courses that appealed to less able pupils was limited and emphasised the importance of meeting the needs of all pupils. The school had acknowledged this concern to the inspectors.

Members noted the inspirational leadership of the Headteacher and the strong support offered by the local authority and by Manchester Challenge. Also the work of the Governors in fully supporting what the school was trying to do, and their holding the leadership to account with increasing rigour.

## **3. Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)**

The unit was inspected on 12-13 March 2009 and received an overall grading of OfSTED of 'Satisfactory'.

Members agreed to congratulate the PRU on its success in improving pupil's confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment of learning. Members recognised that the PRU were successful in providing education for pupils with different needs to those in mainstream schools.

Members commended the range of courses on offer to pupils on site and where they were provided by external providers and were impressed by the links with external partners which was clearly valued by the pupils. Members acknowledged the quality of the curriculum on offer, noting that there was a clear correlation with good attendance levels.

There was some discussion around the reasons for exclusion from mainstream schools, the ongoing feedback between the PRU and the mainstreams schools from which the pupils had been excluded and whether any attempts were made to reintegrate pupils back into the school environment. The Assistant Director for Children's Services (MEP) reported that the position varied according to the needs of the child and the capacity of the school.

[Councillor Cox declared a personal interest in this item as a chair of a Pupil Referral Unit]

#### **4. St Chrysostoms CE Primary School**

The school was inspected on 15-16 June 2009 and received an overall grading of OfSTED of 'Good'.

Members recognised that the school had significantly raised achievement, with year on year improvement to bring them in line with the national average. The school received an above average CVA score of 101.1 where the average for primary schools was 100.

Members welcomed the effective provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children made fast progress. Members acknowledged that there had been a concerted effort to raise achievement of lower attaining pupils but the school should also ensure that the most able pupils were challenged in their work.

Members agreed that the school should be congratulated on the outstanding judgement given for 'personal development and well-being' of pupils and the good relationship established with the parents. The effective role of the School Governors was also noted.

#### **5. Sandilands Primary School**

The school was inspected on 24-25 March 2009 and received an overall grading of OfSTED of 'Inadequate'. The school had been given a 'notice to improve'.

Members were informed that the school had been given notice to improve as it was performing poorly. Members acknowledged the tragic circumstances surrounding the recent death of the Headteacher and the effect on the school. It was noted that a new leadership team was in place, the school had since taken action to halt the

deterioration in performance and it was now moving in the right direction. The school was on target to achieve attainment of 59.55% this year compared to 44.4% last year.

Members discussed the role of the local authority in intervening where the performance of a school was declining. The Assistant Director of Children's Services reported that the authority could only intervene where invited by the School Governors.

Members noted that a significant number of new Governors had strengthened the governing body, which was committed to the long-term improvement of the school. Members acknowledged that the school was showing positive signs for the future.

## **6. St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School**

The school was inspected on 6-7 May 2009 and received an overall grading of OfSTED of 'Inadequate'. The school required special measures.

Members were informed that the school was expected to see a decline in the attainment levels from 74.5% in 2008 to 66.7% to 2009. The school had a below average CVA score of 99.

Members noted that little work had been done to improve the school following weaknesses identified in 2006 inspection. The Governors were committed and knowledgeable but had a supportive rather than challenging relationship with the school. They had failed to provide effective scrutiny to hold the leaders to account to ensure that weaknesses identified in the last inspection were addressed. Members noted that the parents were highly concerned regarding the status of the school.

Members acknowledged that the Council had recommended that the Board of Governors establish an Interim Executive Board to take over the accountability arrangements of the school and to work toward moving the school out of special measures.

[Councillor Tavernor declared a personal interest as a relative attended St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School]

### **Decision:**

1. To support the Council's recommendation to the Board of Governors of St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School establish an Interim Executive Board to take over the accountability arrangements of the school and work toward moving the school out of special measures.
2. The Chair was requested to write to all the schools and the Chair of Governors with a summary of the sub group's findings.

**CYP/OSG/09/10**

**Any Other Business**

Members were informed that Sarah Fuller, SIP/Intervention Manager was leaving the authority. Members thanked Sarah for her contribution to the work of the subgroup and wish her well in her new role.

**CYP/OSG/09/11            Date of Next Meeting**

The subgroup agreed that the next meeting would take place at 10:00am on 20 October 2009 in Committee Room 11.

Please note the new time for this meeting