

## **Overview and Scrutiny OfSTED Subgroup**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2009**

#### **Present:**

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

Wendy Middlemas, Head of Education Services  
Carolyn Shepherd, Children's Services

#### **CYP/OSG/09/12            Minutes**

#### **Decision:**

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2009 as a correct record.

#### **CYP/OSG/09/13            OfSTED Reports**

The Subgroup commented on a range of recent OfSTED reports:

##### **Manchester Academy**

Members noted the Outstanding grading awarded to this school. There were particular good practices around leadership and management and they congratulated the Headteacher, management team and governors for this. They noted that the governing body was seen as strong and effective. The Chair commented that the Local Governing Body (LGB) could further improve by having greater clarity regarding the relative roles of the LGB and United Learning Trust's Central Governing Body. It was agreed that in relation to good governance it would be useful to ask officers to explore how examples of good practice in various schools could be replicated in other schools.

Members noted that the school was relatively small in size and some referred to the negative correlation between size of school and attainment. The Head of Education Services reinforced the importance of strong management which was appropriate to the size of the school to ensure success. It was also important that large schools had spaces which facilitated recreation and learning in small groups.

Members noted that the school included large numbers of Somali children and large numbers of asylum seekers and celebrated its diversity. The school had a clear ethos and vision but was also looking to ensure that children who did not identify with the vision as much did not suffer from this.

##### **Old Hall Drive Primary School**

Members noted that the OfSTED report identified many areas where the school needed to improve. Members noted that there were concerns that children at the

school did not feel safe particularly at lunchtime. Racist bullying had also taken place and members were concerned that the action taken to address it had not been sufficiently strong. The Subgroup felt that it was important that the school should have a designated safeguarding governor on its governing body.

Members commented that it was often difficult to appoint governors to a governing body. The governing bodies were often given information which was not written in a plain and comprehensible way and did not have sufficient support to exercise the increasing amounts of responsibility they were given. The Subgroup felt that if a certain area of the city had a large number of governors or people willing to be governors, officers should look into ways of spreading this out and encouraging them to act as governors in other parts of the city.

Members noted that the school was performing well at the early years level and hoped that progress could be made from this base.

### **St Marys CofE School**

Members noted the outstanding grading awarded to this school and only identified the areas of standards reached by learners and attendance as being average or below average. Members noted that this was an area which troubled schools across the city and supported targeted work to address this.

Members praised the school for its inspirational leadership and successful approach to managing diversity.

### **Varna Street**

The OfSTED report was very positive and referred to the fact that children enjoyed every minute of their schooling. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee had investigated and commented on the importance of enjoyment in education and felt that it would a good idea to visit the school to learn more about what practices it had in place that had led to the children enjoying their education to such a high level.

### **St Aidans Catholic School**

Members noted that according to the OfSTED report the school was performing well in nearly all areas. Standards reached by learners and attendance of learners remained a challenge, but persistent absenteeism was reducing. The governing body was strong and children were enjoying their education.

### **Crumpsall Lane**

Members noted that the OfSTED report reflected the improvements that the school has made over recent years. Members commented that in instances where schools performance had changed significantly the Subgroup should receive not only the current report but also the previous one so that they have better information about the baseline from which the school has improved. The Head of Education Services advised that the school, with support from the local authority, had directed its resources to those areas it needed to improve as a priority.

**Decision:**

1. To agree to visit Varna School to learn more about what practices it has in place that have led to high levels of enjoyment of education.
2. To agree to look at the OfSTED report on Newall Green at the next meeting of the Subgroup.
3. To agree to write to the Headteachers of the six schools that the Subgroup has looked at today conveying members' views.
4. To request that a report be provided to this subgroup on recruitment, selection and training of, and support to, governors with a view to identifying and spreading good practice. The report should also explore the possibility of encouraging people who live in an area which does not have problems recruiting governors and are willing to become governors to carry out the role in an area where there are difficulties in recruiting governors.

[Councillor Cox declared a personal interest as a member of the Academy Board of Governors]

**CYP/OSG/09/14            Work Programme**

The Subgroup's work programme was submitted.

The Chair raised the recent decision of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to refer an item on research into attainment and the different approaches of different schools to this subgroup.

The Subgroup agreed to invite Mel Ainscough to the meeting to talk about the work of the Greater Manchester Challenge in connection with this.

The Subgroup agreed that the item should involve looking at what research into attainment has taken place and how it has been used.

**Decision:**

To agree the work programme for the subgroup with the addition of the item on research into attainment.