

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny – Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2010

Present:

Councillor Carmody – in the Chair
Councillors Chamberlain, H Fisher, Tavernor

Co-opted member:

Mr David Arnold

Councillor S Newman – Executive Member for Children’s Services

Apologies:

Councillors Reeves

CYP/OSG/10/13 Minutes

Decision:

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2010 as a correct record.

CYP/OSG/10/14 Ofsted Reports

The Subgroup commented on a range of Ofsted reports which members selected at their previous meeting.

St Patrick’s RC Primary School

The school was inspected on 13 – 14 October 2009 and received an overall Ofsted rating of “inadequate”. The Head of Education Services (Commissioning) told the Subgroup that a monitoring visit had taken place since the inspection and Ofsted had rated the progress as “inadequate”. She explained the headteacher had left since the school had been subject to special measures and a School Effectiveness Officer (SEO) was in place as an interim headteacher. She said the school was moving in the right direction and the second monitoring, which had just taken place, was expected to find that the school was taking the necessary measures to improve.

The report highlighted problems with staffing, and members asked what was being done. The Head of Education Services explained the staffing structure was under review and the issue was being addressed. The Executive Member for Children’s Services said that very small, isolated schools were more likely to experience problems than larger schools or those that worked in robust partnerships.

A member noted that the report had found that children who did not have English as their first language were given no support. The Head of Education Services said this was no longer the case, and schools are expected to provide the necessary support.

The Subgroup were interested in how the Diocese of Salford were working to improve the school, and how closely Children's Services were working with the Diocese. The Head of Education Services explained that as the school was voluntary aided, the Diocese had significant input into the running of the school, and they were working closely with Children's Services to improve the school. The Diocese was looking to form partnerships between St Patrick's and other local schools to improve the support available and increase access to resources.

The Head of Education Services emphasised that Children's Services had been aware of the problems at St Patrick's prior to the Ofsted inspection, and the inspection had given them greater opportunity to intervene. The first monitoring visit, in which progress was rated "inadequate", had helped the school understand the problems they faced.

A member noted that in smaller schools it was often the case that teachers were more likely to stay for a long time, and the Subgroup agreed that there was a need for a mix of experienced teachers and new staff who were keen and brought fresh ideas.

Mount Carmel RC Primary School

This school was inspected on 29 – 30 June 2010, and received an overall grading of "outstanding". The Head of Education Services drew members' attention to the high number of questionnaires returned by parents as evidence for the high level of engagement with the community the school has achieved. She also emphasised that the leadership, management and governance of the school was outstanding, which was crucial to improving schools. The Subgroup praised the results of the inspection.

Newall Green High School

Newall Green High School was inspected on 22 – 23 September 2009, and was given an overall rating of "satisfactory" by Ofsted. The Head of Education Services informed the Subgroup that it was the first school in Manchester inspected under the new Ofsted framework, and the inspection had been extremely rigorous. . The Executive Member for Children's Services agreed, and told members that the headteacher there was extremely enthusiastic, and the school had adopted working in partnerships early.

The Executive Member for Children's Services said the lower than expected grading was largely because of the different way of measuring achievement at GCSE level. Previously, Ofsted had measured success by the number of pupils receiving five or more GCSEs at A*-C, but now English and Maths were included in the measure. Newall Green High School had not fared well under this change. However in its most recent exam results, 39% of students had achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths in 2010, which was above the floor target of 35%.

The Subgroup was impressed with the improvements in Newall Green High School's GCSE results, and members agreed that from what they knew of the school it was better than "satisfactory."

Trinity CofE High School – Survey Inspection on Health Eating

Ofsted carried out an inspection of the work on healthier eating and school food provision at Trinity CofE High School on 12 November 2010. They found the quality of provision to promote healthy eating to be inadequate. The Executive Member for Children's Services informed the Subgroup that the school was to undergo a refurbishment and this would improve the food provision facilities.

The Subgroup discussed the challenges in promoting healthy eating and members agreed it was very difficult to feed the numbers of young people in a school for approximately £2.00 per pupil a day. The Executive Member for Children's Services told the Subgroup Manchester had been employing a nutritionist for a number of years to advise on healthy eating in schools.

Sandilands Primary School

Sandilands Primary School was inspected on 9 – 10 June 2010, and had received an overall grading of "good". The Head of Education Services informed the Subgroup that at its previous inspection the school had been rated as "inadequate" and so had improved a great deal in the interim period. She said this was largely down to the new headteacher. She had started as headteacher shortly before the previous inspection and had been frustrated by not having enough time to make the improvements she knew were necessary. The Executive Member for Children's Services explained the school had faced significant challenges with the death of the headteacher and the school was taken into special measures a year later.

The Subgroup was impressed with the progress the school had made, and praised the strong leadership that had driven it. A member asked how other schools benefited from the lessons learnt. The Head of Education Services explained there was a strong partnership of schools in Wythenshawe. Best practice is shared at a headteachers' forum.

Decision:

To write to Sandilands Primary School and Mount Carmel Primary School to congratulate them on the results of their Ofsted inspections.

[Mr David Arnold declared a personal interest in this item as a conference organiser for Newall Green High School]

[Councillor Helen Fisher declared a personal interest in this item as her child attends Trinity CofE High School]

CYP/OSG/10/15 Schools of Concern

The Head of Education Services updated the Subgroup on the developments to the schools of concern that had been discussed in the previous meeting. St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School and Old Hall Drive had both been taken out of special measures. An Interim Executive Board had been established for St Margaret Mary's

which would establish a shadow governing body, and then establish permanent governing body.

Victoria Avenue Community Primary School was currently being inspected, and the Head of Education Services explained it was expected to be rated as “inadequate”. The Subgroup asked to receive the Ofsted report at its next meeting, if available.

Gorton Mount Primary School was not improving at a fast enough rate. A member asked if the Montessori method of teaching employed at the school was a factor. The Head of Education Services said that attainment was a factor that needed addressing, but that leadership and management also needed to be improved. Children’s Services were working with the school to recognise the improvements that needed to be made.

A member asked if Ofsted grading a school as “inadequate” enabled Children’s Services to intervene when otherwise they would not. The Head of Education Services said they did not rely on Ofsted and were aware of the circumstances of all schools. However, Ofsted’s judgements can validate the Council’s own assessment of schools, which was helpful.

Decision:

1. To note the schools of concern.
2. To request that the Subgroup receive the Ofsted inspection report of Victoria Avenue Community School at its meeting in January, if available.

CYP/OSG/10/16 Work Programme

Decision:

To request that the Subgroup receive the following inspection reports for consideration at the meeting on 2 December 2010:

- St Peter’s RC High School
- St Anne’s RC Primary School Crumpsall
- Chorlton Park Primary School
- St Kentigern’s RC Primary School
Meade Hill School