

Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee – Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2016

Present:

Councillor Stone – in the Chair

Councillors Cox and Reid

Ms Eve Holt, Co-opted Member, Parent Governor Representative

Mrs B Kellner, Co-opted Member, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester

Councillor S Newman, Executive Member for Children's Services

Apologies:

Councillors Connolly and Midgley

Ms C Wibier, Co-opted Member, Parent Governor Representative

YPC/OSG/16/07

Minutes

Decision

To agree the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 2 February 2016 as a correct record.

YPC/OSG/16/08

Participation in Sport Report

The Chair informed members that schools had been asked to provide information on participation in sport by April 2016 and, therefore, a report on this subject would be considered in the new municipal year.

YPC/OSG/16/09 Ofsted Consultation on Re-inspection Arrangements for Children's Services

The Subgroup received a report of the Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services on the Ofsted consultation on re-inspection arrangements for Children's Services. The report summarised the proposals and potential implications for Manchester. The Strategic Lead Business Change (Reform and Innovation) provided an overview of the report.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised members that issues which might affect the timing of re-inspections, under the new proposals, could include feedback from the Independent Chair of the Ofsted Improvement Board. She informed members that the Council expected that its children's services would be re-inspected some time this year and that this could be a full re-inspection or, under the proposed changes, could be an inspection of the three areas which were judged as 'inadequate' in 2014. However, she advised that the Council had to be prepared for a full re-inspection, as Ofsted retained the right to inspect any area.

In response to a member's question, the Strategic Lead Business Change (Reform and Innovation) reported that it was proposed to have a three-week inspection period but that inspectors would be off-site during the second week, examining data.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Executive Member for Children's Services reported that, if a council's children's services was rated 'inadequate' for a second time, it could be taken over by an external organisation but would still be funded by the local authority.

The Executive Member for Children's Services informed members that the Local Government Association (LGA) had produced a report which demonstrated that Ofsted were now judging more local authorities as 'inadequate' and 'requires improvement' and outlined the impact of this on the local authorities which received these judgements. A member requested that this report be circulated to members of the Subgroup.

Members discussed the LGA peer review which was currently taking place. The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that the Council wanted to use the peer review to know whether it was focusing on the right areas and how it could speed up improvement.

Members broadly welcomed the proposed changes to re-inspection arrangements and supported the Council's response to the consultation.

Decisions

1. To request that the Committee Support Officer circulate the Local Government Association report to members.
2. To broadly welcome the proposed changes to re-inspection arrangements and support the Council's response to the consultation.

YPC/OSG/16/10

Ofsted Reports for Schools, Children's Centres and Daycare Providers

The Ofsted Subgroup considered a selection of Ofsted Inspection Reports; which had been completed since the group last met. The Senior Schools Quality Assurance Officer reported that Ofsted made judgements on the overall effectiveness of a school and, in exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgements could be a grade lower, without lowering the overall judgement.

The Subgroup considered the recent inspection findings from Webster Primary School which had retained its rating of 'good'. A member praised the work of the head teacher and the senior management team. Members commented on the ambitious governing body, the effective safeguarding arrangements and the harmonious relationships between pupils from a wide range of faiths and cultures. The Chair reported that the school had a transitory pupil population and dealt with this well, improving pupils' outcomes during their time with the school. The Senior Schools Quality Assurance Officer reported that the school worked well with the local authority and with other schools, including providing support and sharing good practice. Members recommended that the Subgroup write to Webster Primary School, congratulating them on the report and referencing their engagement with the local authority and other schools.

The Subgroup considered the findings from the special measures monitoring inspection of Cedar Mount Academy. The Senior Schools Quality Assurance Officer reported that the Council had raised its concerns with the academy, the sponsoring trust and the Regional Schools Commissioner. She reported that the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Secretary of State would need to consider what action was required. She advised that they could decide that a change of sponsor was required. Members discussed concerns about the school, including pupil behaviour and the high proportion of supply teachers. A member expressed concern that it was difficult to recruit and retain staff in a school experiencing these problems, which made it more difficult to make improvements. In response to a question from the Chair, the Senior Schools Quality Assurance Officer reported that the governance structure was decided by the trust. She advised that the information supplied to the Board might not have reflected the real situation within the school as HMI reported that members of the Board needed to be more proactive in seeing actual evidence of the impact of leaders' actions for themselves. She informed members that it was likely that the academy would have another monitoring inspection soon.

Decisions

1. To write to Webster Primary School, congratulating them on the report and referencing their engagement with the local authority and other schools.
2. To note the report of Cedar Mount Academy; and to continue to monitor the situation.

YPC/OSG/16/11 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

The Chair advised members that this was Councillor Cox's last meeting. He thanked Councillor Cox for his valuable contribution to the work of the Ofsted Subgroup.

The Subgroup noted it would be re-established in the new municipal year.

Decision

1. To note the terms of reference and work programme.
2. To delegate responsibility to the Chair to approve the draft terms of reference and work programme to re-establish the Subgroup; which would be provided to the Young People and Children Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 24 May 2016 for comment and approval.