

Overview and Scrutiny Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 15 March 2023

Present:

Councillor Lovecy – in the Chair
Councillors Gartside and Reid

Apologies: None received

Also present:

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People

CYP/OSG/22/18 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023.

CYP/OSG/22/19 Ofsted Inspections of Manchester Schools

The Subgroup received a list of all Manchester schools which had been inspected since the last meeting and the judgements awarded.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer advised that in Manchester since September 2022 to date a total of 39 inspections had been conducted by Ofsted (37 schools and 2 Sixth Form Settings). She advised that this was a significant increase when compared to the total of 28 in the whole of the previous year. She informed Members of the 'Watchsted' website that provided a wealth of data in relation to Ofsted inspections and allowed for comparisons to be made between different local authorities and regions. She stated that in Manchester 89.6% of all schools were rated as 'good' or better, adding that this was higher than the North West and national average; 91.1% of primary schools were rated as 'good' or better, again this was higher than the national average and only slightly lower than the North West average; and 82.8% of High Schools were rated as 'good' or better, commenting that this was significantly better than the North West average and higher than the national average. She commented that this was a very positive position.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer stated that the key themes for improvement that had emerged from the reports submitted for consideration included the need for the curriculum to be mapped out and delivered sequentially, across all year groups. This approach needed to be applied and developed across all subjects, not just the core subjects. The same approach also needed to be applied to assessments to ensure the curriculum was evidenced as progressing the students learning. She further commented upon the theme of an emphasis on reading and phonics across the reports.

In terms of those 'Inadequate' ratings, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer stated that issues relating to safeguarding and behaviour had been identified as a key theme, in addition to those relating to the provision of quality education. In regard

to the 'Inadequate' report for St Matthew's RC High School, the Members were provided with a history of the site and information on the measures taken and the support mechanisms implemented following the previous inspections since 2017. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer advised that the Authority would continue to support the EMMAUS Catholic Academy Trust, especially on the issue of safeguarding at St Matthew's RC High School. The Director of Education responded to a question from a Member by stating that she did have confidence in EMMAUS to deliver improvements at this school, adding that they had a Director of Education and a Schools Improvement Team.

With regard to the 'Inadequate' report considered for Crosslee Primary School, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer stated that the Authority would continue to work with the school and the CLIC Trust. She stated this would include providing strategic leadership; support on safeguarding; the curriculum; working with senior leadership team; quality assurance activities and communications with staff and parents. She stated that a review of SEN provision would also be undertaken at the school.

In regard to support for other schools, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer advised that Quality Assurance visits would continue to be delivered and that the regional His Majesty's Inspector had attended and participated in a recent Head Teachers briefing event and had conducted a 'question and answer' session that had been very well received. She further made reference to the Our Manchester Improvement Partnership, stating that this provided a mechanism to support newly qualified and practicing teachers, in addition to the continual professional development available to staff.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People made reference to the East Manchester Academy report. He stated that the report was a very positive account of the improvements realised at the school and noted that the headline rating of 'Requires Improvement' needed to be considered in that context. The Director of Education noted that often a 'poor' rating helped formalise and accelerate the improvements required at a site, noting that schools were often very receptive to any offers of support or advice to improve their rating.

Members discussed the importance of Members being involved with and establishing trusted relationships with schools within their wards. A Member commented that local Councillors should also volunteer to be Governors at their local schools. A Member commented that the Education Department needed to be alert to other indicators that there may be issues at a school prior to a formal inspection, such as a high turnover of staff.

In response to the discussion on the CofE School of the Resurrection report and the 'Good' rating, Members noted this school had previously been rated as 'Requires Improvement'. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer commented that there was a new Head Teacher in post who had a very clear vision and strategy to drive the improvements needed with the support of the local authority, particularly around issues relating to the curriculum and the governance arrangements.

Decision

To note the reports.

CYP/OSG/22/20 Ofsted Inspections of Daycare Providers

The Subgroup received a list of all Manchester daycare providers which had been inspected since the last meeting and the judgements awarded.

The Early Years Quality Assurance Lead advised that 94% of settings were rated as either 'Good' or higher. She commented that Kids Start remained rated as 'Outstanding', adding that the inspection had arisen following a complaint. She further advised that Kids Start had been selected to participate in the Early Years stronger practice hub in recognition of the good work and practice delivered by this provider.

She stated that the positive themes that emerged from the reports included children's independence skills; communication and language; understanding and implementation of the curriculum; positive behaviour of staff and the positive influence this had on the children; unique needs being met; staff wellbeing being addressed through appropriate supervision and training; and assessment of children's development.

In regard to those provisions being rated as 'Inadequate' the Early Years Quality Assurance Lead stated that the key theme that emerged was in relation to poor practice and safeguarding. She stated that work was underway to address this and made reference to the Development Forum and online training available to staff. She further noted the challenge presented to providers by the issue of staff recruitment and retention, the potential for increased ratios, and the increased developmental needs of children due to the pandemic.

Decision

To note the reports.

CYP/OSG/22/21 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

The Chair noted that the Subgroup would be re-established at the May meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. The Chair requested that a meeting be convened for 14 June 2023 at 10am.

The Subgroup discussed which schools and settings they would like to visit. Members agreed that the Moston ward Councillors should be invited to accompany the visit to St Matthew's RC High School.

Decisions

1. To note the Terms of Reference and Work Programme.
2. To arrange visits to the following schools; St Matthew's RC High School, The East Manchester Academy and CofE School of the Resurrection.

3. To arrange visits to the following Daycare Providers; Kids Start, Sutton Road and First Steps Nursery.