

Overview and Scrutiny Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 24 July 2024

Present:

Councillor Lovecy – in the Chair

Councillor Fletcher

Mr G Cleworth, Co-opted Member (Parent Governor Representative)

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

Apologies:

Councillor Bell

CYP/OSG/22/39 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2024.

CYP/OSG/22/40 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 provided Members with an overview of the inspections which had taken place since the last meeting. She highlighted that the monitoring visit to St Matthew's RC High School had been very positive and that it was likely that it would be judged to be 'good' at its next graded inspection. She reported that 88% of Manchester schools were judged to be good or better, including 89.6% of primary schools and 80.6% of secondary schools. She highlighted the main themes emerging from the inspections, which included reading for older pupils (Years 5 and 6 and high school pupils who were poorer readers), implementation of the curriculum, attendance (including reducing persistent absenteeism), assessments and the use of these to identify and address precise gaps in knowledge, adaptations for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and having high ambitions for pupils with SEND and developing pupil vocabulary and speech and language needs. She reported that these had been shared with Headteachers, who had been signposted to the support available in each of these areas. She informed Members that there had been an increase in the number of inspections since Easter. She reported that last year's webinars on curriculum design had been well-received and that in the next academic year these would be repeated face-to-face, targeting particular schools and providing support on how to make these changes within their school. She informed Members about a series of eight further webinars which were being planned for delivery between September 2024 and Easter 2025 entitled 'Moving from Intent to Implementation'.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer provided further information in relation to Camberwell Park Specialist Support School, which had been judged as inadequate. She reported that there had been concerns about the school prior to the

inspection and that her team had been working closely with them and brokered support from the Prospere Learning Trust, which the school would be officially joining. She informed Members that Prospere had been leading the school since September 2023 and had been doing an excellent job in making improvements and she advised that, while the school was judged to be inadequate at the time of the inspection in February 2024, the inspectors could see that progress was being made and she reported that significant improvements had been made, and were continuing to be made, since the inspection. In response to a question from the Chair, she advised that a new process was being put in place from September 2024 to support new Headteachers. In response to a question from the Chair about Loreto High School, she reported that a lot of support had been put in place and the school leaders were clear on what they needed to do to secure improvements. In response to a further question, she advised that she would check whether Loreto was eligible to join the Emmaus Trust.

In response to a Member's question about areas of the city where school attendance was poorer, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that Wythenshawe had lower school attendance levels than other parts of the city and she outlined the work taking place to address this, including attendance sweeps and a communications campaign, including a bus travelling around Wythenshawe, promoting school attendance prior to the start of the new school year. She advised that research indicated that, if a child was not in school for the first week of the autumn term, there was a considerably higher chance of persistent absence. She drew Members' attention to the report on school attendance which had been considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 17 July 2024. In response to a question from the Chair, she advised that there were some specific areas elsewhere in the city where attendance levels were lower and that the learning from the work in Wythenshawe would be used to develop plans to address school attendance issues in these areas. She informed Members about targeted support for pupils who had been persistently absent in Year 6 to support their transition to secondary school. The Chair commented on the importance of the transition from primary to secondary school.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People reported that she would be meeting with Wythenshawe Councillors to discuss what they could do to help improve school attendance in their wards.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that her team had been aware of the challenges that St John Bosco RC Primary School was facing prior to the inspection, including a change of leadership and a high proportion of early career teachers. She reported that key issues identified in the report were curriculum implementation and variability in classroom practice. She informed Members that a permanent appointment to the Headteacher position had been made in April 2024, that the appointee was already making a positive impact on the school and that it was expected that the school would be judged to be good at its next full graded inspection in approximately two years' time. She reported that it was expected that the school would be joining the Emmaus Trust in the next academic year. The Chair commented on the challenges facing small primary schools and advised that joining with other schools in the Emmaus Trust could make them more sustainable.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People informed Members that she had raised the issue of the number of one-form-entry Catholic schools in north Manchester and the challenges faced by these small schools with the Emmaus Trust and she reported that a lot of partnership work was taking place.

The Chair welcomed that so many schools were doing well, including secondary schools. She asked whether there were any schools which were due an inspection soon that the Council had concerns about. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that she had completed a full RAG-rated risk assessment on this, advising that the robust quality assurance process enabled concerns to be identified and addressed at an early stage.

Decision

To note the reports.

CYP/OSG/22/41 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 provided Members with an overview of the inspections which had taken place since the last meeting. She reported that 97% of settings in Manchester were now judged to be good or outstanding, which was an improvement of 2% since the last meeting. She highlighted that Happy Kids had maintained their outstanding judgement. She drew Members' attention to key points from the inspections of the two settings which had been judged to require improvement, Bubbly Bear and Rainbows Day Nursery, and advised that her team were supporting the settings with these issues. In response to a question from the Chair, she confirmed that Rainbows Day Nursery had a good out-of-school provision. The Chair advised that out-of-school provision was important for parents and could improve settings' viability.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People highlighted issues with sufficiency in the Early Years sector and gaps in eligibility for free childcare.

The Early Years Quality Assurance Lead advised that childcare funding was complex and difficult for families, providers and local authorities. She informed Members about the closure of some settings due to staffing issues, while advising that the picture was more positive than the previous year. She highlighted the main themes from the recent Ofsted reports, advising that, overall, leaders and managers were now better at devising a sequenced curriculum, that curricula were based around language and communication and settings were now generally better at promoting independence for younger children. She advised that an area for improvement for some settings was implementation of the curriculum and she outlined how this was being addressed, including the production of six videos on specific areas of practice as part of the Kickstarter Project. She reported that, for settings that were judged to require improvement, there tended to be issues identified with leadership and

staffing. She advised that healthy foods had been identified as an issue in recent reports and this would be addressed through the Forums. In relation to recruitment and retention, she reported that her service was promoting the low-cost recruitment agency funded through the Greater Manchester Innovation Fund to its providers and that there had been positive feedback regarding this. She reported that she and another officer had visited the Job Centre in Rusholme to deliver a presentation to Job Centre Advisors on roles in childcare and that they were looking to expand this work. She also highlighted the national campaign to attract people to the early years sector and strategic work taking place at a Greater Manchester level. She informed Members that job security, the hours and terms and conditions were issues which affected recruitment and retention. In response to comments from the Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People about children starting school in nappies, she reported that children's centres and health visitors did focus on toilet training but she acknowledged that there was not a consistent message to parents on the best approach to this and she highlighted that not all children starting school would have attended an early years setting. She provided an update on the Early Years Professional Development Programme (PDP) and information on the Kickstarter Project, which would provide extra support to settings on speech and language and social and emotional development.

The Chair informed the Subgroup about a recent visit to Winstanley Day Nursery, stating that it had a very good ethos and was well-organised and well-thought-through. She advised that the nursery had found the Rodney House Outreach Service Early Years (RHOSEY) very useful, which was something which other settings had also commented on.

Decision

To note report.

CYP/OSG/22/42 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

Decision

To note the Terms of Reference and Work Programme.