

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2019

Present:

Councillor Lovecy – in the Chair
Councillor Stone

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools

Apologies:

Councillors Hewitson, Madeleine Monaghan and Reid

CYP/OSG/19/10 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2019.

CYP/OSG/19/11 Ofsted Inspections of Manchester Schools

Liz Clarke, Senior School Quality Assurance Officer, informed Members that she would be the lead officer for the Subgroup in future, replacing Simon Taylor.

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 an overview of the list, clarifying that Lancasterian School had previously been judged as outstanding and was now judged as good.

The Chair welcomed the overall picture from the recent judgements, commenting that Manchester primary schools had already improved and that the recent inspections showed that secondary schools were now also improving. She acknowledged the hard work of the Quality Assurance Team in supporting schools to achieve these results.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that there were still a number of schools which had not been inspected for ten years or more and that, under the new inspection framework, it would be more difficult for them to retain their outstanding judgement. She informed the Subgroup that more information of the new framework and what it would mean for Manchester schools would be included in the Members' briefing session taking place on 20 November 2019. She outlined the work her team was doing to prepare schools for the new framework.

The Chair commented that all Councillors should be encouraged to be involved with their local schools and, where local schools were struggling, it was important for Ward Councillors to come to the Ofsted Subgroup meetings where their local school was being discussed, to understand what was being done to address the issues and to be able to speak to parents and local residents about it.

A Member asked for an update on St Matthew's High School, Newall Green High School and the Grange School, which had been placed in special measures.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer for north Manchester reported that St Matthew's High School was receiving support from the Quality Assurance Team and from a school in Salford and was making positive improvements. He informed Members that there had been a culture change within the school and positive feedback from students and parents. He praised the leadership of the school, including the headteacher and the Interim Executive Board which had been put in place. He reported that the last Ofsted monitoring inspection for Newall Green High School had indicated that the academy trust was moving the school in the right direction, that there had been a change in culture and that students felt they were getting a better education. He reported that, while St Matthew's High School was still attracting a high number of new pupils, Newall Green High School in Wythenshawe was affected by a fall in pupil numbers.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer informed Members that the Grange was now part of the Prospere Trust, another of whose schools had recently been judged as outstanding. She assured Members that the Trust would be working hard to secure improvements at the Grange and advised Members that the Trust engaged positively with the Council.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools informed Members about the Wythenshawe Education Board, which was made up of Wythenshawe primary schools and high schools and other partners in the area, such as Manchester Airport. He reported that one of the issues for Wythenshawe schools was that Wythenshawe was on the border of other local authority areas which were attracting Manchester children to their schools. He advised Members that one of the aims of the Board was to address this through challenging perceptions about Manchester schools.

A Member who was also the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee reported that the Committee was due to receive information about the Wythenshawe Education Board in a future report. The Chair of the Ofsted Subgroup requested that this be considered by the Subgroup instead and that the Subgroup also receive a report giving an overview of the support available to schools and early years settings and how well this was working.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted inspection report for Ashgate Specialist Support Primary School, which had been judged as outstanding. The Chair commented that this was a really good report and welcomed the way the school was working with parents. A Member welcomed the benefits of pupils visiting places in the community, such as cafés, museums, tourist attractions and parks. The Chair commented that this enabled pupils to become accustomed to visiting a range of venues and benefited their family life. The Executive Member for Children and Schools highlighted the effective use of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within the school. The Chair praised the caring but focused ethos of the school.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted inspection report for Manchester Communication Academy, which had been judged as good. A Member commented that it was a very good report overall with a couple of areas of concern outlined in the

summary, in particular in relation to pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and the number of exclusions. He asked what was being done to address the issues highlighted in the report. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer for north Manchester informed Members that the school was developing its own internal alternative provision pathway to support pupils at risk of being excluded or who were persistently absent. He reported that the school had strong links with local primary schools and was working with them to improve the transition from primary to secondary school. He advised Members that the school now also had a positive working relationship with the Council. The Executive Member for Children and Schools informed the Subgroup that the Head of Manchester Communication Academy had joined the Inclusion Strategy Steering Group. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer for north Manchester informed Members that the school had received funding to research school exclusions and how they could be avoided and that it would share this best practice across the city. Members discussed the impact of trauma-informed approaches being piloted at another local school and the potential for this to be used more widely. The Chair welcomed the changes made at Manchester Communication Academy, the proactive approach, demonstrated by the Family Zone, and the improved relationship with the Council.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted inspection report for Moston Fields Primary School, which had been judged as good. A Member commented that Members of the Ofsted Subgroup had carried out a visit to the school, shortly after the current Headteacher had started in her role and when the school was still judged as requires improvement. He reported that he had been impressed by the Headteacher and welcomed the good progress that had been made. He advised Members that he had no doubt that the outcomes for pupils would improve. In response to a question from the Chair, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer for north Manchester reported that there was a strong relationship between schools in north Manchester.

Decisions

1. To note that Liz Clarke will become the lead officer for the Subgroup.
2. To request that the Subgroup receive information on the Wythenshawe Education Board at a future meeting, rather than this going to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
3. To request that the Subgroup receive a report giving an overview of the support available to schools and early years settings and how well this is working.
4. To write to Ashgate Specialist Support Primary School, Manchester Communication Academy and Moston Fields Primary School to congratulate them on their recent Ofsted reports.

CYP/OSG/19/12 Ofsted Inspections of Daycare Providers

The Senior Quality Assurance Officer (Early Years) provided the Subgroup with an overview of the current situation within the Early Years sector in Manchester. She reported that 97% of inspected group childcare providers and 87% of inspected childminders in the city had been judged as good or outstanding and outlined some of the key areas for further development highlighted in Ofsted inspection reports, including the need to strengthen the professional development of staff, to strengthen the key person system and to ensure children received appropriate levels of challenge. She outlined some of the changes to the Ofsted Framework and reported that her team was arranging briefing sessions and other support to help to prepare early years providers for this.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted inspection report for Kids Start, which had been judged as outstanding. Members commented that this was a very good report. The Executive Member for Children and Schools informed Members that he had visited the setting and was not surprised that it had been judged as outstanding. He praised the way they engaged with other services such as Early Help and Wellcomm Screening to ensure children received the support they needed and how they proactively worked to support children's transition to primary school. He commented that the manager there had spoken very highly of the Council's Quality Assurance Team and he thanked the team for their work.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted inspection report for the Lighthouse Centre, which had been judged as good. A Member commented that it was a very good report but asked what was being done to address the finding that "staff miss opportunities to further develop children's critical-thinking skills during their play and learning." The Senior Quality Assurance Officer (Early Years) reported that her team would work with the setting to address this. In response to a question from the Chair, she reported that there was a peer support programme where settings which were particularly skilled in different areas such as developing the outdoors or SEND could support other settings.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted inspection report for Tiddlywinks Day Nursery in Ancoats, which had been judged as outstanding. The Chair welcomed that the nursery worked with other settings. A Member commented that Members of the Ofsted Subgroup had visited Tiddlywinks and had been very impressed with the director and the environment at the nursery. The Chair praised the way the nursery provided stimulating activities to develop children's learning.

Decision

To write to Kids Start, the Lighthouse Centre and Tiddlywinks Day Nursery in Ancoats to congratulate them on their recent Ofsted reports.

CYP/OSG/19/13 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

The Subgroup reviewed the terms of reference for the Subgroup and the work programme.

The Chair clarified that, for the report on childminders scheduled for a future meeting, the Subgroup wanted an overview of the current picture including what support was offered to childminders and, if possible, childminders' views on the support they wanted. She commented that a lot of young children were cared for by childminders but that the fragmented nature of this type of provision presented a challenge for the Council in supporting them. She requested further information on how this was being managed, what challenges there were, whether there were any associations of childminders that the team could use as an intermediary and any different ways that other local authorities were supporting childminders.

Members requested to visit Ashgate Specialist Support Primary School and Manchester Communication Academy, including the Family Zone. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer for north Manchester suggested that Members visit Abbott Community Primary School, which had recently moved from good to outstanding, to which the Chair agreed.

Decisions

1. To request that visits be arranged to Ashgate Specialist Support Primary School, Manchester Communication Academy, including the Family Zone, and Abbott Community Primary School.
2. To agree the work programme, subject to the additional items agreed at the meeting.