

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2018

Present:

Councillor Stone – in the Chair
Councillor Hewitson

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

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children’s Services
Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure

Apologies:

Councillor Lovecy
Mr R Lammas, Primary sector teacher representative

CYP/OSG/18/21 Appointment of Chair

Decision

In the absence of Councillor Lovecy, to agree that Councillor Stone be appointed as Chair of this meeting.

CYP/OSG/18/22 Minutes

The Chair informed Members that, as requested by the Subgroup, Damian Hines, Secretary of State for Education, and Vicky Beer, Regional Schools Commissioner, had been invited to attend a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. He advised Members that no response had been received from Damian Hines. He reported that Vicky Beer had advised that it was not appropriate for her to attend a scrutiny committee meeting but that she was working with Council officers.

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2018.

CYP/OSG/18/23 Post Ofsted Inspection Action Plan - Progress Report

The Subgroup received a report of the Deputy Director of Children’s Services which outlined activity undertaken by the service and where relevant its partners to respond to the recommendations from Ofsted following their inspection of Manchester’s Children Services in 2017.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- The structure of the action plan;
- The delivery of the action plan; and
- Progress, risks and next steps in relation to each of the recommendations arising from Ofsted’s inspection.

The Strategic Director of Children's and Education Services also provided Members with an oral update on Ofsted's recent focus visit, advising that the outcome of this visit was due to be published on 10 October 2018. The Chair requested that this document be circulated to Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, once published.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Subgroup's discussions were:

- Staffing issues, including the recruitment and retention of staff and how new staff were supported;
- The importance of ensuring young people leaving care had access to suitable accommodation; and
- Progress in improving Greater Manchester Police's (GMP's) response to domestic abuse incidents involving children.

The Strategic Director informed Members that his service had reduced the number of agency workers used, advising that stability of the workforce was important in ensuring the quality of social work practice. He also outlined the support provided to newly qualified social workers. The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that Ofsted had identified the workforce as one of the service's strengths and that this had been borne out when he had visited staff. He informed Members about work to tackle homelessness, involving a number of Executive Members and the Senior Management Team, and advised that suitable accommodation for young people leaving care was one of the areas being focused on. The Strategic Director informed Members that GMP had agreed to place two police officers in each of the three Locality Hubs, to work alongside Children's Services staff.

Decisions

1. To welcome the progress made so far.
2. To request that Ofsted's letter on their recent focus visit be circulated to Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, once it has been published.

CYP/OSG/18/24 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

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

A Member updated the Subgroup on the recent visit to Armitage Primary School, advising that it was an excellent school and reporting on work to build a new nursery. The Chair noted that the Subgroup had also requested a visit to a daycare provider and asked that this be followed up.

Decisions

1. To agree the terms of reference and work programme.

2. To write to Armitage Primary School to thank them for accommodating the visit.

CYP/OSG/18/25 Exclusion of the Public

A recommendation was made that the public be excluded during consideration of the following two items of business because they contained exempt information as provided for in the Local Government Access to Information Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

Decision

To exclude the public during consideration of the following two items of business.

CYP/OSG/18/26 Newall Green High School (Ofsted Inspection Action Plan) (Public Excluded)

The Subgroup received the action plan for Newall Green High School, following the Ofsted inspection in March 2018, when the school had been judged to be inadequate. The Subgroup discussed how the school was working with the Council and other partners to secure improvements. They also discussed staffing changes and the challenge of attracting new pupils.

Decisions

1. To write to the Executive Head of Newall Green High School to thank him for sharing the action plan and to wish the school every success in its improvement journey.
2. To request feedback on the school's next Ofsted visit and to note that this is likely to take place around March 2019.

CYP/OSG/18/27 The Grange School (Ofsted Inspection Action Plan) (Public Excluded)

The Subgroup received an oral update on progress since the Subgroup had considered the Grange School's action plan at its meeting on 20 March 2018. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer outlined the improvements being made with support from the Council and through a partnership with another local school. He also informed Members about the work of the school's Interim Executive Board.

Decision

To receive the Interim Executive Board's update report, when this is available.