

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2022

Present:

Councillor Lovecy – in the Chair
Councillors Gartside and Reid

Also present:

Councillor Bano, Member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Apologies:

Councillor Sadler
Miss S Iltaf, Teacher Representative

CYP/OSG/22/08 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2022.

CYP/OSG/22/09 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 Director of Education provided an overview of this information, stating that overall the position in Manchester was positive, with 91% of primary schools and 75% of secondary schools being judged as “good” or “outstanding”. She outlined the context of the recent inspections, highlighting the impact of the pandemic on Manchester schools.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted report for Broad Oak Primary School, which had been judged as “requires improvement”. The Director of Education reported that the school had previously been judged as “good” and highlighted some of the challenges facing the school including falling pupil numbers and financial problems. She informed Members that the school was engaging with the Council and with the Aspire multi-academy trust to secure improvements. She highlighted that Ofsted had identified some strengths in the report but that curriculum development had been identified as an area which needed to improve.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted report for Rushbrook Primary Academy which had been judged as “requires improvement” at its most recent inspection. The Director of Education reported that the school had also been judged as “requires improvement” at its previous inspection but that there had been improvements in the more recent report, with some areas now judged as “good”. She highlighted that curriculum development had been identified as an area for improvement in this report, in common with a number of the reports that the Subgroup was considering. She informed the Subgroup that the school engaged with the Council and was part of a multi-academy trust. A Member expressed concern that the current Ofsted report format was not detailed enough. She also expressed concern about the focus that Ofsted were taking and advised that there was insufficient consideration of what

schools had been dealing with during the pandemic. In response to a question from the Chair about support being provided to the school, the Director of Education reported that the Head engaged well with Council's Education Service, which had invited them in for support and challenge meetings. She also commented positively about the Chair of Governors and highlighted that Ofsted had judged the leadership and management of the school to be "good"; however, she expressed concern that leadership of the curriculum was not stronger, considering that the school was part of a multi-academy trust, which should be supporting this. The Subgroup discussed the forthcoming regulations in relation to schools which had twice been judged as below "good" and whether there would be a re-brokering process for the school to become part of a different multi-academy trust. The Chair asked that the Subgroup be kept informed on this.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted report for St John Bosco RC Primary School which had been judged as "requires improvement". The Director of Education reported that it was a very small, one-form-entry school. She reported that the school had previously been judged as "good" but that the Council had had concerns about the school and had provided additional support, including inviting the new Head, who had been appointed prior to the pandemic, in for a support and challenge meeting. She advised that the Head had worked hard to make improvements, that progress was being made and that, as a result, the report was more positive than it could have been, with some areas judged as "good".

A Member commented that small schools should be encouraged to work together more, stating that this was particularly an issue in north Manchester. The Director of Education reported that her service was discussing this with the Diocese of Salford, that some Federations of schools had been established for this reason and that the Diocese of Salford wanted its schools to become part of the Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust. She highlighted that the Schools White Paper included the expectation that schools would become part of a multi-academy trust by 2030. She advised that her service was putting in place subject leadership networks and citywide subject days for subject areas which were in need of curriculum development, with these being run by the Manchester Schools Alliance. She highlighted that there were also networks in north Manchester such as the north primary heads meetings which could be used to support curriculum development.

In response to a Member's question about falling rolls, the Director of Education reported that pupil numbers had declined in Reception and Year 1 but that some Key Stage 2 year groups and the secondary sector were very full. She stated that primary schools were being advised to take a pragmatic approach, bringing staffing levels in line with pupil numbers while making use of the space available, as it was expected that numbers would increase again in future; however, she recognised that this was particularly challenging for very small, single-form-entry schools.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted report for St Mary's RC Primary School, which had been judged as "outstanding". The Director of Education praised the work of the Executive Headteacher. She explained that the school had received a section 8 inspection prior to the pandemic at which the inspectors had thought that the school could be "outstanding"; however, she advised that the judgement could only be changed by a full section 5 inspection, which had taken place in May 2022. The

Subgroup welcomed the excellent report. A Member suggested that the Subgroup visit the school. The Chair recommended that the Committee write to the school to congratulate them.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted report for Lily Lane Primary School, which had been judged as “inadequate”. The Director of Education stated that the Council had had concerns about the school for some time. She reported that her service had put in place additional support to the school, including brokering support from another school, but that it had not been well-used; however, she acknowledged that, once the pandemic started, the school had responded well to the situation, including having a lot of children on site, quickly setting up remote learning and supporting the local community. She advised that the school had received a positive monitoring visit during the pandemic. She reported that her service had met with the school again in September 2021, as the COVID restrictions were lifted, to continue the offer of support but that the school did not take up the support offered. She reported that a lot of work was planned to improve the school and outlined action taken since the inspection, included brokering leadership from the Head of another local school, disestablishing the governing body and putting in place an Interim Executive Board (IEB). A Member suggested that the Subgroup visit Lily Lane Primary School, to which the Chair agreed. In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Education reported that the Executive Headteacher would be spending three days a week at the school and that there would be two Deputy Heads in place. She reported that they were not advertising for a permanent Headteacher yet as the school would have to join a multi-academy trust.

The Subgroup considered the recent Ofsted report for King David High School which had been judged as “inadequate”. The Director of Education noted the unusual context of this inspection, the school having successfully challenged a previous inspection judgement. She reported that, since the most recent inspection, the school had been engaging well with the Council and the family of Manchester schools and that the new Executive Head was making a positive difference. A Member suggested that the Subgroup visit the school. The Subgroup discussed the finding that the school had discrimination unlawfully on the grounds of sex and the need to address this, including the challenges of religious sensitivities and getting support from parents and governors, including religious leaders. The Director of Education clarified that King David had a co-educational school with smaller single-sex units for children from more orthodox families who preferred a single-sex education and that the concerns related to the opportunities available to the girls in the single-sex provision. She reported that Ofsted’s view was that, as it was a state-funded school, while single-sex provision was acceptable, the female pupils needed to be offered the full curriculum and have the same opportunities as the boys.

A Member expressed concern about some private faith schools. In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Education reported that private schools were subject to regulatory inspections and were included in the Council’s safeguarding work but that unregistered schools which were not known to the authorities were a concern. The Chair commented that Ward Councillors could raise any issues they became aware of in their ward.

Decisions

1. To write to St Mary's RC Primary School to congratulate them on their recent Ofsted report.
2. To arrange visits to St Mary's RC Primary School, Lily Lane Primary School and King David High School.

CYP/OSG/22/10 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

Decision

To note the Terms of Reference and Work Programme.