

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023

Present:

Councillor Lovecy – in the Chair

Councillors Fletcher and Reid

Mr Y Yonis, Co-opted Member (Parent Governor Representative)

Apologies:

Councillor Ludford

CYP/OSG/23/13 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2023.

CYP/OSG/23/14 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 reported that an unprecedented number of Ofsted inspections had taken place this year, with 74 Manchester schools being inspected, which was comprised of 46 ungraded inspections, 23 graded inspections and 5 monitoring visits; however, only 56 of the reports had been published so far. She reported that 88% of Manchester schools were judged to be good or outstanding, which was above the national average.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that the same recurring themes were seen in the most recently published reports and that these were being communicated to schools. She stated that there was still a strong emphasis on the curriculum and that key themes included component knowledge, the sequencing of the curriculum, adaptive learning for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), leaders monitoring the impact of the curriculum, assessment and reading and phonics.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer highlighted some of the key points from the inspection of St Francis RC Primary School, which had been judged as inadequate. She stated that behaviour was often an area of concern at schools which were judged as inadequate and that this was often connected to the quality of education, as an engaging, progressive curriculum encouraged better behaviours for learning from the children.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer updated Members on the series of webinars for school leaders focusing on the key themes from the Ofsted inspections. She reported that there would be additional work with schools around adaptive teaching, building on the webinar which had taken place, and that the subject-specific

work would continue. She stated that all schools had been RAG-rated and would receive an appropriate level of support, with all schools receiving at least one visit from a Quality Assurance professional per year and those identified as needing a higher level of support receiving more frequent visits.

The other Senior School Quality Assurance Officer present reported that her team was in the process of identifying the schools which were likely to be inspected in the next academic year, that a risk assessment process would be carried out for those schools in September to identify the ones who might need further support and that information on this could be provided at the next meeting.

The Chair expressed concern about small, one-form entry primary schools which did not have a strong specialist lead for all subjects. She asked for further information in relation to Saviour CE Primary School, Cheetwood Primary School and St Francis RC Primary School, including whether issues had been identified, and additional support provided, prior to the inspections taking place.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that Saviour CE Primary School had been identified as a school causing concern through the risk assessment process and that the Council had brokered support for the school, funded by the Council, from October 2021 until the time of the inspection. She reported that significant progress had been made, that if the inspection had taken place a few months later, it was likely that a good outcome would have been achieved and that it was anticipated that the school would be judged good by the time of its next inspection.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that Cheetwood Primary School had had a new Headteacher in September 2022 and so had received additional Quality Assurance support during this academic year, with the curriculum and leadership being identified as areas requiring support. She advised that, although progress had been made, by the time of the inspection in May 2023, this progress had not been sufficient for the inspectors to be assured that it was still a good school; however, she advised that her team was confident that the school's leaders were in a stronger position now to achieve a good judgement at the next inspection.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer provided an overview of the situation in relation to St Francis RC Primary School, which had been judged as inadequate. She reported that it had been 14 years since its last full inspection, when it had been judged as outstanding, during which time there had many changes to the Ofsted framework. She stated that it had been identified, following the retirement of the previous Headteacher, that the school's self-evaluation was not accurate and additional support was required and she reported that her team had then brokered leadership from another school during the period when there was no Headteacher in place, put in place support for governors and undertaken several audits, which had highlighted areas for improvement. She reported that the Council had then provided intensive support to the school to address these areas and build capacity within the school and had monitored progress; however, by the time of the inspection, there had not been sufficient improvements to secure a better judgement. She outlined the next steps that had taken place after this judgement, with the Council and the

Diocese of Salford working together to secure effective governance of the school, setting up a joint executive body. She reported that meetings had taken place with parents, who were very supportive of the school and of securing improvements for their children's education and that mechanisms were being put in place for ongoing communication with parents. She informed Members that the school had now received an Academy Order from the Department for Education and that it was expected that school would join the Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust; however, there was likely to be a significant period of time before the school joined the Trust and the Council was committed to continuing to work with the school to secure improvements during this interim period, commissioning support from a national leader of education, continuing to provide support from a highly experienced Quality Assurance professional and continuing to hold Support and Challenge meetings between school leaders and the Council's Director of Education.

A Member who was also a Ward Councillor for Gorton and Abbey Hey stated that it was important to have communication with Ward Councillors and she expressed concern that she had not been able to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher of St Francis RC Primary School. She asked for a briefing with all three Ward Councillors regarding the school and that she meet with the Headteacher in September. She highlighted that the school also served children from neighbouring wards.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that Ward Councillors for Gorton and Abbey Hey had been invited to a meeting before the report for St Francis had been published. In response to the Member's request for more frequent communication, she stated that there would be further opportunities to share information with Ward Councillors, including inviting them to attend future meetings with parents and the local community.

A Member commented on the demographics of the families whose children attended St Francis and advised that, due to their culture and being appreciative of the education their children were receiving, they might not express concerns about the school in a way which triggered action to be taken. The Chair commented that, where schools had a high number of relatively recent immigrant parents, it was important to be aware that parents might be less likely to make complaints. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that another issue in this case was the Government's decision not to routinely inspect schools which had been judged as outstanding. In response to a Member's question about whether the Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust had the capacity to support all the schools that were becoming part of the Trust, she stated that the Regional Director would be responsible for providing challenge to them on this. In response to a further question, she stated that it was likely that St Francis would receive a monitoring visit in the autumn or spring term.

A Member welcomed the many positive Ofsted reports for Manchester schools. She expressed concern about the approach of adaptive learning and about mixed-ability classes in high schools. She asked that Subgroup Members be invited to future webinars, which was supported by the Chair.

The Chair reported back on the recent visit to St Matthew's RC High School, which had been attended by Members of the Subgroup and two Ward Councillors. She

stated that, since the school had joined the Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust, Ward Councillors felt that there had been a lack of communication between them and the school, although following this visit the Headteacher had agreed to set up a separate meeting with them. She highlighted the constructive role that Ward Councillors could play, in relation to all Manchester schools. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer recognised this point and stated that her team would raise this as part of their discussions with school leaders and governors.

The Chair reported that it had been useful to have the Ward Councillors on the visit as they were aware of work that had already been taking place in relation to school improvement and she stated that it was important for the school to have evidence of the progress being made. She also expressed concern that some year groups were on school trips on the day of the visit so it was difficult for Members to fully assess what pupil behaviour was like. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that the recent Ofsted monitoring inspection of the school had been positive, despite it taking place earlier than expected, and that these regular monitoring visits would take place until the school came out of special measures. A Member stated that she had spoken to Year 10 pupils during the visit, who had commented on improvements within the school.

The Chair expressed concern that a cohort of pupils who had been through the school had not received a good enough quality of education and might need extra support to develop the skills they needed. She highlighted the Headteacher's concerns about future admissions to the school. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that this would be dealt with by the Admissions Team, based on parental preference, and, where appropriate, through the In-Year Fair Access Protocol.

Decision

To request that Subgroup Members be invited to future webinars.

CYP/OSG/23/15 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 second Senior School Quality Assurance Officer in attendance provided Members with an overview of the inspections which had taken place since the last meeting. She reported that 95% of early years settings in Manchester were judged to be good or outstanding as were 93% of childminders, despite the challenges that the sector was experiencing. She reported that there had been an increase in complaints triggering early years inspections. She highlighted some of the main themes from the reports, stating that strengths included the development of communication and language, adapting the curriculum for individual children, particularly those with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and supporting children with SEND, while the development of children's independence was an area for improvement for some settings. She outlined some of the support being provided to settings, which included a range of training, for example on phonological awareness, a pre-registration course for childminders and termly development

forums. She provided an update on the Government's two Early Years consultations. She reported that the first of these, which related to staff to child ratios, had already closed and the changes would be implemented from September. She advised that the second consultation, which related to mathematics qualifications for Early Years Level 3 staff and creating two separate provider-specific versions of the Early Years Framework, was still currently open.

In response to a Member's comments about recruitment issues in the Early Years sector, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer acknowledged that this was an issue and stated that work was taking place to look at sufficiency for the proposed expansion of childcare funding from April 2024. A Member who was also the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee requested that an item on Early Years Sufficiency be considered at a future meeting of the Committee. A Member also requested that details of the proposed expansion of free childcare and the timeline for its roll-out be emailed to Subgroup Members.

Decisions

1. To note that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will receive a report on Early Years Sufficiency at a future meeting.
2. To request that details of the proposed expansion of free childcare and the timeline for its roll-out be emailed to Subgroup Members.

CYP/OSG/23/16 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

Decision

To note the Terms of Reference and Work Programme.