

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – Ofsted Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023

Present:

Councillor Lovecy – in the Chair
Councillors Fletcher, Hewitson and Reid

Apologies:

Councillor Bano

CYP/OSG/23/17 Minutes

The Chair asked whether she could attend a Childminders Forum meeting in order to better understand the relationship with the providers, to which officers agreed. She provided an overview of the visits Subgroup Members had carried out since the last meeting. She stated that the visit to The East Manchester Academy had been particularly useful in enabling local Ward Councillors, who had joined the visit, to get involved. She reported that Xaverian College had praised the support they had received from the Council regarding their funding bid. She highlighted how the College was moving beyond its traditional academic strengths towards subjects which linked to needs in the city's employment market. She praised Brighter Beginnings in Newton Heath, including the positive atmosphere and its approach to environmental sustainability.

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023.

CYP/OSG/23/18 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, advising that all reports for inspections from the previous academic year had now been published. She reported that 88.4% of Manchester schools were judged to be good or better, which placed the city fifth out of ten local authorities within Greater Manchester and in line with the average for the north-west and nationally. She added that 89.6% of Manchester primary schools were good or better, placing Manchester sixth out of ten within Greater Manchester, and 82.8% of the city's high schools were good or better, placing Manchester second out of ten at secondary level within Greater Manchester.

In response to comments from the Chair about the positive outcomes for the special schools which had been inspected, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer clarified that these were not included in the above figures. The Director of Education highlighted that Prospect House was a new school which had been judged as outstanding on its first inspection. The Chair welcomed that there was additional special school provision for pupils whose needs could not be met in mainstream

schools. A Member expressed concern that the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant was not sufficient to meet the needs of all the pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) in the city.

The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that the themes emerging from the Ofsted inspections remained similar to those reported at previous meetings. She stated that these included curriculum design, particularly identifying component knowledge, and curriculum implementation. She reported that her team had put in place a series of webinars on curriculum design and implementation, which had received positive feedback so far. She informed Members that the city had approximately 81 schools which were likely to be inspected during the current academic year and that these had been risk assessed, with officers working closely with those assessed as being 'red' or 'amber' risk. She reported that, where there were specific concerns about a school, this was closely monitored by the Quality Assurance Board. She informed Members that all Manchester schools had received a Quality Assurance visit during the autumn term and that these had included a focus on the curriculum to identify any issues and provide support. She reported that next term there would be a Quality Assurance report focussing on behaviour, as the Department for Education (DfE) was spotlighting this issue. She also informed Members of a webinar which was being developed on adaptive teaching, stating that Members would be welcome to attend this. In response to a Member's question, she stated that the schools judged to be inadequate or requires improvement were not concentrated in any specific area of the city.

Members discussed King David High School, with the Chair commenting that Subgroup Members had seen improvements when they had visited. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that Ofsted had initially undertaken a monitoring visit to King David, which had been converted to a full inspection because there were signs of improvement and that the full inspection had resulted in a judgement of requires improvement (the school having previously been graded as inadequate). She reported that the school had made significant progress and that it was expected that, when it received its next full graded inspection, within the next three years, it would be judged to be good. A Member reported that a new governing body had been put in place.

In response to a question from the Chair about whether some of the judgements had been expected or not, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that Unity Community Primary School, which had been judged as requires improvement, had been unfortunate in their judgement, advising that they had been judged good in some areas. In relation to Peel Hall Primary School, which had been judged as inadequate, she advised that officers had already been aware that there were concerns and had been working closely with the school prior to the inspection. She outlined the steps being taken since the inspection, including half-termly Quality Assurance visits, weekly visits from the Senior Schools Quality Assurance Officer, local authority-brokered support from a Trust, an Interim Executive Board replacing the governing body and the Council supporting the school's conversion to a sponsored academy. She informed Members that a SEND review and a Safeguarding Review were taking place at the school. She assured Members that Ward Councillors had been well-briefed and involved throughout.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Education provided further information on the Wise Owl Trust, which Peel Hall Primary School would be joining, stating that it was a small local trust which worked closely with the Council and she advised that homegrown trusts knew the city and its demographics well. She stated that the Wise Owl Trust was already supporting the school and making a positive difference.

A Member suggested that at a future meeting it might be useful to look at some schools' trajectories over the longer term.

In response to a Member's comments, the Director of Education outlined some of the positive work taking place at Higher Openshaw Community Primary School, stating that the school was very community-focused.

The Chair welcomed the very significant improvements made in the city's secondary school sector. She highlighted the importance of the transition arrangements. In response to a Member's comments about pressure on school places in the secondary sector, the Director of Education advised that more Manchester children were attending secondary schools within the city and families from elsewhere in Greater Manchester were also now seeking places at Manchester schools.

Decision

To note the reports.

CYP/OSG/23/19 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 95% of early years settings in the city were judged to be good or better and that no settings were currently judged as inadequate. She highlighted that Manchester Montessori House had received an outstanding judgement at its first inspection and suggested that the Subgroup might want to visit the setting.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Early Years Quality Assurance Lead confirmed that the three settings which had recently received judgements of requires improvement had already been identified by her team and had been receiving support. She informed Members that one of these settings had previously been judged as inadequate and had improved following support from her team. She highlighted staffing as a key issue for these settings, and as a wider issue for the sector, and informed Members about work with Manchester College to address this.

A Member expressed concern about the sector's ability to meet increased demand as the free entitlement was expanded and highlighted qualification requirements and pay rates as issues affecting recruitment.

The Early Years Quality Assurance Lead informed Members about plans to change the qualification requirements for Early Years staff and to give managers more autonomy regarding ratios and about a forthcoming Government recruitment and retention campaign in the New Year.

A Member commented on providers developing their own staff into management roles, highlighting an example from a recent visit.

Decision

To note the reports.

CYP/OSG/23/20 Childminders

The Early Years Quality Assurance Lead provided Members with an overview of childminders across the city. She reported that Manchester had 327 registered childminders, although not all would be currently providing childminding services. She informed Members that nationally over the past 10 years the number of childminders had decreased by 50% but that in Manchester the number had only decreased by 25%. She reported that 291 of the registered childminders were on the Early Years register, with the remainder only working with children aged 5 and over. She informed Members that 16 childminders in Manchester were part of the Tiney Childminding Agency so did not have individual registrations and were recruited and trained by Tiney. She informed Members about grants which were available for new childminders registering with Ofsted but advised that the government scheme offered more money for new childminders to register with agencies. She reported that her team offered the same support to childminders who were registered with Tiney as it did to other childminders in the city, including visits and access to the Forums, and that the Council had a working relationship with Tiney. She reported that around 200 childminders in the city could offer free entitlement childcare and that some childminders offered overnight care. She reported that some childminders worked as a group and that approximately 60% worked with an assistant and that her team supported the childminder on their leadership role where they employed an assistant. She explained planned changes in relation to space requirements in the home, which would include kitchens from next year, and the relaxing of the qualification requirements for childminders. She informed Members about the wide range of training and support offered to childminders, including pre-registration training, visits, termly Forums, an allocated Quality Assurance Officer, support from local Children's Centres, support and training on working with children with SEND, safeguarding training, a professional development programme and peer support. She reported that 13 childminders had been judged outstanding, 211 were good and 9 were judged as requires improvement or satisfactory, although 6 of these had no children on roll. She explained that settings which were due an inspection but did not have children on roll could have a "no children on roll" inspection which resulted in a judgement of met or not met but that the grade awarded at the previous inspection would be counted for the figures. She reported that, if settings which had since received a judgement of met were discounted, there was only one provider in Manchester currently judged as inadequate. She informed Members that 93% of childminders were now judged as good or better, compared to 58% ten years ago. She highlighted some of the issues for those which were less than good, including

not keeping up to date with requirements such as first aid certificates and insurance when they did not have any children on roll, which her team regularly highlighted to the providers, and self-evaluation. She explained how her team prioritised their visits to childminders, with priority given to childminders who were due an inspection, had been judged as less than good or were struggling.

In response to questions from the Chair, the Early Years Quality Assurance Lead confirmed that the Forums were used to share good practice and she reported that the SEND support childminders attended the Forums and had delivered presentations at the most recent Forum about what they did and the support they could provide to other childminders. She informed Members about SEND training that the Rodney House Outreach Service Early Years (RHOSY) had recently delivered to childminders, as well as SEND training available from Dingley's Promise. In response to a Member's question, she informed the Subgroup about a Level 3 SEND course which was available online to providers through the Best Practice Network. In response to a question from the Chair about identifying children with SEND, she reported that childminders needed to carry out the 2-year-old development check and that a lot of childminders had undertaken Wellcomm training and worked closely with Children's Centres on the Wellcomm screening of speech and language development.

In response to a Member's comments about SEND training, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that parents of children with SEND could access the Dingley's Promise training. A Member asked for a link to this training to be circulated to Members.

In response to a Member's comments about the need to recruit more childminders, due to the expansion of the free childcare entitlement, the Senior School Quality Assurance Officer reported that a delivery plan for the expansion was being developed and that an update on this would be provided at the next meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee. In response to a further question, she provided information on the Wraparound Childcare Programme and stated that further details of this would also be included in the report to the Committee. A Member expressed concern that parents would need to pay for the wraparound childcare. The Senior School Quality Assurance Officer clarified that the aim of the Wraparound Childcare Programme was to ensure sufficiency of provision.

Decision

To request that a link to the Dingley's Promise training be circulated to the Subgroup Members.

CYP/OSG/23/21 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

Members were informed that the next meeting would take place on 28 February 2024. Members agreed to visit Manchester Montessori House, Rodney House School and Prospect House Specialist Support Primary School.

Decisions

1. To note the Terms of Reference and Work Programme.
2. To arrange visits to Manchester Montessori House, Rodney House School and Prospect House Specialist Support Primary School.