

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

THURSDAY, 10TH MARCH, 2016

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors N Dawson, C Dobson, J Elliott,
C Gruen, A Lamb, P Latty, A Ogilvie,
K Renshaw, B Urry and F Venner

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten – Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr A Graham – Church Representative (Church of England)
Mrs J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
Ms J Hazelgrave – Parent Governor Representative (SEN)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Mrs S Hutchinson – Early Years Representative

74 Late Items

The following late and supplementary information was submitted to the Board:

- Agenda item 6 – Minutes of the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) meeting held on 25 February 2016
- Agenda item 7 – Annual Standards Report – Learning Outcomes Dashboards.

The above information was not available at the time of agenda despatch, but was subsequently made available on the Council's website.

75 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

76 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were submitted by Co-opted Members, Ms C Foote, Ms K Jan and Ms T Kayani.

77 Minutes - 25 February 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2016 be approved as a correct record.

78 Matters arising from the minutes

The Board was advised that it was Paul Brennan's last Scrutiny Board meeting before leaving the Council at the end of the month. Members thanked Paul for his hard work and positive contribution to the Board's work.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Thursday, 21st April, 2016

79 Annual Standards Report 2014-15

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which presented the Annual Standards Report 2014-15.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Annual Standards Report 2014-15 – Report to Executive Board dated 9 March 2016

In addition, the following supplementary information was presented to the Board:

- Annual Standards Report – Learning Outcomes Dashboards.

The following were in attendance:

- Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Paul Brennan, Deputy Director of Children's Services (Learning)
- Andrew Eastwood, Head of Service (Learning Improvement)
- Kevin Paynes, Leadership and Management Lead (Secondary)
- Kimberly Porter, Area Lead (Primary Learning Improvement)
- Erica Hiorns, School Improvement Adviser

The key areas of discussion were:

- Concern about the lack of progress in relation to disadvantaged children and young people in certain parts of the city. The Board discussed the importance of programmes aimed at delivering improvements.
- The impact of changing demographics, particularly in terms of complex needs and EAL.
- The role of social workers to support children and young people overcome barriers that exist both inside and outside of the school environment.
- Concern that further work was needed regarding transition from early years to primary level and the sharing of health information. The Board discussed the importance of ensuring that children were ready for learning. Members were advised that investment in the 'Best Start' programme had helped to address issues. The Board requested further information to clarify how this investment is sustained through key stages 1 and 2.
- Concern about capacity, referral and funding in Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TAHMS).
- Concern about the number of children in early years that had not reached a good level of development.

- The importance of work being undertaken by clusters to support children and young people with social and emotional difficulties.
- An update on progress against actions under the heading 'The Virtual School'. The Board considered the development of corporate parenting and Pupil Premium Plus.
- Concern about the high turnover of head teachers and difficulties with recruitment at some schools. The Board was advised about work being undertaken with Red Kite Alliance, University of Leeds and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) to develop leadership programmes.
- Concern about changes to attainment assessment at KS1 and KS2.
- Concern about levels of attainment at KS5 across all areas, the possible reasons for this and the focus of the School Improvement Team to overcome challenges with learning establishments. The Board agreed this may be an area of focus in 2016/17.
- Concern about changes to funding arrangements and difficulties with recruitment at early years. It was suggested that further information be provided to the Board about work being undertaken to address these issues.
- Concern that overall attendance was down marginally. The Board was advised about actions being undertaken to address this.
- The management of curriculum and time to improve attainment and attendance for young people.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the Board be provided with further information about addressing issues in relation to early years at the April 2016 meeting.

80 Learning Places for Leeds Overview

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which summarised the work undertaken to ensure that the statutory duty to provide good quality learning places and secure an appropriate balance locally between education supply, demand, choice and diversity was being met.

The following information was appended to the report:

- Learning Places – Dashboard report dated 10 February 2016
- Briefing note – Secondary 2016 allocations dated 1 March 2016.

The following were in attendance:

- Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Richard Amos, Partnership Team Senior Manager 14-19
- Viv Buckland, Head of Service (Learning Systems)
- Victoria Coyle, Statutory Assessment and Provision Lead.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Secondary admissions and the growth in the number of places provided this year. Expected pressures to occur between now and 2019 are already being addressed by increasing places at existing schools however new schools will also be required.
- Concern about the shortfall of school places and the need to provide Ward Members with early notification regarding pressure points. The Board was advised that a cross party meeting had taken place to consider hotspot areas. In addition, a seminar had taken place to advise Members. It was suggested that a further seminar be arranged in the near future.
- Concern about the allocation of school preferences, particularly for those families that had been allocated 3rd, 4th or 5th preferences or a school that had not been preferred at all.
- With regard to appeals, the difficulty of measuring nearest school in straight line due to difficulties in travel and transport and that this will be a factor when parents choose schools and should be a consideration when allocating a school. It was explained that this would have to be a change in policy.
- Funding grant for basic need which is currently funded at two thirds of the cost of providing a place.
- The link between housing development and investment in schools via CIL and need for closer liaison between planning and education processes regarding school provision.
- Reassurance regarding sufficient places at Primary. The Board were advised that additional places have been created in the right places in the City and at this stage the situation is considered to be positive.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That a further members' seminar be arranged regarding school allocations.

81 Supporting Siblings of SEND Young People

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which provided information to promote understanding and discussion about the challenges faced by the siblings of young people with special educational needs or disabilities.

Appended to the report was some information provided by Sibs about supporting siblings in schools. This summarised many of the challenges faced by siblings and the 'top tips' to address.

The following were in attendance:

- Lucinda Yeadon, Executive Member (Children and Families)
- Nigel Richardson, Director of Children's Services
- Monica McCaffrey, Chief Executive Officer of Sibs.

The key areas of discussion were:

- An overview of the barriers to learning and the pilot project being undertaken by Sibs around sibling identification. Sibs approach will be to work with schools and SENco's.
- The opportunities for Sibs to work in partnership with other groups and organisations in Leeds. The Board were advised that there is little work in any local authority for sibling services and this group does not have a strong voice unless they meet the criteria of a young carer.
- The need to raise awareness through schools to recognise the problem and develop sibling support and interventions.
- Concern about funding constraints to developing provision.
- A suggestion that the Children's and Families Trust Board be invited to consider how to support Sibs to best to co-ordinate project activities. Advice could also be provided by Young Lives Leeds and LCC Complex Needs Service.
- Sibs concern about the large number of siblings requiring counselling or CAMHS with issues going on into adulthood.
- Research by the University of Warwick about the behaviour between siblings and the two way impact it can have for the child with SEND and their sibling.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.
- (b) That the Sibs be provided with contact information in order to work with the Children's Trust Board

(Councillor C Gruen left the meeting at 12.20pm during the consideration of this item.)

82 Work Schedule

The Head of Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year.

RESOLVED – That reports be brought in April 2016 to provide an updated overview on Young Carers and information relating to Early Years provision (minute 79 refers). Subject to any on-going scheduling decisions, the Board's work schedule was approved.

83 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 21 April 2016 at 9.45am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.15am)

(The meeting concluded at 12.35pm)