

Chichester District Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 March 2017

Education Review Final report from the Task and Finish Group

1. Contacts

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2. Executive Summary

This report summarises the presentations and research undertaken by the Education Review Task and Finish Group in reviewing the progress of both primary and secondary school attainment levels in the district. The group heard presentations from WSCC, Academy schools and Early Years. Assessment mechanisms have changed but there was reassurance that investment in support for schools and Early Years was being made and positive progress in achievements had been made.

3. Recommendation

- 1) **That the committee notes the effect of changes to the assessment process on the comparative performance of schools but notes the overall positive direction of travel.**
- 2) **That the committee notes the recommendation at 6.2 for a future Task and Finish Group focus on the preparedness for further education and work.**

4. Background

- 4.1. Chichester District Council has an interest in the skills of its young people entering the workforce and contributing economically. Educational attainment is a key influence on people's quality of life long term, as well as an important factor in the vibrancy of the district.
- 4.2. A Task and Finish Group examined educational attainment in 2012 and 2014; and were reassured that progress was being made. They reviewed the County's "Start of life" Programme, nursery provision, standards and inspection, "value added", and working with academies. Concern arose in 2016 over test results after two years of a new National Curriculum, when both testing and results were profoundly different from previous years, and some schools expressed dismay at their new rating.
- 4.3. The Task and Finish Group comprised Mrs P Dignum (Chairman), Mr N Galloway, Mrs N Graves and Mrs J Tassell and met twice in February 2017,

4.4. The following witnesses were invited to present to the group:

- Mr Simon Lockwood – Head of School Improvement, West Sussex County Council (WSCC)
- Mr David Linsell, - Director of Education, The Kemnal Academy Trust (TKAT)
- Mr James Munt - Executive Head of three TKAT primary schools
- Ms Lesley Jallow – Early Years' Service Manager - Commissioning, WSCC

4.5. The task and finish group was asked to examine and understand the new performance tables at Key stage 2 (end of primary) and Key Stage 4 (GCSE stage); to look at new requirements for Maths and English at KS2; to see how WSCC was monitoring this and academies' performance; and to revisit the Readiness for School data.

5. Evidence

5.1. The group heard first from Mr Lockwood who explained the results of testing at KS2 and KS4 in 2016. The tests were the first to be based on the new 2014 National Curriculum.

Primary results

Previously assessed by Levels, it was now by Age Related Expectations (ARE), with each year from 1--6 being set its own goals. By year 6 this requires 60 different statements of achievement grouped under seven headings. WSCC had guided its schools to apply the new criteria with a rigour not necessarily applied in some other areas, and may account for lower results in West Sussex against the National average. However that rigour had been recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) in using West Sussex examples of marked work for assessment training, and in selecting a West Sussex trainer for its official team. In Chichester district the results for Reading, Writing and Maths (the core subjects) varied from 78% to 14%, with an average of 45%, below the national average measure of 54%.

Members were pleased to hear that WSCC, following cuts in Government funding, had reversed the 2010 policy of cutting back spending on support in favour of developing academies which had led to fewer staff and special advisers. More time and money has now been invested, with Maths and English having been specially checked. Since April 2016 every school had been visited and had a link adviser.

Secondary results

Again, the assessments were radically different, with no comparison possible against previous years' figures. There were two headline measures for schools' GCSE results: Attainment 8 and Progress 8. Attainment 8 measured pupils performing well across 8 subjects in GCSE (not the 5A*--Cs as previously). The national average score is 50; Bishop Luffa scored 60; Chichester High School for Girls 53. Other local schools scored between 46 and 8. Progress 8 measures the "value added" by the school by measuring pupils' progress across 8 subjects from the age of 11-16. A score of Plus 1 means pupils were achieving one grade more than the benchmark (0) across all 8 subjects. The national average in 2016 was -0.3. Bishop Luffa and Chichester High School for Girls were above zero

(0.34 and 0.15) but the other Chichester secondary schools were below the national average.

Mr Lockwood identified the challenges facing schools but said that progress had been made in Ofsted inspection outcomes. Despite the scores Chichester schools' GCSE results were successful with many more 8s than other areas.

- 4.2 Members then received a presentation from Mr Linsell, and Mr Munt to give an insight into academies.

Mr Linsell said five of their 40 academies were in the district; Chichester High School and Selsey secondaries and Seal, Portfield and Tangmere primaries. Ofsted inspections in all schools indicated improving standards and results. The recent merger of the Boys and Girls High schools had been caused by falling roll numbers and the need to improve boys' standards and this had been successful in both. Progress 8 at GCSE level (for girls only last year), 0.15, was just above "average" into "good".

The Selsey Academy, destroyed by fire in late summer 2016, showed the value of co-operation between school, community, WSCC, and TKAT, as it was able to open in temporary accommodation within a week. The roll at 450 was too small for the DfE to fund a rebuild, but with the addition of a new co-located specialist junior school (the senior element of Seal school) it had won approval for funding. This specialism would include science, ICT and art, and be accessible to all primary schools. The Selsey Academy's results used to be below average but had moved to average (-0.03) in three years, and its Ofsted status from Inadequate to Requiring Improvement.

Mr Munt then spoke of the primary academies in his care at Portfield (formerly St James) and Seal and included Tangmere. Portfield was one-form entry with a specialist unit dealing with children needing specialist help for speech and language which meant it was 11 times the national average for such pupils some of whom come from the surrounding areas. It also has 58% of pupils eligible for free school meals, more than twice the national average. Under a new head good progress had been made, increasing the roll and results were in the top 10% for progress nationally. Its early years' development was moving towards national standards. Seal had fewer children with special needs and lower levels of free school meal entitlement. Its early years and phonics were above national levels, but improvement was needed higher up the school after a plateau in results. Tangmere was improving to a "Good", coming from below the "floor" level to a high, being consistently above the West Sussex average at Key Stage 1 (age 7).

TKAT was pleased with the overall progress in their schools' results.

- 4.3 The TKAT representatives said that despite the reductions in current funding, 8% in 3 years, they would not be introducing four-day weeks; that TKAT top slices 3% to support academy structures which is lower than the average trust and Local Authorities who take between 5 and 8%; that TKAT academies benefit from collaboration between schools and were free to engage with the local authorities if they wanted to; and that TKAT made their buildings/facilities available for community use.

Members were reasonably reassured by all the information on academies, with questions largely answered, and felt better informed about how academies run, and their successful contribution to the education scene locally.

- 4.4 Ms Jallow gave a presentation on Readiness for School and Early Years Provision. The aim of focusing on the earliest years was to develop the cognitive, linguistic and self-regulatory skills of children so they were ready for school and action was aimed to counter a disadvantaged background.

Early Years' provision included private childminders, play groups and nursery schools and was subject to Ofsted inspection. WSCC early year's staff visited each establishment termly checking standards and targeted resources where improvements were needed. Children & Family centres (CFCs) supported families and encouraged take up of free school places for 3-4 year olds and special funded places for 2 year olds seen as vulnerable (there are 107 aged 2 children funded in the district). Take-up of 15 hours' free nursery places for 3-4 year olds was fairly good, e.g. in Chichester central (city) in autumn 2016 it was 97%, in the rural areas 89%.

Early years' development is measured at 24/36 months by a short statement observing personal, social, emotional development, physical, communication and language development. Ofsted rated the quality of funded pre-school highly, rating Chichester 100%. The second statutory assessment comes at the end of Reception, comprising teacher judgements on communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development, literacy, maths, understanding the world, expressive arts and design, ability to solve problems. To achieve a good level of development (GLD) a child has to achieve the expected level in all 17 aspects of learning. In 2016 West Sussex achieved 68%, just below the national average, up from 53% in 2013. The 2016 Chichester area results ranged from 60-71% and improved overall on 2015 results.

5. Outcomes to be achieved

- 5.1 The terms of reference set out the agreed outcomes as a) Understand progress in GCSE performance; b) Note change in the Key Stage regime and compulsory Maths and English; c) Understand WSCC role in monitoring academy performance, and d) Understand issues related to readiness for school.
- 5.2 At the end of the review the task and finish group members:
- considered that they had been presented with comprehensive data and explanations which allowed them to understand GCSE performance under the new curriculum and the testing methods
 - felt reassured that results were satisfactory and improving despite comparisons with previous years being impossible
 - noted and understood the assessment changes at primary level
 - noted the improvement progress in Ofsted inspection outcomes
 - understood early years' provision and noted the improvements in GLD
 - noted the efforts to counter deprivation and vulnerability

- noted the invaluable contribution made by WSCC, private provision and CFCs to children's readiness for school and that focusing resources led to improvements.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 At the conclusion of the review, the task and finish group feels able to reassure the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that, despite the complexities and changing assessment criteria, overall positive progress is being made in early years' readiness for school, and primary and secondary outcomes.
- 6.2 The task and finish group recommends that, should the Overview and Scrutiny Committee wish to revisit educational attainment when the new curriculum and testing regime are better established, they could look more broadly at temporary and permanent exclusions and the readiness of school leavers for further education or employment.

7. Alternatives that have been considered

- 7.1 For the purposes of the review the topics and speakers were constrained by time and the terms of reference. Wider topics could be considered in future by engaging with elements of the education provision beyond secondary education and with local employers.

8. Appendices

None

9. Background papers

Education Review Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference – available online under the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agenda 17 January 2017