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Richard Burrett
Chairman
Children and Young People's Services
Select Committee

23 May, 2012

Dear Richard

I write in response to the recommendations of the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee held on 25 April 2012 in respect of the Review of the Education and Schools Policy Task Force Report.

My responses follow your recommendations as set out below:

1) Consideration should be given to revising the terminology within the Education and Schools Policy to address concern about the potential for the term 'reduce the gap' to be misinterpreted.

I agree to take this recommendation into account in any review of the Policy.

2) The Learning Service should provide guidance on the requirements for annual reports from Area Behaviour Partnerships.

I will ask officers to ensure that there is more consistent reporting from Area Behaviour Partnerships to inform future annual reports.

3) All schools should be encouraged to work in partnership with neighbouring schools to raise attainment particularly at Key Stage 2.

This approach is already encouraged through the 24 local groupings of schools known as Localities. I will encourage all primary schools to ensure that they are maximising the benefits of these partnerships to raise standards by the end of Key Stage 2.

4) All elected members should be encouraged to visit and get to know schools in their area and ask relevant questions about raising attainment at Key Stage 2.

I continue to carry out an extensive programme of school visits and I send an invitation to the local Member to join me on these visits. Furthermore, there is cross-party membership of my Schools Review Task Force which meets termly. Members who attend this group are encouraged to keep their colleagues informed on schools' progress.

Agenda Item Number 4

5) Additional detail should be provided in the final version of the Executive Summary about the derivation of the measure of disadvantage used within the report.

I will ask officers to ensure that this additional detail is provided in the next annual report.

6) The definition of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) who are identified as School Action and School Action Plus should be included in the final version of the Executive Summary.

I will ask officers to include these definitions as recommended. Committee Members should be aware that new legislation is now being prepared which will result in a single definition of SEN from 2014 onwards.

7) The Corporate Parenting Panel should maintain a strong focus on the work being undertaken by the Virtual School to support the attainment of Looked After Children.

I am confident that the work of the VSLAC will continue to be a key focus of the CPP, and I will ensure that the views of this committee are passed onto the Chair of the CPP.

8) The first paragraph of the explanation under Priority 4 should be revised to clarify the information provided.

I will ask officers to clarify this information for the final version of the report.

9) The explanation under Priority 7 should be amended to include reference to the changing focus of the Learning Service to statutory and strategic functions, away from discretionary tasks.

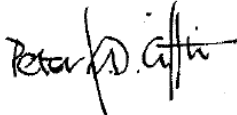
I will ask officers to amend this section of the report accordingly.

10) Monthly updates on the Academy Conversion Programme should be circulated to co-opted members of CYPSSC and relevant support officers, in addition to all elected Members.

I have already acted on this recommendation and the May 2012 update was circulated as requested.

Do let me have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Education and Schools