

# Chichester District Council

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 November 2014

### Report from the Education Task & Finish Group

#### 1. Contacts

Mrs B Tinson, Chairman of the Education Task & Finish Group  
Tel: 01243 603214 Email: [btinson@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:btinson@chichester.gov.uk)

#### 2. Recommendations

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider and note the key points concluded from this review as set out at paragraph 5.2 in the report.**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that:**

- 1) The Council makes a commitment to support family friendly policies.**
- 2) The Council should consider how it could support Early Years and Early Help strategies which support families with young children seeking or identified as needing help.**

#### 3. Terms of Reference

3.1 The background to establishing this TFG Educational Review comes as a result of previous concerns raised by the OSC in 2012 with our secondary school GCSE performance and the uncertainty about the future status of schools. Educational data provided at that time showed that some pupils lacked readiness for school, were below average at KS2 in some primary schools and this in turn affected the performance of some schools with KS4 GCSE attainment.

It was agreed in 2013 that Educational Attainment in our district schools would be reviewed by a TFG in late 2014.

The purpose of this review was to consider the current performance of schools in the Chichester district, the current status of secondary schools and, children's readiness for school (i.e. the under 5s at first entry to primary school).

3.2 The outcomes to be achieved at the end of the TFG review were to have;

- A better understanding of the progress in GCSE performance.
- An understanding of the relationship/role at WSCC with academy performance.
- An understanding of the issues relating to readiness for school.

#### 4. Approach to the review

4.1 This review was carried out over two meetings in October and November 2014. Members involved in this review were Mrs N Graves, Mr R Hayes, Mrs J Tassell and Mrs B Tinson (Chairman). Mrs Apel also attended both meetings.

4.2 The approach taken to achieve the above outcomes was a series of presentations from:

Mr M Gover, Corporate Information Officer, with educational performance data of Chichester primary and secondary schools and information on the supply of pre-school settings across the district.

Mr B Martin, Head of Schools, WSCC, to clarify and validate the performance figures and explain any slippage in performance; to give his opinions on the overall direction of travel; to explain WSCC role in managing performance and WSCC relationship with and influence over academies.

Ms W Sibley, General Advisor for Area A Schools, WSCC, to give more in-depth information about desktop performance monitoring on school results carried out and to explain value added scores and students' improvement information.

Mrs M Barton, Principal Manager Early Childhood, Children's Services WSCC, to hear about Early Years and 'readiness for school' initiatives, to receive an overview of early years provision in the area and to explain the key themes and areas of action.

Mrs P Bushby, Community Interventions Manager, to hear about the work which her team is doing as part of the Think Family Programme and on Early Help strategies.

Mr D Linsell, Director of Education, The Kemnall Academies Trust, to give his perspective on performance in the Trust's schools, their direction of travel and related details; and his views on readiness for school issues and what we can do/how we can work closely together to identify and ensure help for those families who need it.

#### 5.0 Findings of the review

5.1 The group particularly noted the following:

- Reassurance around educational results and the emphasis on 'value added' children's progress information as the key indicators of success.
- Understanding that the ability of schools to predict their results is at the heart of good performance and that all schools in the district declare their results at first entry.
- Reassurance that WSCC is resourcing activities around its 'Start of Life' priority and reinvesting in education by appointing new Directors.
- Reassurance that WSCC is Developing Memorandums of Understanding with academies to firm up the basis of their continuing dialogue.

- Reassurance that WSCC continually carries out desktop performance monitoring of every school and that they intervene in schools where concerns are raised from this data.
- Reassurance that if a school becomes vulnerable WSCC meets with teachers and governors to discuss improvement plans.
- Reassurance that TKAT is regarded as a strong multi academy trust sponsor and that as a sponsor it carries out a quality assurance role for its schools.
- Reassurance that Seal and Medmerry primary schools have put extra resources into reception years to support children's transition to primary school.
- Reassurance that early years provision e.g. nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups all follow a national curriculum.
- Reassurance that the Think Family key worker is achieving the Council's targets on the Think Family programme.
- The importance of Members' continuing commitment to engaging with educational providers in the district e.g. governorships

## 5.2 The key points concluded from this review are:

- A commitment is required from the Council to support family friendly policies.
- The Council needs to consider how it may support Early years and Early Help structures which support families seeking or identified as needing help.
- The Council works with WSCC to increase funding for the Think Family Phase 2 by working with partners who have made savings as a result of the benefits of the Think Family Programme e.g. DWP, police, accident and emergency etc.
- An open dialogue is maintained with local schools through Members' involvement as governors.
- The committee undertakes a further review of educational attainment in the district in early 2016 when there may be new Government educational policies and performance monitoring targets in place and it is likely that more schools in the Chichester district will have converted to academy status.

## 6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Early Years information, Mrs M Barton WSCC