

Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 14th January, 2015.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark(Chairman), Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Elliot Kennedy, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Mr Phil Rigby

Officers: Diane McConnell (CESC), Marianne Mason (Specialist Teacher), Judith Trainer, Jenna McDonald(LDS)

Also in attendance: Pupils and Head Teacher from Wolviston Primary School, Pupils and Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher from Conyers School.

Apologies: Cllr Ken Lupton

1 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes for signature - 25th September and 15th October 2014

The minutes of the meetings held on 25th September and 15th October 2014 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AGREED that the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 Draft Minutes - 20th November 2014

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2014.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

5 Scrutiny Review of Transition from Primary to Secondary

In support of the Scrutiny Review of Transition from Primary to Secondary, staff and pupils from Y6 Wolviston Primary School and staff and pupils from Y7/8 Conyers attended the meeting to provide Members with their personal views and opinions on the transition process.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions. The following points were raised in response to the questions:

Wolviston Primary:

- What is the relationship like with the secondary school? Members heard that the majority of children from Wolviston Primary School attend Northfield Secondary School. The Head Teacher informed Members that Wolviston had a very good relationship with Northfield and transition work had been carried out

over the past 24 months between the two schools.

- Do schools talk to each other about the information they need to transfer? Members heard that cluster meetings took place with teachers and children from both schools in order to discuss any information which needs to be transferred.

- Do you think that secondary schools are fully aware of the pupil's capabilities when they transfer? If not, how can this be improved? It was highlighted that over the past 12 months, Literacy and Numeracy Teachers from Northfield visited Wolviston Primary to sit in on lessons in order to gain more of an understanding of the capabilities of the children.

- The children were asked what worried them the most about moving to their secondary school, the children raised the following concerns: Bullying, getting lost, mixing with older pupils, being unfamiliar with teachers and moving to a much larger environment.

- The children were asked what more could be done to improve the transfer. The Pupils suggested the following:

- Ensuring that sign posts were located around the school grounds to avoid getting lost and to help find your lessons easier.

- Introducing the opportunity for children to get to know their future teachers before the transition.

Conyers School:

A Wide range of transition activities included:

- Year 5 and 6 activities including a year 5 transition day and year 6 sporting competitions

- Year manager oversees Y6 transition

- SEN - Detailed exchange of information

- Every subject completes a Sparking the Gap project. This begins in year 6 and pupils finish the work over the summer. A prize giving to which parents are invited to marks the end of the six week induction.

- Summer school taster sessions

- Induction day and family fun evening

- Induction afternoon for smaller schools

- All Year 6 pupils watch Conyers School production at The Arc

- Wide range of sporting events for primaries hosted at Conyers

- Year 11's sports leader runs festivals for primaries

- Primary pupils met Year 8 and 9 pupils at the induction day and were shown around the school by them

Pupils commented that the Sparking the Gap project:

- Helped them to see the different types of work and subjects they would be doing at secondary school

- Encouraged pupils to put more effort into their work

Pupils commented on the difference in work between primary and secondary:

- Challenging but not unattainable
- Completing work which they never heard about but receiving a lot of help
- Good to be learning new subjects
- There is a lot of homework but teachers help out at lunchtimes and homework clubs. It is a challenge, but once the homework is complete you feel good about it

Pupils commented about what they were worried about/found difficult:

- Being bullied by older pupils
- Getting lost - Sixth formers took them to lessons to begin with and this was helpful
- Lunchtime was a shock, you have to be really quick and it was confusing knowing where to go

Members of the Committee who had attended site visits to schools gave feedback to the rest of the Committee. They particularly highlighted:

- There was a wide variation in the transition arrangements across schools in the Borough - more consistency was needed
- There was a clear need for all primary and secondary schools to work much more closely together with more opportunities for joint moderation of work
- There had been clear support from the schools visited for Borough Wide Transition days/weeks
- There was a good degree of support for a Borough wide transition project
- Best practice needed to be promoted

Members were provided with an information pack from the Stockton-on-Tees Education Improvement Service which included:

Moving Forward, Proposal for a Borough-wide Primary to Secondary School Transition Programme for all Pupils.

- This proposal was designed to ensure that all Stockton children were supported as they moved from the primary phase to the secondary phase. It was highlighted that in order to identify current challenges to effective transition, particularly for vulnerable pupils, within Stockton-on-Tees, one large secondary school and related feeder primary schools were chosen and interviews with Primary head teachers and SenCos from one cluster carried out.

- Work was carried out with groups of people considered to have been vulnerable. The groups of children did not only consist of pupils on the SEN register but those who had experienced events in their lives which could have affected the transition process, such as bereavement.

The Committee felt the proposal would provide an excellent framework to support transition Borough wide.

Sprint Tracker:

- The Sprint Tracker launched with schools Autumn 2013 and devised to plot new curriculum against chronological age group expectations for each pupil. Members heard that the Tracker aimed at:

- Primary schools looking to stretch those pupils who worked beyond the KS2 curriculum
- Secondary schools to build Year 7 curriculum from pupils' current knowledge and skills
- To track progression from Year 1 through to Year 9
- KS3 Sprint Tracker in reading, writing and mathematics
- Most schools had adopted the tracker

Point Score Calculator:

- The Point Score Calculator was a simple excel sheet which aimed at supporting and measuring the progress of individuals and groups. It was highlighted that if children were to cover what was expected of them, they would be awarded with two points annually. Members were presented with explanation sheets which provided examples of the Point Score Calculator. The Point Score Calculator provided a framework to measure a pupils progress which could be used to replace the previous levels used.

In response to Members questions, Diane advised that the Council had statutory powers to intervene in the running of a school when it was failing. If schools/academies are not failing, however, they are autonomous, self-governing institutions and could not be required to comply with council guidance in relation to transition although they could be strongly encouraged to engage in the spirit of the family of schools within Stockton and in the best interests of the children and partner schools.

AGREED that the information be noted.

6 Work Programme

Members gave consideration to the work programme.

AGREED that the information be noted.