

## Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 14th March, 2018.

**Present:** Cllr Carol Clark (Chairman), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Peter Snowden

**Officers:** Neil Schneider (Chief Exec); Martin Gray, Dianne McConnell, Rhona Bolland, Joanne Mills, Leanne Chilton (CHS); Peter Mennear, Annette Sotheby (DCE)

**Also in attendance:** Ann McCoy (Cabinet Member); Clare Mahoney (St Michael's Academy); Mark Hassack, Ralph Pickles, Steve Merrifield (Outwood Grange Academies Trust); Rob Tarn, Michael Robson (Northern Education Trust),

**Apologies:**

### **CYP 60/17**      **Evacuation Procedure**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

### **CYP 61/17**      **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Inman declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Item 4 as a Governor of North Shore Academy.

### **CYP 62/17**      **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1st November 2017**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2017

AGREED that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **CYP 63/17**      **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6th December 2017**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2017

AGREED that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **CYP 64/17**      **Scrutiny Review of Inclusion in Schools**

Members received information to inform the review from a number of Multi Academy Trusts and Academies operating in the Borough. The Trusts outlined their approach as follows:

Outwood/Bishopsgarth

- Outwood Grange Academy Trust (OGAT) operates a system of peripatetic lead principals that cover a number of schools to raise standards.

- Other schools within the Trust had received three Ofsted inspections in the last 4 years (two good and one outstanding).
- Bishopsgarth was continuing on a journey of improvement. Safeguarding concerns around bullying at Bishopsgarth were highlighted by Ofsted and improvements have since been made. The school had the lowest average points score on entry in Year 7, with many pupils living in areas of deprivation and having low aspirations.
- Main role is to educate students and give them self-discipline and gain skills for the future. Tolerance of bad behaviour does not prepare young people for the role of work or help them to achieve their potential.
- Pupils who were always going to attend school and complete their work, and those who were put off from attending school due to intimidatory atmosphere, benefit from others being excluded.
- Whenever a student is given detention or exclusion, it is crucial that they are supported. The ambition was to get all pupils attending.
- It was not possible to 'game the system' by using exclusions due to the relatively new Progress 8 measure.
- A wealth of support and intervention is given to help youngsters, and every parent at Parents Evening felt that their child was supported in school.
- Once schools become calm, praise can be introduced which is more effective than sanctions.
- The school had more time to develop extra-curricular activities to engage with challenging pupils.
- The Chair of Governors at Bishopsgarth also chaired Acklam Academy. Attendance there had significantly improved and there were now 100 pupils in school that did not previously attend on a regular basis.
- Policies were acknowledged to be strict, but children value consistency.

#### Northern Education Trust / North Shore

- The Trust ran two schools in the Borough – Grangefield and North Shore. Grangefield was a Good school. The Committee was particularly interested in North Shore due to the high number of Fixed Term Exclusions.
- North Shore Academy has seen major improvements and hopes to achieve good or outstanding at the next Ofsted inspection. The school was previously at risk of intervention.
- The school has a high number of vulnerable children. There was a Vulnerable Child Register in place.
- Higher standards resulted in a number of exclusions initially. The Trust made no apologies for focussing on standards. There was a need to challenge the perceptions of a north / south divide in standards in schools and this was part of the approach. Exclusions due to issues such as wearing make-up and earrings were not due to the fact they were worn, but if pupils refused to remove them when asked.
- Students are now on task in every classroom in a calm environment, engaging with staff who can spend all their time teaching, and where learning is of a high standard. The Trust believed this was an inclusive approach and ensured there was more time for vulnerable and low ability pupils, once behaviour issues had been addressed.
- Students who were not in school due to intimidatory or bullying behaviour now benefit from a good system in place, and attend school.
- A consistent system of discipline has enabled an increase in attendance figures from students who did not attend every day in the past.

- Northshore had spent around £250k on alternative provision.
- More funding would enable earlier intervention.
- The Trust is constantly challenged with regard to exclusions, but less often asked about standards.
- Permanent exclusions were avoided wherever possible in Year 11. An example was given of the range of support put in place to avoid an exclusion, including additional Teaching Assistant support.
- A range of support for pupils with SEND or who may otherwise not have attended the school was outlined, including the Bridge unit and Personalised Learning Centre, and counselling support.

#### St Michael's Catholic Academy

- The Deputy Head of St Michael's chaired the new Stockton Pupil Inclusion Panel. Deputy and Assistant Heads meet at the Panel every 3 weeks, sharing best practices, looking at every alternative to reduce fixed term and permanent exclusions and keep students in mainstream school. Referrals to the PIP should be made once a number of FTEs had been issued.
- Permanent exclusions have a detrimental effect on a young person's education and their long-term prospects, and should be avoided wherever possible.
- The managed move process allows a student a fresh start, however this is only undertaken when a school has explored all other possibilities for that student. All schools needed to take responsibility for the children in the Borough, and to explore options to relieve pressure on the Pupil Referral Unit.
- To develop an inclusive school depends on the student mix, quality of teaching and parent engagement.
- Consideration is given to possible mental health reasons for disruptive behaviour, for example bereavement or tragedy.
- Most schools have an inclusion unit/open room for time-out from mainstream school. St Michael's equivalent room can accommodate up to 5 students.
- Early intervention is crucial – use of early help process and referral to Preventions/Youth Directions can assist schools in helping individual students. More capacity in Preventions would be helpful so that early intervention work can be done with students and families. There is greater capacity in other support services but schools need to make timely referrals. Some families choose not to engage at times, but this is improving. Monitor the number of exclusions given to the same student to help determine the correct family support package.
- Spikes in exclusions can be due to changing standards/requirements at a new school which can take time to settle down.
- Governors need to challenge decisions made in their schools to ensure they are appropriate.

All three schools invited members of the Committee to visit to see their approach and speak with pupils.

Members comments and questions could be summarised as follows:-

- Was Northshore's approach to set boundaries and then reward students for good behaviour? In response it was noted that this was the case and had resulted, for example, in some Year 11 pupils attending their Prom free of

charge due to this reward system.

- Concern was expressed with regard to lack of achievement if pupils were moved or excluded in Year 11. It was reported that North Shore current Y11 pupils with exclusions were expected to perform better than all Y11s last year.
- The Cabinet Member commented that the local authority try hard to engage with academies, and asked whether both could get together to look at best practices. Of Stockton's schools 92.5% were good or outstanding, an achievement that some other local authorities would be pleased to emulate. In response it was noted that such a meeting would be welcomed and it would be beneficial to invite staff involved with inclusions. It was noted that the Inclusion Panel performed a similar role and Members could be provided with learning from the Panel as part of the review.
- Members noted that at Bishopsgarth FTEs totalling 684 days had been issued to only 23 students. This had reduced this term by 23% with students making good progress and remaining in school. Bishopsgarth was projecting improved results for Year 11 in 2018 compared to 2017.
- High numbers of exclusions did not mean that there was regular bad behaviour in the schools.
- It was concerning that policies seemed very restrictive at North Shore compared to St Michael's and Northfield for example. It was noted that the school has a set of behaviours that are unacceptable, but does not permanently exclude students to raise school standards. It has a huge diversity of students including those who have been reintegrated back into mainstream school. 10% of pupils received support in alternative provision, funded through the school.
- Members noted perceptions that the "consequences" policy where a pupil may be sent out of class for fiddling, tapping, chewing, swinging on a chair, shouting out or sighing, then receiving sanctions that would lead to time in the Consequences Room seemed harsh as it is often difficult for children (and adults) to sit quietly for long periods. It was stated that at times students deliberately act in this way to encourage others to follow suit which then disrupts the class. The policies were in place but teachers were still able to use their professional judgement to tackle situations.
- Do the "middle of the road" students who behave in school get overlooked or lost in the system? It was noted that every student is discussed in depth to ensure they never fall behind or slip through the net.
- With regard to EHE (elective home education), what approach is adopted when pupils are taken off roll and what are the key reasons given by families? All schools present at the meeting stated that they did not support home education. It was felt that there was no advantage, particularly in disadvantaged areas for parents to home educate.

AGREED that:

- a) The Trusts be thanked for attending and the information provided be noted.

**CYP 65/17 Annual Overview of Children and Young People Services**

AGREED - this item be deferred.

**CYP 66/17 Work Programme 2017-18**

The next meeting to be held on 18th April 2018.

AGREED – that the Work Programme be noted.

**CYP  
67/17**

**Chair's Update**

The Chair had nothing further to report.