

## Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

**21 November 2016**

Present: Councillor M Madden  
Councillors K Bolger, P Brooks, J Cassidy,  
K Clark, M A Green, J O'Shea, M Thirlaway, A Newman  
and M Rankin.

Mr G O'Hanlon	Church Representative
Rev. M Vine	Church Representative
Mrs M Ord	Parent Governor Representative

### **CES31/11/16 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Austin and J Walker.

### **CES32/11/16 Substitute Members**

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor J Walker.

### **CES33/11/16 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declaration of interest or dispensations reported.

### **CES34/11/16 Minutes**

**Resolved** that subject to correction of those present by the removal of Councillor A Austin's name, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 October 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **CES35/11/16 Education Attainment and Progress Report**

The sub-committee received a report from the Chief Adviser for Early Years and School Improvement Service (SIS) on the work undertaken to ensure pupils classified as disadvantaged made comparable progress to those not classified as disadvantaged. The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee had requested at its 30 March 2015 meeting that the sub-committee monitored the effectiveness of the support and challenge programme by the SIS to ensure comparable progress was being made (minute OV43/03/15) and the sub-committee received its last report in March 2016 (previous minute CES52/03/16).

The sub-committee was informed that North Tyneside Schools had produced their best ever results in 2016 with all key measures anticipated to be in line or above the national

average, although it should be noted that the data was still provisional as test remarking and checking exercise outcomes were still unavailable.

At the end of Reception the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils reaching a good level of development was 23%; at Key Stage 1 the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils of those that reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics combined was 23%; at Key Stage 2 it was 21%; and at Key Stage 4, the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils of those students who achieved 5 A\*-C with English and mathematics was 23%, the national gap was 28%. The local authority performance of both non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged students across all phases was better than nationally; however there was a gap and closing the gap remained a key priority for improvement.

To close the gap the SIS had identified the following priorities for improvement:

- a) support schools to increase the number of pupils achieving the expected level in the Key Stage 2 tests through training, bespoke support and the sharing of best practice;
- b) share successful strategies across the authority for addressing the progress of disadvantaged pupils whilst supporting all schools to minimise difference;
- c) promote effective transition between phases of education;
- d) support schools with the introduction of the new GCSE grading system for English and mathematics in 2017 and most other subjects in 2018; and
- e) support the introduction of new specifications at Key Stage 4 and 5.

In relation to overall attainment, at the end of Reception 69.7% of children reached a good level of development. This was 6% higher than in 2015 and just above the national figure of 69.3%. This was the first time North Tyneside had been above the national value for this measure. At Key Stage 1, 81% of pupils in year 1 achieved the expected level in the phonics test. This was in line with the national figure and across reading, writing, mathematics and the combined measure. 56.1% of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 reached the expected level in the combined reading, writing and mathematics measure. This was above the national figure of 53.2%. At Key Stage 4, 63% of students achieved 5 A\*-C with English and mathematics. This level of attainment should place North Tyneside in its best ever performance position, 25<sup>th</sup> in the country and top quartile compared to all local authorities nationally. Attainment 8 (the attainment of students across 8 qualifications) was 51.2 points; this was above the 2016 national figure of 49.9 points. 67.9% of students achieved the new accountability measure 'Basics' (A\*-C in English and mathematics). The methodology for this measure had changed this year but the performance exceeded the national average of 62.8% and placed the Authority in the top quartile of local authorities nationally.

At Key Stage 5, North Tyneside achieved its best ever results. The average point score per academic entry was 32 which was significantly above the national value for state funded schools and in line with the national value for all schools and colleges, including independent. When expressed as a grade this was C+ and was higher than in 2015 when it was a C. The average point score per vocational entry was 40 (Distinction+). This was above 2015 (Distinction-) and well-above the provisional national average of 33 points. Vocational attainment was now above the national average.

Whilst acknowledging that the results compared favourably to the national figures, concern was raised by Members that at Key Stage 2 only 53.2% reached the expected level; last year the local authority had an 80% attainment. Members were reminded that changes to

the testing process for this age group had been introduced last year and had caused controversy nationwide due to the late notice of the contents of the tests and with some parents refusing to allow their children to sit the tests. Nationally and locally there had been a wide variation in the performance between schools both in individual subjects and in the combined reading, writing and mathematics measure. For these tests, despite the high performance of the local authority, 19 schools were below the attainment element of the floor standard (65% of pupils reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics) and only one school exceeded the attainment element of the coasting measure. These measures had not been revised to take account of the higher challenge of the assessments and would have implications for Ofsted inspections.

Each school had to publish how it spent its Pupil Premium Funding and how it was making a difference for those children, this was a key part of the Ofsted inspection and the SIS also challenged each school to demonstrate the difference the funding was making. It was a clear priority for all schools and those schools performing well, like Churchill Community College and Burradon Primary School shared good practice with other schools. In North Tyneside the Reading Recovery Programme had been a success and there was clear evidence to demonstrate that once a child had caught up to their age appropriate standard they did not regress. It was acknowledged that some schools might only focus on preparation for tests in the run up to the assessment period but it was discouraged and should be identified by the School Development Practitioner who worked for the SIS; the late notification of the contents of the tests did make last year particularly difficult and it was still unknown what 2017's might look like.

In relation to Looked After Children, the Head of the Virtual School was now a member of the School Improvement Service (SIS) and the service as a whole endeavoured to work holistically with colleagues across education and also in health to identify challenges and how these might be best met. The attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils was not the same throughout the borough nor did it follow an up or a down trajectory as each cohort and the numbers involved were so different.

It was clarified that the statistics included all young people children attending school, what the definition of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils was and that this was only used in reporting statistics, no child was labelled as such in the classroom. The situation with regarding the conversion of Seaton Burn High School to an Academy was also explained and Members concerns acknowledged.

It was **agreed** to note the information provided by the Chief Adviser for Early Years and School Improvement Service.

### **CES36/11/16 North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board's Annual report 2015/16**

The sub-committee received the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board's (NTSCB) Annual Report 2015/16 from the Independent Chair, Richard Burrows.

The report provided an account of what the Board and its members had achieved during the year, including an assessment of the impact of these efforts and the overall position of joint working arrangements to safeguard children and young people in North Tyneside. The report was organised into two sections, with the first considering the context and role of the Safeguarding Children Board and gave a view on the overall position regarding the effectiveness of joint working arrangements to protect children and young people in North Tyneside.

The second section examined how the Board fulfilled its statutory responsibilities and formed a view as to how effective this had been. An Executive Summary would be published to illustrate the actions the Board had agreed to take in response and amendments made to the current priorities and business plan.

For the review of 2015/16 the Annual report included sections on the national and local safeguarding context, how the Board was organised, and in the review of 2015/16 sections on: child sexual exploitation and missing children; performance management; policies, procedures and protocols; Section 11 and 156 self assessment; training; Case Reviews and the use of learning to improve practice; Child Death Overview Panel; safe recruitment and allegations management; and private fostering. The final section was the summary and sufficiency question which looked at the report as a whole and commented on the joint working arrangements to protect children and the effectiveness of the Board.

Mr Burrows commented that this was his third annual report as the Independent Chair of the NTSCB and was based on the culture of partnership and illustrated the year on year learning and progress of the Board. It was acknowledged that the pressures on the system and the turbulence being felt in the sector affected all organisations and in light of this Mr Burrows particularly wanted to note the commitment to the Board from the Deputy Chief Executive and the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding and for their recognition of how important a strong partnership was for all.

The Board had concluded that increasingly there was a more robust view of and testing out of joint working arrangements; that the partners were responsive to learning with a desire to do better; and more quantitative analysis, audits and reviews of practice had been undertaken. The coming year would see the partnership focus more on hearing children's voices, being able to clearly identify how interventions produced positive outcomes and on children who were missing from home, school or care and consequently from sight.

Members asked questions regarding the difficulty of meeting performance targets for a demand led service; the Prevent agenda and how it related to child protection; and what support was available for young men and boys at risk from sexual exploitation; and the definition of a 'missing' child.

Mr Burrows responded that the timeliness and quality of the assessments could be monitored and it was these aspects that were targeted rather than numbers; there had been no referrals through the Prevent agenda so he was unable to comment on the effectiveness of the process but it was acknowledged by those involved that it was a child protection issue and the information would be shared with appropriate agencies; he was unable to provide an answer on the services available for boys affected by CSE but accepted that it was a fair challenge and would consider it further. In relation to the definition of a 'missing child' it did specifically relate to looked after children in this context and depending on the circumstances of the child there was an interim category of 'absent'. 'Absent' was used to describe short-term incidents, if the location of a child was unknown for an hour they were 'absent', after an hour they were upgraded to 'missing'; however if the location of a child who had been identified as being at risk from CSE was unknown they would never be categorised as 'absent' they would immediately be classed as 'missing'.

The Chair thanked Mr Burrows for the work of the NTSCB and for his attendance at the meeting.

It was **agreed** to note the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2015/16.

**CES37/11/16 Child Sexual Exploitation Update**

The Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Placement Services attended the meeting to provide the sub-committee with its regular update on the work being undertaken to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE) in North Tyneside, in particular the report provided information in relation to individual cases; what work was being undertaken across the council; and what work had been undertaken with partners.

The sub-committee was informed that currently 14 young people were identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation with a high proportion of these being looked after children with full Care Orders. Looked after children placed out of the borough were the current focus to ensure their needs were being met and whether being out of the borough was actually the correct solution. As recommended by the review of the MSET (Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked) panel the risk assessment tool for child sexual exploitation had been updated and would begin to be used in December 2016.

SCARPA (a collaborative project in Newcastle made up of representatives from the Children's Society, Barnardo's and Save the Children) continued to be the predominant service for young people and provided support and intervention in respect of healthy and safe relationships and the issues of CSE. SCARPA also had a dedicated worker for boys and young men. There was capacity within this project to engage young people from the age of ten into adulthood which had significant benefit and value with regard to transition work into adulthood.

The contact group, established to consider what awareness and action was required in all service areas, had concluded its work with identified actions being taken by individual services or as part of the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children's Board (NTSCB) multi-agency sexual exploitation action plan. Two CSE Learning Forums had been held in November, CSE Practice guidance had been developed and distributed across the service in order to ensure that procedures were consistently and appropriately applied; and regular CSE clinics were being held to provide advice and support to managers. Performance data was being collated but it was too early to identify trends in patterns of behaviour to inform practice and training needs but this would be done when the information was available.

The social work secondment to Operation Sanctuary had been reinstated after a short gap and would run until March 2017. Kings Priory, Churchill, Norham, Burnside, Moorbridge schools and PALS would be seeing the drama "Chelsea's Choice" as part of the work undertaken by Bright Futures providing support and education to young people on a range of vulnerabilities.

Members sought clarification on what the process of identifying a child as being at risk was and how workers were assigned to cases; the work on increasing awareness of CSE and how strategies, advice and information was shared within teams; how the local authority's numbers compared to neighbouring authorities; and how children who left home to go elsewhere in the country, e.g. London, were identified.

The sub-committee was informed that the Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Placement Services' role was to ensure that CSE was on everyone's agenda and she also received a daily report on children in the local authority's care; currently there were no young people categorised as missing and there were two unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the borough. Schools had processes to follow if children did not attend school so children missing education were usually identified, a sixteen year old child deciding to leave home and this not being reported by the parents/carers could go unnoticed. No comparable data

for other local authorities was available to ascertain what this number looked like against statistical neighbours.

It was **agreed** to note the updated information on the work being undertaken to raise awareness of, and protect children from, sexual exploitation and the implementation of the recommendations from the sub-committee's Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Group.

## **CES38/11/16 Corporate Parenting Strategy Update**

The sub-committee received a copy of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-19 with information on how work against the action plan 2016/17 was progressing with detailed information on Disabled children.

The Manager of the Disability and Additional Needs Service informed the sub-committee that there were nine Disabled young people who were looked after known to the children with Disability social work team (age 0-18). The age of the young people ranged from 5 years to 17 years of age and there were eight males and one female. One of the young people was non-verbal, the others were able to communicate basic information (usually single words or short phrases). All the young people had difficulties in understanding complex information and the authority relied on the people who knew the young people well to identify if there had been a change in their behaviour and if something might be wrong.

Six young adults had transitioned from the children's social work team to the adult social work team in the previous 12 months. All of the six young adults were verbal with two of the young adults able to communicate using single words or short phrases and the other young adults able to communicate basic information. There were four males and two females within this cohort of young adults.

The five outcomes in the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan were:

1. Our children and Young people achieve their educational employment and life skills potential.
2. Our children have a stable home and are safe.
3. Our children are healthy and well.
4. Our children build positive relationships.
5. Our children are listened to and respected.

The report covered the five outcomes and provided information on the current status, the impact of the work undertaken and identified the next steps specifically in relation to Disabled children.

Of the 15 school aged children, 13 attended special schools within the Borough which all had an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating. The Corporate Parent Group included the Head teacher of the Virtual School and she ensured that these young people were making progress against their particular targets which were based on preparedness for adulthood rather than the acquisition of certificates. The Education, Employment and Life skills group would be undertaking a demand analysis on whether the right courses were offered which led to employment for this group of young people. There was also to be an examination of the young peoples' Health, Education and Care Plans (EHCPs) to establish whether any progress could be evidenced. The feedback from carers on EHCPs was 'satisfactory' and they had been more co-produced than in the past and there was evidence that they did succeed in enabling children into adulthood. It was acknowledged that there was a lot to

learn with the transition process and arrangements and work needed to be undertaken to understand the difficulties experienced by families and learn how this could be improved for the future and the appropriate support put in place.

The importance of taking care of the young people's social, emotional and mental health needs and the impact if this wasn't supported on their learning was stated with an explanation of the partnership working with health organisations to maximise the independence for these young people and build positive relationships.

In April 2016 a single service manager position was developed to oversee social workers in the children with a disability team and adult social care learning disability team with the intention that this would support the provision of a single named worker attached to a family throughout childhood and through transition into adult services. Each child also had a key worker to provide consistent contact and support and, in addition, access was also available to advocates to ensure the voice of the child was heard.

Members asked questions relating to the decline in the number of foster carers and how social workers were kept up to date with changes relating to benefit entitlements to ensure that young adults leaving care avoided sanctions by being given wrong information from the outset.

The sub-committee was informed that disabled children were always placed with in-house foster carers or accommodation if the particular needs of the child could be met by them and there was a drive to recruit foster carers for hard to place young people. In relation to the numbers of foster carers and the support available for care leavers generally, the Manager of the Disability and Additional Needs Service undertook to obtain this information from the appropriate officer and provide this to the sub-committee.

Members also made comments about the difficulties with the transition process from children to adult services, including personal experience, and expressed concern that other parents/carers would be too exhausted to fight the system to get the support needed. As the sub-committee would be deciding on what topic to undertake as an in-depth study in the new year, it was suggested and agreed that the transition process be put forward as one to be considered.

It was **agreed** to (1) note the information presented to the sub-committee on the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-19 and how work against the action plan 2016/17, particularly in relation to Disabled children, had progressed; and (2) that the transition process from children to adult services for disabled looked after children be considered as one of the options for an in-depth study by the sub-committee in the new year.