

Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

23 January 2017

Present: Councillor M Madden
Councillors A Austin, K Bolger, J Cassidy,
K Clark, D McMeekan, A Newman, P Oliver,
M Thirlaway and J Walker.

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

CES39/01/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Brooks, M Green and M Rankin.

CES40/01/17 Substitute Members

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

Councillor D McMeekan for Councillor M Green.

CES41/01/17 Declarations of Interest

Councillor A Newman declared a non-registerable personal interest in relation to the Dyslexia Services presentation because he and a member of his family had Dyslexia (minute CES45/01/17).

CES42/01/17 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CES43/01/17 National Education Policy

At its meeting on 18 July 2016 the sub-committee received a briefing on the *Education for All* Bill from the Deputy Chief Executive. At the time it was accepted by the sub-committee that insufficient information on the proposals was available to consider whether to establish a sub group to examine the proposals in depth and that it would be revisited in the New Year. Since July there had been a change to Government priorities and the Education for All Bill had not been published, however the Chair considered that it was still appropriate for the sub-committee to receive an update on what the new proposals were and the local authority's response to them.

The Sub-committee received background information and a presentation from the Deputy

Chief Executive on the recent work done by the Authority with school leaders in response to the national direction of education policy. Following the EU Referendum, change of Prime Minister and change of Secretary of State for Education the Government published a further Green Paper *Schools that Work for Everyone*, and sought views on its contents. The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning responded on behalf of the Authority following discussions with Cabinet colleagues and school leaders, this letter formed part of the background information appended to the report. The background information also included a briefing note issued to all Governing Bodies in July 2016 on the Authority's position, a copy of a report to Cabinet in July 2016 and outputs from two Listening Events for Chairs of Governing Bodies and Head Teachers on 10th June and 8th December 2016.

The presentation included comment on the background information; the situation nationally; the feedback received from governing bodies, head teachers and government; and information on the Green Paper *Schools that Work for Everyone*.

Members were reminded that the borough started from an unusual position due to its low number of Academies and high performing schools. That success was, in part, based on the support and challenge of the local authority which meant in North Tyneside there was limited additionality on offer which would be of a benefit to a school which converted to an academy. The small number of academies in the borough and the lack of an "Outstanding" academy in the borough meant that the borough did not have a representative on the Headteachers' Board and also no organisation available to sponsor any of the borough's schools should they be required to convert to an academy for any reason; a local authority could not be a sponsor. Recently Norham High School had been served an Academy Order even though it had come out of special measures and the issues with the forced conversion of Seaton Burn College remained. The Regional School's Commissioner and the National School Commissioner Group had been established to support an Academy system and when there were few academies in a borough and the local authority still had statutory responsibilities for all schools it became very complicated and difficult. Some of the outstanding schools in the borough were taking a watching brief on the situation to ensure they could response quickly to any changes in policy direction.

The *Schools that Work for Everyone* Green Paper's main focus was on areas of England where less than 50% of schools were classified as "good" or "outstanding", (this did not include North Tyneside) and indicated a direction of travel towards grammar schools where independent schools, universities, selective schools and faith schools would be expected to contribute to delivering more school places at "good" schools. The consultation closed on 12 December 2016 with the feedback expected in March 2017.

Members were assured that they would be kept informed as the Green Paper progressed through Parliament, an Education Bill of some kind was expected as part of the Queen's Speech this year, and that the team's focus was on keeping the positive working relationships with the schools and concentrating on outcomes for the children.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Chief Executive for his attendance and presentation.

Agreed to note the information presented to the committee on national education policy changes.

CES44/01/17 Children and Young People's Plan 2016/17

The sub-committee received a mid year progress report on the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan. The Children and Young People's Plan provided the strategic framework for the integrated planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services in order to improve the lives of children and young people in the borough. The plan was produced and owned by the Children, Young People and Learning Partnership. The Plan also served as the borough's Child Poverty Strategy, setting out how partners would work together to address the underlying causes of deprivation.

The Plan's priorities were aligned with the 'Our North Tyneside Plan', the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Safer North Tyneside Plan and set out three priorities and associated outcomes:

1. Ready for School

- a) A healthy early childhood.
- b) Children are ready to start school.

2. Ready for Work and Life

- a) Narrow the gap in educational outcomes.
- b) Ready for employment.

3. Safe, Supported and Cared For

- a) The most vulnerable children and young people are protected.
- b) Improved outcomes for looked after children.
- c) The right support for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs.

The Research and Intelligence Manager attended the meeting to present the report and answer any questions. He began by stating that whilst the report had a statistical focus the team did acknowledge that one child in need was one child too many and they would continue to improve outcomes for the children of the borough.

Members asked questions in relation to particular outcomes. In particular it was noted that whilst the improvement in the attainment of students at Norham High School was excellent news, the attainment in 2015 was as low as 35% on the Council's 'watch', how had this not been tackled previously? Why, when initial interventions did not work, were other steps not taken? Questions were also asked in relation to the number of young people who were classified as being in employment, education or training but actually had zero hours contracts or were in a position where there was little if no real chance of progression; and whether fostered children were included in the looked after children statistics.

In response Members were informed that the obesity level for young children and the 'good level of development' was a national standard and not set locally; that interventions had been in place for Norham High School since 2011/12 and that the introduction of an executive head had made a significant impact on the school; that post school destinations could be provided in the future and the style of the report to the sub-committee could include more explanation of the results. Fostered children were a significant proportion of the looked after children population which also included a small number who resided at a care home but were still with their parents.

It was **Agreed** (1) to note the information on the mid year progress of the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan; and

(2) that for the next update further information on the analysis of young people's employment destinations and longer employment trend information be provided with a more narrative report to explain the results and what policies may have impacted upon the results.

CES45/01/17 Dyslexia Services

The sub-committee received a copy of the North Tyneside Dyslexia Team Annual Report and a presentation from the Team Leader.

The presentation included information on how needs were identified promptly, what early intervention strategies were used and what longer term support was available; the specialist teaching available for children with persistent literacy difficulties; training available for schools; the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Award; strategic outreach work; and feedback from users of the service.

The sub-committee was informed that the Dyslexia team was a small team of specialist teachers available to all schools in the borough which took a preventative, early intervention approach because if a child was diagnosed in secondary school they required more support because their confidence would be lower. Schools had to have undertaken some initial intervention work with a child before they could be referred to the team which did reduce the number of inappropriate referrals to the services; not all children with reading difficulties have dyslexia. A child was unlikely to be given an Education, Health and Care Plan if their only additional need was dyslexia.

A comprehensive review of the Dyslexia Team's procedures and practice has enabled the team to provide a high quality service on behalf of the local authority. The service combined targeted involvement with mainstream school pupils who had persistent specific literacy or numeracy needs alongside capacity building within schools. Access to training, resources and informal advice was available to staff in all schools in North Tyneside, with a total of at least 638 school staff receiving training from the Dyslexia Team over a 2 year period by July 2017.

In 2012 the team had initiated the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Award which had been awarded to six schools which had been very positively received by headteachers and special educational needs coordinators and had seen benefits to all pupils in the school, not just those with dyslexia. These schools could then network and share practice with other schools allowing the Dyslexia Team to focus on schools which were not engaging with them that might benefit from their assistance.

Comments from service users indicated that the team's priorities of early identification, capacity building through training and support for targeted intervention were appreciated. The message from schools, pupils, students and parents/carers was that the preventative service was effective and pupil progress data and outcomes confirmed that the Dyslexia Team's provision was helping many pupils with significant specific literacy and numeracy difficulties to make successful progression through the mainstream system.

Members asked questions relating to the training teachers received to identify dyslexia; where to go for support if a school did not believe dyslexia may be a factor for a child; strategies for times of stress which can make a child's dyslexia worse; what number of people nationally have dyslexia; and could children who had dyslexia be missed if teachers were not confident in identifying symptoms.

The Dyslexia Team Leader informed the sub-committee that they often attended schools to deliver training sessions on dyslexia and that was preferable as research was being published all the time. If a child was struggling with any aspect of work, schools were encouraged to attempt a number of interventions themselves, if these are unsuccessful they were encouraged to refer children to the team for assessment; the team leader did not think this was an issue, they had received 28 referrals in the last two weeks. She did acknowledge that the team would be unaware if a school was not referring children but if a school has not made a referral for an untypical length of time, enquiries were made. Schools, particularly secondary schools, were good at ensuring additional time was available for children with dyslexia and would ring the team if they had particular concerns about a child at exam time or other periods of high stress; each school should have a staff member that a child could talk to about any anxieties relating to exams.

It used to be reported that 10% of the population had dyslexia; figures quoted now were between 4-20%. The team was conscious that if teachers were unsure then children may be missed and it was part of the team's work for the year to further raise the profile of the team and their work and to be in every school; early intervention was key and their focus was on the Early Years and Foundation Stage of education where they found children responded well if they had a language rich environment at this age.

The Chair thanked the North Tyneside Dyslexia Team Leader for her presentation and attendance at the meeting.

Agreed to note the information on the services provided by the Dyslexia Team.

CES46/01/17 Work Programme 2016/17

The sub-committee was provided with an update on its work programme and the progress of its in-depth investigations into support for families effected by Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Elective Home Education. There was also additional information on an option for a new in-depth investigation to be undertaken before the end of the municipal year into the transition process between children and adults services for disabled looked after children.

The sub-committee was reminded that at their July 2016 meeting it had been agreed that whilst concerned about particular elements of the *Education for All Bill* regarding school system changes and the increased focus on academisation, it had been accepted that insufficient information on the proposals was likely to be available prior to January 2017 and that it would be appropriate to consider the position again then (previous minute CES15/07/16). The report informed the committee that a full update on government policy was being provided to the sub-committee at the meeting (minute CES43/01/16) and that the Chair of the Sub-committee was of the view that a sub group to examine its implications would not be timely and would not contribute to policy development. The sub-committee agreed with this assessment.

The sub-committee was informed that Cabinet on 16 January 2017 had agreed its response to the recommendations from the ADHD sub group which had looked into the support provided for children with ADHD in the borough. The Elected Mayor had thanked the sub group for the report and welcomed any improvements to support services for children with ADHD and their families. All of the recommendations had been accepted, albeit one was only partially accepted as Cabinet wanted to consider alternative methods of delivery to the one in the recommendation. An Action Plan had been provided with

timescales for when the recommendations would be implemented by; the last date being October 2017. The sub-committee agreed to receive an update report on the implementation of these recommendations to its November 2017 meeting.

Councillor Thirlaway confirmed that the Elective Home Education Sub Group was finalising its work and the report would be submitted to the March meeting of the sub-committee for approval to refer the report to Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee for submission to Cabinet.

During discussion on the next subject for an in-depth investigation it was proposed and duly agreed that the remit be expanded from the transition process between children and adult services for disabled looked after children to the transition process between children and adult services for all looked after children as the cohort of disabled looked after children would be very small. Councillors Cassidy and Thirlaway volunteered to serve on the sub group as did Reverend Vine.

Agreed (1) to note Cabinet's response to the ADHD Sub Group's report and receive an update on the implementation of the recommendations to its November 2017 meeting;
(2) to establish a sub group to examine the processes undertaken by both Adult Services and Children Services when a disabled child transfers to Adult Services; and
(3) in addition to the members of the sub-committee who had volunteered to serve on the sub group to give all non-executive members of the Council the option to serve on the sub group.