

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
30th April, 2014**

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Ali, Clark, The Mayor (Councillor Barry Dodson), Lelliott, License, Read, Roddison and Sharman and Co-opted Member Ms. J. Jones.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckley, Burton, J. Hamilton and Kaye and Co-opted Member Mr. M. Smith.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

58. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

There were no members of the public or the press in attendance.

59. COMMUNICATIONS.

There was nothing to report under this item.

60. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12TH MARCH, 2014.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 12th March, 2014, were considered.

Resolved: - That the previous minutes be agreed as an accurate record.

61. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE.

Councillor G. A. Russell welcomed the Director of Schools and Lifelong Learning, the Head of the School Effectiveness Service and the Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children (Schools and Lifelong Learning, Children and Young People's Services Directorate) to the meeting. Councillor Russell thanked the Officers for authoring the reports and attending the meeting during a very busy time for the Service.

The Head of the School Effectiveness Service gave a presentation that outlined Rotherham's Schools' performance against key areas. The presentation updated the Improving Lives Select Commission on areas of progress and on areas where further improvements were required. The context to school performance had to be considered alongside the role of local authorities as set out in Section 13a of the Education Act (1996), the different types of schools and Ofsted's role as an independent quality assessor.

Early Years Foundation Stage Service: -

- There was a new Early Years Foundation Stage Framework;
- Many children in Rotherham joined the Foundation Stage below their age-related expectations;
- There continued to be a gap between Rotherham's performance and the outcomes achieved nationally;
- Areas where improvements were required included phonics and overall boys' attainment.

Key Stage One: -

- Key Stage One performance used to be undertaken by formal assessment, but was now through teacher assessment;
- The expected age-related performance was Level 2b;
- Boys' attainment was an area where improvements were required across Rotherham.

Key Stage Two: -

- Assessments at this stage were undertaken under 'exam conditions';
- Attainment at Key Stage Two was an area of significant underperformance in Rotherham;
- Outcomes suggested that children were not making progress quick enough through this Key Stage;
- Outcomes at the end of Key Stage Two were one measure used to judge whole school performance.

Key Stage Four: -

- Rotherham had demonstrated significant improvements over this Key Stage;
- Rotherham's GCSE performance achieved highly.

Key Stage Five: -

- This Key Stage constituted post-16 education, and included sixth-form provision;
- Performance at this Key Stage was complex and would warrant its own session to fully consider all of the relevant factors.

In summary: -

- Attainment and outcomes from across the five Key Stages were one of the ways that judgements were made about schools' progress;
- Rotherham was continuing to make good progress at Key Stage Four;

- Areas where further improvements were required to close the gap between Rotherham's performance and that achieved nationally were Key Stage Two and Boys' attainment and Literacy across all Key Stages.

Discussion followed the presentation and questions and comments were made: -

- **Why was Boys' performance lagging behind in Rotherham? Was this due to nature or nurture and what role did learning and assessment styles have? Was this the case nationally?**

Testing conditions were tending to favour girls' learning and remembering styles. Continuous assessment methods used favoured girls, whereas single end-of-year or end-of-school-career exams tended to favour boys' learning styles. However, some schools were bucking the trend and boys were outperforming girls, but this could be because girls were underperforming.

Boys matured later than girls and their learning styles favoured active styles of learning. Schools needed to ensure that their teaching and learning methods engaged both boys and girls.

Because testing was an annual event, significant changes were expected to attainment performance given the school amalgamations that were taking place, leadership changes and the use of Local Leaders of Education to drive school performance up.

- **Could action to raise the performance of boys lead to gender segregation in learning? (The Councillor who raised this question felt that it would be a negative development.)**

There was no movement towards gender segregated education in Rotherham schools. Schools and the Local Authority were using a range of strategies to ensure that all children performed to their best ability, including judging performance against national outcomes. School attainment was not the only performance measure used to judge schools. Children and young people did need qualifications to progress to the next stage of their life, but qualifications alone were not the only thing needed for successful adulthood.

- **What strategies were taking place to ensure that there were no underperforming or left behind ethnic and/or social class groups? There were groups that showed clear examples of educational disadvantage. What was being done to encourage disadvantaged communities to engage with education?**

This would be addressed in the section relating to the Pupil Premium.

- **Government messages were always clear that a child's first five years were crucial. Rotherham's performance was behind national performance in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage Two, but above in Key Stage Four. How was this the case; was it down to Rotherham's excellent secondary schools?**

Rotherham did have outstanding secondary schools whose performance was amongst the best in the country. Rotherham also had outstanding primary schools. Globally, trends had been identified that suggested large junior schools were not conducive to high outcomes due to leadership and management considerations. Rotherham's performance at Key Stage Four – GCSE level – had improved over the past ten to fifteen years. Rotherham's performance was closest matched to North Yorkshire, whereas the other South Yorkshire areas and statistical neighbours' performance was the opposite to Rotherham's.

- **What was considered to be a large primary school, and was this the same in other areas?**

400-500 pupils was considered to be a large primary school. Previous policies had been to limit pupil numbers within primary schools. Some areas had primary schools with 900-1000 pupils but this was not considered good practice.

- **How were services working together to ensure that children starting school had the best start possible?**

Rotherham's Early Years Service was developing better links to health, wellbeing and education.

Councillor Russell thanked the Officers for their attendance and contribution to the discussion.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the areas where improvements are required: Key Stage Two and Boys' attainment and Literacy attainment across all Key Stages be noted.

62. IMPACT OF THE PUPIL PREMIUM.

In addition to the Schools and Lifelong Learning Officers who had attended for the previous item, Councillor G. A. Russell welcomed the Headteacher of Broom Valley Community Primary School, and the Executive Headteacher of the Sandhill Multi-Academy Trust.

The Head of the School Effectiveness gave an overview of the overall attainment of pupils who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM): -

- Attainment gaps persisted between pupils from deprived backgrounds and their more affluent peers at all stages of education, including entry into higher education;
- The highest early achievers from deprived backgrounds were overtaken by lower achieving children from more advantaged backgrounds by age seven;
- This gap widened further throughout secondary education and persisted into higher education;
- The likelihood of a pupil eligible for FSM achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths was less than one third of a non-FSM pupil;
- A pupil from a non-deprived background was more than twice as likely to go on to study at university as their deprived peer.

The Pupil Premium: -

- Introduced by the Coalition Government in 2011;
- Eligible children were those looked after by the local authority, those who had been eligible for FSM at any point in the past six years (also known as Ever 6 FSM) and for children with parents currently serving in the armed forces;
- The Pupil Premium gave schools extra funding to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils from Reception to Year 11;
- In 2014/2015 the amounts of the Pupil Premium would be: -
 - Primary-aged pupils - £1,300 (increased from £900 during 2013/2014);
 - Secondary-aged pupils - £935 (increased from £900 during 2013/2014);
 - Looked-After Children - £1,900 per pupil.
- Schools were responsible for how the FSM Pupil Premium was spent, and had to publish how they spent the additional funding and how it had made a difference to attainment of eligible children;
- Local Authorities were responsible for distributing Looked After Children Pupil Premium to the schools and academies these children attended;
- Ofsted inspected how schools were deploying their Pupil Premium. It was unlikely that a school would be judged to be Outstanding if its disadvantaged pupils were not making good progress.

The Head of Service referred to the annexes submitted with the report. The information included: -

- Good Practice information on spending the Pupil Premium successfully to maximise achievement;
- 2013 performance for pupils who were eligible for the Pupil Premium including Key Stages One, Two and Four, and how these compared negatively to their more affluent peers' performance;

- The £ allocation of Pupil Premium funding to Rotherham schools during 2013/2014.

The Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children spoke about how the Pupil Premium for Looked After Children was developing, along with the workforce available to support Looked After Children.

- The changing role of the Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children: -
 - Accountable for the use of Pupil Premium through pupil progress interviews, interventions and impact assessment;
 - Would be accountable for passing the money on to schools and academies. Previously it had gone directly to schools and academies;
 - The role of the Virtual Headteacher was to become the fifth statutory role within a local authority;
 - In Rotherham the Pupil Premium for Looked After Children would be closely linked to Personal Education Plans (PEP) to ensure that a looked-after child was supported to achieve the targets within their PEP, which existed as part of their wider Care Plan;
 - Proposals about how the Pupil Premium for Looked After Children would be allocated were being drawn up, but included termly lump-sums being released to schools and academies after they had submitted monitoring and action plans that were specific to the child or young person's needs and had demonstrated appropriate use of funding and progress;
 - Both schools and local authorities would be accountable to Ofsted for the use of the funding.

The Chairperson of the Improving Lives Select Commission thanked the Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children for her presentation. Councillor Russell was pleased that the role was becoming statutory and also pleased with the clear outline given about the proposed deployment of funding to schools and academies alongside the use of robust PEPs to record children and young peoples' needs, targets and progress.

The two Headteachers had attended the meeting to give an account of how FSM Pupil Premium was deployed in their schools.

The Executive Headteacher of the Sandhill Multi-Academy Trust, spoke about how FSM Pupil Premium was used in his schools: -

- The use of the Pupil Premium sat within the overall ethos and vision of the Multi-Academy Trust, which was 'Learning How to Learn';
- Pupil Premium funding was used for things like music tuition as it removed the financial barrier that low-income children faced so they could explore their talent. The funding also provided access

to learning mentors, improvements to social skills and self-esteem, breakfast clubs, emotional support, parenting workshops, bereavement, family crisis, early years physiotherapy or physical development support and the school had a residential visit for each year of Key Stage Two;

- Named School Governors were responsible for tracking FSM childrens' progress compared to their more affluent peers national progress;
- It was not used to provide quality teaching and learning but to provide additionality;
- It was used to remove barriers and was not all spent at once. Some funding was kept in reserve throughout the school year to address issues as and when they arose, for example bereavement support;
- Children who received Pupil Premium were not segregated from their more affluent peers;
- The school did not identify individual children when it published information about the Pupil Premium.

The Headteacher of Broom Valley Community Primary School, spoke about how the FSM Pupil Premium was used in his School: -

- Broom Valley Community Primary School received £124,000 for 138 children, which equated to 35% of the school population during a previous financial year;
- Every professional working in every classroom knew the names of the children who were eligible for the Pupil Premium;
- Consideration was given to classroom structure and seating children receiving Pupil Premium together so that their needs could be identified and they benefit from the interventions;
- However, care was taken not to conflate FSM eligibility with automatic low attainment;
- All teaching needed to be good as a baseline. The FSM Pupil Premium was not used to fund extra teachers or teaching assistants;
- Pupil Premium funding was used to provide reasons or 'hooks' for children to come to school and enjoy it, which would lead to increased attainment;
- Broom Valley Community Primary School sought to ensure that there were children in receipt of FSM Pupil Premium on the School Council, Library Monitors, Reading Buddies and Play Ground Buddies. FSM-eligible children had been historically underrepresented on these bodies. The School aimed to increase the childrens' aspiration to be chosen for things and become involved;
- After School Club attendance had increased from 31 to 49 FSM eligible children;
- School Council representation had increased from 2/30 children – 7% - to 8/30 children – 27%;

- Parental involvement and the Achievement for All Strategy. A termly 40-minute meeting was held where a structured conversation took place to work with families to improve outcomes and encourage aspirations around education and learn what parents wanted for their child's education. 72 structured conversations had taken place with families as a result of the Pupil Premium;
- Provision of breakfast clubs to fulfil basic needs like hunger. Being hungry meant that children would not learn during the school day. Breakfast clubs enabled families to spend quality time together and improved childrens' attendance and punctuality;
- Pupil Premium funding had been used to buy P.E. kits and homework packs. Completion of homework had increased by 14%;
- Three walking busses were run by the School along with a rewards system for punctuality;
- The Pupil Premium was used for the benefit of the children and not for Ofsted. A recent Ofsted report had said that Broom Valley Community School was 'very much an inclusive school'.

Discussion ensued and the following points were raised: -

- **What would happen when the Free School Meal entitlement was rolled out to all infant-aged children from September, 2014. Would all infant-aged children be in receipt of the FSM Pupil Premium and be eligible for the Ever 6 FSM?** – No notice had been given about what the plans would be following the universal infant entitlement;
- **What safeguards were in place to ensure that the Pupil Premium funding is targeted appropriately and not 'absorbed' into general budgets?;**
- **Sustainability – what would schools do if the funding scheme ended?;**
- **What could the Local Authority do to ensure the good practice that was demonstrated here was widely known?** – Being aware of good practice and ensure that all stakeholders know what good practice looked like;
- **Linking into Rotherham's Families for Change programme;**
- **Governor training on the importance of the Pupil Premium and their role in challenging the Headteacher on the deployment of the funding;**
- **What powers did the Local Authority have to enforce excellent practice for funding the Pupil Premium?** – The Local Authority could not enforce schools to spend the money in a particular way. However, good practice could be shared. There were consequences of not following good practice for using the Pupil Premium in terms of attainment outcomes and Ofsted inspection outcomes;
- **Training for Headteachers** – Two excellent examples had been shared today, but any number of headteachers could have

attended to share their good practice. Information and good practice was shared at a recent Joint Headteachers meeting, where over 90% of Rotherham's headteachers had attended.

The Chairperson thanked the Headteachers and Officers for attending the meeting and for the information they had provided and the passion that they demonstrated to improve outcomes for the children attending their schools.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

63. CONSULTATION ON THE GOVERNMENT'S CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY.

The Policy and Partnership Officer (Policy and Research, Planning and Regeneration, Environment and Development Services Directorate) presented the submitted report that outlined the requirements of the Child Poverty Act (2010) and the current consultation relating to child poverty.

The report outlined the requirements and intentions of the Act: -

- The Act intended that less than 10% of children would live in poverty by 2020/2021. This was from a baseline of 18% in 2010/2011;
- In 2011/2012 17% of children were living in relative income poverty;
- The Act required the Government to produce a Child Poverty Strategy every three years, and for local authorities and their partners to cooperate to produce a local needs assessment and produce a joint local Child Poverty Strategy;
- Originally the Act had defined poverty as children living in households with less than 60% of the median income;
- Frank Fields MP's independent review stated that there should be a shift in focus from relative income measures of poverty to tackling root causes, along with a clear focus on the 'foundation years' of a child's life;
- Previous consultation that had been undertaken called 'Better Measures' related to issues of income, worklessness, parental skills, debt and family stability;
- The Child Poverty Act (2010) called for the creation of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. The Commission's 'State of the Nation' report published in 2013 called for the working poor to be the focus of the future efforts to eradicate child poverty.

The report also considered Rotherham's context: -

- On the latest available figures, around 13,000 Rotherham children – one in five – lived in relative income poverty;
- 64% lived in a lone-parent household;

- An updated needs assessment was required as it was now estimated that 42% of the families were not in work;
- Rotherham's Early Help Strategy had a focus on preventative work with children and families and served as the primary vehicle for addressing and mitigating the effects of child poverty in Rotherham;
- Rotherham's Health and Wellbeing Board's Strategy had a specific poverty priority focussing on reducing health inequalities and improving skills and work readiness;
- A Strategy for building resilience in Rotherham was being developed and concentrated on four objectives related to sustainable employment and training, inclusive economic growth, helping people to thrive and fulfil their potential and building social capital and helping neighbourhoods to flourish.

A draft response had been prepared regarding the specific consultation questions that were to be used to shape the next three-year Strategy: -

1. To what extent do you agree that the draft strategy achieves a good balance between tackling poverty now and tackling the drivers of intergenerational poverty?
2. Considering the current fiscal climate, what is your view of the actions set out in the draft strategy?
3. At a local level, what works well in tackling child poverty now?
4. At a local level, what works well for preventing poor children becoming poor adults?
5. What more can central government do to help employers, local agencies and the voluntary and community sector work together to end child poverty?

A draft consultation response was included and the content of the response was discussed.

There was general support for the response. It was requested that the response to question two regarding the use of Pupil Premium funding be amended to reflect the information that was shared under the previous two items.

It was noted that the final response would be considered at the Children, Young People and Families Partnership meeting taking place on 21st May, 2014, before being submitted to the Department for Education on 22nd May, 2014.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That the draft response, with the amendment to the section concerning Pupil Premium funding, be approved by the Improving Lives Select Commission and be passed on to the Children, Young People and Families' Partnership.

64. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME 2013/2014 UPDATE AND FORWARD PLANNING 2014/2015.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Senior Scrutiny Adviser: Member Development (Scrutiny Services, Legal and Democratic Services, Chief Executive's Office Directorate) that outlined the activities of the Improving Lives Select Commission during 2013/2014.

The Select Commission had received a mid-year update on the 2013/2014 work programme at their meeting on 18th December, 2014 (Minute No. 42 refers).

The Select Commission had completed work on: -

- Children Missing from Education;
- Local Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Safeguarding Report and Business Plan;
- 'Working Together' 2013 guidance;
- Adult Safeguarding Annual Report;
- Update on Families for Change (outcomes);
- Annual Lifestyle Survey (2013);
- School places update;
- Outcomes for Looked After Children (based on the ten questions to ask document);
- Narrowing the Gap – the impact of the Pupil Premium;
- Key Stage Performance;
- Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Improving services for people experiencing domestic abuse;
- Carers' review – completed jointly with the Health Select Commission.

The intended item on poverty affecting children and older people had been absorbed into the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board's work programme. A further report on anti-bullying was awaiting completion and would be presented to the Improving Lives Select Commission prior to the recess.

A suggested work programme for the Improving Lives Select Commission for 2014/2015 included: -

- Children Missing from education (update);
- Update on Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Neglect – effects on vulnerable children and young people;
- Outcomes for Looked After Children;
- Updates on Families for Change;
- Effectiveness of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub;
- Annual Safeguarding Report and Business Plan (LSCB);
- Forced marriage (recommendation from scrutiny review of domestic abuse);

- Annual Safeguarding Report for Vulnerable Adults;
- Review of progress: scrutiny review of domestic abuse.

Given how safeguarding issues for children, young people and vulnerable adults was central to the issues in the suggested work programme it was suggested that 'safeguarding' become the common theme of the Select Commission. It was noted that the Improving Places Select Commission's central theme would be supporting the local economy, the Health Select Commission's would be mental health and wellbeing, and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board's would be the Department for Work and Pensions and other programmes.

The Improving Lives Select Commission's work programme maximised the potential for scrutiny to have an impact and mitigated against the risk of using resources with little impact or outcome. The work programme needed to maintain flexibility to allow for uncertainties to be accommodated within the planning process.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That the outcomes of the Improving Lives Select Commission during 2013/2014 be noted.

(3) That the suggested work programme for this Select Commission during 2014/2015 be agreed as the central theme of safeguarding.

65. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Wednesday 11th June, 2014, to start at 1.30 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.