

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3A - Town Hall
27 September 2018 (7.00 - 8.55 pm)**

Present: Councillors Judith Holt (Chairman), Sally Miller,
Reg Whitney, Tele Lawal, Michael Deon Burton,
Christine Vickery and Christine Smith+

Co-opted Members:

Julie Lamb, Special Schools

Lynne Bennett, Church of England
Jack How, Roman Catholic Church

+ Substituting for Councillor Carol Smith

The Chairman advised those present of action to be taken in the event of an emergency evacuation of the building becoming necessary

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (AGENDA ITEM 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Gillian Ford, Carol Smith (Christine Smith substituting) and Natasha Summers.

Apologies were also received from Tim Aldridge, Director of Children's Services and from Taiwo Adeoye, Democratic Services Officer (Anthony Clements substituting).

10 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 2)

There were no disclosures of interest.

11 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

The Chairman clarified that an informal briefing on Private Sector Landlords would be given to the Sub-Committee at the conclusion of the formal meeting and that a written report on the issue would be taken at a future meeting. The issue of knife crime among young people would also be scrutinised at a future meeting.

The Chairman had conducted visits to schools including Brady, Parsonage Farm and Rainham Village Primary Schools, met head teachers and pupils

and been shown round the premises. Further visits were planned to schools in Hornchurch during the half term period.

It was noted that an Executive Decision had been agreed to establish a nursery class at Langton Infant School. The class had opened in September 2018 with 18 children aged 3-4 years.

12 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 10 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

It was agreed that a draft work programme for the Sub-Committee should be discussed at the next meeting. Updates on provision for children with Special Education Needs or Disabilities and on the OFSTED inspection of Children's Services would also be given at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

13 OLIVE ACADEMY (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Officers reported that the Olive Academy, run by a company that specialised in alternative provision, had been operating for two years following the previous failure of an inspection by the Pupil Referral Unit. The Academy worked with students to try to develop their self-esteem, focussing on permanently excluded pupils at Key Stage 4.

The Academy had received a less favourable review although there was a new head teacher and new core subject teachers at the school. Work would take place to make the Key Stage 3 curriculum at the school more appropriate. The new behaviour and attendance policy at the school was fit for purpose but had yet to fully embed at Key Stage 3.

There had been a slight improvement in exam performance at the school with high rates of entry and good pass rates for English and maths. Pupil attendance had improved in comparison to pupils' attendance at mainstream schools. As regards governance, the Academy enjoyed good links with the Local Authority and with local schools and the Service Level Agreement with the Academy had been refined over time.

Substantial building work was taking place at the site in order to increase capacity which was due to be completed by Easter 2019. The first OFSTED inspection of the Academy was due in spring 2019.

It was planned to increase over time the number of Olive Academy pupils returning to mainstream schools. If a pupil was admitted for respite entry into the Academy, the receiving school was named as the point of entry. At Key Stage 4, the aim of the Academy was to direct pupils towards attaining GCSEs but it was accepted that this was not always possible if for example a pupil had Special Education Needs. The academy also worked closely

with post-16 education providers and all leavers last year had moved on to either further education, employment or training.

Behaviour issues included the establishment of a named safer school officer to manage pupil dispersal outside the Academy. The Academy also now had a uniform that had proven popular with pupils. It was clarified that behaviour policies operated whilst pupils were in school uniform even if they were away from the school premises. This could however be difficult to enforce. The Chairman indicated a wish to visit the Academy in due course.

The Academy was funded for a total of 64 pupils with class sizes varying from a maximum of 8 down to 1:1 sessions. Each class generally had a teacher and at least one other adult present. There was also a procedure for staff to summon assistance should this be required.

The Sub-Committee noted the position.

14 PERFORMANCE UPDATE - QUARTER ONE (AGENDA ITEM 6)

It was noted that the number of indicators for review by the Sub-Committee had been reduced from 17 to 8. Whilst two indicators would be amended, the Sub-Committee would from now on be considering four indicators for Learning & Achievement and four related to Children in Care.

The proportion of early years providers judged good or outstanding was ahead of target and provision in Havering for this area included a good training offer to early years providers. DfE methodology for the equivalent measure for schools had changed slightly but two Havering Academies had received a good rating in recent inspections. Numbers of children missing from education had reduced overall.

The percentage of child protection visits carried out within timescale had seen significant progress in the last quarter and it was a priority for the service that children with child protection plans were seen. A restructure of the service was likely to lead to continued improvement in this area and this indicator would therefore be altered to look at the percentage of initial child protection conferences held.

The number of missing children indicator had reduced significantly over the past year and issues such as gang violence and child sexual exploitation that led to children going missing were being addressed by the Council. Recruitment of new foster carers had started slowly this year with only six recruited to date but officers felt that the overall target of 16 new foster carers to be recruited this year was on target to be met. A number of prospective foster carers were currently undergoing the assessment process and it was suggested that a report on foster carer recruitment could be taken at a future meeting of the Sub-Committee. Officers also felt that

the full year target of 8 new approved adopters was also on target to be met.

The Council had run a positive fostering recruitment campaign including a large poster by Romford station. Groups such as teachers, Police, nurses and the BME population who were thought more likely to foster had also been focussed on by recruitment advertising.

The Chairman thanked officers for producing the performance indicator figures.

15 BROADFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL (AGENDA ITEM 7)

Officers advised that this school, located in Harold Hill, had previously been in special measures. The school had improved but its SATS results this year had not been administered correctly resulting in coverage in the national press. An investigation by the Standards and Teaching agency was ongoing but the school's results for english and maths had been annulled.

Officers assured the Sub-committee that this issue was being taken very seriously and that the Council was working very closely with the school. The investigation was expected to conclude prior to the half-term holidays. The Executive Head was not present at the school whilst the investigation was ongoing but the Head of School remained in place.

It was confirmed that training was run for school staff on how SATs should take place and a sample percentage of the administration of SATs was tested. The Council would seek to look at any lessons learnt from the incident. Children affected were not able to resit the tests but their teacher assessment results (which were not subject to investigation) would still be passed on to their secondary schools.

The Sub-Committee noted the position.

16 PRIMARY SATS OUTCOMES, 2018 (PROVISIONAL) (AGENDA ITEM 8)

Initial provisional figures indicated that SATs results at Key Stage 1 were just above the national average which was good progress. The combined measure at Key Stage 2 for reading, writing and maths was 6% above the national average. Havering was likely to be in the 10th – 20th percentage for this stage nationally which was considered a good outcome.

Progress at Key Stage 1 meant Havering was likely to be in at least the top 20% nationally, part of a good performance across the sector overall. It was expected that there would be some variances in the results of individual schools and data on the performance of individual schools would be brought to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

17 ACADEMICALLY ABLE PUPILS (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Chairman felt that gifted children did need support and it was important this was provided. Officers advised that very few children entered early years exceeding national expectations for academic ability. Figures for exceptional children at Key Stage 1 were broadly in line with national averages and these were exceeded at Key Stage 2. Equivalent figures for Key Stage 4 were in line with the national average whilst small gains had been seen at Key stage 5 (A-Levels) but figures for this stage remained below the national average.

The Council's quality assurance team aimed to ensure schools undertook work with more able pupils. There was no longer any specific funding to support more able pupils so the focus was on challenging and influencing schools. Nearly all Havering schools did provide extra teaching for academically able children.

Additional teacher training was also provided and support was publicised via e.g. The Rising Stars programme, Connections and virtual universities in schools. Most schools also had a Gifted and Talented Policy. Some schools also offered preparation for the 11 plus examination and this was a decision for the governing body. Teaching standards also expected teachers to provide work that was suitable for each child.

Officers emphasised that provision for higher attaining children was not the responsibility of the Local Authority and that there was not any specific funding for this. Academies could not be instructed in this regard, the Council could only make suggestions although academies were scrutinised via the quality assurance process. Academically able children were also not currently a focus for OFSTED.

It was clarified that current legislation did not permit Academies to express a preference to be selective. The Chairman felt pupils could excel at more selective schools but agreed that there was no option for this in Havering.

18 CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2017-18 (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The statutory complaints process for children's issues consisted of three stages – local resolution, independent investigation and a stage 3 review panel. Complaints learning had been helped by the opening of the Cocoon centre which had already hosted a complaints meeting for young people. Practice weeks were also held to allow better engagement between social workers and families.

Three Ombudsman complaints had been received in 2017/18 with one finding of maladministration concerning Education Health and Care Plans. One matter had been closed by the Ombudsman after some initial enquiries and one investigation was still ongoing.

Complaints from young people had increased slightly following the introduction of an app to facilitate this. There had not been any stage 3 escalations in 2017/18. The main reason for complaints was the level of service and particularly the support offered to parents.

A total of 41 complaints had been upheld at earlier stages of the process, 38 not upheld and 8 withdrawn. The main themes of the complaints had been support to care leavers (although this had improved since the opening of the Cocoon) and recording practices where parents disagreed with the outcome of an assessment by social workers. It was hoped that the introduction of a new social care IT system would improve recording practices.

It was accepted that complaint response times were not as good as they should be although efforts were made to keep people informed as far as possible. Members correspondence had achieved a rate of 63% responded to within timescale. There had also been a low rate of compliments during the period under review although it was felt that this was due to low reporting by staff of compliments received.

Education complaints covered bullying as the main issue. It was clarified that enquiries re schools were received by the complaints team but these were signposted back to the relevant school.

The complaints system was publicised on-line and leaflets were also available and the complaints system was also explained by phone to parents if necessary. Officers also tried to manage the expectations of parents as regards the complaints process.

The Sub-Committee noted the content of the Children's Services Annual Complaints Report 2017-18.

Chairman