Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

MEETING	DATE	ITEM
CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE - SPECIAL	**31st March 2016**	

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE–EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT TOPIC GROUP

SUMMARY

This report contains the findings and recommendations that have emerged after the Topic Group scrutinised the subject selected by the Sub-Committee in October 2014.

The environmental, equalities & social inclusion, financial, legal and HR implications and risks are addressed within the Topic Group's report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members:

1. Note the report of the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Topic Group

2. Decide whether to refer the recommendations of the Topic Group set out in section 4 of this report to Cabinet.

At its meeting on 21 October 2014, the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee agreed to establish a topic group to ensure that children in Havering were getting the best education and support to achieve their best potential.

Attached is the Topic Group's report. The report includes details of the research that the group undertook in reaching the conclusions set out.

Staff Contact: Wendy Gough
Designation: Committee Officer

Email: wendy.gough@onesource.co.uk
Telephone No: 01708 432441

REPORT OF THE
CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT TOPIC GROUP

1.0   BACKGROUND

1.1   At its meeting on 21 October 2014, the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee agreed to establish a topic group to ensure children in Havering were getting the best education and support to achieve their best potential.

1.2   The following Members formed the topic group at its outset: Councillors Gillian Ford (Chairman), Jason Frost, John Glanville, Keith Roberts and Nic Dodin. Jack How was also a member of the topic group.

1.3   The Topic Group met on six occasions, including visits to schools, so that all areas of educational attainment could be investigated. The Topic Group has now reached its findings and conclusions which are detailed in this report.

1.4   The Topic Group experienced a number of challenges and issues leading to the delay in reporting. These included changes to clerk support, school holidays and the introduction of Lead Member and Scrutiny Chair School Progress Reviews.

2.0   SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

2.1   To understand the attainment level in all schools including Academies within the borough.

2.2   To understand how schools are supported by the Local Authority.

2.3   To understand any issues for lower attainment schools and the reasons why.

3.0   FINDINGS

3.1   The group wished to scrutinise all areas of educational attainment in Havering. It was agreed that the group would not look at where individual schools were within the published league tables, but the focus would be around the educational values in the borough as a whole.

3.2   The group investigated the School Standards Report, 2014, which showed where Havering sat within London compared with both Inner and Outer London, nationally and with its statistical neighbours. The group noted that

Havering had a significantly reduced amount of funding than its neighbours and so comparisons were very difficult.

3.3   The topic group noted the main challenges of the School Standards Report 2015/16 in the short and medium term to improve the borough's ranking particularly when compared with London by improving the:

- Percentage of schools judged at least "good" by Ofsted, particularly in the secondary sector;
- Progress pupils made between key stages two and four;
- Attainment of pupil groups such as Children Looked After and low attaining pupils (previously called SEN without a statement) at all key stages;
- Attainment of pupils at key stage four in secondary schools in some subjects particularly, humanities, science and mathematics;
- The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and non disadvantaged peers; (Recommendation 4.4)
- Performance of Further Education colleges providing for 16 to 19 year olds.

3.4   The School Standards Report provided a five-year trend, this was not comparable to Ofsted reports as they provided a four-year trend and concentrated more on the standards of schools rather than their attainment.

3.5   The group noted that with the introduction of the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) would have a significant effect on the figures reported for each area.   The EHCPs would replace School Action (SA) and School Action Plus (SA+). Members noted that SA was assigned only by the school and was therefore subjective with no external monitor. However, SA+ was externally moderated by the local authority, and whilst this did recognise the needs of the child and was agreed by the school, this was not the same as a statement or the new EHCPs. (Recommendation 4.6)

3.6   Members were concerned that when the change took place children currently on School Action may not receive the support they required. It was explained that the Department for Education had suggested that every child may need intervention at some point in their education as there was an expected rate of progress for every child.

3.7   Officers explained that whilst the service did not carry out an overview of all schools, it did annual health checks and quality assurances.   School trackers were monitored and samples of assessments and marking meetings were investigated.   The service worked with groups who were under attaining and with schools who were graded 2 or 3 by Ofsted and therefore a priority.

3.8   Monthly performance monitoring boards were held to look at the progress of children, and the pupil review meeting also examined, in detail, lessons, talking to children involved and any challenging sessions carried out by

teachers. The group noted that each school has its own action plan which it followed.

3.9 The group observed that looked after children were below average attainment in key stage 1 and key stage 4. This was attributed to the stability of the looked after child placement. If there were breakdowns in placements this affected the child and as children become older both education and attainment were affected.

3.10 Discussions were had about the use of the pupil referral units. Members raised concerns about the success at a primary level. It was felt that a pupil referral unit was necessary at secondary level; however members felt that pupil referral units were not necessary for primary aged children. (Recommendation 4.5)

3.11 Members investigated how English not the first language was supported and how the schools worked with the local authority to maintain levels. It was observed that languages were an issue across all year groups as there was a very diverse and mixed cohort. It was explained that Inner London boroughs received higher funding for English as an additional language (EaL). The EaL service had to be bought in, which was a challenge, as this was a Traded Service that schools had to purchase.

3.12 It was noted that from the October 2015 school census, there was 17.4 % of pupils in primary schools and 10.5% pupils in secondary school with English as an additional language (EAL). It was explained that other boroughs have specific groups in the community that can work with the children and local authority. However, Havering did not have specific groups so it was very difficult to engage with the community. Often children would present at school on the first day and not be able to speak any English. The groups felt that this was an issue that needed addressing (See Recommendation 4.1 and 4.2)

3.13 The group was informed that Local Authority maintained primary schools in Havering, were able to buy back access to the EAL service, as a bulk Funding Forum agreement, access to both training and advice was readily available to class teachers. It was noted that this was also available to academies as part of the traded offer and there were approximately half the academies within this buy-back service.

3.14 The percentage of EAL learners was growing over time, although it was noted that this was not dramatic and the growth was accounted for by schools' finance teams who reviewed funding allocations to meet the changing demographics of Havering schools.

3.15 The group agreed that they would wish to visit schools to understand attainment levels. Officers explained that there were 14 out of the 18 secondary school which were academies. However all 18 schools shared good practice. It was noted that Hall Mead Secondary School was a "Secondary Teaching School"; all Head teachers attended the partnership as did the college and representatives from the local authority.

Visit to Schools in Havering.

3.16   Members of the group visited schools in the borough to understand the decline in attainment across secondary schools in the borough and how this could be improved upon. Schools stated that they received a lot of support from the Local Authority, not only financially.   A number of building improvements had been made at one school following feedback received from pupil surveys. These were often visible improvements or repairs which had a positive impact on moral throughout the school.

3.17   The Head Teacher at Gaynes Secondary school explained that he felt the decline in their intake was due to previously receiving more pupils from Thurrock. This number had changed as Coopers Company and Coborn School had increased their numbers. Other areas suggested as contributing factors included the lack of expansion/ building of new homes in the south east area of the borough; the locality was turning into an ageing population and the withdrawal of a local bus route.

3.18   Reductions in school capital funding provided by the Government were also suggested as a factor since this had declined in one school from £100,000 in 2007 to £16,000 in 2015. The school housed a swimming pool which had been closed since it had become unsafe and was no longer fit for purpose. The investment needed to make it usable would be £100,000 this was not essential to the curriculum.

3.19   Members felt that if the profile of schools was raised and their unique selling points were publicised this would increase the intake of places. (See Recommendation 4.3)

3.20   During the Lead Member and Scrutiny Chair Progress Review with schools it was identified that in one school the Head Teacher and another teacher were to be trained by Ofsted to assist with the inspection process. A change to the curriculum had been put in place and networking had been developed with SENCO regarding the Education, Health and Care Plans. It was noted that even with additional funding the delivery of the EHCPs was proving a challenge.

4.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   That the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning and the Chairman of the Topic Group discuss with the Education Strategic Partnership the issue of support for pupils who do not have English as a first language and how schools can be encouraged to work with volunteers within the local community to offer further support to these students.

4.2   That the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning ask officers to review the coverage of traded services for pupils not having English as a first language as well as, where appropriate, approach schools directly to discuss their needs in this area.

4.3 That the relevant Cabinet Member and Chairman of the Topic Group consider with the Education Strategic Partnership how schools can better publicise their unique selling points in their advertising and school profile.

4.4 That Cabinet endorse the Topic Group's view that information on how schools spend their Pupil Premium funding is made as accessible as possible to parents and carers. This matter to be the subject of a separate report by officers to the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee within six months.

4.5 That the existing proposals to reconfigure the Pupil Referral Service be continued with the overall aim of establishing a different model for primary-aged pupils.

4.6 That the relevant Cabinet Member ensures that existing dialogue with and training for SEN advocates is continued and expanded in order that Education, Health and Care Plans are delivered and reviewed within target time scales.

4.7 That Cabinet agree that a report on progress with implementation of all the above recommendations be submitted by officers to the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee within one year of the Topic Group report being considered by Cabinet. The relevant Cabinet Member to be invited to attend the meeting of the Sub-Committee when the progress report is given in order to aid discussions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the course of its review, the topic group met and held discussions with the following people:

Mary Philips – Assistant Director, Learning and Achievement
Susan Sutton – Quality Assurance Manager, Learning and Achievement
William Edgar – Head teacher, Gaynes Secondary School
David Rogers – Chair of Governors, Gaynes Secondary School

The following comments are submitted by members of staff:

Financial Implications and Risks:

There are not direct financial implications or risks arising from this report however use of existing funds to implement the recommendations may be required in order to bring attention and awareness to the current school profiles and the additional support available.

Legal Implications and Risks:

There are no legal implications resulting from the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee noting the contents of this report.

There are no legal implications directly arising from processing the recommendations of the report.

Human Resources Implications and Risks:

There are no direct HR implications or risks to the Council or its workforce, outside of the normal level of provision or demands in relation to Learning & Achievement services, that can be identified from the contents of this report or the recommendations made.

Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications and Risks:

There are no equalities and social inclusion implications arising from the contents of this report or the recommendations made.

<u>Background Papers List</u>

Notes of the Educational Attainment Topic Group Meetings:

12 February 2015
18th March 2015
27 May 2015
19 June 2015
23 July 2015