

EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Education Advisory Board held virtually on Thursday, 1 December 2022 at 4.00 pm

Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair)

Sarah Daly, Director of Children's Services and Education
Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Education
Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement and Early Years
Helen Reeder, Chair of Teacher Liaison Panel
Frances Soul, Chair of Portsmouth Education Partnership

15. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ryan Brent and Tom Coles, and Rob Sanders, Deputy Director of Anglican Diocese of Portsmouth.

16. Declarations of interests

Councillor Horton declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as she is Vice-Chair of the governing body at Craneswater Junior School. Debbie Anderson declared an interest as she works for Ofsted.

17. Minutes of previous meeting held on 18 July 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2022 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.

18. Support and Challenge for LA Maintained Schools

Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement and Early Years, introduced the report and outlined the support available to schools. Last week there was an event at Springhill Catholic Primary School in Southampton (an English Hub) just for Portsmouth schools which was worthwhile as it showed how to access DfE funding and support for improving Phonics; she encouraged schools who could not attend then to attend future events.

Councillor Horton thanked officers for the thorough report and noted the extra pressure to raise standards as well as the other challenges schools are facing. Schools played a key role in the pandemic and then have the cost of living crisis so have had no meaningful break. The support for headteachers was particularly welcome as it can be a lonely position. Peer review was something to be proud of. The work to ensure schools' websites met statutory requirements was good as they gave the first impression of a school and often the first way Ofsted engages with schools. It was a simple but supportive measure. Councillor Horton was still moved by the impact of the Learning

Walk she had seen at a primary school and how engaged the children were with reading and oracy. When children were engaged they would achieve.

RESOLVED that the Education Advisory Board note the actions that have been taken to support and challenge LA Maintained schools since the last report.

19. Ofsted school inspections Summer and Autumn terms 2022

Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement and Early Years, introduced the report, noting that there were no changes apart from specialist terminology and the layout of the Ofsted school inspection handbook. A section 5 inspection was now called Graded as all areas of the framework were inspected and section 8 was now called Ungraded as outcomes not grades were not given. Two questions were answered instead: does the school remain Good or Outstanding and is safeguarding effective?

There were an additional two inspections in the summer so eleven in total in the summer term; eight were section 8 and three were section 5. There have been six inspections to date in the autumn term: one section 8 and five section 5. In Portsmouth there was an emphasis of change with more Graded inspections being carried out. Some schools had changed their grade. St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary's inspection was very focused as it was carried out by a senior inspector. Although King's Academy Northern Parade Junior retained its Good judgement it may not have done so under a full inspection; therefore, the next one would be a section 5 (Graded) inspection. One recently inspected school had not been inspected since 2009.

The Chair noted the report and increased inspection activity showed that central government have invested resources so that all schools were inspected between May 2021 and July 2025.

RESOLVED that the Education Advisory Board note the report.

20. Portsmouth data for 2022

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Education, introduced the presentation, advising that caution should be applied when comparing 2021/2022 data with 2019 data in view of the impact of the pandemic and the effect on both pupil and staff absence and the uneven impact across the city. There had been a significant drop in Year 1 Phonics results whereas up until 2019 the trajectory had been one of improvement and narrowing the gap to national. There was now a widening gap with national. Although figures had dropped for KS2 maths and writing the KS2 reading results were a positive story as they had increased from 67% to 70%.

Despite increases (since 2019) in both standard and strong GCSE passes the gap with national has slightly widened. However, caution should again be applied to the results as the DfE has indicated some inflation following teacher assessed grades being awarded in 2020 and 2021. The gap with national for

the Average Attainment 8 Score had widened but had narrowed slightly for Progress 8.

The number of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) has reduced significantly from a number of years ago. The figure of 3.8% was robust as NEETs are tracked robustly and officers have confidence in the figures.

Persistent absence was still a concern although there has been some improvement this term. Portsmouth's figures were replicated across the country. Absence would be reviewed as part of the attendance strategy.

The Chair said that some gaps had started to close but Portsmouth was a poor city that had been impacted by the pandemic. Where Portsmouth had decided to prioritise specific areas it had seen positive results (e.g. reading), though there was still much work to do.

RESOLVED that the Education Advisory Board note the report.

21. Update on Portsmouth as a Priority Education Investment Area

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Education, introduced the report and outlined progress so far. He explained that the funding had to be used for evidence based bespoke interventions that met local needs and had an impact. A sub-group of the PEP had been tasked with a data analysis, identification of priorities and preparation of a three-year delivery plan. The requirement to have a local partnership board had already been met by the Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP), which had a strong structure behind it. The process was challenging as the timetable was tight and officers had sometimes received conflicting guidance so were working slightly blind at the start.

Maths had not featured in the education strategy in the last three years as there had been a trajectory of improving performance and there was additional help in the form of the Solent Maths Hub. However, in light of the decline in performance in 2022 and the importance of maths in terms of life chances and post-16 progression, it had been re-instated as a local priority.

The final delivery plan had been submitted to the DfE on 29 November. It was still unknown when the funding would be received but it was hoped to have feedback before Christmas with a view to implementation from January. Officers were happy to share the information they had so far.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr Stoneman confirmed that although it was half-way through the first year of the three-year programme the amount of funding was not known; however, assurances had been given by the DfE that it would not be removed. If there were delays in receiving funding officers may have a case for extending the programme.

The Chair noted the complex process and said that if, for example, funding was not received until May it left little time to teach and deliver the programme

in the remaining few weeks of term. To make a long-term impact it had to be done properly. She said officers and the PEP had done a good job in thinking things through and was grateful to them for doing their best for Portsmouth children. She thanked the team for their work.

RESOLVED that the Education Advisory Board note the update.

The next meeting is on Thursday 2 March at 4 pm; those present agreed to hold the meeting virtually.

The meeting concluded at 4.53 pm.

Councillor Suzy Horton
Chair