

EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Education Advisory Board held on Tuesday 8 October 2019 at 4.00 pm in Ground Floor Room 3, Civic Offices

Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair)

Councillors Tom Coles
Frank Jonas
Terry Norton

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Education & Early Help, PCC
Jo Peach, Head of School Improvement, Education, PCC,
Fiona Calderbank and Steve Labeledz, Joint Chairs of the Portsmouth Education Partnership Strategic Board

8. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence. Ms Calderbank apologised she would have to leave at 4.45 pm as she had another meeting.

9. Declarations of interests

Councillor Horton declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as she is a governor at Craneswater Junior School. Councillor Coles declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as he is on the Academy Advisory Board at Penhale Infant School. Councillor Norton declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as he works for Mayfield School and his partner is employed there.

10. Minutes of the previous meeting - 17 July 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2019 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record subject to the amendment that the second bullet point in the Key Stage 2 section of minute 4 reads:

"Tests have changed radically and are more challenging."

11. Provisional Results 2019 for EYFS, KS1, KS2 and KS4

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Education & Early Help, presented the report, explaining that all data is provisional. The EYFS, Phonics and KS1 results use NCER proxy data based on data submitted by local authorities and he is confident about their accuracy. Results for KS2 use provisional data published by the Department for Education (DfE). The provisional results had

been discussed at the Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP) Strategic Board the previous day and at the School Improvement Board that day.

During the presentation Mr Stoneman highlighted the following areas:

EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage)

A slight decrease of 0.8 percentage points in the number of Reception pupils achieving GLD (Good Level of Development) had led to a widening of the gap between Portsmouth and the national average. In 2015 and 2016 Portsmouth had been above national but in the last couple of years a small decline in performance has emerged against a national improvement.

Phonics (expected standard Year 1)

In Phonics there was no change from last year for both local and national results.

Key Stage 1 (expected standard)

KS1 reading and maths results at national and local remain the same as last year. KS1 writing results have fallen by one percentage point both locally and nationally.

Key Stage 2 (expected standard)

For the combined measure of Reading, Writing and Maths there was no change both locally and nationally; the gap is still eight percentage points. For KS2 Reading results have fallen by three percentage points both locally and nationally. For KS2 Writing the gap with national has narrowed from six to three percentage points; Portsmouth results had increased by two points. For KS2 Maths results have increased by six percentage points, reducing the gap with national to five points. However, KS2 progress scores for Reading, Writing and Maths are significantly below national and statistical neighbours.

Key Stage 4

A small drop in both the standard pass (level 4 +) and strong pass (level 5 +) were recorded for English & Maths with considerable variation across the city.

Summing up, Mr Stoneman said the results were mixed and some were disappointing, particularly at EYFS and KS4. Not as much progress as hoped has been made at KS1 and KS2. There have been some improvements but significant progress has not been made in terms of closing the gap with national and statistical neighbours.

In response to questions from members as to reasons for Portsmouth's lack of progress officers raised the following points:

- Mr Stoneman said there is significant variability across Portsmouth's schools. Some schools' results have improved strongly whereas others' results have decreased significantly. Leadership issues have a clear impact on results. Schools which have had problems gradually improve when changes are embedded but this takes time. Two thirds of schools in Portsmouth are now part of a Multi Academy Trust. Some MATs have led on some dramatic improvements but this is not consistent.

- Ms Calderbank noted whereas previously borderline pupils could be helped to get a grade C GCSE the exams are now more challenging and appropriate teaching needs to have been in place since year 7.
- Ms Peach said there does not seem to be any particular type of school that does better or worse. She thought the lack of progress was more related to children and teaching. Some children are entering Reception with very low or almost no speech and language, which affects their progress at EFYS. Literacy is a major issue throughout all stages. The progress of SEN pupils in mainstream education also affect results.
- In response to concerns over the lack of consistency when academies want to change exam boards Ms Calderbank explained schools have to change boards so that they can moderate exams with other schools. This is only the second year of the new exams and they are much harder. For example, history results "bombed" nationally this year as pupils did not have the higher level of language needed. Modern foreign languages are very hard to pass. However, she wants her pupils to take harder subjects like English, Maths and modern foreign languages which will give them more career opportunities than easier ones that allow them to achieve Progress 8.
- The Chair said that although the main measures by which the public judge schools are Ofsted and results schools still need to maintain a broad curriculum.
- Mr Labedz explained it was consistently harder for Portsmouth children to achieve success than those in other areas. Schools are delivering the curriculum but there is a low level of skills in Portsmouth which in turn impacts on children. For example a two-year-old may only have heard about 2,000 words instead of around 30,000 different words. As much neural development happens at a very young age they may never make up the lack of progress and schools are playing catch-up from the start with children who are not ready to learn. There are a few other coastal towns and cities similar to Portsmouth such as Blackpool or Grimsby but their population changes; Portsmouth's population does not change very much as it is an island. It needs its own bespoke solution. Admiral Lord Nelson School has improved and this is partly due to about one-third of pupils being children of previous pupils who raised aspirations; the current generation of pupils are ready to learn.
- Ms Peach agreed early engagement is needed across the board, for example, with health visitors. Mr Stoneman said there are three areas for improvement: literacy, SEN in mainstream, curriculum and subject networks. Despite a big focus on literacy across Portsmouth and improved school leadership transformation will take some time.
- In discussing language and literacy the following points were raised:
 - Councillor Norton emphasised the importance of developing oracy and explorative talk. He mentioned the Voice 21 programme used at School 21 in London which develops pupils' oral communication.
 - Councillor Coles said Sure Start centres had been useful but there were fewer of them now.
 - Ms Calderbank explained that mastering tier 2 language (high frequency written words) is harder than tier 3 language (technical vocabulary) which can be taught. She noted pupils with EAL (English as an additional language) make very good progress.

- Ms Peach suggested that employers could be encouraged to use higher level language in mock interviews with pupils.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12. School improvement update - July 2019

Ms Peach presented the report and highlighted some of the main themes for autumn 2019:

- Safeguarding will be improved by ensuring schools understand how to apply the rules as well as knowing them. Ofsted inspections will focus very heavily on safeguarding.
- Schools will be supported to cope with the new Ofsted inspection framework.
- More work needs to be done on governor training; some governors are struggling to find out where help is needed in their schools.
- Public Health are to lead on PSHE. There is focus on mental health as children need to be resilient to cope in the modern world.

Ms Calderbank left the meeting at 4.45 pm.

- Mr Stoneman confirmed the numbers of SEN children are rising which creates more pressures on the high needs block. The number of children with an EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan) was rising significantly as schools are better at identifying children needing support. While children with the most complex needs attend specialist schools mainstream schools are becoming more inclusive which puts them under pressure.

In response to questions from members officers explained:

- Changes in leadership do not necessarily cause problems if there is a good succession plan in place. However, there can sometimes be "churn" or lack of consistency. Northern Parade Junior School had leadership issues but now has a very competent executive headteacher. Mr Labedz said MATs will only change headteachers when necessary. Although the local authority is not responsible for the standards of academy schools it can still challenge them. MATs are held to account by the DfE and the Regional Schools Commissioner. Portsmouth is fortunate in having open dialogue with its academy schools.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13. Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 4 February 2020
4 pm - room B, floor 2, Civic Offices

Wednesday 15 July 2020
4 pm - room B, floor 2, Civic Offices

Mr Stoneman agreed to provide more detailed data for the February meeting including KS4 Progress 8 data and breakdowns according to particular groups e.g. disadvantaged, gender, ethnicity and SEN

The meeting concluded at 4.55 pm.

Councillor Suzy Horton
Chair