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## EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Education Advisory Board held on Tuesday, 4 February 2020 at 4.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

### Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair)

Councillors Tom Coles  
Frank Jonas BEM  
Terry Norton

#### 14. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Labeledz, Helen Reeder and Rob Sanders. Ms Calderbank apologised she would have to leave at 4.55 pm as she had a governors' meeting.

#### 15. 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 his partner is employed at Mayfield School and his daughter attends it.

#### 16. Minutes of the previous meeting on 8 October 2019

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2019 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.**

The Chair proposed taking agenda item no.5 (Ofsted inspections) after agenda item no.6 (School Improvement Summary) as item no.5 contained exempt appendices. For ease of reference, the minutes will be kept in the original order.

#### 17. Results update

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Education, presented the report, explaining that the data was confirmation of the provisional results presented at July's meeting. Key Stage 4 and Progress 8 results had declined with a 0.41 gap with Portsmouth's statistical neighbours. Eight schools had results which are significantly below national. Portsmouth Academy and St Edmund's Catholic School had above average results.

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

- Ms Calderbank said results for exams and Progress 8 in most academies had declined. One reason is that the new exams are harder. Another is that exams in some subjects are no longer available. A larger number of white working class boys with average ability will lower the results. Some GCSE subjects are harder than others. For example, results in computer science and languages are one grade lower than the norm whereas photography, health and social care, and PE are one grade higher. The Fischer Family Trust (national provider of education data) advises how targets are set for different schools.
- As a result of changes to exams Ms Calderbank will have to change the curriculum in her own school (Miltoncross) to improve Progress 8 results, even though this means removing the opportunity to study subjects that can be more beneficial for careers and further education. Languages are a core subject but 50% pupils will study them rather than the current 85%. This discourages learning languages which means fewer pupils taking A-levels so fewer taking degrees and ultimately fewer language teachers. In addition, recruitment of language teachers is harder because of Brexit as many come from the EU.
- Subjects are divided into three "buckets." Bucket 1 - core subjects (English, Maths). Bucket 2 - subjects like languages, humanities, science. Bucket 3 - subjects on the prescribed list
- Changing exam boards is disruptive but there is little that can be done about this as mock exams and moderation have to be the same across academies so schools can be benchmarked. Schools can mitigate against the changes by having a forensic approach to taking exams.

Members asked why it was that Portsmouth schools have good Ofsted inspection results (92% of inspected schools are Good or Outstanding) but results have continued to be lower than national and statistical neighbours for several years.

- Results have risen nationally so Portsmouth is now competing against a rising tide. Children who are borderline grade 5 (grades 5 to 9 are a strong GCSE pass) can easily fall below the boundary. Portsmouth's statistical neighbours include Southampton, Bristol, Southend and Torbay. Socio-economic characteristics are used to compare neighbours but there are still differences, for example, Southampton has a much higher ethnic mix. In some areas Portsmouth does better than its neighbours. Portsmouth children with EAL (English as an Additional Language) do very well.
- The Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP) Board will refresh the education strategy when it meets next week. Attainment and progress are at the top of the agenda. There are many successes to report from the implementation of the 2017-2020 strategy, particularly with respect to inclusion, but the strategy and the policy of academisation has not delivered the improvements that were needed in educational outcomes. On 24 February Mr Stoneman will be meeting with Nick Gibb (Minister for School Standards) to set out the action the council has taken to address

underperforming maintained schools. The RSC will also be attending. A separate meeting is being held for academies.

The PEP will seek to encourage the sharing of resources and good practice across our schools and academies. With respect to Multi Academy Trusts this has been limited with a few exceptions e.g. ARK; and many will charge.

The Chair noted that children who have worked hard are devastated when they have disappointing exam results. She gave credit to schools for their good curricula and pastoral care. A collective solution might help as teachers and officers know Portsmouth children.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

**18. Ofsted school inspections late summer and autumn terms 2019**

**RESOLVED that that the following motion be adopted**

**Exclusion of Press and Public**

**"Under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded for the consideration of the following item on the grounds that the report contains information defined as exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972."**

Under the following exemption paragraph numbers:

1. Information relating to an individual
2. Information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Mr Stoneman presented the report and the exempt appendices. He noted two errors in Table 1:

Corpus Christi - previous rating was Good (not Required Improvement)  
Milton Park Primary - rating is Required Improvement (not Inadequate so remains the same)

He explained how schools are prioritised for school improvement visits and the level of support they receive. As the school improvement budget is limited support has to be targeted.

Ms Calderbank left the meeting at 4.55 pm.

Where there are concerns over standards the council has to act. They can challenge and, if necessary, raise concerns with the RSC (in the case of academies) who can intervene. Fortunately the council has good relationships with individual academies and Multi Academy Trusts. There is no government pressure for a school to become an academy unless it is judged to be

Inadequate. Under the 2010 legislation it is not possible for a school to return to local authority (LA) control unless it closes though it can be re-brokered (transferred to another trust).

Councillor Coles left the meeting at 5.05 pm.

The Ofsted rating for Corpus Christi was surprising as it had been Good and there were no alerts about safeguarding which was the main reason for the Inadequate judgement. However, Ofsted found systematic failings in the school's safeguarding procedures (although no child has suffered harm) and issues with teaching and learning. There are no longer safeguarding concerns. The council has produced a LA statement of action relating to safeguarding and academisation. Under the legislation the Inadequate rating means the school is required to become an academy. There is a memorandum of understanding between the DfE and the Catholic Diocese that Catholic schools have to be sponsored by a Catholic academy trust. However, there are no Catholic trusts in the Portsmouth diocese (which extends across a large part of the South East) willing to accept Corpus Christi at this point in time. If there is no sponsor the school becomes an "orphan" school. The council will continue to support the school as it would for any other maintained school, until it transfers to academy status.

The three SEN schools in the Solent Academy Trust are all Outstanding. Milton Park has good leadership and is expected to improve. The headteacher of ARK Dickens was applauded for their Good rating (previously Required Improvement).

**RESOLVED that members of the Education Advisory Board note the outcomes of the school inspections that were undertaken during the late summer and autumn terms 2019 and the actions being taken to address the Inadequate judgement given to Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School.**

## **19. School Improvement Summary**

Ms Peach presented the report and highlighted the three school improvement priorities.

### Improving pupil outcomes in reading/literacy, including early language development

Literacy includes speech and language but the main priority is developing reading ability as being unable to read prevents people from participating fully in daily life. For example, it is almost impossible to get a job without GCSE English. Early Years will run training and CPD. The joint council project with the Teaching Schools Alliance will use evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation which shows what is effective in teaching reading..

The council has submitted a bid for early language development as some children cannot speak or interact with others when they start school.

### Improving outcomes for pupils with SEN, especially those with SEN support

The current good practice with SEN pupils will continue with more focus on those with an EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan).

Improving teaching and learning in the wider curriculum, with a focus on leadership

There will be a focus on supporting middle leaders to develop teacher subject knowledge. Ofsted used to concentrate on English and maths but are now looking at the wider curriculum.

In response to questions from member officers clarified:

- Support for reading already starts at the pre-school stage, for example, health visitors promote reading.
- The importance of family learning and engaging parents in helping with reading is acknowledged.
- Although there is no concrete evidence the cuts to Sure Start centres are likely to have affected literacy and language support.
- The Accelerated Reader scheme is good but has limitations so pupils need a wider range of books as tests have broadened their scope.
- Portsmouth is a "category 6" city so can take advantage of a lot of free or heavily subsidised staff development / leadership courses.
- Secondary schools receive information from primary schools in May/June about English, maths and reading levels of Year 6 pupils due to start year 7. "Catch up" funding is available to give extra support in English and maths. At Miltoncross there is a six-week catch-up programme at the end of which pupils either continue or move on.
- The move from primary to secondary school is a major transition for children. In addition, they will have had a gap in learning over the holidays. Prospective Year 7 pupils spend a week in July at Miltoncross which is more effective than the usual three days as preparation for the transition.

**RESOLVED that members of the Education Advisory Board note the school improvement priorities for 2019-20 and the work that will be undertaken this year as part of the revision of the Education Strategy to inform the priorities for 2020-21.**

**20. Dates of future meetings**

Wednesday 15 July 2020

4 pm - Conference room B, floor 2, Civic Offices

Wednesday 14 October 2020

4 pm - Conference room A, floor 2, Civic Offices

**RESOLVED that dates of future meetings be noted.**

The meeting concluded at 5.20 pm.

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Councillor Suzy Horton  
Chair