

EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Education Advisory Board held on Wednesday, 15 July 2020 at 4.00 pm as a virtual meeting.

Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair)

Councillors Frank Jonas BEM
Terry Norton
Jeanette Smith

21. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Robert Dare, Jeff Williams and Councillor Smyth.

22. Declarations of interests

Councillor Horton declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as she is a governor at Craneswater Junior School. Councillor Norton declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as he is employed at Mayfield School through a cover agency, his partner is employed at Mayfield School and his daughter attends it. Councillor Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as she works for Hampshire branch UNISON and represents support staff in Hampshire schools.

23. Minutes of previous meeting held on 4 February 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.

The Chair proposed taking agenda item no.4 (Ofsted inspections) after agenda items no.5, 6 and 7, as item no.4 contained exempt appendices. For ease of reference, the minutes will be kept in the original order.

24. Ofsted inspections update

**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).

Mike Stoneman presented the report. Jo Peach presented the exempt appendix relating to the inadequate judgement given to Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School by Ofsted. The school was judged to be inadequate due to safeguarding concerns, but there were also issues associated with the quality of teaching, leadership and governance. The school has put in place an action plan and a new head teacher has been appointed. An Academy Order was issued by the Regional Schools Commissioner. The leadership is already stronger and they are now in discussions with another Catholic academy trust which looked promising.

In response to a question about how COVID-19 might affect the plans, Jo Peach said that the new head had adapted the action plan and is focussing on phonics and maths. The Board wished the new headteacher well in her new role.

In response to a question about attainment levels, officers said that assessment thresholds have risen and the authority had been hoping for a better set of results, but due to the pandemic all exams and assessments were cancelled.

RESOLVED members of the Education Advisory Board noted the outcomes of the school inspections that were undertaken during the Spring term 2020, the continuing work that is being undertaken by the council to address the Inadequate judgement given to Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School last year and the plans by Ofsted to resume inspections in 2021.

25. Returning to School - Summary of local arrangements and updates from the working group and workstreams

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Education, presented the report. Sarah Christopher, PEP and School Inclusion Manager presented the section on the Emotional Health and Wellbeing workstream.

In response to questions from members the following points were made:

- In terms of schools wanting to be accessible for key worker children there has been a fairly uniform approach in terms of the desire to provide those places. Any variability has been due to the particular circumstances of the school. For example where a school has a number of teachers who are shielding or if there are space constraints. On the whole schools have done everything possible to admit key worker children, vulnerable learners and children of those year groups that the Government wanted to target after 1 June (primary), and 15 June (secondary and post-16). Alison Jeffery, Director of Children, Families and Education added that at the beginning of lockdown there

were a handful of parents who contacted the local authority as they had concerns and these were resolved. She had received few complaints or issues brought to her attention. Schools had been very resilient and had done a fantastic job. She also wished to thank her colleagues during this period working long hours and wished to pay tribute to them.

- All schools have made sure that eligible families have been able to access free schools meals for their children, either through the voucher scheme or through food parcels provided by the catering provider.
- The baseline survey confirms the variability across schools in terms of home and digital learning. The report would be circulated to the Board after the meeting. St Edmund's were a good example but in other smaller schools the digital learning offer has been limited with a reliance on paper based packages and limited teacher feedback and assessment. It was now important to see some consistency and share good practice.
- Generally schools have been able to cope with the demand and use the teaching resources effectively. Many did a rota system for teachers coming in to teach and others doing home learning, and this worked reasonably well. Officers were not aware of any schools where children have not been able to attend school due to a lack of teachers.
- A letter will be sent to all schools from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Education which will be sent this week to acknowledge the fantastic efforts of staff and give thanks.
- The Teach Portsmouth awards have been postponed until March but there is planned to be a virtual version in the Autumn that will focus on the excellent work of schools during the pandemic. Sarah Christopher added that officers are encouraging schools to send in examples of work they are doing at the moment and are also looking to offer the long service awards.
- With regard to teacher availability for LA maintained schools the PCC HR advisors will be working with schools to ensure the right thing is done by every member of staff including vulnerable members of staff. For the academies it would be the MATs responsibility.
- In terms of attendance, the indication is that schools will be focussing on welcoming back children and staff with a positive message. This will be kept under review and the local authority will not be insisting on penalty fines where schools do not believe this is the right thing to do. The first half term after autumn will be focussing on welcoming children back and the school attendance campaign Miss School Miss Out is likely to resume after the October half term.
- Ofsted inspections will not resume until January 2021. Ofsted will be conducting 'visits' to collate intelligence about how schools are adapting to the changes.
- Some schools are offering summer provision as they do every year but this is quite limited. PCC is also working with Portsmouth Schools Sports Partnership and Connect 4 Summer which are schemes taking place and schools have been made aware of all schemes. Sarah Christopher added that the Sports Partnership are providing some key

worker places in the north, centre and south which are paid places. PCC has also commissioned 425 days of provision for children of vulnerable families at no charge to the families. Schools have identified families that they think will benefit from that. In terms of the Enableability respite provision for families of children with SEN, the offer has been increased this year and families will not have to pay for this. This will not be full time provision but it will give families some support and respite.

- In terms of preparing for a potential second wave of the pandemic, the infection prevention group is doing a lot of work on this and there is a lot of guidance going out shortly to schools including information sheets and a flowchart. Guidance has also gone out to schools about setting up arrangements for their year group bubbles and what to do if there is a positive case. Alison Jeffery added that one of the reasons that the authority is leaning so hard into the digital learning strategy is to ensure schools are really well equipped to support remote access to education if there is a second wave.

The Chair said it was important to look for the positives that have come out of the pandemic. This included collaboration between schools and between schools and MATs, other partner organisations and the council which had been heart-warming and effective. The other important thing to note was around attention to vulnerable learners with excellent systems set up around tracking and monitoring them. It had been a safety first approach and working with the Director of Public Health has been a brilliant addition to the collaboration. The Chair thanked Mike and his team for the report.

RESOLVED members of the Education Advisory Board noted the considerable work that has taken place across the city to:

- **Support schools, children and their families in order that more children can return to school during the remainder of the 2019/20 academic year.**
- **Prepare plans for the return of all pupils to school from September 2020.**

26. School improvement update

Jo Peach, Head of School Improvement introduced the report. She explained that since the last meeting officers have continued to work on the reading and literacy project and a number of schools were involved with this. They had just reached the stage where they were beginning to implement this in schools after developing plans when schools closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools were then focussed on other matters such as operational matters and providing home schooling support. This meant that the authority had to step back from the planned priorities and bring in other ones, and concentrate on helping schools with their own priorities.

Officers had worked with schools on home and blended learning which was new for a number of schools. Officers had to initially establish a baseline and

are now building a programme based on this. The baseline report would be circulated to the Board after the meeting. Jo advised that every school is offering some form of home learning but often it is just signalling to parents/children what there is available.

There had been really strong communication with parents through this period. Every school has communicated digitally with every child and where they had not this had been escalated. Jo wished to pay tribute to the hard work of schools that had kept their virtual communities going, such as virtual dance competitions, to bring people together. Access to internet and a suitable device has been variable; access to a smart phone is not enough. There is a worry that very young children should not be spending too much time on a screen and teachers had been massively creative to find other ways of learning. Jo said she had been really impressed with how quickly teachers have learnt new techniques for teaching. Almost all secondary schools and colleges had the technology in place such as Google classrooms which is supervised remotely, and it had been more difficult for schools where that technology was not already in place.

A great deal of work had gone on in the background regarding what the curriculum will look like when children return in September. It was impossible to catch up on the work missed in the months schools were closed so teachers need to slim down the curriculum and focus on which areas matter most. Schools had been phenomenal in how they had approached this. It was very difficult as teachers do not know what they are aiming for at the end of 2021 in terms of assessment systems. It was likely that GCSEs would be slimmed down but these are all moveable feasts and to plan the curriculum has been very hard.

The authority had also been holding virtual support and training for those schools who needed it. Jo finally wished to pay tribute to EMAS and the music service who have become 'digital pioneers' by delivering their service virtually.

The Chair said that it was really positive to see the improvements that have happened. The Chair wished to give thanks to Jo Peach for all her hard work as she would be retiring next week. Alison Jeffery also wished to place on record her thanks to Jo for the huge contribution she had made to education in the city.

The Chair also thanked all officers within the Education directorate for their phenomenal levels of work during this challenging time.

RESOLVED the Education Advisory Board noted the improvements in 2019-20 (and the impact Covid-19 / school closures had had on school improvement plans); the work of the Head of School Improvement since March 2020; and plans for 2020-21.

27. Dates of future meetings

Members of the Board noted the dates of the next meetings as follows:

- Wednesday 14 October at 4pm
- Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 4pm
- Wednesday 14 July 2021 at 4pm

The meeting concluded at 5.40 pm.

Councillor Suzy Horton
Chair