

**Schools Forum**

**Wednesday 19 September 2018**

**Walsall Strategic Education Inclusion Board – A Sector Led Improvement Model & Approach**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update School Forum members on the establishment of the Board

**2 Recommendations**

2.1 Schools Forum to note to date progress made in the establishment of the Board

**3 Background**

3.1 Schools Forum agreed in January 2018 the move from the original Education Challenge Board to the new Board. Funding of £250K (2018/19) and £250K (2019/20) was approved.

**3.2 Key Priorities to be addressed by the Board:**

- All children in Walsall to attend a good or better school
- Improved pupil outcomes
- Reduced exclusions
- Board members to take decisions which serve the collective needs of the communities of children and young people in Walsall
- Build upon the existing expertise and good practice from our Clusters of schools
- Partnership work to strengthen and sustain the approach adopted to ensure that children in Walsall get the best possible life chances
- Bespoke packages of support for schools of concern
- Raising aspirations of our young people
- Ensure young people have appropriate skills and access to jobs so economic benefits are felt across communities

**4 Current Position**

4.1 Following approval, the following actions were implemented:

- A Task and Finish group was established to set up the Board. Membership is made up of LA officers, Head teacher representatives from Secondary, Primary, Special and Nursery alongside experienced Chairs of Governors. This group was responsible for identifying Board membership, terms of reference, operational groups and priorities to be addressed by the Board. This group will continue to meet this term but is expected to have completed its work by November 2018; when the Board is fully established.
- A Head teachers briefing led by Sally Rowe Executive Director: Children's Services was held on 6 March 2018 to introduce, explain and record feedback on developing the working of the new Board.
- The first Board meeting took place on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018. Board representation was established and terms of reference agreed. Discussion of proposed operational groups led by Seconded Senior

## Agenda Item 10

Leaders from our schools was agreed. Inclusion was identified as a key priority to be addressed across Walsall, with the appointment of an Inclusion Leader to be made. Board members began to interrogate Walsall data regarding pupil outcomes and exclusions and were clear on the need to address these as part of the key priorities for Walsall.

- Recruitment to the Secondary and Primary Leader posts agreed took longer than anticipated due to a thorough shaping of the job description identifying clearly the knowledge, skills and experience needed to undertake the post. Posts were advertised through the PNS and WASH forums as well as the Friday Link newsletter. Limited expressions of interest were received. By July 2018, in terms of leading the Primary Strategy group, which was originally the Heads of Cluster meeting group, Sean Davies Head teacher at Christchurch School agreed to undertake this role. For our Secondary colleagues, Billy Downie, Head teacher at Streetly Academy has agreed to undertake this role at WASH, which will operate as the Secondary Strategy group.
- The Inclusion Leader post was advertised twice, with candidates brought to interview but no appointment made. Following discussion by panel members, the post will now be advertised as a Local Authority appointment in West Midlands jobs in September 2018. This post will be contracted to the local authority reporting to the Head of Educational Standards and School Improvement and accountable to the Strategic Board.
- A further Head teachers briefing led by Sally Rowe Executive Director: Children's Services was held on 27 June 2018 providing Head teachers with an update of the progress made in establishing the Board and its work but also noting their feedback for consideration.
- At the second Board meeting held on Tuesday 3 July 2018, the leaders were accepted and working terms agreed for them. There had been previous discussions regarding post 16 pupils and their needs. At this meeting, it was agreed that a separate post-16 strategy group would be set up by Kerry Wootton and include partners from Walsall College and Helena Baxter who leads on Apprenticeships for the LA. This means there will be three operational strategy groups in place from September 2018. Discussion took place around the SENDI Challenge Board which will no longer meet in its present format and its remit sitting within this board.
- The strands identified for the Strategy groups to work upon include: SEND, Vulnerable Learners, Transition and Recruitment and Retention.
- Board members have examined Walsall pupil data in relation to our statistical neighbours. Members asked to see data from other LA in a similar context to our own, where pupil outcomes are highly successful.
- Board members have also focused upon the need for a revised Inclusion Strategy for Walsall, as our permanent exclusions are twice the national average. It is anticipated that the Inclusion Leader will work across the three strategy groups to determine key priorities to be addressed.

- No funding has yet been spent.

**4.2 Next Steps:**

- Publication of document to include Board membership and its remit
- Finalised strategy groups in place: Primary, Secondary and Post-16 with calendared meetings in place
- Appointment of Inclusion Leader
- Task and finish group meetings commencing September 2018
- Work Programme for each Strategy group developed, approved by the Board and commissioned
- Budget Monitoring
- Next Board meeting to take place 2 October 2018

**5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1** Agreed by Schools Forum. £250K (2018/19) and £250K (2019/20) approved to undertake work on priorities identified above.

**6 Legal Implications**

- 6.1** No issues directly arising from this report.

**7 School Improvement**

School Improvement Partners will be changing their way of working with schools from September 2018. Work will align with the Board's identified priorities and with those schools of concern.

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