

## **CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

TUESDAY, 30 OCTOBER, 2012 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE

### **Panel Members Present**

Councillor B. Cassidy  
Councillor R. Martin  
Councillor D. Shires  
Councillor T. Jukes  
Councillor R. Thomas  
Councillor E. Hughes  
Councillor G. Perry

### **Non elected voting members present**

S. Rayner (Lichfield Diocesan Education)

### **Non elected non-voting members present**

R. Bragger (Primary Teacher representative)  
P. Dunn (Secondary Teacher representative)

### **Portfolio holder present**

Councillor R. Andrew - Children's Services

### **Officers Present**

Rose Collinson, Interim Executive Director, Children's Services;  
Louise Hughes, Assistant Director, Children's Services;  
Sue Butcher, Interim Assistant Director, Children's Services  
Graham Reiter, Head of Safeguarding;  
Denise Faulconbridge, Managing Director, Serco  
Frank Barnes, The Assistant Managing Director, Serco  
Carol Boughton, Head of Service, Serco  
Shannon Moore, Head of Improvement Services, Serco  
Sue Morgan, Strategic Lead, Early Intervention and Family Support  
Jane Bonner, Senior Area Improvement Advisor, Serco

### **231/12 APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received for the duration of the meeting.

### **232/12 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

## 233/12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

## 234/12 **MINUTES**

The presence of Councillor Thomas at the previous meeting was noted. A number of amendments to item 225/12 Education Developments were agreed during the meeting's private session

### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2012, as amended, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

## 235/12 **The Role of Governors**

The Chair explained this item would be considered earlier than set out in the published agenda. The main points of the presentation and subsequent discussion were as follows:

- The Senior Area Improvement Adviser, Serco, noted that the Chief Inspector of Schools highlighted the importance of governors in the success of schools. It was explained that nationally governors were a cohort of around 300,000 unpaid volunteers, with around 1,500 in Walsall. The remit of the governing body of a school includes setting targets and evaluating pupil progress and outcomes and oversight of the budget. School governors have a strategic role and devolve operational matters to head teachers;
- The Instrument of Government is a document that sets out the legal framework for a school, including the constitution of the governing body, with a requirement for maintained schools to submit an Instrument to the LA. It was explained that recent legislative changes, including the Education Act 2011, would enable the Instrument to be more varied and flexible;
- It was explained that there were a range of types of governors including staff governors and parent governors. An additional category is associate governors who do not have voting rights but who offer a variety of different skills and expertise. This had proved particularly useful both in involving those with skill sets absent from governing bodies and succession planning. Governors are also bound by a number of corporate responsibility expectations and should act according to the Nolan Principles of Public Life. The importance of objectivity and the ability to consider the interests of all children was highlighted given that many parent-governors may initially be motivated by having a child at a particular school;
- In terms of expectations of governors it was recommended that governing bodies operate a code of conduct. Where governors failed to attend meetings for more than six months they should be asked to step down as stated in the Governors' Guide to the Law;
- Governor training is provided either through Serco or others in order to enable governing bodies to operate effectively as a critical friend to schools. This process has been enhanced by the establishment of the role of link governor

which has specific responsibility for a particular element of school activity e.g. Special Educational Needs (SEN). The purpose is to ensure that through a range of action, including awareness raising and policy review, effective provision is delivered;

- It was explained that there was now a higher profile for governors in the revised Ofsted inspection framework and this is a factor in the leadership and management grade. At present nationally 40% of governing bodies are not yet “good” and this percentage has not moved in five years. In terms of making improvements in Walsall it was recognised that governors needed to have an accurate understanding of a school’s strengths and areas for improvement coupled with monitoring and provision of support to school leaders to improve performance. To further strengthen governance Governor Support provide regular updates and conferences, together with a programme of evening training and telephone advice. In addition, the Governor Services team is developing ‘external reviews of governance’ and an awards system is being considered , for example, for long standing governors;
- The Panel discussed ways of encouraging Members to consider becoming governors, while the Senior Area Improvement Adviser stressed the significant commitment of which anyone contemplating this should be aware. Officers also explained that a regular report is made available in the political group rooms that identifies all the current local authority vacancies. Officers also suggested that Members should encourage other people they know with skill sets, such as finance, to become governors;
- In response to a Panel query it was also explained that support is provided to academies although as with other types of schools they were free to seek support from elsewhere. However, in one instance an academy had chosen to operate its own governing body support but had recently returned to receive support from Governor Services in Walsall;
- Mike Lee explained that he had been a member of the former Walsall Association of Governors (WAG). The group had existed as a fully constituted independent and coherent voice for governors. The meeting agreed that such a group would be valuable in enabling effective communication between the Panel, and other groups, and governors. Officers explained that establishing a new governor representative group was currently being explored.

## **Resolved**

That:

officers will provide Members with an update on developments regarding the potential establishment of a governor representative group; and

the report be noted.

## **236/12 Pupil Performance in Walsall (2012): Provisional Headline data**

The Head of the Improvement Service introduced the report. The main points of the report and subsequent discussion were as follows:

- It was explained that the report referred to provisional data that was not yet validated. In respect of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) there was an improvement of 7.3% in the number of pupils achieving at 78 points or more and 6+ in Physical, Social and Emotional (PSE) and Communication, Language and Literature (CLL). Officers explained that this degree of improvement was 2% more than the 5% improvement witnessed nationally. However, they agreed with a Member that a significant factor was the starting or base point from which the improvement was measured. It was likely that Walsall would remain within the bottom quartile for performance nationally. The Chair expressed the view that while some schools had performed well at EYFS level, it was apparent that many still had to make significant progress. Officers explained that one of the challenges that existed at EYFS was that 40% of the intake of teachers at this level were newly deployed, and teaching three and six year olds requires different skill sets to those used in other year groups. While the importance of Children's Centres in ensuring children were prepared for learning, as well as having good social skills was endorsed by a Member;
- In relation to phonics it was explained that this test had been introduced for the first time in 2012 for Year 1 pupils. The provisional results indicate Walsall performance of 61.3% placing it 3% above the national average of 58%. A Panel member explained that the introduction of phonics testing had proved problematic for teachers because of limited guidance;
- In relation to Key Stage 1 it was explained that performance was up 2-3% on 2011.
- At Key Stage 2, however, a complete set of provisional results had still not been received as assessments for two schools were still awaited from the DfE. Provisional results for Level 4+ for English and maths combined improved by 1% from 2011 to 76%, while nationally results have risen to 79% (4% improvement on 2011 out-turn);
- Within Key Stage 2, the provisional results for Level 5+ including English and maths has improved to 22%, an increase of 3% on 2011. It was explained that the results should be viewed as a baseline and are expected to improve further when a complete set of results are released, as 3% of the cohort's results are still awaited;
- In relation to Key Stage 4 provisional GCSE results indicate that the percentage of pupils attaining 5+ A\*-C has risen to 87%, an increase of 3% on 2011 outturn. The number of students achieving A\*-C in maths increased by 6% when compared to 2011, rising to 69%, while English results for A\*-C declined by 7% to 68% compared to 2011. In addition, there had been a 0.8% decline in the number of students achieving 5+A\*-C including English and maths. It was explained that legal action is being taken by a number of local authorities against exam boards to challenge the banding of English exam results which had led to a significant number of pupils nationally not gaining the C or above that had been predicted. In Walsall, a number of pupils will be retaking English GCSE exams in November 2012 and have been allowed to commence A-Level studies;
- In relation to Key Stage 5 the data indicates that the average point score per candidate (APSpC) for schools in Walsall has risen by 16 points when compared to 2011, rising to 758 (APSpC);
- The Chair observed that Members would want to be reassured that all schools, colleges and learning settings are equipping young people to be able to learn effectively. Following a Panel query the Interim Executive Director explained that

national floor targets for performance were set by the Government and the Borough Children and Young People's Plan reflected local aspirational targets. It was explained that officers were aware of the need to ensure that schools were supported and challenged to ensure high expectations and standards enabled children and young people to achieve their ambitions.

## **Resolved**

That:

officers will provide Members with more detailed results when these become available;  
and

the report be noted.

### **237/12 Early Years, Parenting and School Readiness**

The Head of the Service introduced the presentation. The main points of the presentation and subsequent discussion were as follows:

- It was explained that between 2008 (42.4%) and 2012 (58.6% - provisional) a trend of improvement had been established for Early Years Outcomes. However, it was acknowledged that while this represented progress, without knowing the national outcome it was likely that the borough was still in the bottom quartile nationally;
- The Early Years Outcomes 2012 indicate that girls continue to outperform boys but the gap had slightly narrowed this year. This is a national trend. However, for both boys and girls Communication, Language and Literature (CLL) was critical as it was apparent that failure to progress in this area was likely to limit the ability to progress in other subjects. In addition, those who are eligible for free school meals do not perform as well;
- Action taken to address these issues includes 'The Trouble with Boys' Conference to consider some of the key areas of concern. In addition to the focus on CLL, strategies to support attainment in calculation, as well as creative programmes which support numeracy, creativity and boys' learning had been put in place. As a result focus on the way boys learn has produced a 9% improvement in the number of boys who achieved 6+ points in these key areas;
- In relation to actions for the current academic year support was provided to all practitioners to understand the new Foundation Stage requirements, together with a continued focus on numeracy, communication, language and creative programmes. Additionally, a conference focusing on Physical Development was planned to take place, as well as a continued support for a robust and co-ordinated approach to moderation;
- It was noted that the way Early Years Outcomes would be assessed has changed; however the DfE have not yet released the grade descriptors which will outline whether children are at expected levels, exceeding expectations or emerging, i.e. they have not yet reached expected levels

- It was explained that fifteen children's centres have been established over the last three years. Eleven are reaching between 60% - 89% of under 5's in their area, with four reaching between 40% and 50%. The need to target hard to reach families in assisting with learning was emphasised. It was also explained that the Government has recently introduced the 2 year old offer which was a requirement for all local authorities to deliver free places for 570 hrs a year for the 20% most deprived 2 year olds by September 2013. The local estimate, based on guidance from the Free School Meals service, is that 1,200 places will be required. While by September 2014 local authorities will be required to deliver free places to 40% of 2 year olds who fall into criteria currently being developed;
- In relation to the Parenting Strategy in Walsall to date, it was explained that pre implementation of the strategy 39 practitioners were trained with 143 parents and 357 children reached in 2011/12. Post implementation 239 practitioners have been trained and 586 parents trained and 1,465 children reached;
- In relation to local emerging evidence it was explained that there had been a 32% reduction in self reported emotional problems (Walsall), while 90% of participants on the Mellow Parenting programme in Walsall have made positive progress with their CPPs (Child Protection Plans).

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

## **238/12 Government Policy Changes – Teacher Appraisal Regulations 2012**

The Assistant Managing Director, Serco, introduced the report. The main points of the report and subsequent discussion were as follows:

- It was explained that the Government issued new Appraisal Regulations in 2012 which seek to make the process of teacher appraisals more rigorous and support higher teaching standards in schools. Headteachers have been working with WCS Serco to develop a Walsall process, this included consultation with teacher unions and professional associations;
- The new regulations require all qualified teachers, including head teachers, to have an annual appraisal which will see them assessed against teaching standards. The appraisal is required to be developmental and supportive, set individual objectives and identify development needs;
- National action is being taken jointly by the NUT and NASUWT over a number of issues including the new appraisal arrangements, with guidance provided by these unions to members that they should not participate in any activities that do not conform to a protocol document that they have issued. The impact of this will vary between schools and the Schools' HR Team are working with individual headteachers to resolve issues as and when they arise. A Panel member explained that this was a national dispute over a number of issues;
- Ofsted will triangulate evidence from observations, dialogue with staff and leaders, including governors, and from written reports and records, to ascertain the impact of the performance management and training in schools and academies;
- The Headteacher members of the Appraisal group plan to build on the appraisal process and to incorporate it within the Walsall "Passport to Progression", while

agreement has still to be reached with local teaching unions and professional associations over a revised Capability Policy.

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

### **239/12 School Improvement Supporting Strategy**

The Chair explained that this item would be deferred until the next Panel meeting.

### **240/12 Improvement Plan for Safeguarding and Looked after Children Services - update**

The Interim Executive Director introduced the report. The main points of the presentation and subsequent discussion were as follows:

- Following an Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked after Children (LAC) in June 2012 services were deemed inadequate. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families subsequently advised the council of his intention to issue an Improvement Notice. As a result an Improvement Board has been established which first met in September to consider a very detailed draft Improvement Plan. At the request of the Improvement Board a more strategically focused draft Improvement Plan has been developed and presented to its October meeting;
- The Improvement Plan includes three distinct themes that reflect the areas of focus of the draft Improvement Notice: quality and effectiveness of front line practice, improving the quality and effectiveness of partnerships and governance, together with capacity, capability and culture. The Improvement Plan details the outcome that is sought and is aligned to the Ofsted recommendations. The report also included guidance to support Scrutiny in testing and challenging practice and impact;
- In response to a Panel query it was explained that it would be important to ensure that social workers were enabled to work effectively and directly with children and their families by striking the right balance with office based work requirements. However, creating capacity for social workers also included enabling them to undertake research, as well as reflect and share good practice. In response to a Panel query officers identified a further issue relating to the size of the social work teams with some that were too small, and others that were too large to operate effectively;
- It was also explained that a further issue identified related to a need to reduce the number of panels and boards which were creating too many gates. The number of such groups was now being actively reduced. A more effective approach would include task and finish groups, together with proactive partnerships which operated with more challenging relationships;
- A further issue highlighted was the need to learn about risk. It was apparent that the service and referrers had become too risk averse. For example, children had

been taken into care but were not known to a range of preventative services. To support this it would be important to work more effectively across the system with other services.;

- Following a Panel query it was explained that there had been a step up in the Ofsted inspection regime, with a number of local authorities recently found to be inadequate. Additionally, from Spring 2013, Ofsted will work with a number of the inspection bodies including the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and HMI Police to operate a joint and joined-up inspection framework which will focus on the effectiveness of multi-agency work across a locality to ensure collective swift, sustainable and safe practice in a child's journey from needing to receiving help.
- The Chair requested that future updates on the Improvement Plan should include quicker wins and areas for development.

## **Resolved**

That:

future updates on the Improvement Plan should include quicker wins and areas for development; and

the report be noted.

## **241/12 Monitoring Safeguarding Performance**

The Head of Safeguarding introduced the presentation. The main points of the presentation and subsequent discussion were as follows:

- It was explained that the new Ofsted multi-agency inspection arrangements will be implemented from June 2013 and will consist of a two week unannounced inspection. Other elements of this process will include case tracking, practice observations, the use of national and local data and effectiveness of multi-agency and local authority partnerships;
- The Panel were also directed to a guide to help them in their role of scrutinising safeguarding children. This includes ten key questions in relation to partnership, quality, performance and practice. ([www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/15327408](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/15327408));
- A number of possible lines of enquiry were suggested. This included partnership work and effectiveness and the effectiveness of the Walsall Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) in holding individual agencies to account. In addition, quality and performance, including the WSCB quality assurance function, as well as elements of the Child's Journey. A further area for consideration were issues relating to the workforce. Following a Panel query it was explained that the effective use of social worker time included the need to operate flexibly and the use of all the tools available to them. It was also explained that an online confidential health check of colleagues from within the service would also be carried out to measure if the new approaches are proving effective.

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted.



**242/12 WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13 AND FORWARD PLAN**

The Panel considered the work programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan

**Resolved**

That the work programme and Forward Plan be noted.

**243/12 EDUCATION DEVELOPMENTS**

(Exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972) as amended.

The Panel received a number of updates from officers.

**Resolved**

That the amended private minutes of the meeting held on 13 September be approved;  
and

the updates be noted

**244/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair informed Members that the date of the next meeting would be 26 November 2012 at 6.00 pm.

The meeting terminated at 8.25 pm.

Chair:

Date: