

## Membership

### Councillors

Liz Yates (Chair)  
John Allin (Vice Chair)

- Michael Bennett  
LB Cooper  
Michael J Cox  
V H Dobson  
Sybil Fielding
- Michelle Gent  
Rev Tom Irvine  
Rod Kempster
- Wendy Quigley
- Kevin Rostance  
S Smedley  
Stuart Wallace
- Brian Wombwell  
Martin Wright

● absent

### Statutory Co-optees

Edward Hayes

- James Parry
- David Richards  
John Rudd

### Officers

Sara Allmond – Governance Support Officer  
Helen Lee – Scrutiny Officer  
Chris Harrison – Children & Young People  
John Slater – Children & Young People

## 1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 December 2009, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michelle Gent, Wendy Quigley and Brian Wombwell and Mr James Parry.

## **3. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **4. GCSE Attainment and Deprivation**

John Slater, Children and Young Peoples Services presented a report on GCSE Attainment and Deprivation. He explained the statistics within the report highlighting that there had been improvements in Key Stage 4 results since 2007 but that the gap between the results of children who were eligible for free school meals and those that were was still as wide.

In response to questions and comments from members of the Committee, Mr Slater stated: -

- The group of statistical neighbours was a long running comparison, and whilst there were differences between the neighbours such as Dudley being a city, rather than a rural county, the improvements Nottinghamshire County Council had made over time within the group showed success.
- The key to improving results was getting to know the individual children and adjusting strategies week by week to suit the children.
- Only 4 schools were now achieving below 30% A\* - C grades compared to 13 in 2007. All schools were expected to achieve over 30% by 2013.
- Changes in teaching methods and examination methods had resulted in an increase in the grades achieved by girls. Further changes made recently were expected to help improve the results that boys gained.
- If children were unable to read by age seven, they then struggle generally at school, often resulting in them struggling at secondary school and becoming troublesome. This was why the Every Child Reader scheme was so important.
- The Local Authority had a duty to offer diversity and choice of schools to parents and so could not stop parents from choosing schools out of the county. The solution was to improve the quality of the schools within the county so parents would want to choose them. Currently the choice of secondary schools within Newark was limited and therefore parents often chose to send their children to schools in Lincolnshire, who offered grammar schools.
- The gap between the "haves" and "have not's" had not changed nationally and school improvement techniques alone would not be

able to solve the problem. If parents did not see the benefit of education, then their children might not see the benefit either, so it was important to work with the family generally.

- Schemes like Every Child Matters were very important. The impact of early years initiatives and Children's Centres will take time to mitigate the effects of lack of parental interest.
- Migrants coming into the Mansfield area were having a positive effect on standards due to the positive view their culture had of education.
- The ratio of boys to girls within schools was believed to have remained constant. Mr Slater agreed to investigate the query and provide information on this.
- Nottinghamshire County Council was following good practice from Lincolnshire County Council in terms of schools collaborating together as a family of schools to enable them to access services between them and support each other.
- Looked After Children was an important area in terms of deprivation and ensuring participation in education and Mr Slater offered to attend a future meeting to provide the Committee information on this important area.

It was agreed to: -

- note the presentation
- receive the Key Stage 4 expected results and actual grades annually each January once the actual results were published.
- receive a presentation on Looked After Children at a future meeting.

## **5. Special Educational Needs and Inclusion**

Chris Harrison, Children & Young People's Services gave a presentation on the SEN and Inclusion Strategy, which had been developed following a review done by the department. A brief history of inclusion and education was given to the Committee and the outcomes of the review were explained.

In response to questions and comments from members of the Committee, Mr Harrison stated: -

- There was no clear scientific correlation between children with special needs being in a class and the exam results achieved by the other children in the class. However, when inclusion is done correctly it can be of benefit to all in class.
- The hierarchy of funding created a series of gateways ensuring that the funding was allocated as required to support the children that

needed it. The majority of funding went to the school. The next level was funding to the family of schools, which was allocated to those children with the most need across the family and finally a pot of money was earmarked for those children that required extra support and funding beyond what could be provided through the school or family of schools.

- Schools currently used a system called Raise Online which the Authority were hoping to gain access to so that individual achievements of children with special educational needs could be tracked to assess the effectiveness of the strategy, as using exam results alone did not necessarily show the achievements made by the individual children.
- Nottinghamshire County Council was 7<sup>th</sup> best in the country in parental satisfaction for the special educational needs support and education provided by the Authority.
- Basic level training was provided to teachers on children with special educational needs and support could be provided to schools on how to cope with specific needs.
- Newark was going for a whole town approach with a SENCO for the area which would help the allocation of funds to the schools in the area.

It was agreed to: -

- note the report
- receive further information on the Newark model and the possibility for it being rolled out to other areas if it was successful.
- receive further information on the progress and results of Raise Online system in January 2011.

## **6. Managing the Programme of Work**

The programme of work for 2009/10 was discussed.

It was agreed to: -

- set up a working group to visit the Magistrates Court to witness a case being heard in relation to truancy from school.
- receive a scoping report on the appointment of School Governors at the next meeting to decide whether to add the topic to the work programme as a possible future review.

The meeting closed at 12.02pm.

CHAIR

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