

SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 1 – INEQUALITIES

MINUTES

Wednesday 17th November 2016

PRESENT: Councillors: Ciaran McCartan (Chair), Jon Ball, Theresa Byrne, Paul Conlan, Fabio Conti (Vice-Chair), Tejinder Dhami, Dee Martin, Mohinder Midha, Karam Mohan, *Lynne Murray* (Substitute for David Rodgers) & Ian Proud.

Ealing Officers Present:

Angela Doherty	- Principal Advisor 11-19
Helen Green	- Head of Special Education Needs Strategy and Inclusion
Julie Lewis	- Assistant Director, School Effectiveness
Anna-Marie Rattray	- Scrutiny Review Officer
Sue Tarry	- Ealing Virtual School
Lee Teasdale	- Democratic Services Officer

External Attendees:

Ursula McGinty	- Resident
Syed Zaidi	- Education Co-optee

1. Apologies for Absence
(Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Swarn Kang and Sarfraz Khan.

Councillor David Rodgers was substituted by Councillor Lynne Murray.

2. Declarations of Interest
(Agenda Item 2)

There were none.

3. Matters to be Considered in Private
(Agenda Item 3)

There were none.

4. Minutes (08.09.2016)
(Agenda Item 4)

The Panel considered the minutes of the last meeting of the Panel which had taken place on 8 September 2016.

It was noted that the date at the top of the minutes referred to the June meeting of the Panel and this would be amended.

Councillor Rodgers had submitted an email to the Chair asking that additional comments made by him during the meeting be included within the minutes. These were in reference to the NHF Affordability Working Party (on which Councillor Rodgers had served in the 1990s). They had determined that for the two lowest quartile of the

income spectrum – 1/3 of net household income was what could be considered affordable, and that this was now generally accepted as the measure of housing affordability.

It was agreed that Councillor Rodgers further comments be added to the minutes for clarity.

Resolved: That, subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting of the Panel held on 8 September 2016 be agreed as a true and correct record.

5. Inequalities and Educational Outcomes (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair invited Julie Lewis (Assistant Director of School Effectiveness) to introduce a report to the Panel which set out the educational outcomes for children attending Ealing schools and the work being undertaken by education providers and agencies to tackle inequalities and improve outcomes. Also in attendance were Angela Doherty (Principal Advisor 11-19), Helen Green (Head of Special Education Needs Strategy and Inclusion) and Sue Tarry (Ealing Virtual School).

The report opened with a general overview of educational attainment within the Borough. 95% of all schools within Ealing now achieved a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding', this had risen from just 62% in 2010. Significant improvements had also been seen in the outcomes from Key Stage 4 of the learning process.

Ealing had a shared strategy (*Achieving Excellence Together 2015-2018*) with its schools, which set out clear and ambitious educational goals for all learners as well as specific groups of learners. Ealing's Primary and Secondary School Improvement Teams worked directly with all schools to challenge and support performance. Every school received a termly visit from a dedicated 'Link Officer' who worked alongside school leaders to test out the quality of school self-evaluation in relation to leadership and management; quality of teaching and learning; outcomes for pupils; personal development; behaviour and welfare; early years and post-16 provision.

There had been a strong focus on areas where the Borough had been underachieving against its London neighbours. Reading and writing levels for some groups during Key Stages 1 & 2 had been areas of concern. For example, whilst Black Caribbean pupil groups were on a par generally with other pupil groups until the end of Key Stage 2, beyond this point, the cohort begins to perform less well.

It was advised that in addition to primary and secondary support and advice, a dedicated 14-19 advisor also worked with school leaders, further education leaders, employers and wider groups to help in developing strong engagement and collaboration to improve educational pathways and outcomes for Ealing's underachieving groups.

Sue Tarry explained the role of the Ealing Virtual School and how it raised the attainment and educational achievements of Ealing's Looked After Children (LAC). This was done through working directly with the children and young people, and additionally through providing training, advice, support and consultancy to a number

of stakeholders in order to ensure that Ealing's looked after children received a high standard of education and were engaged in appropriate educational activity.

The Virtual School team had a qualified teacher allocated to each key stage, from Early Years to Post-16. The Post-16 teacher also worked with 18-25 year old care leavers in higher education.

A key role of the Virtual School team was to work in partnership with Ealing social workers to support the education of their young people through training social workers, advice and consultation. The team coordinated applications and admissions processes both in and out of the Borough; Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) processes and advice on schools/appropriate education provision; advising on pupil premium grants and financial support for education; extra-curricular activities; LAC Designated Teachers Network – training, support and advice forums; providing advice and targeted intervention and ensuring that the pupil premium grant was used effectively.

Helen Green then advised the Panel about 'Preparing for Adulthood' and what officers were trying to achieve in Ealing and with the West London Alliance for Post-16 learners with SEND.

Preparing for adulthood work was focussed on expanding the range of options leading to employment and training, good health, community inclusion and independent living, setting the highest possible aspirations for young people with special educational needs. This had included:

- **Supported Internships**
- **Young People's Participation/Voice** – through the young people champions being developed by Ealing Mencap Preparing for Adulthood
- **The Champions Group** – collaboratively working to develop a vision for change and transform the opportunities for young people with high needs in Ealing.
- **"The Hub"** – This acted as a conceptual framework for the delivery of Preparing for Adulthood especially for routes to employment, and supported the 'Pipeline to Work' in the Borough.
- **Information, Advice and Guidance** – ensuring the strength of these for learners with special educational needs.
- **Addressing the More Immediate Post-16 Issues for Springhallow and John Chilton Schools** – Both schools provided education for children and young people up to 16 years old. Their learners needed to have a more structured post-16 offer.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their initial presentations and invited Panel Members to comment and ask questions. The Chair asked that the questions be framed around particular aspects of education, with the first round of questions covering educational attainment.

Educational Attainment

The Chair asked about the Early Years Leadership and Management Course which had been offered during 2015/2016; would this be continuing? The Chair also made reference to the groups falling behind at Key Stage 2. This problem was not unique to Ealing, so was joined up working taking place on how to approach the issue?

It was advised that case studies from the Early Years Leadership and Management Course would continue to be used to drive up standards. With regards to Key Stage 2, generic priorities had been identified across the board on what needed to be done to approach the issues.

Councillor Conti asked if there were any barriers in place in regards to the relationships between schools and Link officers.

It was stated that Link officers reported good relationships with all schools and this was evidenced in the improving school ratings seen. That said, the spectrum within a 'good' rating for schools was quite wide and some still clearly needed more assistance than others. It was felt that the most successful schools targeted individuals and offered personalised support. It was important to try to get pupils to 'buy in' to a success culture within schools. This also involved working with family members.

Councillor Proud asked about how teachers influenced parents, were parents evenings used as a forum for this? It was advised that engaging parents was at the heart of encouraging achievements amongst pupils. Good schools would provide additional support to parents to help them personally develop as well. Turnout at parents evenings did collate with the amount of engagement work a school had undertaken.

Councillor Proud asked about visits from 'role models'. Were these regularly arranged for pupils? It was advised that there were a number of 'mentor' links with schools. But it was emphasised that 'day in, day out' aspiration building was as important as one off visits. Therefore, a successful model had been adopted in many schools where older students would mentor younger ones.

Councillor Conti asked about how the best practice from the top rated schools could be expanded. It was advised that the rating statistics could often betray a more complex underlying picture where ratings across stages at single schools could vary significantly. Some of the highest achieving schools at Key Stage 5 were in some of the most deprived wards in the Borough, with many schools bucking 'expected' trends. The measuring of progress was always 'fraught with controversy' with all progress measures having changed even within the last year.

Councillor Conti then queried how schools went about introducing children to arts and the theatre and addressing that side of education?

It was advised that Ealing had a programme for children to learn a musical instrument at school, the Assistant Director of School Effectiveness would feed back to the Panel on how far this offer extended.

Lack of access to arts was a particular area of concern for Looked After Children for various reasons; therefore efforts were made to take them on daytrips related to cultural activities. This was to show these children that these were not areas denied to them, and that they should aim as high as possible.

Councillor Martin asked for further information on what was being done to address the gaps in educational attainment. It was advised that the gaps in Ealing were a lot less than those seen nationally, though these had to be carefully measured, as small gaps could also indicate that all the pupils were underachieving.

The pupil premium offered by the government to aid in raising attainment standards for disadvantaged pupils played an important role in helping to plug the gaps, though concerns were raised that it had sometimes proved difficult to find out exactly what the schools in the borough were spending the premium on. Sue Tarry advised that in schools with looked after children, the pupil premium was sometimes held back until the school could account for how it would be utilised.

It was vital that gaps in educational attainment were addressed from a very young age, and focussed use of pupil premium was considered to have a huge impact, allowing students to access a whole range of activities. Two years ago an 'Ealing Innovation Fund' had also been set up in which schools could make bids for up to £30k for projects which promoted pupil achievement.

Councillor Conlan made reference to some children from an ethnic background being recent immigrants to the UK. Did these recent arrivals have an impact upon figures?

It was advised that the Borough had received quite a high number of immigrant children from Afghanistan who were currently within early years education. Focussed work had been taking place with these children. It was stated that generally, children for whom English was a second language would make up ground quite quickly and were usually on a par with other students by the time they were 11 years old.

Councillor Conlan also asked if academies, free schools and maintained schools were measured. It was advised that officers maintained a good relationship with all of these types of schools, and many of them bought into the Council's services such as a school improvement packages.

Councillor Murray asked about housing and studies related to the impact of housing upon educational attainment. It was advised that Sutton Trust report studies had confirmed that a lack of permanent housing had a detrimental impact upon studies, sometimes the impact of this was underreported, as the children would move from one authority to another within short periods. Overcrowded housing also presented an issue, as this often proved a difficult environment for pupils who needed to study or do homework.

Councillor Midha made reference to money issues for education schemes. Had possibilities around applying for National Lottery funding been fully investigated? And had other potential resources for funding been tapped into?

Councillor Byrne queried whether it was ensured that school governors had a full understanding of online data supplied through portals such as RAISEonline? It was advised that there was guidance available, and that it would be ideal for heads of

departments to spend time with governors to ensure they gained a full understanding.

Councillor Byrne then made reference to recent school leavers attending further education colleges. Had an impact been seen upon the numbers of school leavers attended FE colleges following the removal of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) from students in England?

Officers did not have the figures to hand but it was considered that there would have been some impact. It was advised that officers would feed these figures back to the Panel.

Virtual School

The Chair asked if the current level of a teacher for each age group was sufficient. Sue Tarry stated that whilst the department did what they could with limited resources, the level of teaching support they had was “never going to be enough”, considered the damaged upbringings that many of the looked after children had. During the six years it had been operating, the Virtual School had grown into a ‘proper school’ with a psychologist available and links with a clinical psychologist team available.

Councillor Mohan asked if the Virtual School worked with adopted children. It was advised that from spring 2017 they would be included following new government legislation. It was not known yet, how exactly this would work.

Councillor Martin asked about attendance, was this monitored differently to children in mainstream education. It was advised that the attendance was above the average for looked after children and that they did have a more sophisticated attendance monitoring system in place.

Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)

Councillor Conti asked about the how the general progress and levels of attainment in SEND Ealing measured up. It was advised that Ealing rated very well overall, though there were some marked differences seen from school to school.

Councillor Ball made reference to the person-centred programmes which helped to enable effective preparation for adulthood. Was there any tension between this programme and others? And did the programmes allow pupils freedom to take up their other interests? It was advised that whilst Ealing offered some of the widest ranging programmes in the UK, officers would like to be able to expand it further.

The Chair made reference to the development of an ‘Ealing Ambition’ framework which would work with partners to mirror the Mayor’s London Ambitions programme, encouraging more local employers to work with schools. What approaches were being developed for this?

It was advised that work was taking place with autistic young people to consider the most successful routes to employment attainment and retention, helping them with issues such as general presentation, hygiene, timing etc. Some helpful DVD’s had

been produced and were available to tutors. National Grid Education were highlighted as leading on some innovative approaches.

Councillor Proud made reference to the continuation and expansion of support internships. At what age was this route offered to pupils? It was advised that traditionally pupils would enter these pathways at around 14 years old. Though some innovative pathfinders had started working with pupils from 4 years of age. The general approach was start as early as was deemed right for the child.

The Chair then invited a resident, Ursula McGinty, to address the Panel. Mrs McGinty expressed concern that 6th Form and 6th Form Plus options were not provided by Springhallow School. The School catered to children with severe intellectual disabilities and autism, and it was considered to be unfair to these children that such services were not available via the site. Mrs McGinty stated that the information which had been provided to the Panel by officers was a 'disneyfied' version of the reality experienced by parents and pupils.

Helen Green responded to state that the attendees of Springhallow School had a wide matrix of needs and that the pupils needed a more structured post-16 offer with a range of clear progression opportunities. As part of this, work was taking place with partners on an 'Ambitious about Autism' programme. Mrs McGinty disagreed, stating that the programme could not offer the scope that continued education through Springhallow School would.

Councillor Martin asked about SEND child centred approaches. How was its effectiveness measured to ensure that no pupils were 'left behind'?

It was stated that traditionally SEND had seen a 'black and white' approach but officers were now looking at new approaches. It was felt that this had been successful, with Ealing seeing higher than average rates of former pupils living in solo accommodation and being in paid employment; though this came with the caveat that national rates were generally very poor. It was hoped that development would continue on better data sets to ensure that no pupils were ever 'left behind'.

Co-opted education member Syed Zaidi expressed concern around free schools meals. Some pupils had special needs that meant they could not consume regular meals and had to have specially prepared meals. It was advised that health and care plans assessed pupils needs. If they had such needs, there was a legal obligation to meet these. This was assessed through the speech and therapy service. Helen Green stated that if Councillors had noted any particular cases where it was felt needs were not being met, then these could be investigated.

The Chair then drew the item to a close, thanking officers and attendees for their contribution to the discussion.

Resolved: That

- (i) the report on inequalities and educational outcomes in Ealing schools be received;
- (ii) information on the musical instrument offer to Ealing students be fed back to the Panel; and

- (iii) figures on attendance levels at further education colleges in the Borough, before and after the removal of the Educational Maintenance Allowance be fed back to Panel Members.

6. Panel Work Programme

(Agenda Item 6)

The Chair advised the Panel that the next meeting would look at health inequalities in the Borough.

Councillor Byrne asked if the Panel would consider the Clinical Commissioning Group's Sustainability Transformation Plan (STP) as part of the meeting. The Scrutiny Review Officer and Chair felt that as this had been recently considered in full by the Health and Adults' Services Scrutiny Panel, there was a risk that this would duplicate oversight already undertaken.

The Chair informed the Panel of homeless visits he had made with St Mungo's, following up from the last meeting of the Panel. He noted shock at the level of poverty seen, and stated that it helped in understanding the scale of the problem. St Mungo's had opened the invite to other Councillors, and were welcome to sign up for a visit themselves via the Chair or the Scrutiny Review Officer.

Resolved: That the Panel Work Programme be noted.

7. Date of Next Meeting

(Agenda Item 7)

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would take place on Thursday 19 January 2017.

Councillor Ciaran McCartan, Chair.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.