



Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
Education, Skills and Children's Services

Date: Tuesday 4 November 2014
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury

AGENDA

9.30 am Pre-meeting Discussion

This session is for members of the Committee only. It is to allow the members time to discuss lines of questioning, areas for discussion and what needs to be achieved during the meeting.

10.00 am Formal Meeting Begins

Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE		
2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To declare any Personal or Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.		
3 MINUTES Minutes of the meeting held on 7 th October 2014 to be confirmed as a correct record.		7 - 16
4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS		



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Public Questions is an opportunity for people who live, work or study in the county to put a question to a Scrutiny Committee about any issue that has an impact on their local community or the county as a whole.

Member of public, who have given prior notice, will be invited to put their question in person.

The Cabinet Member and responsible officers will then be invited to respond.

Further information and details on how to register can be found through the following link and by then clicking on 'Public Questions'.

<http://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=788>

5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

For the chairman of the Committee to provide an update to the Committee on recent scrutiny related activity.

6 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

For members of the Committee to update the Committee on any issue they are investigating on behalf of the Committee.

7 IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY - ORAL EVIDENCE

Questions to Cllr David Simmonds, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, Hillingdon Borough Council and Chairman of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People's Board.

Contributor

Cllr David Simmonds, Hillingdon Borough Council

8 SUPPORTING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

10.40am 17 - 20

To consider the local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement in Buckinghamshire.

Contributors

Mr Mike Appleyard – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Mr Chris Munday – Service Director, Learning, Skills and Prevention

Mr Raza Khan – Chief Executive – Bucks Learning Trust

Mrs Amanda Taylor-Hopkins – Director of Education – Bucks Learning Trust

Mrs Sarah Holding – School Relationship Manager, Learning Skills and Prevention

Papers

A report to consider the Ofsted inspection framework for the

Local Authority arrangements for supporting school improvement and to provide an update on the preparations underway to prepare Buckinghamshire County Council for a possible Ofsted Inspection for its arrangements for supporting School Improvement.

9 NARROWING THE GAP 11.10am 21 - 34

An update on the implementation of the agreed Select Committee recommendations of the Narrowing the Gap Select Committee report on the attainment gap between socially and economically deprived pupils and their peers in Buckinghamshire.

Contributors

Mr Mike Appleyard – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Mr Chris Munday – Service Director, Learning, Skills and Prevention

Mr Raza Khan – Chief Executive, Bucks Learning Trust

Mrs Amanda Taylor-Hopkins – Director of Education, Bucks Learning Trust

Papers

A report on Narrowing the Gap

10 THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE 11.30am 35 - 48

To consider the governance arrangements for Adult Education in Buckinghamshire.

Contributors

Mr Bill-Bendyshe-Brown - Deputy Cabinet Member Education and Skills

Mr Chris Munday – Service Director, Learning, Skills and Prevention

Papers

A report on the proposed governance arrangements from the Adult Learning Service.

11 EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2014-15 12pm

Members will review and plan the Committee's Work Programme.

Contributors

Mrs Val Letheren – Chairman of the ESCE Select Committee

Mr Michael Carr – Scrutiny Policy Officer

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
To note the next meeting of the Education, Skills and

Children's Services Select Committee on Wednesday 19th
November 2014 at 2pm in Mezzanine Rooms 1 and 2

13 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To resolve to exclude the press and public as the following item is exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

14 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

12.30pm 49 - 54

Of the meeting held on 7th October 2014 to be confirmed as a correct record.

Purpose of the committee

The Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee shall carry out the local authority scrutiny functions for all policies and services relating to education and learning and children and young people, including: Nurseries and early years education; Schools and further education; The Bucks Learning Trust; Quality standards and performance in education; Special Educational Needs (SEN); Learning and skills; Culture and learning; Adult learning; Children and family services; Early intervention; Child protection, safeguarding and prevention; Children in care (looked after children); Children's psychology; Children's partnerships; Youth provision; The Youth Offending Service; Libraries; The County Museum; and Registrars.

In addition to the Buckinghamshire County Councillor membership, the Education, Skills and Children's Services also has up to 5 statutory education co-optees as set out in the Council Constitution.

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*For further information please contact: Kelly Sutherland on 01296 383602
Fax No 01296 382421, email: ksutherland@buckscc.gov.uk*

Members

Mrs M Aston	Mrs W Mallen
Mr J Chilver	Mr M Shaw
Mr D Dhillon (VC)	Mr R Stuchbury
Mr P Gomm	Mr D Watson
Mr P Irwin	Ms K Wood
Mrs V Letheren (C)	

Co-opted Members

Mr D Babb, Church of England Representative
Mr M Moore, Roman Catholic Church
Ms M Nowers, Primary School Sector



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Buckinghamshire County Council
Select Committee
Education, Skills and Children's Services

Minutes

EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2014, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.02 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.50 AM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Aston, Dev Dhillon (Vice-Chairman), Phil Gomm, Paul Irwin, Valerie Letheren (Chairman), Wendy Mallen, Robin Stuchbury, David Watson and Katrina Wood

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT

David Babb and Monique Nowers

GUESTS PRESENT

Angela Macpherson and Donald McPhail

OFFICERS PRESENT

Trevor Boyd, Michael Carr, David Johnston, Ed Mallam and Chris Munday

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from John Chilver and Michael Moore.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman made the following statement:

'I was the Cabinet Member for Children's Services from May 2011 to April 2013. I have considered carefully therefore whether I have a conflict of interest for this particular inquiry and have discussed the matter with the Council's Monitoring Officer and the Chief Executive who have advised me to continue in the chair for this item. Since May 2013 my role has been Chairman of this, non-executive Committee, a role I take very seriously.'



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



The terms of reference for this Inquiry relate to the Ofsted Inspection of June 2014 and the Improvement Plan being developed for the service moving forward. Should any matter arise during the deliberations of this Committee where I feel I do have a conflict of interest I will of course declare it.'

Mr Dev Dhillon declared that he was on the Board of the Farnham Common Children's Centre and Mrs Margaret Aston declared that she was on the Board of the Haddenham Children's Centre.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2014 were confirmed as a correct record.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chairman welcomed Mr Derek Berry from High Wycombe who wished to put a question to the Committee on the subject of the 11+ examination.

Mr Berry advised that he was concerned about the success of the new style 11+ exam which had been introduced in 2013, as he believed that a significant number of Bucks educated children were failing to secure a Grammar School place as a result of the changes. Mr Berry asked what options and powers were available to this Committee and Buckinghamshire County Council(BCC) to evaluate and address the many concerns and question raised about the results of the new 11+ exam that was introduced in 2013 and had just been repeated this year. Mr Berry commented that he believed that some BCC officers had concerns about the new exam as shown in the due diligence report and he was aware that BCC had signed a confidentiality agreement with the Bucks Association of Secondary Heads (BASH) to withhold the results of last year's exam from the public and wondered why this agreement was necessary. Mr Berry wanted to know if the Committee could ensure that the results of the 2014 test would be made available to the public in a more timely manner.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Chris Munday, Service Director, Learning, Skills and Prevention to the meeting. The Chairman advised that Headteachers were attending a meeting of the Committee in November to report on the 11+ results and asked Mr Munday to respond to Mr Berry's questions. Mr Munday agreed to answer the question regarding the powers available to the committee and BCC to evaluate and address concerns, but explained that the further issues raised could be addressed at the November Committee meeting.

In response Mr Munday explained that Buckinghamshire has a selective school system - the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 allowed for schools which were selective in 1997-1998 to continue to select by ability and this was reaffirmed in section 38 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006. Under paragraph 1.31 of the Admissions Code, it states that tests for all forms of selection must be clear, objective and give an accurate reflection of the child's aptitude and ability regardless of sex, race or disability. The admissions authority decides the content of the test providing it is a true test of aptitude and ability. All Grammar schools in Buckinghamshire are now Academies which mean they are their own admissions authorities and are independent of the Council, answerable only to the Department of Education and the Education Funding Agency. BCC had agreed to deliver the 11+ exam for a three year period for practical and logistical reasons. However BCC has no input into the content of the tests which are provided by a third party provider, selected by the Grammar school. BCC agreed to administer the test as BCC wished to work with the Grammar schools to maintain a single test across the county with an 'opt out' rather than an 'opt in' arrangement and to ensure appropriate access to the test for those with disabilities. The Grammar schools have been invited to present the data related to the tests to the Select Committee in November and have agreed to do so.

BCC had no duty or power to alter the Academies' admissions processes. BCC has no input into the content of the test. If members of the public have concerns regarding the 11+ test results or admissions arrangements for Academies then they must raise these issues with the Grammar Schools directly, make a complaint to the Department of Education or refer their concerns about admissions arrangements to the Schools Adjudicator.

A member expressed disappointment that Mr Munday would not answer all of Mr Berry's points in the interests of being open and transparent but Mr Munday explained that he needed to gain further information to enable him to respond properly. The Grammar schools would present their data to Committee in November and they are responsible for the test now. The Grammar schools need to be held to account for the 11+ tests. A member asked if BCC had considered making any representations to the Schools Adjudicator in relation to the new 11+ tests and Mr Munday confirmed that BCC had not. Mr Berry commented that he had wanted to ask his additional questions in preparation for the November meeting when the 11+ would be discussed in more detail.

RESOLVED

That the Secondary Transfer Exam results and analysis will be considered in detail as the next meeting on 4th November 2014 and on 19th November 2014, when the Committee would be receiving evidence from Buckinghamshire Schools. **

***[Subsequent to the meeting it was agreed that the item on Secondary Transfer Exam Results would be presented at the 19th November meeting.]*

5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported that she had attended an LGA conference on Ofsted Inspections. It was reported that 75% of local authorities (LAs) that had been inspected under the new regime had been rated as inadequate or needing improvement and the conference was helping LAs to understand how to improve.

The Chairman reminded members that Corporate Parenting training was taking place on Thursday 9th October in Great Missenden and also some members were visiting Bletchley Park on 21st October in connection with the Committee's Children's Internet Safety Inquiry.

6 COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

Mr Stuchbury and Mr Irwin reported that they had learned a lot at the first meeting of the Children's Internet Safety Inquiry and were looking forward to finding out more about the issues.

7 QUESTIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mrs Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Mr David Johnston, Service Director, Children and Family Service and Mr Ed Mallam, Head of Children's Partnerships took questions on the Children's Services Performance Report for Quarter 1 2014-15.

What is the current situation with agency staff in the service? What is your overall staffing establishment?

We still have a high proportion of agency staff but this varies from team to team. Currently 23-24% of the workforce are agency staff but previously over 80% of the First Response team were agency staff which was not ideal and we have tried to move more permanent staff into this team. We do have teams where all staff are permanent staff. I am uncertain of the establishment figures but can provide this information after the meeting, both Full Time Equivalents (FTE) and number of staff. Sickness levels are also high in some areas currently.

How do you know that we have enough social workers when demand for the service appears to be very unpredictable?

It is important that all agencies clearly understand the new Threshold Document so that unnecessary referrals might be diverted elsewhere. Also we need to have flexibility to move staff to deal with extra pressures for example, CSE issues or a serious child injury case, to be able to demonstrate to other agencies, members and the public that we are able to cope I have presented at both the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) and partners have been very supportive. This week the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services are meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

I am very concerned about the spending on agency staff, what is the difference in their remuneration?

We pay 30% more for agency staff. But we have proposals to improve a retention package for permanent staff and some agency staff have indicated that they would consider joining BCC on a permanent basis. We are working on a number of strategies including recruitment but workforce stability is very important for our children.

Do BCC offer further training opportunities?

Yes but we do need to recruit people with appropriate skills. Also our structure is very flat so we need to create alternative ways of rewarding staff as opportunities for promotion to a management role is limited. Therefore we need a number of offers, there is not one simple answer.

Have you modified your performance targets at all in light of the Ofsted report?

No, but we are developing a new performance framework. Where there are significant differences between the target and current performance, we would like to introduce stepped targets and monitor this very closely to ensure that changes initiated through the Improvement Plan become embedded.

Has any work been done with our Client Transport department as I have concerns over issues of taxi drivers and our vulnerable children. This issue has also been raised by the Leader of the GNB.

When I report on CSE I will be able to demonstrate the discussions that we have had with the district councils around this and the safeguards that we have put in place.

Would you like to make any comment about the number of repeat referrals?

Obviously a lower figure is better – the target is 25% and we are currently running at 32%. We are undertaking analysis of why we are getting repeat referrals. I hope that the MASH and the strengthening of the First Response team will lead to a drop in re-referrals. This could also reflect the general increase in the total number of referrals and perhaps indicate that the initial assessment has not been done as thoroughly as it could be.

Another issue is that a partner agency, such as a school, may refer a child to us due to concerns and we will then direct them to services elsewhere. Later on the school may still be concerned and will therefore re-refer. It is important that we provide feedback to agencies that refer into social care. It is about improving the quality of practice and instilling confidence in our partners.

What are the average caseloads like for social workers at the moment?

The Children in Need teams average 15-18 cases per worker, Looked After Children teams have caseloads ranging from the high teens to early twenties and Children with Disabilities teams sometimes have slightly higher caseloads. The First Response team is a bit more difficult to manage caseloads as it depends on the number of referrals.

But does every child now have an allocated social worker?

Yes I checked this yesterday afternoon.

Are assessments now being completed within the 45 day timescale?

We have now added in a mini target of 10 days and progress is being made. Achievement of this target relies on increasing staff in the First Response team and having the correct skills there. Also we need IT recording to be tighter. This is very important – I want to see that assessments are being completed in a timely manner.

How many Looked After Children do we have currently?

438.

How can we ensure that other agencies refer to social care correctly and not in reaction to recent media coverage or due to concerns about being seen to do the right thing?

All agencies have agreed the Threshold document and will be delivering training to their staff on this. We also need to ensure that our First Response team are clear on the thresholds and encourage them to signpost to other early help services if appropriate.

Will the change from Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements to Educational Health and Care Plans impact Social Care?

This will provide us with a new framework for working with schools and we will need to establish a common professional arrangement. The SEN teams sit in the Learning, Skills and Prevention side of the portfolio.

When a child comes into care, if it is then agreed that they should be put forward for adoption this does seem to take a long time. Please can you explain where delays may occur in the adoption process?

We are achieving the required 6 months Public Law Outline (PLO) target set by Government but there are delays in finding suitable matches and it is crucial to get that right. We are now averaging 223 days from start to finish which is better than highlighted in the Ofsted inspection report. If we run campaigns for prospective adopters we have to ensure that we have the staff and capacity in the process. Also if one child has complex needs and takes a long time to place this will impact on the average time which is recorded in the performance report.

The Chairman thanked all contributors.

8 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE PORTFOLIO PLAN

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ed Mallam, Head of Children's Partnerships to the meeting. Mr Mallam joined the Cabinet Member, Mrs Angela Macpherson and Mr David Johnston, Service Director, Children and Family Service in answering questions on both the Children and Young People's Service Portfolio Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan, as there were synergies between the two.

The Chairman invited members' questions.

Will you modify the Portfolio Plan in light of Ofsted?

This is a shared Portfolio Plan and many elements of work sit beneath this, so it is not necessary to modify it. There are clear links between current existing work and the Ofsted Improvement Plan.

Please can you provide the Committee with an update on the Families First programme?

Around 700 families have been involved to date and BCC recently submitted an additional payments by results claim. The success of this initiative should help to keep children with their

families rather than coming into care. 72-75% of families have met their targets within the agreed timescales.

Mr Mallam, please can you explain to members how the Children and Young People Performance Scorecard works.

This is a very detailed performance monitoring system which focuses not just on targets but also finance and staffing etc. Page 43 of the agenda papers shows the front page of the scorecard and page 45 shows the screen behind which allows you to drill down to further details by clicking on the relevant data buttons.

Mrs Macpherson suggested that it might be useful for members to have a training session and access to the system once it was all fully up and running. She reported that she had asked for some additional indicators, including number of social workers a looked after child has and the number of care leavers who are NEET (Not in education, employment or training).

I am intrigued by the happiness measure – how do you measure this and how do you rank the different indicators around living a fulfilling life?

In terms of assessing children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing, colleagues in Public Health provided us with a series of questions to include in our Children and Young People residents survey which takes place every two years, but I agree it is a very challenging thing to measure.

I would like to know how we can monitor how effectively children move from Children's Services to Adults and Family Wellbeing, as this transition has been problematical in the past.

I know that Transitions can be difficult. A crucial issue is that the criteria for support for children with disabilities is very different to the criteria for adults with disabilities, so children reaching adulthood might not automatically qualify for the same levels of support.

Members thanked Ed Mallam for explaining the scorecard and made two suggestions – firstly that it should be clearly marked as to whether a high figure or a low figure is a positive indicator and also that it might be useful to include national high and low figures as a comparison. Mr Mallam agreed to take these suggestions back to his team.

The Chairman thanked Mr Mallam, Mrs Macpherson and Mr Johnston for their contributions.

9 UPDATE ON THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

This item was considered together with Item 8.

10 PERFORMANCE REPORTS - CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO - QUARTER 1

Mrs Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Mr David Johnston, Service Director, Children and Family Service and Mr Ed Mallam, Head of Children's Partnerships took questions on the Children's Services Performance Report for Quarter 1 2014-15.

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Action: Service Director, Children and Family Service

How do you know that we have enough social workers when demand for the service appears to be very unpredictable?

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The Chairman thanked all contributors.

11 EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2014-15

Mr Michael Carr, Policy Officer, Scrutiny advised the Committee that he felt it would be useful to amend the Committee's annual workplan in light of the Ofsted Draft Improvement Plan which had recently been received by members.

RESOLVED

That the Committee's Work Plan be updated to reflect the key priorities outlined in the Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Services Improvement Plan.

12 CHILDREN'S SERVICES DRAFT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Chairman welcomed Mr Trevor Boyd, Interim Strategic Director for Children and Young People who joined Mrs Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Mr David Johnston, Service Director, Children and Family Service for the presentation of the draft Children's Services Improvement Plan.

The Chairman began by stating her disappointment that the draft Improvement Plan was not made available to members of the Committee until late Friday evening via email. If information was not made available in a timely manner then the Committee was unable to do its job in

providing effective challenge and holding decision-makers to account. Also because the Plan was confidential, the Committee was unable to discuss the detail in public at today's meeting, which further undermined the Committee's ability to support transparency and public accountability.

The Chairman requested that in future papers should be provided to meet the statutory five working days deadline and she hoped that the Committee would be provided with full information on the timetable for the plan, draft project plans for each workstream and full costings information. The Committee members really wanted to contribute to the development of the Draft Improvement Plan.

In response, Mr Trevor Boyd expressed regret that the Draft Improvement Plan had not been available to members any earlier but he had explained to Mr Carr, Policy Officer, Scrutiny that the statutory deadlines could not be met on this occasion. This was mainly because events were being held with staff last week to enable their contributions to be included in the draft and officers were still working very hard to confirm the final costing information, which is why there were no costs outlined in this version. Mr Boyd was confident that the costings element would be finalised by the end of the week and he was happy to work with the Committee to ensure that they could have further sight of the draft once the costings were agreed.

The Chairman asked Mr Boyd for a clear outline of the timetable for agreeing the Improvement Plan prior to the submission of the final version to Ofsted. Mr Boyd explained that unfortunately the political timescales never quite match the practicalities. The final Improvement Plan had to be with Ofsted by 14th November but ideally BCC wished to submit it ahead of this date and were currently aiming for the end of October. The draft plan with full costings was due to be presented at Cabinet on 20th October and the supporting papers must therefore be circulated by Monday 13th October at the very latest. The draft the Committee had before them today was therefore very close to the final version.

The Chairman asked how the Committee were meant to have a meaningful input prior to the final version of the Improvement Plan being presented to Cabinet. It would mean having to call another meeting of the Select Committee at very short notice. Members were very concerned that they would not be able to scrutinise the final version of the Improvement Plan and called for a further meeting to be arranged as soon as possible, in order to facilitate this.

13 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

As the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board's Improvement Plan was included in the Children's Services Draft Improvement Plan which was confidential, this item was discussed under Item 15, following the Exclusion of the Press and Public.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the next meeting of the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee on Tuesday 4th November 2014 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 2

15 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded for the following item which is exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

CHAIRMAN



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee

Report to the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee

Title: The Ofsted inspection framework for LA arrangements for supporting school improvement

Committee date: 4 November 2014

Author: Chris Munday

Contact officers: Sarah Holding, sholding@buckscc.gov.uk;
01296 383038

Atifa Sayani; asayani@buckscc.gov.uk;
01296 383105

Report signed off by Cabinet Member: Mike Appleyard

Electoral divisions affected: All

Purpose of Agenda Item

This agenda item is for information and will provide an update on the preparations underway to prepare Buckinghamshire County Council for a possible Ofsted Inspection for its arrangements for supporting school improvement.

Background

This agenda has not been previously brought to the Select Committee. However, a recent Member decision (July 2014) was taken to approve Buckinghamshire's School Improvement Strategy and, in devising the Strategy, consideration was taken of the Ofsted Framework. As a result, the School Improvement Strategy reflects the priorities and focus areas within the Ofsted Framework

Summary

The statutory responsibility for school improvement and school standards remains with the County Council, as outlined within the Education and Inspections Act, 2006. The new framework for the inspection of LA arrangements for supporting school improvement came



into force in June 2013. (*Please note that the Framework is under review; see addendum at end of paper*)

The Handbook makes it clear that 'local authorities retain a legal responsibility for performance in the area as a whole, under the 1996 Education Act'.

HMCI may cause an LA to be inspected where one or more of the following apply:

- The proportion of children who attend a good or better maintained school, pupil referral unit (PRU) and/or alternative provision is lower than that found nationally
- There is a higher than average number of schools in an Ofsted formal category of concern and/or there are indicators that progress of such schools is not securing rapid improvement
- There is a higher than average proportion of schools that have not been judged good by Ofsted
- Attainment levels across the LA, or rates of progress relative to starting points, are lower than that found nationally and/or where the trend of improvement is weak
- The volume of complaints to Ofsted about schools is a matter of concern
- The Secretary of State requires an inspection of LA school improvement functions

Inspectors are likely to conduct meetings with:

- Elected Members of the Council, particularly those responsible for education
- The Chief Executive; DCS (or equivalent); head of school improvement (or equivalent)
- Local authority staff, or contracted staff (eg. BLT) who support school improvement
- School improvement data manager(s)
- chair/vice chair of the schools' forum
- other agencies involved in school improvement such as National/Local Leaders of Education/training schools, Teaching Schools and /or other contracted partners
- Headteachers and governors of schools subject to intervention or intensive support
- Headteachers and governors of schools subject to light touch monitoring
- governor support services (or their equivalent) staff
- Other stakeholders as appropriate – eg. BASL, BASH? PEB? BASG?

There are 9 aspects of school improvement which will be inspected.

Handbook for the Inspection of local authorities – effectiveness descriptors

1. The effectiveness of corporate and strategic leadership of school improvement (eg. ambitious vision; coherent and consistent challenge; shared understanding with schools; clearly understood and communicated strategies; credible and trusted senior officers)
2. Clarity and transparency of policy and strategy for supporting schools and other providers' improvement (eg. school improvement priorities are clear and transparent and have been influenced by schools and other providers; plans are integrated with the programme for differentiated LA support and intervention; monitoring and evaluation of impact is regular and robust; LA definitions, processes and criteria for monitoring, challenge, intervention and support are clear, transparent, sharply focused and understood)
3. The LA knows its schools and providers well and tailors support accordingly (eg. data analysis used to determine intervention; comprehensive range of performance

data is used by school leaders to inform strategy and development; data is used as basis for challenge and support)

4. The LA's powers of intervention are used effectively (eg. monitoring progress of individual settings; robust action taken)
5. The impact of LA support and challenge (eg. differentiated, coordinated strategies and intervention; reduction in schools causing concern)
6. LA commissions and brokers a full range of school improvement expertise (eg. best practice known; clarity over what is provided and what is brokered; impact of brokered support is monitored in order to assess impact)
7. Strategies in place to support L&M (eg. expert advice and training; accurate identification of concern with L&M and governance, followed by prompt intervention)
8. Support and challenge for school governance (eg. strategy for recruitment and retention of governors; training' prompt action/intervention when governance a concern)
9. Use of funding must ensure focus on greatest need (eg. consultation so that schools understand deployment of resources; delegated resources monitored)

Resource implications

The School Improvement Strategy and Ofsted preparations will be funded from existing resources. The Council has a grant agreement with the Learning Trust for school improvement services of approximately £3 million pounds. This resource is reducing over the MTP period due to reductions in the Councils Education Support Grant.

Schools also have delegated budgets to purchase support for School Improvement.

The School Improvement Strategy drives the school improvement model delivered by the Learning Trust; other partners – eg. The Teaching Schools – have also committed to the Strategy and their school improvement activity will be designed to meet the priorities agreed within the Strategy.

Next steps

- Preparing relevant BCC services for a possible Ofsted Inspection (Aug – ongoing)
- Preparing and working with schools and academies on a possible Ofsted Inspection
 - ~ Discussion papers to be taken to the Primary learning Hub meetings, to the Primary Executive Board, to the Buckinghamshire association of Secondary Headteachers, to the Buckinghamshire association of School Governors.
- Preparing and working with school improvement partners on a possible Ofsted Inspection
 - ~ Buckinghamshire Association of School Leadership
 - ~ Buckinghamshire Learning Trust

- ~ Teaching Schools
- ~ National Leaders (of Education and Governance) and with Local Leaders
- Implementation of Buckinghamshire County Council Education Board
 - ~ Half-termly meetings, beginning in October 2014
- Completion of Buckinghamshire County Council Self-Evaluation Form (thereafter a 'live' document)
- Member Decision on the completion of the Self Evaluation Form – November 2014

Discussion Question:

Q How could the Select Committee contribute to the Buckinghamshire County Council Self-Evaluation?

Addendum

Ofsted is currently reviewing the methodology for its inspection of local authorities' arrangements for supporting school improvement ('LASI inspections'). The review will also ensure the methodology takes account of the Department for Education's Schools causing concern: statutory guidance, published in May 2014. Ofsted hope to publish the new framework and handbook at the end of October.

Two particular changes are being considered:

The first proposal is to combine the LASI inspection with a focused inspection of schools in the local authority area. A number of school inspections will take place in the first week of the inspection period, followed by direct engagement with the local authority in the second week. It is felt that this approach will provide inspectors with a rich source of direct evidence about the quality and impact of support and challenge. Inspectors will not, however, make their judgement on the focused inspection evidence alone: they will consider the full range of available evidence as they do now.

Ofsted is also considering whether to remove the current effective/ineffective judgement. Their view is that this may help inspectors to make a more nuanced evaluation of the support and challenge provided. The proposed approach is for inspectors to report clearly and unambiguously on what they find, identifying key strengths and weaknesses. Where significant concerns are identified, Ofsted will consider conducting further inspection activity at an appropriate time in the future.



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Education, Skills and Children's Services

Report to the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee

Title: Narrowing the Gap –
Narrowing the attainment gap between economically and socially disadvantaged pupils and their peers in Buckinghamshire

Committee date: 4th November 2014

Author: Chris Munday

Contact officer: Atifa Sayani, asayani@buckscc.gov.uk

Report signed off by Cabinet Member: Mike Appleyard, Education and Skills

Electoral divisions affected: All

Purpose of Agenda Item

This Report is for Information and aims to provide an update on the status of the twelve Recommendations as set out in the Narrowing the Gap Report published on 14th March 2014 by the Select Committee.

Background

The Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee conducted an in-depth Inquiry in Narrowing the Gap in 2013, to investigate the high attainment gap in Buckinghamshire and to develop proposals to the Buckinghamshire County Council, the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust and to local schools to help narrow the gap and raise attainment for economically deprived children in Buckinghamshire. This Inquiry was carried out by a Narrowing the Gap Inquiry working party of the Select Committee.

The Select Committee engaged with all schools in Buckinghamshire through the Bucks Association of Head Teachers (BASH) and the Primary Executive Board, as well as through an invitation to submit evidence to the Inquiry through a questionnaire survey on how schools are narrowing the gap.



Members of the Select Committee have visited schools to talk to school leaders and see some of the activities first hand, including visits to the Disraeli School and Children's Centre to Cressex Community School in Buckinghamshire. Members also visited Morpeth School in Tower Hamlets to find out about how they have raised achievement for economically deprived pupils.

Summary

A summary of the Primary Narrowing the Gap Project can be found at Appendix A and a summary of the Secondary Narrowing the Gap project at Appendix B.

The recommendations following the Inquiry were welcomed by the Council's cabinet and serve as a useful reflection and challenge to the local authority and the school community to help towards boosting educational attainment and outcomes for the most deprived children in Buckinghamshire and thereby, narrow the gap. The recommendations in the Report are as follows:

Recommendation One: Targeting Economically Disadvantaged Communities

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to explore the feasibility of establishing Learning Development Centres to offer targeted learning opportunities for parents and children. These centres should be located in areas accessible to economically disadvantaged families.

This is a commissioning responsibility which remains with the County Council. We will seek to understand what approach is used at Learning Development Centres to see whether it is already available within the County. We will then consider a local response utilising existing resources

Update

The Council transferred to the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust the Matrix Centre project in High Wycombe based at Wycombe Wanderers Football Club. The centre focuses on Pupil Premium pupils and provides 6 week interventions based on Numeracy, Literacy and social development activities. The outcomes of the Centre are very positive. Eight hundred students accessed a variety of programmes in 2013-14. 88.3% of Year 6 students who attended the Matrix Centre achieved 2+ levels of progress in reading, 90% in writing and 92.7% in maths.

The Trust are looking into the viability of developing a programme in Aylesbury which will target Pupil Premium pupils in Aylesbury with a similar programme that will link to catch up opportunities for Pupil Premium pupils and their families. 98% of parents said they were pleased with their child's experience with the Matrix Centre. Pupil Premium pupils receive out of school learning opportunities to allow them to access high quality learning support linked closely to needs as identified by the schools. Impact will continue to be measured from each pupils starting point.

Recommendation Two: The Early Years Curriculum

In order to promote the Early Years Curriculum, we recommend that the Council pro-actively supports the implementation of Development Matters, Early Years Outcomes, and the new Early Learning Goals for all Early Years providers in Buckinghamshire

Update

The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust's Early Years Foundation Stage(EYFS) team and workforce development have actively promoted the curriculum and the implementation of the new early learning goals. This has been developed through one to one support for settings and through a wide range of Continuous Professional Development. A focus on early identification in particular with those families with low socio economic status has been a key driver in all the work so far. The Learning Trust have a planned focussed project about to start which aims to work collaboratively with EYFS providers to enhance the quality of support for disadvantaged families.

This work has resulted in improved performance. The percentage of children reaching a good level of development has improved from 55% in 2013 and 64% in 2014.

Buckinghamshire's Statistical neighbour rank, was 5th in 2013 and is still 5th in 2014. The Authority's National rank was 39th in 2013 and 30th out of 152 in 2014. The Inequality Gap has closed; it was 32.6% in 2013 but is 28.7% in 2014. The Statistical neighbour rank, was 9th in 2013 and is 7th in 2014. Buckinghamshire's National rank for this measure was 42nd in 2013, but is an improved 30th in 2014.

Recommendation Three: Children's Centres Review

We recommend that the planned review of Buckinghamshire Children's Centres focus on a) accessibility and take-up of services by deprived parents and children, b) the location of centres in their role as early intervention hubs, and c) the links between schools and centres.

Update

The Cabinet Member remains committed to Children's Centres and Early Years has a high priority. The review has been completed and the Council is proceeding to tendering for providers of Children's Centres. From September 2014 the following Centres have been developed into Early Years Excellence Hubs and we are monitoring their development and performance

Coldharbour (Aylesbury)

Elmhurst (Aylesbury)

Newtown (Chesham)

Millbrook (High Wycombe)

Terriers (High Wycombe)

Bowerdean (High Wycombe)

Recommendation Four: An Early Years Pupil Premium

We recommend that the Schools Forum review the Funding Formula with the objective of targeting additional funding at the children of families from the most deprived backgrounds, in order to assist early years providers to achieve the Government's Early Years Outcomes and the 17 Early Learning Goals.

The Council has protected funding for early years with the support of the Schools Forum. We have recently agreed a cut to the School's budget to offset cuts from central Government. We already fund for deprivation and we will review, with the Schools' Forum, whether a pupil premium approach will be more effective

Update

The Government consultation on Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) and funding for two-year-olds was published on 25 June 2014. It sought views on the extension of the pupil premium into the early years, in order to better support the early education of disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds. It asked questions on the mechanics of extending the premium, including checking eligibility; holding providers accountable for the use of the funding; and examples of good practice in supporting disadvantaged children. It also asked for views on managing the first year of participation funding for the early education entitlement for two-year-olds in 2015-16.

The consultation was positively received and the Early Years Pupil Premium will be implemented nationally

Implementation of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP): In order to ensure that the whole system is ready for the introduction of the EYPP in April 2015, the Government will implement it from January 2015 in a representative group of local authorities. This will give the Government the opportunity to ensure that systems for funding and for checking eligibility are working smoothly ahead of the introduction of the EYPP in April 2015. The Government will produce short guidance for local authorities on how to implement the EYPP later this year.

Early years pupil premium allocations for 2015 to 2016: Buckinghamshire was allocated £221,329 to fund 768 eligible children

Recommendation Five: Improving Literacy

We recommend that the Cabinet Member undertake a review on how to improve the performance of phonics and to consider methods to achieve higher levels of literacy for deprived pupils at early years and primary school levels

The Council is responsible for overall standards in our schools and is committed to ensuring that we maintain and build on our successes. We consider that phonics should be taught as part of a range of strategies to support literacy within our schools in line with the Rose Review findings. We will not commission a separate review but undertake to report on the strategic conversations the Service Director is holding with a range of schools on literacy (including the teaching of phonics) to develop the future commissioning of the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust in this area.

Update

The Service Director for Learning, Skills and Prevention has actively sought the views of Head-teachers from a range of schools in regards of the phonics screening. Through this, Headteacher forums and Liaison Groups, schools have given their views on challenges they face and ways of sharing good practise. This information will be used to steer the BLTs Phonics Project.

Our termly data review has highlighted 29 schools who have not met the expected standard in the Year 1 Phonics Check.(74%) by 10% or more. The Local Authority has written to each of these schools informing them that they will be part of a “*Driving Improvement in Phonics Project*” run by the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust. Each school will receive funding for the Headteacher and one member of staff to attend ‘*The Road to Success with the Phonics Screening Check*’ in November. Following this they will receive targeted support by BLT Officers who will help create an action plan with clear outcomes.

Recommendation Six: The Role of Parents in Education

We recommend that the Cabinet Member develop a programme to engage and further involve parents in the education of their children, with a particular focus on supporting parents of the most vulnerable children.

The Cabinet Member is committed to ensuring that the Council supports parents in supporting their vulnerable children in education. Funding is used already to support this work in Buckinghamshire and, therefore, I do not believe we need to develop a new programme.

Recommendation Seven: High Achieving Economically Disadvantaged

We recommend that the Cabinet Member encourage Buckinghamshire primary schools to provide targeted learning support in order to enable high achieving pupils from deprived background to access grammar schools.

The Cabinet member is committed to ensuring that high achieving children who are economically disadvantaged perform well in all school settings not just Grammar Schools. The Council has commissioned the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to pilot targeted learning support for children with high prior attainment to ensure they reach their potential

Update

The Learning Trust has established a pilot project running through Sir William Borlase Grammar School. The project is working with Primary Schools to identify high achieving Pupil Premium pupils and work with them to ensure they reach their full potential and standards expected for Grammar School entrance. If this project is successful it will be rolled out over the year to cover Aylesbury and High Wycombe

The impact will be monitored over the Year. Key indicators will be progress from starting points. Targeted children will be monitored in Year 6 and the percentage of children achieving above expected levels will be reported.

Recommendation Eight: An Analysis and Challenge Toolkit for Schools

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to develop guidance and online toolkits for schools on:

- project identification and assessment of educational programmes and interventions targeted at the needs of pupils most in need, and
- an evaluation framework template as a practical tool for assessing the impact of narrowing the gap projects.

The Cabinet Member supports the use of evidence bases, but does not consider it appropriate to develop new guidance and on-line toolkits and will ask the Learning Trust to enable on-line access to existing tools from the Sutton Trust and other organisations

Update

This is available on a Website to support schools and leaders launched at pupilpremium.learningtrust.net A questionnaire will be sent out in the Autumn term to evaluate how Leaders are using the site. All schools who have participated in focus Narrowing the Gap work are aware and now familiar with the Sutton Trust research.

Recommendation Nine: Researching and Evaluating what Works

We recommend that the Cabinet Member apply to the Education Endowment Foundation for funding to undertake an independent peer review of narrowing the gap projects in Buckinghamshire and that this report be shared for best practice

We will ask Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to apply for funding

Update

This will be applied for in January 2015, once the Secondary project is underway to allow maximum impact.

Recommendation Ten: Narrowing the Gap Reports to Governing Bodies

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to develop guidance for schools on the roles of governors in developing and implementing narrowing the gap projects, and evaluation of the effects of the Pupil Premium. This should include quarterly/annual reports on these topics to governing body meetings.

Update

Written guidance for leaders and Governors on effective use of Pupil Premium has been produced and sent to Schools. Governors use this guidance to support their roles in schools. 'Narrowing the Gap' is high profile in all training and is referred to at all Governing Body training events resulting in increased awareness.

Recommendation Eleven: Lead Governor for Narrowing the Gap

In order to raise the profile of narrowing the gap within schools, we recommend that school governing bodies consider appointing a lead governor with special responsibility for narrowing the gap and Pupil Premium.

Update

Buckinghamshire Governor Services published a list of 'Top ten questions' for leaders. Governors are encouraged to use these questions to support and challenge school leadership. The template of the Head teacher report to governors has been amended to include a section on Pupil Premium. This area is also included as a standing item on all LA governing body agendas. Clerks are directed to minute evidence of impact. The Buckinghamshire data dashboard has been amended to include gap analysis data. This is made available to the Governing Body to support and challenge school leaders further and questions.

Top 10 Questions to ask about Pupil Premium

1. What is the PP gap in your school? (for En+Ma, Rdg, Wri, Ma?)
2. How does this compare with National? How has this changed over time?
How are you tracking the changes?
3. Who are the PP pupils in your school? How many? Boys/girls by year group?
What is the overlap with other groups – EAL, BME, G&T etc?
4. How much PP funding do you get? Can you detail how it is used? Who decides how it will be spent? Is it used to support pupils other than PP?
5. What do you do to encourage parents/carers to claim Free School Meals (even if they don't use the meal)? Do they understand how much money can benefit the school and their child?
6. Does your school website meet the requirements for reporting on Pupil Premium?
7. How are Governors involved in monitoring Pupil Premium?
8. What interventions/actions have you used to narrow the gap? What was their impact? How did you measure it? What is the most effective strategy you have used to reduce the PP gap?
9. Do class teachers know who the PP pupils are in their class? Do teachers have PP targets as part of their performance management? What support do teachers receive in order to address PP gaps?
10. Do you have Pupil Premium pupils who achieve national expectations but who ought to be achieving more highly? What could you / do you do for them?

Recommendation Twelve: Narrowing the Gap Training for School Leaders

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to enhance training opportunities for school leaders on maximising narrowing the gap projects and Pupil Premium including strategic overview, project identification and budget allocation, mid-term review, and evaluation and assessment.

Update

All Buckinghamshire Learning Trust CPD courses reference Pupil Premium and identify how best to raise achievement. There is now an increased offer of NtG governor training. This includes training on monitoring the progress of Pupil Premium pupils. Bespoke packages are also offered to Governing Bodies whose schools data suggest that this is an area of priority. Governing Bodies are invited to participate in the Primary and Secondary Narrowing the gap projects. A website to support schools and leaders has been launched at pupilpremium.learningtrust.net

Resource implications

NtG projects are funded by a grant given to the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust by the Local Authority.

Next steps

To continue work with schools on the Narrowing the Gap Primary and Secondary Projects

Background Papers

Narrowing the Gap Report – March 2014

[*BucksNarrowing GapReport FINAL 2014.pdf*](#)

Appendix A

Primary Update

Buckinghamshire Premium Challenge a joint project between HMI, Teaching Schools, School Leaders and Buckinghamshire Learning Trust.

‘No Excuses: High Expectations for All.’

In January 2014 we launched a short time-targeted project to help narrow the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in Buckinghamshire Primary schools. The Pilot is to run until July 2014.

Aims:

- To raise the achievement of our most disadvantaged pupils.
- To create a network of leaders who develop expertise in and enthusiasm for effective practice in closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- To draw on best practice and research based interventions to reduce the achievement gap in Buckinghamshire.

School selection

Schools were invited to be involved; 17 schools were selected based on the following criteria:

- Inclusion on a list held by HMI of the lowest performing 45 schools in Buckinghamshire using the measure of FSM6 reaching Level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics and with more than three pupils in the cohort;
- VA for disadvantaged pupils below 98.5 in 2013;
- Disadvantaged pupils at EYFS, KS1 or KS2 performing significantly below their peers.

The project provides funded support from a named National or Local Leader in Education for four half-day visits. Back up is provided by the Pupil Premium Team and HMI, in addition schools are invited to attend a midway meeting with HMI and a best conference in July.

Many of the schools involved are currently judged to be a good or better schools, this Pilot provides an opportunity to focus on effective ways of improving outcomes for this particular group of pupils. The intention is that lessons learnt will be made available to all Buckinghamshire Primary schools.

Each participating school has made a commitment to:

- Share data with professionals involved with the project;
- Name individual FSM6 pupils to be targeted in every year group to improve their outcomes;
- Professional openness, honesty and generosity;
- Confidentiality;
- Willingness to review and adapt practice for disadvantaged pupils.

Actions taken

- 12 Local and National Leaders signed up to be involved in the project. They committed to visit a named school for four-half day visits, attend the Launch and Best Practice Conference in July and attend a scheduled follow up meeting for NLEs and LLEs after every school visit.

- Training delivered to NLEs and LLEs. This includes an overview of the project and actions to complete on visit one. Mike Sheridan, Senior HMI and Lead on Narrowing the Gap in the SE attended to speak to the group and support the Pilot.
- Launch for invited schools and NLEs and LLEs. Contribution from the Pupil Premium Team, Mike Sheridan and Chris Raeside HMI and Teaching Schools.
- Representatives from the Pilot invited by HMI to attend a conference in London and show case the work in Buckinghamshire. Sir Michael Wilshaw praises the Buckinghamshire Premium Challenge Project in his key note speech.
- NLEs and LLEs make their first visit to schools and complete the Premium Challenge Booklet and return a copy to the Headteacher and a named Pupil Premium team member.
- NLEs and LLEs meet with the Pupil Premium Team to review progress to date and plan for visit two. It is agreed that visit two will include a sharper focus on tracking, naming FSM6 pupils in each year group to meet at least expected progress (preferably more than expected progress) and evaluating the impact of interventions.
- Pupil Premium Team, evaluated contact notes and followed up individually with NLEs, LLEs and schools.
- Mid-point evaluations to be completed at a briefing meeting. Schools and a governor representative invited to attend 10 -12, NLEs and LLEs to attend 1.30 – 3.30. Session to be led by the Buckinghamshire Pupil Premium Team, Chris Reaside HMI invited to talk to both groups about evidence, tracking, role of governors and best practice.
- EYFS booklet printed and a copy sent to all Primary schools, additional copies made available for down-load on pupilpremium.learningtrust.net.
- Pupil Premium website launched at pupilpremium.learningtrust.net
- On-line platform launched to share ideas and material for those involved in the Pilot Project.

Feedback to date; all schools have engaged positively in the Pilot project and are eager to improve outcomes.

Schools who participated in the first project closed the gap by 6%

HMCI will include the project in his annual report.

The project is running again with new schools involved.

Appendix B

Narrowing the gap in secondary schools update

1. Work commenced academic year 2013-14 with differentiated commitments made to secondary schools regarding the funding and training for PP leadership in schools, for 2014-15 –
 - a. 16 Blue schools (highest need 125-296 PP students) - PP Champions TLR3 @ £1500 per school;
 - b. 19 Green schools (20 – 124 PP students) - PP Champions TLR3 @ £1500 per school;
 - c. 11 Yellow schools (<20 PP students) - PP Champions TLR3 @ £1500 per school – **total funding per school £1500**

Total funding committed

46 PP champions - £69,000

The aim of this TLR position is to raise the profile of the pupil premium pupils and ensure one person within the school takes the responsibility of monitoring their progress.

The pupil premium champions will also meet 3 x over the year to attend training and impact reporting sessions with the BLT.

2. All Secondary schools had the opportunity to Bid for school designed projects with potentially £15K available per school for appropriate projects.
 - **19 bids immediately successful** and schools informed funds to be transferred in 3 installments, the first being in September 2014 with further release of funding dependent on attendance at termly progress meetings; This allows the schools with the highest need to design their own specific interventions for PP students.
3. Experienced, urban challenge Headteacher consultants have been engaged to work with 10 (out of total of 16) Blue schools to monitor/support impacts – Kevin Moloney and John Bowers. The highest need schools have been targeted and the external consultants will provide support and challenge.

4. A range of other activities have been proposed – conference and seminars; school improvement school triads; specific interventions with students etc

Work Plan

- 1 **A steering group combining local Headteachers/senior leaders; BLT consultant(s) and external specialist support.** A group of willing secondary Headteachers have already come together and are willing to support this work – see list above.
 - 2 **TLR3 for Pupil Premium Champion** in each school – some secondary schools have already implemented this element and appointed Pupil Premium Champions in their schools.
 - 3 **Funding the agreed school specific projects @ £15K** and the opportunity for school's not yet with a successful bid to learn from what other schools are doing and to bid to improve an aspect of their provision in school. A second bidding round could be run alongside the proposed progress meetings for schools already underway – both could be designed as development opportunities for schools.
 - 4 **Bespoke support to Blue schools via Consultant Headteachers** who will support and challenge.
-
- 1 **Refresh data analysis to allow priority schools identification** – Pupil Premium analysis and agree with Headteachers/BASH steering group the priority schools based on the proportion of PP students in the school, the size of the gap and direction of travel in addressing the gap.
 - 2 For those schools contributing most to the undesirable gap, ringfence a resource to be set against detailed and achievable plans for improvement which create a balance between creating impact through each of addressing QTL in the classroom (e.g. ineffective identification and tracking of progress, or weak subject departments where achievement is low overall) and targeted PP interventions with identified pupil groups. Schools who are succeeding in reducing the gap should also be identified through this analysis and their practice understood, celebrated and shared e.g. Cressex

- 3 **The resource allocated to the development opportunity for collaborative learning-**
Combining a local programme where these lead teachers form a learning network and are introduced to innovative practice through a series of seminars and visits to successful schools with training bursaries bespoke to the school and individual may be more successful. It would be advisable, however, to profile this group and create either smaller local groups or groups of leaders at similar levels of development. Development activity could then be planned across whole group events (e.g. termly best practice conferences as originally planned) and smaller group work with common interest groups, led by a NLE or similar, focusing on developing actual school practice.
- 4 Proposed targeted student interventions will be provided over the Year.
- **Inspirational career days for PP students**
 - **Exciting University experiences**
 - **Improved access to well trained learning mentors**



Buckinghamshire County Council

Select Committee

Education, Skills and Children's Services

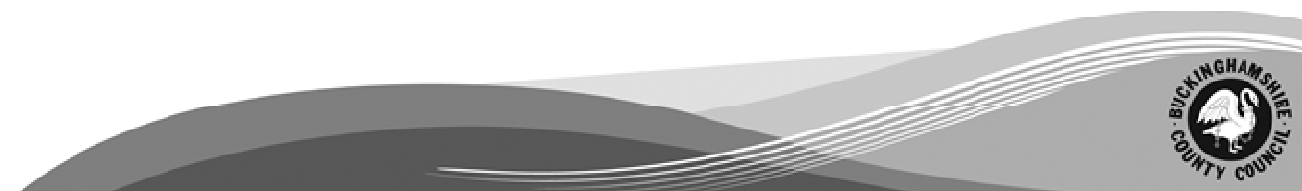
Report to the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee

Title:	Governance of Adult Learning
Committee date:	4 November 2014
Author:	Beth French
Contact officer:	Beth French, 01296 382806, bfrench@buckscc.gov.uk
Report signed off by Cabinet Member:	Mike Appleyard, Education and Skills
Electoral divisions affected:	All

Purpose of Agenda Item: To consider the proposed *governance arrangements for the Adult Learning service*

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Buckinghamshire Adult Learning was part of the Culture and Learning service, within the Adults and Family Wellbeing Portfolio, until 1 October 2014 when it moved to Children's Social Care and Learning, within Learning, Skills & Prevention, as part of the Council's Future Shape programme.
- 1.2 Buckinghamshire Adult Learning is externally funded, principally via the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), although it does earn substantial fees from customers. Its gross annual budget is around £5.6M.
- 1.3 The funding received by Buckinghamshire Adult Learning is governed by a 'conditions of funding' document, issued by the SFA, which contains a number of detailed provisions, some of which concern the quality of delivery. All organisations receiving grant funding from the SFA for the delivery of training are subject to OFSTED. OFSTED inspections are governed by the 'Common inspection framework for further education & skills 2012'.



1.4 Providers who are to be inspected are given 2-days' notice of an inspection. Each of the following areas is graded separately:

- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment;
- Outcomes for learners; and
- Leadership and management

and they all contribute to the overall inspection grade.

1.5 Within the further education sector, there is an increased focus on governance, which impacts on the 'leadership and management' grade. Within colleges, much of this has focused around financial management but also on the role of governors in providing suitable robust challenge to management. Although governance within a local authority is very different from that within a college setting, many of the principles still apply. Although Buckinghamshire Adult Learning is managed through the BCC corporate frameworks, in particular relating to finance, performance and HR, it is the senior management team which interprets the Skills Funding Agency's and Department for Business Innovation & Skills' policies and priorities, ensuring these are reflected in its service plan and then ensuring the quality of the service offer. There are some service targets within the portfolio service plan, but these are at a very top level and are mainly around delivery volumes rather than quality and thus they do not provide the mechanism for a more in-depth review of service performance, including comparison of results against Buckinghamshire Adult Learning's peers.

1.6 In order to address these issues, it was proposed that a separate Adult Learning Board be constituted. Both the Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Skills were invited, as were the Service Director for Learning, Skills & Prevention; representatives from the Children and Young People's commissioning team; Central Finance; Overview and Scrutiny and Buckinghamshire Adult Learning. The first meeting was held on 26th September 2014 and it was agreed that Bill Bendyshe-Brown, Deputy Cabinet Member for Education & Skills would act as chairman. Draft terms of reference, membership and reporting were discussed. It was agreed that once arrangements were a little further advanced and the proposals had been reviewed by the Education and Skills select committee, the membership would be widened. The detailed service plan with targets was circulated for comment and the financial budget for the 14/15 academic year was signed off. A copy of the draft terms of reference is attached at **Appendix A**.

1.7 Buckinghamshire Adult Learning was last inspected by OFSTED in October 2008 when it received a grade of 'good'. As a 'good' provider, Buckinghamshire Adult Learning faces inspection at up to 6-yearly intervals, unless concerns trigger an earlier visit; an inspection is now overdue. Going forward, OFSTED is due to start a consultation on halving this interval, in order to ensure good standards are maintained. Even though a formal governance structure would be in its early stages when OFSTED appeared, it was considered important that Buckinghamshire Adult Learning could demonstrate the importance that Buckinghamshire County Council attached to good governance and how it was planning to improve this.

2.0 Issues

- 2.1 There have been quite a number of recent inspection reports for colleges where OFSTED had highlighted cause for concern on the quality of governance and subsequently Ministerial letters setting out the FE Commissioners' assessment summary and recommendations had been published. Although many of these relate to financial management, there were also other themes which would be relevant for Buckinghamshire Adult Learning.
- 2.2 The principal, non-financial issues identified in these recent OFSTED reports included:
- The Governing Body (the Board) members had insufficient skills and experience to be able to monitor the quality of provision effectively;
 - There was insufficient financial expertise among Board members;
 - There was insufficient Board member training.
 - The Board members did not have a full picture of how the service were performing;
 - There was no dashboard of performance indicators to enable the Board to review performance against peers;
 - The Board did not demonstrate rigorous challenge;
 - Board minutes did not accurately record issues of concern or actions taken and were 'bland and minimalist as to be of virtually no value'.
- 2.3 At a recent OFSTED training event, it was made clear that inspectors expected Board members to be well acquainted with the service and its performance. Grade characteristics for the effectiveness of leadership and management for each of the OFSTED grades of 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' have been published by OFSTED and these are attached at **Appendix B**. It should be noted that the grade characteristics are for guidance only and should not be used as a literal checklist. Typical questions that Board members may be asked by OFSTED are also attached at **Appendix C**.

3.0 Current position for Buckinghamshire Adult Learning

- 3.1 Finance. There are no financial issues at this time. In its most recent self-assessment of financial management and control, the service graded itself as 'good'. For the last three academic years the service has remained within budget, despite significant funding cuts and has even reported a small surplus in each of those years.
- 3.2 SFA Employer and Learning Surveys. In the SFA employer and learner surveys carried out in 2013/14, Buckinghamshire Adult Learning had scored 9.1 (out of 10) in the employer survey. Comparative data is not yet available but, in 2012/13 when it received a score of 9, this was the highest score of any local authority (which had a valid score). In the learner survey, the score was 9 and this should be just above the median. 94% of employers say they would recommend Buckinghamshire Adult Learning and 93% of learners said the same.
- 3.4 Self-Assessment. In the 2013/13 self-assessment, the service graded itself as good. It is expected that this would also be the position for 2013/14.

3.5 Data Analysis. The provisional success rates for 2013/14 with 2012/13 actual results and comparative benchmark data are summarized in the table below:

Type of provision	Provisional 13/14 data* for Buckinghamshire Adult Learning	12/13 data for Buckinghamshire Adult Learning	12/13 benchmark data**
FE long courses	81.8%	78.5%	78.7%
FE short courses	85.7%	86.8%	83.6%
Intermediate apprentices	80.6%	79.2%	72.7%
Advanced apprentices	78.6%	81.1%	72.3%
Other workplace learning	82.9%	87.2%	88.8%

Provisional 13/14 data*: Some results are still outstanding so these results are the 'worst' case; further achievements should increase overall success.

12/13 benchmark data**: Comparison is against similar providers, where the data is available, or national data, where not.

4.0 Resource implications

4.1 There should be negligible resource implications. Board members should be able to carry out their responsibilities as part of their normal duties, although some Board member training may be required.

The Select Committee is asked to

- 1. Comment, discuss and make recommendations around the proposal for, terms of reference of and membership of an Adult Learning Board***
- 2. Comment, discuss and make recommendations around the type and frequency of reports to be laid before the Adult Learning Board***
- 3. Note the questions that OFSTED inspectors may ask Board members***
- 4. Note the financial position of Adult Learning.***
- 5. Note the provisional data provided in relation to the 2013/14 academic year***

Background Papers

Draft Terms of Reference for Adult Learning Board – Appendix A

OFSTED: Grade characteristics – Effectiveness of leadership and management – Appendix B

Potential OFSTED questions for governors – Appendix C



Adult Learning Board

Background, Structure and Terms of Reference

INTRODUCTION

ORGANISATION:

The Adult Learning Service (ALS) moved to the Children and Young People's portfolio, within the Learning, Skills and Prevention team with effect from 1 October 2014. Politically it comes under Education and Skills, which is the responsibility of Mike Appleyard who is the Deputy Leader of Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and Cabinet Member for Education & Skills. He is supported by Bill Bendyshe-Brown, who is the Deputy Cabinet Member for Education & Skills. Key decisions are currently agreed and signed off by Mike Appleyard, for example around future direction, fee levels and sub-contractor management.

The ALS is managed through the BCC corporate frameworks, in particular relating to finance, performance and HR. It contributes towards BCC's strategic priorities and objectives, through the Education and Skills portfolio plan. These are reported on centrally, as is financial performance. The ALS's senior management team meets bi-monthly to review performance and quality issues, as part of a cycle of continuous improvement, setting actions to ensure targets are met. It is the ALS's senior management team who interpret the Skills Funding Agency's and Department for Business Innovation & Skills' policies and priorities and ensures that these are reflected in service's and portfolio's objectives.

ADULT LEARNING BOARD:

In order to ensure that there is more explicit service direction, challenge and performance management by non-ALS personnel, an Adult Learning Board has been set up. Whilst there is uncertainty around the future delivery model for the ALS, as a result of BCC's future shape programme, membership will initially be restricted to BCC councillors and staff. The composition of the Board will consist of:

- Cabinet Member for Education & Skills or Deputy
- Service Director for Culture & Learning
- Adult Learning Service Manager
- Learning Services Manager – Adult Learning
- An employee representative – Adult Learning
- A representative from Children & Young People's Services
- A representative from central finance
- A representative from corporate performance/policy
- A representative from Scrutiny

Longer term the intention is to widen participation with additional representation from:

- Other local further education providers
- Secondary schools
- Local industry
- Learners.

PURPOSE OF MEETINGS:

The purpose of the meetings will be to:

- Determine the overall strategy for the service and priorities for delivery, ensuring that these are in line with government and BCC priorities;
- Support and challenge the service in order to deliver continuous improvement
- Review performance and ensure that targets are met;
- Ensure there is robust financial management and review financial performance;
- Review the quality of service delivery
- Receive reports on tutor performance
- Receive reports on safeguarding and any safeguarding incidents

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:

Meetings will take place 4 times a year, times so as to be able to address the key issues arising during the planning and delivery cycle. Certain items will be standard and will feature on the agenda for each meeting. Other meetings will have specific topics, as set out below:

DATE	ISSUE
January	Strategy, key targets & delivery priorities to include fee policy, to include fee levels and concessions
March	Review of success rates for previous academic year
July	Budget for next academic year
November	Sign off of Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

MEETING AGENDA:

A standard meeting agenda is set out in appendix A.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

- To ensure that there is robust leadership and management of the ALS;
- To support and challenge the ALS in order to deliver continuous improvement
- To develop and monitor the ALS plan, the Community Learning plan and contribution to the portfolio plan
- To ensure that the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for learners are good so that the requirements of inspection criteria as assessed by OFSTED are met;
- To review and agree the ALS's Self-Assessment report and Quality Improvement Plan, including the self-assessment grade awarded;
- To ensure that competent staff deliver and assess learning, receiving reports on assessment of Teaching and Learning Observation grades and actions taken to support grade 3 and 4 tutors;
- To ensure that there is robust financial planning and management, receiving regular reports and a final year-end financial outcome report;
- To ensure that there are adequate arrangements for learners health, safety and welfare, receiving reports on any safeguarding incidents;

Standard Agenda

ADULT LEARNING BOARD

1. Apologies
2. Accuracy of the previous minutes
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Review of service plan, community learning plan and quality improvement plan
5. Review of:
 - Achievement of targets
 - Financial performance
 - Quality of Teaching and Learning
 - Safeguarding incidents
6. Discussion of key issue of the meeting date
7. AOB
8. Dates of next meeting

Grade characteristics - Effectiveness of leadership and management

Please note that the grade characteristics are for guidance only and should not be used as a literal checklist.

<p>Outstanding (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All of the provider's activities demonstrate the pursuit of excellence through innovative responses to local and national need, and, over a sustained period of time, an uncompromising ambition to constantly improve performance, or maintain the highest levels of performance, for all learners, including those in subcontracted provision. ■ All leaders and managers, including the governing body or supervisory body (where appropriate), have high expectations of learners and the organisation as a whole; they lead by example. Governors effectively hold leaders and managers to account for all aspects of the provider's performance. Actions are based on the provider's self-assessment processes that provide a deep and accurate understanding of data and performance, and of staff and learners' skills and attributes. ■ Leaders and managers take actions that focus relentlessly on improving teaching, learning and assessment, which are likely to be outstanding and at least consistently good. Professional development is underpinned by highly rigorous performance management that encourages, challenges and supports staff to improve. ■ The provider has highly successful strategies for engaging with learners, employers and parents to the very obvious benefit of all learners. The curriculum, learning programmes, recruitment are thoroughly planned and exceptionally well implemented. Learners' needs are exceptionally well matched to learning programmes and meet the needs of the local and national community. ■ The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet statutory requirements and it manages any potential risks to learners appropriately. ■ Equality and diversity are promoted actively, resulting in a learning environment where bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. There are likely to be no achievement gaps between different groups of learners.
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<p>Good (2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leaders and managers, including the governing body or supervisory body (where appropriate), consistently communicate high expectations and ambition. Governors systematically challenge leaders and managers to account for the provider's performance. ■ They model good practice and demonstrably work hard to monitor, improve and support teaching, learning and assessment through effective performance management and professional development. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment are improving and likely to be good. ■ Planned actions to address weaknesses, based on reliable data, rigorous quality assurance systems and accurate self-assessment, have been concerted and effective, including in subcontracted provision. As a result, outcomes for learners have improved or previous good performance has been consolidated. ■ The provider has good relationships with learners, parents and employers, whose views clearly influence improvements. The curriculum and learning programmes are well planned and organised and provide imaginative and effective opportunities for learners of all abilities and meets the needs of the local and national community. ■ The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet statutory requirements and risk is managed appropriately. ■ Equality and diversity are promoted actively, resulting in a learning environment where bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. There are very few achievement gaps between different groups of learners.
<p>Requires improvement (3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A number of aspects of leadership and management require improvement. However, the leaders and managers, including the governing body or supervisory body (where appropriate), demonstrate the capacity to tackle necessary improvements, including subcontracted provision. ■ Planned actions have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that very little is inadequate and a minority is good or better, but much remains satisfactory. Managers receive accurate data and use it effectively to manage and improve their provision. Capacity to improve is demonstrated by a trend of at least modest improvement in learners' performance and attitudes to learning and safety, although a few significant weaknesses remain. Essential systems, including self-assessment, are embedded sufficiently to enable the provider to continue improving; these do not depend solely on individuals. ■ The provider usually works well with learners, parents and employers, and their views are used to evaluate the provision. The curriculum generally matches learners' needs, interests and aspirations locally and nationally. However, some curriculum areas do not meet the needs of the learners. ■ The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet statutory requirements. ■ Equality and diversity are promoted adequately, resulting in no serious instances of bullying or discrimination. The achievement gap for all

	groups of learners is narrowing.
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<p>Inadequate (4)</p>	<p>Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if any of the following apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The ability to make further improvement is limited because leaders and managers have been ineffective in securing essential improvements, including in subcontracted provision. ■ Outcomes for learners are inadequate and/or not improving. ■ Leaders and managers are not taking effective steps to secure good or better teaching for all groups of learners. ■ Self-assessment lacks rigour and is inaccurate in its evaluation of the provision. Despite remedying a few small areas of weakness, perhaps recently, self-assessment is not effective and improvements are insecure, too slow or depend too much on external support. ■ Governors are insufficiently rigorous in holding the provider to account for the quality of the provision. ■ Weak curriculum planning results in a lack of choice and coherence in learning programmes that do not meet individual needs or the needs of the local and national community. ■ The provider's strategies for engaging with learners, parents and employers are weak so that they are not involved sufficiently in influencing changes and improvements. ■ The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners do not meet statutory requirements and give serious cause for concern. ■ Equality and diversity are not promoted, unlawful discrimination is not tackled and achievement gaps between particular groups are not being closed.
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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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