



Minutes

EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2014, IN MEZZANINE ROOMS 1 & 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 1.30 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.30 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Aston, Phil Gomm, Paul Irwin, Valerie Letheren (Chairman), Wendy Mallen, Robin Stuchbury and David Watson

CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael Moore and Monique Nowers

GUESTS PRESENT

Mr S Butler, Andy Gillespie, Ray Plimsaul, Alan Rosen, Katy Simmons, Andrew Walker and Philip Wayne

OFFICERS PRESENT

Simon Billenness, Michael Carr, Sarah Harris, Amanda Taylor Hopkins, Raza Khan and Therese McAlorum

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from David Babb, Dev Dhillon, John Chilver, Mark Shaw and Katrina Wood.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the running order of the meeting had been amended slightly and copies of the new timings had been distributed. On each item, the Committee would first hear from the main contributors, members of the Committee would have an opportunity to ask questions based on what they had heard and then Headteachers or Chairmen of Governors who had asked to speak would be invited to the table to give their comments.

4 SECONDARY TRANSFER TEST (11 PLUS) RESULTS ANALYSIS

The Chairman welcomed Mr Philip Wayne, Headteacher of Chesham Grammar School and Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools and his colleagues, Mr Alan Rosen, Headteacher of Aylesbury High School and Dr Andy Gillespie, Headteacher of Burnham Grammar School to the meeting. The Chairman invited Mr Wayne, Mr Rosen and Dr Gillespie to give a brief presentation.

Mr Wayne explained that as all the Grammar schools in Bucks were now Academies they were responsible for their own admissions. Mr Wayne was proud that all 13 schools had agreed to work together to preserve the co-ordinated testing process and to introduce the new 11+ test in 2013, which was designed by CEM. The Grammar School Headteachers liaise with Upper School colleagues through the Bucks Association of Secondary Heads (BASH) and the Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools have maintained a good relationship with the local authority and CEM and have introduced a new Selection Review Panel process which is carried out by Headteachers and is supported by a well-trained clerk.

Mr Rosen gave members details of the new test, commenting that the test is blind to who is taking it, therefore it is the same for boys and girls and appropriate adjustments are given to SEN (Special Educational Needs) pupils. There is a science of how to design an appropriate test and this is why the Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools chose to use CEM as they have a great deal of experience and had carried out modelling for the tests. Clearly the test is designed to discriminate between candidates, otherwise it would not be a test.

It was recognised that different groups do perform differently in education and this was a concern for professionals in Secondary Schools as well as members of the Select Committee. Mr Rosen advised that the Strand report had led to more collaborative working between the Primary and Secondary sector in Bucks. It would be surprising therefore if the 11 + test results were significantly different from the local picture – they reflect what goes on at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

With regards to the introduction of the new test, the Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools liaised with Primary colleagues to ensure that the test would fit in with their needs, for example, the test date was brought forward in order to free up more teaching time in the Autumn term. Out of County children had previously been tested later but now sit the test on the same day as in county children.

It was very important to consider the test results carefully – if boys and girls performed differently, you could judge that the test is unfair but there is more to it than that, you have to be very careful in drawing conclusions. The Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools and CEM will continue to monitor and revise the test every year going forward.

Dr Andy Gillespie provided members with an overview of the new Selection Review Process, which had been introduced as a mechanism for children who did not automatically qualify to have their position reviewed by a professional panel. This process was designed to be less stressful for parents, to be more focussed on key questions and to decrease the impact on Primary Headteachers. The Panel considered if there were any extenuating circumstances for

the child which might have affected their test score to a significant degree and whether their test score was a true reflection of their academic potential.

The Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools had worked closely with the Headteacher's Admission Working Group in setting up the Selection Review Process. Each Panel comprises of two Grammar School Headteachers and a Primary Headteacher. All papers are reviewed in detail by each Headteacher prior to the meeting, where the papers are then discussed in detail. The expertise of the Primary Headteacher is vital when reviewing a child's academic progress. This process is fair and focussed and gives parents assurance that they can ask for a review. If their Selection Review fails, parents can still request an Independent Admissions Appeal.

The Chairman thanked Mr Wayne, Mr Rosen and Dr Gillespie for their presentation and invited members' questions as follows:

What were the expectations of the new test and has this been fulfilled?

The key thing was that the new test should broadly mirror the Primary School curriculum and although the mechanism was slightly different the test should feel similar to a SATs paper. This has been delivered and we will continue to work with CEM and Primary Headteachers to fine tune the test and the process going forward.

You have highlighted the issue of 'Test Tourism' – but going back to what is the test setting out to achieve, are you trying to identify the top 30% of Bucks children as being suitable for Grammar School?

About 31% of those who sit the test should qualify. Ultimately we cannot avoid out of county children sitting the test.

No I appreciate that, but given that the rate of out of county children sitting the test has shot up, by 70% last year according to the data and given that these opt in children tend to be high achievers the overall results of the test will be skewed. Is it possible to exclude the out of county children when we standardise the data?

We began with the same supposition that we needed to maintain the percentage of children qualifying, but as the numbers of children sitting the test are rising year on year, maintaining the same percentage would lead to higher numbers in the Grammar Schools.

I would suggest that we need to identify enough children who can succeed in the Grammar Schools. I am aware that last year a further 800 children got through at the review stage.

Yes, we are working with CEM on the qualifying rate each year to essentially keep the numbers in the Grammar Schools roughly the same. We could lower the qualifying mark and then the Grammar Schools would be over-subscribed and the Upper Schools would not be happy, so we need to maintain the equilibrium. However the landscape is changing and where Grammar Schools are near the county borders it is only right that they will serve children in their local community who do not live in Bucks.

Dr Gillespie highlighted the fact that the county border runs across the field of his school, Burnham Grammar School and a significant number of his pupils are from neighbouring Slough. Talking about out of county children is not a simple issue – Burnham Grammar School delivers fantastic education to the local community and that includes non-Bucks children.

I am concerned about children from deprived backgrounds whose parents cannot afford to pay for additional coaching for the 11+ test. Can the new test be coached for and are we doing enough to support children from deprived backgrounds?

The CEM test is based on national curriculum subjects that all children in Primary schools should be taught, which is what we wanted. Coaching cannot be avoided or controlled and I

would never use the words 'tutor proof' but by choosing a test which broadly reflects the curriculum, we have tried to achieve a level playing field and mitigate the effects of coaching. Part of the design of the test is to vary the nature of the questions and the frequency with which they occur in order to make the test less predictable. Also there is a lot of work being undertaken to raise aspirations and to encourage Primary students to sit the test. Dr Gillespie commented that his school works very closely with their feeder primary schools, with primary students using their science labs and design and technology rooms. Burnham Grammar has more children from an economically deprived background than all the Secondary schools in Bucks bar one, and clearly these students are passing the 11+ test and passing it well. Other Grammar Schools are being more proactive with their Primary outreach work and Free School Meals eligibility is being given high priority on the criteria lists, which are used when a Grammar School is oversubscribed.

How are pupils in Primary Schools prepared for the test?

The short answer is we do not want Primary Schools to focus unduly on the selection test. Now that the test is aligned more to the national curriculum, as long as the children are being taught well it will raise standards for all and will stand the children in good stead for taking the 11+. It was important that pupils were relaxed going into the test as they would then perform better and give a truer reflection of their ability.

I believe that the people of Bucks would want Bucks schools to primarily serve Bucks children. I am concerned that the data shows that a high percentage of children qualifying for the Grammar Schools are coming from private education.

The redesign of the review process means that we ask for exactly the same information from Primary or Independent School Headteachers which helps to make the review process much fairer.

I imagine that private schools may also tutor children for the test so they have an unfair advantage.

In South Bucks around 40% of Primary age children are educated in an Independent School compared with a national average of 7%. There is nothing that we can do about that. But by changing the structure and design of the test, CEM assured us that it was less coachable, so the coaching houses are selling lots of unfounded promises to parents.

Mr Rosen commented that the out of county and in county distinction and the private versus state education issues were becoming a bit confused. If your child attends a state Primary school in Bucks they are automatically entered for the 11+ test unless you choose to opt out, whereas for Independent schools they must opt in and not every child is entered which can skew their success rates.

The Chairman clarified that in short, the Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools believed that the new test was fairer for all children, regardless of background and Mr Wayne agreed, as it was based on the primary curriculum which all children have access to.

If people are free to access coaching outside of schools, why do you not want the Primary schools to offer coaching to prepare all children and thereby level the playing field?

You cannot design a test that is completely uncoachable but the CEM test is designed to minimise the effects of any coaching. Burnham Grammar School pupils have the lowest socio-economic background of all Secondary Schools in Bucks except one, yet our pupils have passed the 11+.

I am pleased that you do not want Primary schools to coach for the test – they need to focus on teaching the child, not coaching for tests. You have indicated that it is perhaps too early to reach any conclusions from the test data, but when will we be in a position to draw more definitive conclusions?

It would be useful to carry out a longitudinal study to track students who are successful at the 11+ right through to their GCSEs but this will obviously take a long time. In the short term we want to ensure that the test is as good as it can be, but it is too early to draw conclusions from the first year results. The process is continuous - we will work with CEM to ensure we can make improvements and ensure that the test is fair.

You have mentioned that you have made the Review process as fair as possible but I spoke to one Primary Headteacher who still felt that some of his parents were intimidated by the process, so how effectively has this been communicated to parents?

We need the Primary Headteachers to promote the review process and to make it clearer for parents. The design of the form actually favours state school pupils as many Independent schools do not use national curriculum levels which is key information considered by the review panels.

Will you compare your Grammar School benchmarking tests against the 11+ results, particularly for those 800 or so pupils who got in via the review process and would you be prepared to share this information with us in future?

We would look to share this with each other initially and possibly over time we could disclose this.

The big issue with your data is that it gives no breakdown of the results according to race, gender, disability etc so it is hard to demonstrate if the results are fair or if any one group is being disadvantaged .

When the test was originally designed it was modelled on 1000 Bucks children and also some pupils from out of county schools who volunteered to help with the test design. The design of the test captured their characteristics to ensure that if different groups respond differently it is down to their ability and not down to their particular characteristics.

I would like to see the indicative levels of pass rates from different groups as we need to ensure that no groups are being disadvantaged. As you know we have done a lot of work looking at Narrowing the Gap and Pupil Premium.

Dr Gillespie reported that he had 70 pupil premium children at his school currently but it was important to recognise that parents from certain communities would not take up free school meals or pupil premium even if they were eligible, as they do not entertain charity in any shape or form. We are keen to engage and are keen to analyse the data – we will offer transparency and work with you on this.

The Chairman thanked Mr Wayne, Mr Rosen and Dr Gillespie for answering members' questions and invited school representatives to give their views and experiences of the new test.

Mr Ray Plimsaul, Head of Brushwood Juniors

On a positive note the new test saves teaching time but we had issues with the test process – it is not effective time for Primary Heads to be listening to a blank tape. I feel that there is no effective data collection around narrowing the gap. Also we are an Outstanding school with 22% of our Year 6 students achieving Level 6 in Maths but our 11+ results do not reflect this. Given the restraints on budget and teaching time I wonder if it would not be more effective for the Grammar schools to host the tests themselves.

Mr Stephen Butler, Chartridge Combined School

We should remember that the old test was not that great or effective and I feel that despite the criticisms the new test is still more effective than the old one. It takes up less lesson time and less teacher time and the results produced far less surprises than the old test. Previously coaching had meant that some children qualified who I did not think were Grammar school children, but this was not so obvious this time around. One criticism I do have is the fact that

the new test has produced such a wide range of scores, as this has been very demoralising for children when scores are inevitably shared.

Mrs Katy Simmons, Chairman of Governors at Cressex School

I have been a long term school governor in Bucks and I know that everyone here is committed to the wellbeing of our children, yet this test is disadvantaging children. We have found the following from publicly available data – in 2014, 4% of children eligible for Free School Meals qualified for Grammar School compared to 65% of children from private schools. Also in 2014, twice as many children in the most affluent district of Bucks, Chiltern passed the 11+, as compared to those children in the least well off district, Aylesbury Vale. Also in two neighbouring schools in High Wycombe in 2014, School 1 had 66% of children on the roll from a Pakistani background, whilst School 2, a Grammar School, had only 5% of children on the roll from a BME background.

It appears that the 11+ test is an obstacle to social mobility and this has a lasting and profound effect on children. We are aware that the local authority's own officers expressed concerns about the unfairness of the exam. As the 11+ has directly disadvantaged children we need to work together to resolve this. I would ask the Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools to please share the ethnicity data that you have and to the local authority I ask you to please follow up on the concerns of officers around due diligence as you have a legal responsibility to do so. Previously you have referred schools to the Adjudicator and whilst there are any doubts about the fairness of the 11+ test I ask that the test should be withdrawn.

Mr Andrew Walker, Chairman of the Bucks Association of School Governors

I am a governor of a Primary Academy and we have always been encouraged to triangulate our Key Stage 2 results and the 11+ results. For the last 6 years this has roughly been in line but with the introduction of the new test the 11+ results were lower. I am concerned that in 9 out of 12 Primary schools in High Wycombe, less than 12% of pupils have qualified, although I acknowledge that the appeals process will have some effect on this. I would like to reiterate that at a Leadership Group Briefing last April CEM told us that the new test was tutorproof although I don't believe this. Also I requested the report on the pilot test that has been mentioned here but all 22 pages were totally redacted.

The Chairman thanked all the school representatives for taking the time to attend the meeting and give their views and she invited Mr Wayne to respond to the points made. Mr Wayne advised that he was aware that there had been some logistical problems with the test and he hoped that this would improve. He took on board the point about the wide spread of marks and again highlighted the fact that the process was continual and would be refined along the way. The contract with CEM would be up for renewal and Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools would scrutinise them closely. The other point Mr Wayne made was that with the abolition of national curriculum levels would have an impact on the review process going forward. Mr Wayne and his colleagues welcomed the full and frank discussion as above all their aim was to be fair.

5 IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The Chairman welcomed Ms Therese McAlorum, Education Safeguarding Advisor and Mrs Sarah Harris, Interim Manager, Children in Need to the meeting. The Chairman advised that the Committee were conducting an Inquiry into Improving Children's Social Care following the Ofsted inspection and they were keen to hear about Safeguarding from the School perspective.

Therese McAlorum reported that she managed a small team, funded by the Direct Schools Grant (DSG) to support Bucks schools on all aspects of Safeguarding. There were three workers who aligned themselves to Aylesbury Vale, High Wycombe and Chiltern and South Bucks areas. They provided training to the Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools and

also ran a duty service. If you worked in a school and had a concern about a child it could feel very lonely, as safeguarding information is only shared on a need to know basis within school, so the duty service provide the opportunity to discuss the context of the concerns without naming the individual child. The Education Safeguarding Advisors may then suggest referring the case to Social Care or perhaps signposting towards an Early Help service. Mrs Sarah Harris commented that there had been some concerns about communication between Schools and Social Care but the First Response team also offer a no name consultation to help Schools make a more informed decision if Therese or her team were unavailable.

The Chairman then asked Mr Ray Plimsaul, Headteacher of Brushwood Juniors for his views and experiences of working with Social Care. Mr Plimsaul expressed the view that additional investment in Social Care was important as turnover of Social Workers had been a key issue for children in his school and he could already see some improvements. However he was keen that professionals in Schools should not end up with an increased workload as a result of the local authorities Ofsted inspection result, for example, the new S11 reporting was far more onerous and has a massive implication for the work of Headteachers. He also believed that senior leaders in Social Care should support their Social Workers and target schools that have a higher proportion of children in need in order to support the School leadership teams more effectively.

The Chairman thanked Mr Plimsaul for his comments and invited members' questions as follows:

How are Schools dealing with Safeguarding and what is BCC policy on this?

By and large Schools do the best they can. One of the central themes we discuss when training the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) is how can you create a culture of Safeguarding within your school, as without this policies and procedures alone become meaningless. We try to support the DSLs to create this culture of Safeguarding so they can ensure that a Teaching Assistant working with a young person who notices concerning changes in behaviour, knows the process to follow to escalate this to the DSL. I think the success of creating this culture varies from school to school.

Mr Plimsaul commented that he feels his school does have a culture of Safeguarding but when families have been identified as having needs the communication back from Social Care is not good. Going to numerous meetings and having to repeat the story of the family is not helpful – Social Care have lacked longevity of Social Workers.

What is the procedure for identifying children at risk?

All schools must have a clear Safeguarding policy and a Safeworking document which links in with the recently introduced Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance which came out earlier this year. I agree with Mr Plimsaul that Schools do take Safeguarding seriously and want to get it right. The processes must be explained to new staff and the DSLs are key to getting this right. I am conscious that this is time consuming for the DSLs.

If for example a Teaching Assistant had a concern this might be discussed verbally at first but ideally this should then be passed in writing to the DSL. The DSL has to take ownership of this concern and decide what to do – it might just be a conversation with the class teacher to ask them to keep an eye on the child or it could be that this concern is a tipping point which suggests that a referral to Social Care might be needed. There is record keeping guidance that many schools in Bucks have now adopted.

How do Schools refer to other agencies, both in Policy and in Practice?

There was some frustration from Schools in that they had children with particular needs and they were having trouble referring to services. There is greater clarity now through the introduction of the revised Threshold Document. This has been helpful in supporting all

agencies and is included in our training. We are also rolling our DSL forums to enable DSLs who have been in post for a while can keep up to date with changes.

Do you feel that this is enough – can you guarantee that concerns are escalated to the right place at the right time?

I have been in Bucks at four years and I feel that the escalation process is better understood and is being activated better than ever before. If Schools are frustrated, my team try to support Schools in facilitating their views to be heard.

The Chairman thanked Ms McAlorum and Mrs Harris for attending the meeting.

6 CHILDREN'S INTERNET SAFETY

The Chairman welcomed Mr Simon Billenness, Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board's (BSCB) e-safety Sub-Committee and Jeanette Cochrane, Deputy Headteacher from Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School to the meeting.

Simon Billenness explained that the e-safety Sub-Committee provide information and support to Schools, Youth Groups etc to help them promote online safety to children. The e-safety Sub-Committee includes representatives from the local authority, Thames Valley Police, Barnardo's R U Safe? and other voluntary organisations and part of their work is to deliver assemblies to children from primary school age through to Sixth Formers on how to stay safe online, often using materials from CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre). They also work with McAfee, a US Software Company based in Aylesbury who have also run workshops aimed at children and their parents to help them to identify risks associated with internet use. These risks include cyberbullying, being groomed online or leaving a bad digital footprint.

The Chairman thanked Ray Plimsaul, Headteacher of Brushwood Junior School for contributing to this item and asked how his school promoted internet safety. Mr Plimsaul detailed three elements to their approach – firstly ensuring the robustness of their IT systems to prevent adults outside of school being able to gain access. They had also just completed a whole series of assemblies on the theme of 'Keeping Safe' and internet safety had been incorporated in that and finally they would be holding a workshop in January aimed at Years 3 to 6 specifically focussing on being safe online. They had sent each child home with a booklet entitled 'Watch Out!' which was a multi-agency production and they hoped that parents would discuss this with their children at home. With regards to mobile phone use in school, because Brushwood is a junior school not all children have a mobile phone, but those who do have them collected in at school and returned to them at the end of the day. The school also give them advice on how to use their mobiles safely on the way to and from school, e.g. to be alert to potential muggings and avoid bullying.

The Chairman asked Jeanette Cochrane, Deputy Headteacher at Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School how they had approached internet safety. She explained that they had featured two productions at school, including 'Chelsea's Choice' which highlighted the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and had followed these up with an assembly on anti-bullying. They had also run e-safety assemblies using CEOP resources which had quite a hard hitting message. Staying safe online would also be discussed in PSHE lessons.

With regard to mobile phone use at school, this was much more of an issue at Secondary level and Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School (SHFGS) had trialled a new approach of using Phone Zones. This meant that there were specific places in school where children could access their phones at specific times of the day. The school had found that parents often contacted their children on their mobiles throughout the day, which was disruptive but very hard to police. The School Council agreed new rules on phone use and Phone Zones had been very successful, with no resulting anti-social behaviour.

SHFGS ask about online experiences in their student surveys and this week they had distributed the Bucks wide Anti-Bullying survey. Over the past two years they have held e-safety evenings for parents in conjunction with McAfee and their Police Liaison officer, which have been well-attended. Jeanette Cochrane also reported that she has been trained on Parenting in the Digital Age (PiDA) which would help to encourage good parenting in this area.

A member asked how the school would intervene if despite the training, things did go wrong, for example she was aware of an incident of Instagram bullying in a Bucks Secondary school recently. Jeanette Cochrane explained that if an incident took place at school, then the school would discipline the individual concerned and if appropriate refer to other agencies such as R U Safe? or the Police Liaison Officer. If something happens outside school but impacts or upsets an individual whilst at school, then again they might bring in the Police Liaison Officer if necessary.

7 FROM GOOD TO OUTSTANDING

The Chairman welcomed Mr Raza Khan, Chief Executive, Bucks Learning Trust and Mrs Amanda Taylor-Hopkins, Director of Education, Bucks Learning Trust (BLT) to the meeting and invited them to outline the BLT's approach to School Improvement and in particular the work they were undertaking to support schools in moving from Good to Outstanding.

Mrs Taylor-Hopkins began by explaining that the BLT wanted to support all schools to reach their potential. A school an individual attends should not be seen as a barrier to success, instead school should be a platform for them to launch from. In the past School Improvement had traditionally focussed on progressing from Satisfactory to Good. Outstanding is very hard to achieve and even harder for Schools to retain. BLT wanted to intervene with schools far earlier rather than waiting to see a decline in performance and had introduced School Reviews to identify key areas for development. Often there can be five years between Ofsted inspections and this is too long to wait to rectify problems.

The BLT were about to launch key packages for Good and Outstanding schools to help them to improve and to maintain standards in the longer term. HMCI has announced a new approach which would see more regular inspections so schools would need to be ready for this.

The BLT valued the expertise available across the county and wanted to engage with experts and encourage them to share their specialist skills. They were also encouraging schools to support each other through sharing best practice. The BLT wanted school staff to improve their skills through ongoing training and development. Previously the Committee had been given examples of Heads being seconded into schools in order to improve standards.

BLT interventions needed to be appropriate, individual, focussed and have an impact on a school. As well as promoting co-operation between Bucks schools they have also looked nationally for inspiration. The BLT were also working with communities with challenge and were keen to work with schools in engaging more effectively with their communities. The Committee had previously heard about the BLT's work on narrowing the Gap.

After Christmas the BLT would be holding some network events for Good and Outstanding schools and they would be benchmarking them against schools across the UK. Governor events would also be offered. 32% of Bucks schools were currently ranked Outstanding compared to a national average of 21%. During 2014 8 schools had gained or maintained Outstanding following Ofsted inspection.

Andrew Walker, Chairman of the Bucks Association of School Governors, commented that his school, which was ranked Outstanding, felt that offering school to school support helped the community and was very good for the development of their own teaching staff.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Taylor-Hopkins for this introduction and invited members' questions as follows:

Can you give us any more specific examples of what the BLT has done and how you can demonstrate your effectiveness?

We are very pleased with the rapid rate of improvement in schools achieving Good or Outstanding. Bucks is one of the fastest improving local authorities in the country in the Primary sector which is a significant shift from 12 months ago. We are now focussing on Upper Schools. As they are mainly Academies this requires more of a voluntary relationship, but we are looking forward to seeing a similar shift there.

What are the challenges for a school which is currently Good to move up to Outstanding?

It will depend on each individual school but there is a high shift in expectation in terms of the Ofsted framework. An Outstanding school must demonstrate high quality teaching and learning right across the school and training and recruitment of teachers is key. BLT are brokering relationships with training providers but it is difficult to recruit teachers in Bucks. Often Headteachers have a lot of pressures from beyond the school gates and they need to stay focussed in order to deliver School Improvement.

I have two Upper Schools in my division, Waddesdon School which is doing well and Aylesbury Vale Academy which is not doing quite so well. Why would a teacher at Waddesdon want to go and help Aylesbury Vale Academy? How do we encourage this? I would like to see both my schools performing well.

We are working hard on building relationships with Upper Schools and we are trying to encourage School Leaders to allow us to share best practice. Sending staff into a different situation provides continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities and BLT were trying to change the mindset of teachers to realise that teachers have a collective responsibility to all children. Also Ofsted now expect Outstanding schools to be supporting other schools. Unfortunately Aylesbury Vale Academy are not engaging with us just yet.

In addition we compensate teachers for their time in engaging with other schools so we are not just 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'. We can compensate schools as the BLT is more financially efficient.

What other resources can Schools draw on?

Schools who are failing or need Improvement can get support through our local authority grant. Also all schools can participate in projects run by BLT – these are either funded by BLT or the local authority. Schools can also purchase packages of support from BLT.

In your opinion has your job been vast? It really seems that you have turned things around.

We took on the BLT with a clear mandate to drive up standards and we inherited some experienced staff from the local authority. But as a charitable trust we have more freedom to be focussed on outcomes.

I am a Governor in a Bucks Primary School which is on this journey and I find there is a lack of support for governors and a lack of challenge. What are you providing for governors?

We are relaunching Governance Reviews to help governing bodies highlight any issues. Governors feel isolated as there are no networking opportunities so BLT are introducing network events. Also BLT will offer a CPD programme for governors.

I am very concerned to hear about the issues with accessing Academies, what can we do about this?

It is a changing culture for Academies. We have been in touch with Aylesbury Vale Academy and are awaiting a response. We now also have a Department for Education Regional Commissioner who can help to broker a relationship with Academies and of course the BLT are working very closely with the local authority who have also written to the school to advise them to arrange some School Improvement support whether that is from the BLT or another provider. I would like to reassure members that Academies have generally been far more receptive to the BLT this academic year, now that the BLT have proved that they are effective.

The Chairman thanked Mr Khan and Mrs Taylor-Hopkins for attending the meeting.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the next meeting of the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee on Tuesday 9th December 2014 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury.

CHAIRMAN