

Minutes

Education & Children's Services Policy Overview Committee

Wednesday, 9 September 2009

Meeting held at High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW



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Members Present:

Councillors Catherine Dann (Chairman), Brian Crowe (Vice-Chairman), Judith Cooper, Peter Curling, John Hensley and Anita MacDonald

Representatives: Anthony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan representative.

Others present:

Parent Witness (Mrs X), Carer Witness (Mrs Y), Child Witness (Child Z) and Lesley Markham.

LBH Officers Present:

Natasha Dogra, Jane Guest, Debbie Haith, Pauline Nixon and Chris Spencer

Public Present: 0

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTER COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING

Councillors Catherine Dann, Brian Crowe, Judith Cooper, Peter Curling, John Hensley, and Anita Macdonald declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda due to their roles as a School Governors.

3. TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND ALL THOSE MARKED IN PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

All items were Part 1 and were considered in public.

4. TO RECEIVE AND AGREE THE MINUTES OF 8 JULY 2009

The Committee queried the "*Attendance and Staff: Pupil ratio statistics*" which were circulated following the previous meeting. Members said the information could be misleading if Rosedale College was used as a best practice, as the number of staff was very high compared to the number of pupils and the level of funding was high. This could be due to the school receiving funding for each child with Special Education Needs (SEN). Officers said the ratio was between staff: pupil and not teachers: pupil. Therefore all staff had been included (teacher, teaching assistants and support assistant.) Therefore the funding formula was the same for all schools.

The minutes were agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSION IN HILLINGDON SCHOOLS: WITNESS SESSION 2

Action By:

The Chairman welcomed all of those present to the meeting, and asked Mrs X (Parent witness) to begin her presentation. Mrs X said her son suffered from autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). He attended Highfield Primary School until the age of three, after which he was excluded for attacking a teacher. He moved to Belmore Primary School, Hayes, and then transferred to a Special Resource Provision (The Acorns) at Hayes Park school in Hayes. Mrs X said her son spent most of his day with the 12 children in the unit cared for by fully trained teachers. There were 2 children in his year group, which enabled the teacher to focus on each child and dedicate their time and attention to them.

Mrs X said her son was happy at the Special Resource Provision where a lot of time was spent attending assemblies, playing time and undertaking interactive learning. He was not included in his mainstream school to a great extent, and spent most of his time there in the Relaxation Room where he was able to unwind and calm down.

Although her son is 10 years old, Mrs X said he is working at the pace of a 7 year old. He will be transferring to secondary school next September, and Mrs X said she had submitted her application for her choice of school, which would be Meadow. Mrs X said her son benefited from interactive learning that was provided in SEN schools as he could not keep up with other children in mainstream schools.

The Chairman opened the floor to questions. Members asked Mrs X whether her son preferred 'hands-on' learning rather than sitting in a classroom. Mrs X said her son enjoyed cooking and painting. He was able to express himself well in the unit in his school, where the walls had paintings with emotions stuck on them. Her son was able to pick up which emotion he was feeling in order to express himself.

Members asked Mrs X what activities were available to her son at The Acorns. Mrs X said the children were taught social stories, encouraged to use the computers, use a camera to take photographs, take care of pets and take part in speech programmes to develop their vocabulary.

Members asked how often Mrs X communicated with her son's teachers. A contact book was filled in every day by Mrs X and her son's teacher to track his progress. An annual review took place of her son's academic progress, which Mrs X thought was not often enough. In the last year her son's progress had become stagnant, and Mrs X was unaware of this until the review. Mrs X said had she been aware of his lack of progress throughout the school term, she could have offered her help and support to her son. However, due to the review only taking place on an annual basis she was unaware of the problem until it was too late.

Mrs X said that she had received a lot of help from the Parent Partnership Service when applying to her son's secondary school. She had been supported by an Linda Dines officer from this service from the date her son was first excluded and was very grateful for this help.

The Chairman thanked Mrs X and asked the next witness to begin their presentation.

Fourteen year old Child Z said he enjoyed attending his mainstream school (Ruislip High) for three days a week, compared to the SEN school that he attended (Chantry School) for two days a week. Child Z said he was confused with attending two different schools at one time and sometimes lost track of which day and time he was attending which school. Child Z said the work he did at the two schools was very different and he was learning at different levels at each school. He had recently begun his double science GSCE at Ruislip High School and enjoyed working towards this qualification.

With regards to his SEN school, Child Z said there were not enough services available to him. However, at Ruislip High there was a room dedicated to SEN where the children could relax. Child Z said Chantry School did not have the equipment or services to meet his needs.

Child Z said he had had a number of bad experiences at Chantry School which had discouraged him from attending. However, this had made him more determined to integrate back into mainstream school.

Deputy Head Teacher of Chantry School, Lesley Markham said each SEN school had to anticipate the needs of each child and cater for them. Ms Markham said each child had differing needs and the school was responsible for nurturing their behaviour.

The Chairman thanked Ms Markham and Child Z for his presentation and opened the floor to questions. Members asked Child Z about his teachers at Ruislip High School. Child Z said from the moment he reached the school, via bus or after his mum dropped him off, he was accompanied by his dedicated support assistant. There were support staff available to him at Ruislip High, but Child Z said staff change frequently so that children do not become too reliant on them.

Members asked Child Z what the curriculum at Chantry School included. Child Z said science, ICT and maths were available to the children. Recreational activities are also available such as physical education.

The Chairman asked the Committee for any further issues that they wished to be included in the final report for this review.

Members agreed that the remit for the Development of Inclusion was very wide. Officers said the process of transition is defined within the SEN code of practice. This process started in year 5 when the type of provision and future

<p>needs of the child are determined. Members agreed that there should be constant communication between the school and parents.</p> <p>Officers informed the Committee that all special schools in the borough were at maximum capacity, with an increasing birth rate and therefore the probability of a high percentage having SEN. The draft Inclusion Strategy focused on encouraging mainstream schools to meet the needs of those pupils with the less complex children, making spaces available at the special schools for the more complex children.</p> <p>Agreed: The Committee agreed that the final report should include information regarding the communication between parents and schools, and the frequency of reviews of the child.</p>	
<p>6. REVIEW 2 – SCOPING REPORTS</p> <p>The Chairman invited Jane Guest, Debbie Haith and Chris Spencer to present this item. Officers presented the four scoping report:</p> <p>Junior to Senior School Transition: Officers said this review last took place in 2007. Since then, an electronic form had been created to keep record of each child. Head Teachers had formed a Steering Group and met on a regular basis, which enabled them to keep up to date on current practice. An annual conference was led by Hillingdon and attended by the DCSF.</p> <p>Safeguarding Children in Schools: This review would focus on how to ensure the recruitment service in schools is safe by working with external agencies and challenging how the Local Authority works with these agencies. Members requested for officers to provide the Committee with a detailed scoping report at their earliest convenience regarding this issue.</p> <p>Effective Support and Intervention: Officers informed Members this review would entail scrutinising the current practise and ensuring value for money.</p> <p>Child Trafficking: This review would be focused on how the Local Authority worked with external agencies to safeguard children who arrive at Heathrow Airport. The review would be hinged on inter-agency working and where the Local Authority could add value and support to the service. The Committee could use this opportunity to explain the Council’s role in this process and review & develop how we work with external agencies.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that a review into Child Trafficking would be significant, with Heathrow Airport within the borough. The Committee agreed Child Trafficking was to be chosen as the second review topic for 2009/10.</p>	<p>Action By:</p>

