

Petition In Relation to Minet Junior School

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor David Simmonds CBE
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services
Officer Contact(s)	Laurie Baker, School Improvement Service, Education Dan Kennedy, Director, Residents' Services
Papers with report	None

HEADLINES

Summary	The Council received a petition against Minet Junior School from some members of their parent community in July 2018. This report is to support the hearing of this petition, taking place on 21st November 2018.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objectives of: <i>Our People</i> .
Financial Cost	There are no financial costs associated with this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents, Education & Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	Townfield

RECOMMENDATIONS

Meeting with the Petitioners, that the Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services:

- 1. Listens to the concerns of residents regarding Minet Junior School;**
- 2. Notes the intervention action the Council has taken to improve the leadership and governance of the school; and**
- 3. Notes that the Council will continue to monitor the school closely and will not hesitate to take further intervention action should this be required.**

Reasons for recommendations

The legal responsibility for actively tackling the points raised within the petition lies with the school itself and, under duties delegated to community schools, most particularly the Governing Body and Head Teacher, and not the Council. However, given that the school is a community

school setting where the Local Authority remains the employer in law, the Council can choose to respond to parental concerns and use its resources to support and challenge community schools to improve.

Alternative options considered / risk management

An alternative option was to reject this petition. This option was not agreed because it was felt necessary to provide the lead petitioner with the opportunity to hear about the intervention action the Council has taken, the progress subsequently made in the School and future plans to address the concerns presented to the Council, set out in the petition.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

The response to the petition is consistent with standing orders.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Petition overview

The Council received a petition regarding Minet Junior School from some members of their parent community in July 2018. This report is to support the hearing of this petition, taking place on 21st November 2018.

The group of petitioners who signed and submitted the petition to the Council raised a number of points regarding their level of confidence in the school. Overall the petitioners' concerns focused most centrally on:

- a. The lack of a substantive Head Teacher at the time of petition submission and, consequently, concerns regarding the stability of senior management at the school.
- b. The resignations of some teachers at the end of the summer term 2017/18.

Petitioners have requested that the school and the Council respond in order to tackle the specific points raised within the petition.

Context of Minet Junior School

Minet Junior School is a larger than average-sized primary school and is located in the Hayes area of the Borough. This Junior School shares a site with its neighbouring Infant School. The school is currently judged Good by Ofsted and has been since October 2015.

The school serves a diverse community - pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with most pupils being of either Black African or Asian heritage. An above average proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language attend the school. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have Special Educational Needs is also above the national average.

In 2016/17, Key Stage 2 academic attainment in Minet Junior School was below the national average for the combined Reading, Writing and Maths measures but demonstrated an overall improvement when compared to commensurate standards in previous years. Most notably, academic progress measures for 2016/17 were positive for Reading, Writing and Maths which indicates that the school, on average, added more value to children's learning than other schools nationally. Nationally validated data for Key Stage 2 for 2017/18 is not yet available; however, analysis of provisional data for 2017/18 indicates that the school's Key Stage 2 progress measures will, once again, be stronger than the national average.

Minet Junior School was downgraded from Good to Satisfactory (Grade 3 Ofsted) in December 2011 and remained Requiring Improvement (Grade 3 Ofsted) in September 2013 when the school was re-inspected. In December 2014, the London Borough of Hillingdon undertook formal action to intervene in the school as a consequence of continuing concerns regarding the quality of education. The Council appointed an Interim Executive Board (IEB) to oversee the school and replace the previous Governing Body and monitored the impact of this board in effecting positive change at the school.

It is noted that Local Authorities have a number of statutory education duties regarding the improvement of schools. These duties are primarily focused on the overall promotion of high standards in schools and on the use of formal intervention powers where a school is judged to be underperforming or is inadequate. Local Authorities do not provide direct governance or leadership in a school and do not have legal responsibility for the daily running of a school, which includes the recruitment and appointment of staff and the oversight of both daily school operation and wider strategic development. These activities are legally delegated to Governing Bodies (or Interim Executive Boards) who work closely with school leaders to oversee the quality of education in their schools. For this reason, complaints about schools are usually resolved by complainants raising concerns directly with the school and Governing Body. Where a complaint remains unresolved, a Local Authority may choose to intervene to support effective resolution in the best interests of local children, young people and families.

Information relating to (a) the lack of a substantive Head Teacher at the time of petition submission and, consequently, concerns regarding the stability of senior management at the school.

At Minet Junior School and, following its appointment in late 2014, the Interim Executive Board undertook action to tackle historic underperformance and, alongside the school's interim Head Teacher, secured an overall improvement in standards which were recognised by Ofsted when the school was reinspected and judged to be Good (Grade 2 Ofsted) in October 2015. This means that Minet Junior School is now included in the 92% of all primary schools in Hillingdon that are currently judged 'Good or Outstanding'. The interim Head Teacher remained in the school for the following year and in October 2016 the Interim Executive Board appointed a permanent Head Teacher who started in their post in January 2017.

During the summer term of 2017, a new and permanent Governing Board led by a very experienced Chair of Governors was established for the school. The permanent Head Teacher left the school in March 2018 and school leadership for the remainder of this academic year was provided by the Deputy Head Teacher in an Acting Head Teacher role.

Information relating to (b) the resignations of some teachers at the end of the summer term 2017/18.

During the Autumn term of 2017, a number of teaching staff tendered their resignations to the Governing Body. These resignations were accepted by the Governing Body and exit interviews were held to ascertain the reasons for the departure of staff. The Governing Body was satisfied that these resignations were reasonable in the circumstances and acted quickly to ensure that teaching vacancies were filled by the end of the school term. Minet Junior School began this academic year (2018/19) fully-staffed with no interim or supply teachers covering classes.

The Governing Body recruited to the permanent Head Teacher position and appointed the new Head Teacher in September 2018 and are currently recruiting to the newly vacant Deputy Headship position. The school's Governing Body reports that staffing is now stable and positive across the school.

Financial Implications

There are no financial costs associated with this report.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities

Improvements in education will also improve outcomes for Hillingdon residents.

Consultation carried out or required

No consultation was carried out or required.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed the report and confirms there are no financial implications arising from the recommendation.

Legal

Legal has reviewed this report and there are no specific legal comments arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.