

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Station Road, Seaham SR7 0BH on **Monday 11 September 2017 at 10.00 am**

### **Present:**

**Councillor C Potts (Chairman)**

### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors H Smith, J Blakey, J Considine, R Crute, C Hampson, I Jewell, L Kennedy, A Patterson, M Simmons and A Willis

### **Faith Community Representative:**

Mrs A Swift

#### **1 Welcome from the Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular the Year 9 pupils from Seaham High School.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager went on to give a presentation about what Scrutiny is and how it works in Durham (for copy see file of Minutes).

#### **2 Apologies for absence**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Bainbridge, D Bell, Brookes, Charlton, Grayson, Reed, M Wilson, Miss Ashcroft, Mr Conlon and Mrs Craig

#### **3 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute members.

#### **4 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **5 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **6 Elective Home Education**

The Committee considered a report of the Joint Report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Children & Young People's Services that provided an introduction to a presentation on Elective Home Education (EHE) (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Pupil Placement and Education Safeguarding Manager and Pupil Placement and Attendance Manager gave a detailed presentation that included the following:-

- Background to Elective Home Education – registers were kept to monitor and track the pupil and the LA must approve the Education being proposed at home
- Number of Pupils Education at Home – approximately 280 pupils currently being education at home with a 50/50 split between male and female pupils. 55 traveller children were included in this number.
- Local Authority Responsibilities, Safeguarding and Support – a Multi-Agency panel ensured the process was robust and satisfactory. A private members bill was being proposed whereby there was a duty on the local authority to monitor the child or young person, that parents were required to register their child and to assess each child annually.
- Destinations of Children and Young People
- Good Practice – a lot of interest had been expressed in the Durham model and training had been provided for neighbouring authorities.

Councillor Jewell asked what form would the monitoring of home education take and how effective this would be. The Pupil Placement and Education Safeguarding Manager said that it was difficult as parents did not have to follow the national curriculum but they had to provide a suitable education. Parents were contacted and meetings were offered at the early stages where their responsibilities were explained. Proposals and evidence samples of learning were sought from the family and the panel would determine if they were suitable. If parents refused to participate then legal action could be taken and cases could end up in the Magistrates Court.

A pupil asked that if bullying in a school had occurred and then the parent withdrew the child to home educate, would the school be questioned. The Pupil Placement and Safeguarding Manager explained that meetings with the parent and child would take place to discuss what had happened and would challenge the school to ask if they had put all of the support mechanisms in place. The service would offer support to the school and give suggestions to overcome any problems at the early stages of bullying issues.

The Chairman thanked officers for a very informative presentation.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be noted.

## **7 Student Voice Survey**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided an introduction to a presentation on the results of the Student Voice Survey (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager gave a presentation that highlighted the following:-

- About the survey
- Participation

- Achievement
- Bullying
- Feeling safe
- Feeling safe online & social media use
- Careers education
- Healthy lifestyle
- Year 9 performance
- Next Steps

The Chairman thanked the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager for his very informative presentation.

A pupil said that she had taken part in the survey but the questions were more specific to her own school. She referred to the behaviour of students and questioned how useful the survey would be in terms of actual behaviour problems.

Councillor Blakey said that it would be useful for members to receive a list of all schools that took part.

Councillor Jewell raised concerns about the validity and reliability of the survey in relation to social media questions and suggested if pupils were less aware of problems on social media then they would feel safer than those who used it more frequently. He asked how the results would be used and taken on board.

The Head of Education emphasised the important point about what we could do with the results from the survey. He referred to the survey carried out a couple of years ago which had raised awareness about certain issues but there was a commitment to ensure this survey was followed up and acted upon. He said that a lot of issues were about perception. Schools would be looking at their own individual reports and would need to dig deeper with any areas that surprised or concerned them. The County Council's resources would be looked into to see how best we could support the schools with this task.

Councillor Kennedy commented that most secondary school children have a mobile phone and therefore there was more chance that they would feel unsafe compared to a primary school pupil. She was aware of a lot of bullying that took place over social media. She was concerned about the consumption of energy drinks but said that a number of retailers sell them really cheaply so would appeal to pupils.

Referring to the reporting of bullying Councillor McKeon commented that of those children who did not feel comfortable with their tutor may have an impact on the figures as they might not report any problems.

Councillor Patterson confirmed that the issue of cybercrime would be looked at by the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee as there was a concern on the effect of education. Further to the governments green paper about the contribution by CCGs she asked how this would then pan out with the white paper. The Head of Education confirmed that they had been involved in consultation about the green paper but had not been involved in any further research. He was aware of proposals for the County Council to become formally involved in Careers Education and guidance.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be noted.

**8 Management of School Exclusions**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services that provided information on the extent of exclusions in County Durham in the academic year 2016-17 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chairman asked if Ofsted looked at exclusion records and was informed that they do and would focus on reported high levels.

Councillor Kennedy said that primary schools did not appear to have as much behavioural problems as the secondary schools, and some children who move up to secondary school were already experiencing problems. The Head of Education said that the working group would focus on that but that the statistics did not show that trend. He said that the management of behaviour often resulted in less exclusions.

Councillor Smith said that care should be taken not to generalise as a lot of staff were motivated to engage with children experiencing behavioural problems and suggested that a pro-active approach was taken.

Referring to Special Needs, Councillor Blakey asked if children who were awaiting to be statemented were included in these figures she was concerned that this would affect the numbers. The Head of Education confirmed that they would be included in the figures but a defined analysis would show that most children who were excluded would have an undiagnosed matter of SEND.

Mrs Swift asked why there wasn't as much success in secondary schools from the Early Intervention and Crisis Team as the Head of Education explained that this could be down to the service level agreement. He added that some primary schools may choose to buy in to that service whereas secondary schools often had their own teams. This was being reviewed in terms of success and how to role that out.

With regards to alternative provision Councillor Patterson asked who funded the bill and if that funding moved with the child. The Head of Education advised that each pupil has a block of funding and that would move with the pupil but that the Behaviour Panel also have money to fund alternative provision so could pick up on any shortfalls.

A pupil commented that primary schools tended to make verbal warnings for misbehaviour whereas secondary schools take more action by excluding rather than talking through any problems on a one to one basis.

A pupil added that some students think that if they receive a verbal warning then they can get away with misbehaving and showing off to their friends and therefore they agreed that there needs to be a system in place to exclude.

A pupil asked if information was shared from a primary in the transition to secondary school.

The Head of Education thanked the pupils for their questions. He would take all of their points on board. He commented that in primary school often teachers would know the child better and therefore might be able to manage behaviour better. However, new teachers in a new school would not necessarily know the student at secondary level. He confirmed that information should be shared from primary to secondary school about all pupils but appreciated the question about ensuring the transition was right.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **9 Summary of 2016-17 Ofsted Inspection Results**

The Committee received a report of Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services that provided a summary of Ofsted inspection results over the previous academic year (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Education reported that 92% of primary schools had achieved a good or better grade and this compared to a regional and national average of 91%. 65% of secondary schools had achieved a good or better grade which was the same regionally and compared to 71% nationally. He said that they were looking at what primary schools were doing better at than the secondary schools.

Referring to special schools the Head of Education said that the 3 schools in County Durham had received a requiring improvement grading and they were supporting those schools to make any necessary changes. He added that it had been recognised that the current Ofsted framework did not accurately reflect the quality of teaching and learning in special schools and that work to remove some inconsistencies in reporting and measuring outcomes needed to be undertaken.

The Chairman said that as a governor of one of these special schools she found the outcome unfair as students in these schools could not be matched to those in mainstream schools.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

The Chairman everyone for their attendance and thanked the pupils for their comments and questions which had been really useful and would be taken on board.