Children & Community Services P&S Committee

The Annual Education Performance Report
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Children & Community Services
Policy & Scrutiny Committee

December 2012
Chairman’s Introduction

On the 19th November, the Children and Community Policy & Scrutiny Committee met at St Clement Danes Church of England Primary School.

When St Clement Danes was inspected in December 2007 it was ‘satisfactory’. Pupils’ progress was uneven because teaching was not consistently good and there were weaknesses in leadership and management. Since then, the school has been transformed and it is now a good and rapidly improving school. The school was one of 12 case studies featured in the report ‘Getting to good’, published by Ofsted in September 2012. As of today, St Clement Danes is judged to have outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is reported that the leadership is effective and the curriculum is creative, rich and imaginative. Ofsted consider that the school is inclusive and all pupils and adults are valued: cooperation and teamwork are fostered. Parents, carers and pupils are proud to be part of the school. As such, this school engendered the drive to improvement that the all Westminster councillors like to see. It was thus fitting to host the third meeting of the Children & Community Services Committee at the school.

As at last year’s scrutiny of the Annual Education Performance Report, when the Committee heard from the LGiU about the changing education landscape, the future role for local authorities in education is shifting quickly. At Westminster and at a Tri-Borough level, we see a continuing role for authorities in challenging schools to achieve improvements. As such, we are grateful that we receive reports such as the Westminster Annual Education Performance Report, where councillors can examine and assess the performance of education providers within the City.

Since the implementation of the Tri-borough Children’s Services Department we have succeeded in maintaining good relationships with schools in each of the three boroughs. The new Tri-borough Education Service offers schools and academies a range of non-statutory school improvement services that providers can opt to purchase from the Councils. The local authority continues to act as a quality assurance broker and has a real impact on maintaining the high standards achieved.

In acting as a ‘critical friend,’ the Children and Community Services P&S Committee are able to assess current challenges, drive performance upwards and plan for the future. As such I commend this report, on the behalf of our Committee, to the Cabinet Member for Children and Community Protection.

Clr Ian Adams,
Chairman of the Children and Community Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Summary of Discussions of the Wednesday 19th November meeting of the Children & Community Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee:

1. The Committee noted the successful delivery of the School Improvement Framework, Service Level Agreement and the new staffing model and appreciated that the new arrangements reflected the continued need for school improvements activities but also the need to reduce spend in each of the three boroughs.

2. The Committee noted range of non-statutory school improvements services available for schools to purchase from the LA, such as early intervention, safeguarding, music and sport. Members noted that the cost of providing these services were cost neutral.

3. The Committee highlighted the importance of maintaining a good working relationship with the new academies.

4. The Committee stressed the need for flexibility around pupil place planning.

5. The Committee emphasized the importance of inspiring pupils, starting from primary school, to work towards attending university. Members supported the idea of the central funding pot, which would be used to commission targeted activities such as post-16 revision classes and residential university summer schools with the objective of increasing the number of young people that progress to Russell Group Universities.

6. The Committee noted the importance of sharing good practice amongst schools and Headteachers in each of the three boroughs.

7. The Committee stressed the importance of securing stable foster placements for Looked after Children (LAC) because the figures produced by officers demonstrated that LAC children in stable placements achieved better GCSE results than those continually moved around.

8. The Committee highlighted the continuing importance of the early year’s intervention programme and how the effects were now being seen in Key Stages 1 and 2.

9. The Committee reinforced the need to reach a GCSE pass rate of 75% in Westminster and welcomed the news that the Tri-Borough area was aiming for a GCSE pass rate of 80%, through the sharing of good practice amongst the three boroughs.

10. The Committee stressed the importance of recognising the challenges of providing good quality post-16 provision and that consideration be given of specifically looking at Post-16 provision as a topic at a future meeting.
1. THE ADVENT OF TRI-BOROUGH WORKING

1.1 Ian Heggs, Tri-Borough Director of Schools Quality and Standards Officers presented the Committee with a report on how the Tri-Borough Education project was progressing. He reported that they had designed a new staffing model that reflected the continued need for school improvement activities, but also the need to reduce spend in each of the three boroughs. As a result, fewer school improvement officers were now directly employed by the authority in each of the three boroughs, and they had created a portfolio of quality assured consultants that provided a more flexible service, based on the level of funding that is received from school buyback.

1.2 There is also a ‘Tri-borough Headteachers’ Executive Board’, which includes cross-phase headteacher representatives from each of the three boroughs. The Board meets to discuss tri-borough development opportunities and key issues once every half term. In June 2012, there was a ‘Tri-borough Headteachers’ Conference’, which was well attended by schools and academies from all phases in each of the three boroughs.

1.3 The Tri-Borough project is building on the success of Westminster’s 75% GCSE programme by continuing the programme in the 2012/13 academic year and rolling it out to all secondary schools and academies in the Tri-borough area. The implementation of this is via the Educational Excellence Programme, which is part of the Community Budgets scheme. The objective of the Educational Excellence programme is to improve GCSE attainment at 5+ A*-C (including English and maths) to 80% as a borough average by 2014 (and 75% by 2013) and to increase progression to Russell Group universities.

1.4 It was reported that all secondary schools and academies had been given £20,000 to support activities aimed at increasing their results. Each school will be visited by a school improvement adviser to establish a GCSE attainment milestone for the 2012/13 academic year. If this milestone is achieved, a further £10,000 funding will be provided to the school on a payment-by-results basis for 2013/14. The Tri-borough Education Service have planned a joint workshop for Headteachers and Heads of English and maths to share good practice across the three boroughs and therefore make best use of the funding available to them.

1.5 The Tri-borough Education Service is also holding a central funding pot of £50,000 per borough that will be used to commission targeted activities, such as post-16 revision classes and residential university summer schools, with the objective of increasing the number of young people from the three boroughs that progress to Russell Group universities. Schools and 14-19 Partnership Groups have been asked to submit proposals on how this funding should be used and, once these proposals have been considered, funding will be devolved or appropriate activities commissioned later in 2012.
1.6 Ian acknowledged that Westminster would support schools and governing bodies in making choices over the change to Academy status and would assist schools in making this transition if requested. He further advised of the need for flexibility around pupil place planning and the range of non-statutory services which continued to be offered to schools.

1.7 The Committee noted that Westminster supported in principal the creation of free schools, provided proposals were underpinned by evidence of demand and a sound business case. The committee further noted although Academies and Free Schools were outside of the remit of the local authority and directly accountable to the Secretary of State, the City Council would work with them proactively, as they would remain part of the Westminster collective of schools.

1.8 The Committee acknowledged that the City Council would also need to maintain successful relationships with local schools in order to meet its statutory obligation to deliver pupil place planning that meets the needs of local residents. In addition Westminster would also seek to act as a ‘critical friend’ to schools in the borough, challenging them to improve standards and seeking to guarantee choice and provide independent advice for parents.

1.9 Members also acknowledged that the future working relationship between local authorities and schools would be a partnership, rather than led by the local authority.

1.10 The following key themes emerged from the Committee’s discussion:

- the successful delivery of the School Improvement Framework and Service Level Agreement and the new staffing model that reflected the continued need for school improvements activities but also the need to reduce spend in each of the three boroughs.

- the range of non-statutory school improvements services available for schools to purchase from the LA, such as early intervention, safeguarding, music and sport. Members noted that the cost of providing these services were cost neutral.

- the importance of maintaining a good working relationship with the new academies.

- the need for flexibility around pupil place planning.

- the importance of inspiring pupils, starting from primary school, to work towards attending university. Members noted that there was a central funding pot of £50,000 per borough that would be used to commission targeted activities such as post-16 revision classes and residential university summer schools with the objective of increasing the number of young people from the three boroughs that progress to Russell Group Universities.

- the importance of sharing good practice amongst schools and Headteachers in each of the three boroughs.
2. THE ANNUAL EDUCATION PERFORMANCE REPORT

2.1 The Committee discussed standards of education in Westminster focusing on the findings of the Annual Education Report 2011/2012, looking at Early Years Foundation and Key Stages 1 and 2 and then GCSE, A levels and Post 16 and the educational achievements of Westminster Schools. Daria Wignall (Head of Schools and Learning) presented the Annual Education Report 2011/2012 which provided an overview of education in Westminster and the standards of achievement being reached by children and young people. Members discussed each point of assessment and considered key area of success and areas to be developed.

2.2 Early Years Foundation

2.3 Judie Harrison (Head of Quality Improvements for Early Years) reported that achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage had increased significantly and was now in line with the national average for the first time and importantly the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% of pupils and the rest of the cohort in Westminster had continued to narrow.

![Chart showing gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the EYFSP and the rest](image)

2.4 Judie Harrison advised that children who were able to access Early Years services started mainstream education with a good foundation and highlighted the importance and effectiveness of early intervention and of programmes such as ‘Every Child a Talker.

2.5 Judie Harrison advised that the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development had steadily increased since 2006, reaching 64% in 2012, an increase of 9% from 2011 and this was due to early intervention work being targeted into Westminster’s large community schools. She further advised that
measures were being taken to improve all the schools graded satisfactory and that Early Years was now part of the Ofsted Inspection.

2.6 The Committee discussed the challenges ahead for the Early Years Service after the early year’s curriculum had been revised in September and in light of a new profile being introduced on how children’s success should be measured. The committee noted that the early invention curriculum was play based and learning was achieved through supported play. They further noted that work was being undertaken to ensure that the needs of vulnerable groups within Westminster were being met.

2.7 The Committee noted that improvement measures had been put in place after Wilberforce Primary School had failed its Ofsted Inspection and because of the quick intervention the school was already improving. The committee further noted that the Interim Executive Board was working on transforming the school into a sponsored academy.

2.8 **Key Stages 1 and 2**

2.9 Daria Wignall reported that Westminster pupils were generally achieving in line with national and inner London averages for all subjects at Key Stage 1 and noted that at Key Stage 2, Westminster continued to achieve above the national averages.

2.10 The Committee congratulated Westminster’s primary schools on their continued improvement.

2.11 **GCSE and A Levels:**

2.12 Daria Wignall reported that GCSE attainment for the 5+A*-C including English and maths indicator had continued to improve and Westminster pupils had made more progress in English and Maths than pupils nationally. The local authority was now working towards an 80% GCSE pass rate across all schools.
2.13 Members noted that it was difficult to speculate on the final GCSE results because three schools with large cohorts had not released their results because of the dissatisfaction with the GCSE English Language results their year 11 pupils had been awarded by the AQA examination board. Members noted that the local authority had no statutory powers to request Westminster’s Academies to give them their exam results.

2.14 **Post 16:**

2.15 Daria Wignall reported that based on the average score per pupil, performance was now above national and inner London but that based on the average point score per entry, achievement was slightly below the averages for inner London and nationally.

![A-level - Average points score per entry](image)

2.16 The Committee discussed the rise in the 'leaving age' to 18 from 2015 when all young people would have to participate in education, employment or training and the challenges that the local authority would face providing a good mix of academic and vocational opportunities. The Committee further discussed the problems associated with the number of young people who were not completing courses and noted that a lot of work was being done to ensure that young people enrolled on the right course for them at the beginning of the year.

2.17 **Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN):**

2.18 James Thomas, Director of Family Services, reported that the number of children with Special Educational Needs in Westminster attending secondary
school was double the national average and that at GCSE level, pupils with SEN were continuing to achieve considerably higher than nationally.

2.19 The Committee congratulated the schools and teachers for the continued progress, acknowledged the important role of school governors and the value and importance of good leadership and succession planning in schools. The committee further discussed the interpretation of data and noted that overall ratings could be affected by individual schools not performing well.

2.20 The chairman summed up the key themes from the Committee’s discussion:

- the importance of securing stable foster placements for Looked After Children (LAC) as the figures in the Annual Report clearly showed that LAC children in stable placements achieved better GCSE results than those continually moved to different settings.

- the importance of the Early Year Service and how the positive effects of early intervention were now being seen in Key Stages 1 and 2.

- the need to reach a GCSE pass rate of 75% in Westminster and the welcomed news that Tri-Borough was aiming for a GCSE pass rate of 80% with the sharing of good practice amongst the three boroughs.

- the importance of recognising the challenges of providing good quality post 16 provision and that consideration be given to looking at Post 16 provision as a topic at a future meeting.