



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 MARCH 2020**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A P Maughan (Vice-Chairman), Mrs W Bowkett, M T Fido, R L Foulkes, C Matthews, S R Parkin, M A Whittington, L Wooten and R Wooten.

Added Members

Church Representative: Reverend P A Johnson.

Councillor: Mrs P A Bradwell OBE, Executive Councillor Adult Care, Health and Children's Services attended the meeting as an observer.

Officers in attendance:-

Roz Cordy (Interim Assistant Director of Safeguarding), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director Early Help), Heather Sandy (Executive Director of Children's Services), Sue Williams (Head of Educational Strategy), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer).

54 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Miss A E I Sayer (Parent Governor Representative).

An apology was also received from Councillor D Brailsford, Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services.

55 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

Councillor M A Whittington wished it to be noted that he had an adopted son who was in receipt of services from Barbardo's.

**56 MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2020**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 January 2020 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a record.

57 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR

FOR ADULT CARE, HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND CHIEF OFFICERS

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Chief Executive had received a letter from Stephen Rudman tendering his resignation due to ill health. The Committee noted that Mr Rudman had been the Roman Catholic Church representative at the County Council for over twenty years. It was noted further that the Chairman would be writing a joint letter with Councillor R B Parker, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, to thank Mr Rudman for all his time, involvement and valuable contributions to both the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Scrutiny Board; and to wish him a speedy recovery.

The Executive Councillor Adult Care, Health and Children's Services advised that she and officers were going to have discussions with Nick Gibb, Schools Minister regarding two schools in Lincolnshire.

The Committee was also advised that Heather Sandy had been successful in being appointed as the Executive Director – Children's Services. The Committee extended its congratulations to Heather on her new appointment.

58 REFERRAL FROM OSMB - CHILDREN WHO ARE SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN (MEASURE 24)

Consideration was given to a report from Roz Cordy, Interim Assistant Director – Safeguarding, which asked the Committee to consider further the performance of Measure 24 – "Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan".

It was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on 28 November 2019 had raised concerns that Measure 24 had not achieved its target in Quarter 2; and the Board had agreed to refer the measure back to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to investigate further and explain why the number of children on a plan had increased.

The Committee was advised that there had been an increase in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan; and that the increase had been across all eight Family Assessment Support Teams, with the exception of North Kesteven. To understand why there had been an increase, data had been analysed; and an in depth audit of some cases across the teams had been conducted.

The key finding of the data analysis had been that the number of children going on a plan was higher than the number of children coming off a plan (as the children were remaining on a plan longer), hence why there had been an increase in numbers. It was noted that due to the complex needs of the current cohort of children plans were being tried and tested before children were coming off a plan.

Key findings of the audit carried out were shown on page 17 of the report.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that there was no evidence that the increase in Child Protection numbers had been due to any changes in practice or decision making. It was highlighted that due to the complexity of need and risk, children were remaining on a Child Protection Plan for longer to ensure that the plan was tried and tested. It was noted that the audit had highlighted that in cases where it was no longer safe for children to live at home, alternative care provision was put in place. It was noted further that there would always be some fluctuation in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan; and it was highlighted that since Quarter 2 there had been a reduction in the number of children on a plan. The Committee noted further that currently there were 342 children on a Child Protection Plan.

It was highlighted that compared to statistical neighbours in England, Child Protection numbers were still relatively low in Lincolnshire.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following issues:-

- Clarification was given that North Kesteven had been included in the audit and that it was just an anomaly. It was also highlighted that the scrutiny process was working and that some confidence should be taken from this referral;
- A question was asked as to whether the lack of Legal Aid was having an impact on system delivery. Officers confirmed that this issue had not been considered and had not been picked up by the audit, and that it was a matter that could be considered in the future;
- Reassurance was given that if the number of children on a plan should rise again, there were internal processes in place to deal with the increase. Officers confirmed that the most important factor was to ensure that children were set up on the right plan and that these were regularly monitored; and that this formed part of the daily service provided by Children's Services; and
- Officers advised that other local authorities had children on plans for shorter periods of time. It was noted that compared to statistical neighbours and England data, Lincolnshire's Child Protection numbers were still relatively low. It was noted further that the number of children subject to a Child Protection plan from statistical neighbours in 2018/19 was 642; and that the England figure had been 636. The Committee was advised that the figure for Lincolnshire for 2018/19 had been 303, which was less than half the number.

RESOLVED

1. That assurance was given on the performance of Measure 24 "Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan."
2. That the comments as detailed above be passed on to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the Executive with regard to this measure.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 MARCH 2020

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Kate Rouse, Interim Head of School Standards, which provided the Committee with an update regarding standards within the sector led system.

In guiding the Committee through the report, reference was made to details of the high level summary as shown on pages 19 to 21 of the report, which covered:-

- Early Years (aged 5) – It was reported that the percentage of Lincolnshire pupils achieving a good level of development in 2019 had increased to 70% compared to 69% in 2018. It was noted that the increase was in-line with statistical neighbour average, which had increased by 1% since 2018. It was also highlighted that the percentage of Special Educational Needs (SEN) support pupils achieving a Good Level of Development in Lincolnshire was below its comparators; and that the gap between Lincolnshire and National remained at 4%;
- Phonics Screening Check (aged 6) – It was noted that the percentage of children meeting the expected standard by Year 1 in Lincolnshire was in line with East Midlands and statistical neighbours, with Lincolnshire remaining 1% below the National figure;
- Key Stage 1 (aged 7) – The Committee noted that this was a local measure of Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined and that the measure had dropped from 62.2% in 2018 to 61.5% in 2019. It was noted further that Free School Meal (FSM) Eligible were performing less well than National in Reading, Writing and Maths; and that the support of SEN support pupils was below National, East Midlands and Statistical Neighbours in each of the three areas;
- Key Stage 2 (aged 11) – It was highlighted that Lincolnshire had improved in this measure since the previous year to 61% in 2019; however, Lincolnshire was below the National expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics by 4%, below East Midlands by 2% and below Statistical Neighbours Average by 2%. It was highlighted further that Lincolnshire's performance in attainment had seen a 4% increase in Mathematics, 1% increase in Writing and 3% decrease in Reading, compared to 2018. It was reported that the percentage of FSM Eligible pupils had improved by 2% compared to 2018; and pupils receiving SEN support achieving the expected standard had improved by 1%, it was highlighted that this was still below the National level; and
- Key Stage 4 (aged 16) – The Committee was reminded that 2018 had been the first year of the new numbered grading system for GCSEs. It was highlighted that Lincolnshire was currently lower than National but higher than East Midlands and Statistical neighbour in the percentage of pupils achieving 9-5 in English and Maths GCSE. It was noted that the percentage of pupils achieving English and Mathematics (strong 9-5) in Lincolnshire was 42.5%, which was 0.9% below National, 0.4% above East Midlands and 1.5% above Statistical neighbours. The Committee was advised that Lincolnshire's average Attainment 8 score of 46.8 per pupil was in line with National, 1 point above East Midlands and 1.2 points above Statistical Neighbours. It was

noted that the performance of Lincolnshire's SEN support pupils was above the National and East Midlands for average Attainment 8 Score.

Attached to the report at Appendix A was a copy of the Key Numbers report for 2019 for the Committee to consider.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following points:-

- Some concern was expressed that the Key Stage 1 and 2 figures were not quite as good for local authority schools. Officers confirmed that the data referred to all Lincolnshire Schools;
- A question was asked as to whether data provided could be drilled down further to specific schools and postcodes, to identify how disadvantaged children were performing. Officers confirmed that this information was available through local leads. The Committee noted that schools held that data to enable them to prioritise intervention to where it was needed most. The Committee also noted that schools were funded through the national funding formula which included an element for deprivation to enable schools to meet that need;
- The difficulties experienced by smaller schools in responding to the new Ofsted framework. Reassurance was given that even though rural schools did not have the facilities of larger schools, the teachers were very dedicated and were doing the best that they could; and that it was very challenging for them. It was highlighted that the government was committed to conducting a review of small schools and that Lincolnshire was part of that review to ensure that the challenges that Lincolnshire faced were highlighted;
- The need to encourage reading between parents and children. The Committee was advised that this was a matter being dealt with as part of the Early Years Strategy; and that this would be considered by the Committee at the 24 April 2020 meeting. The Committee noted that the local authority through teaching hubs, teaching schools etc., was helping to co-ordinate the schools system and that it was not the role of the authority to improve results. It was highlighted that some schools had already introduced initiatives to encourage children to read more; and
- It was realised that there was still more work to do and that the Early Years Strategy would help to improve performance at Key Stages 1 and 2.

RESOLVED

That the report concerning the Lincolnshire Local Authority School performance 2018/19 be received and that the comments raised be noted.

60 LINCOLNSHIRE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP AND SECTOR-LED UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report from Sue Williams, Head of Education Strategy, which provided the Committee with an update on the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership and its development over the previous year.

Details of the work of the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership throughout the year was shown on pages 30 – 32 of the report, which included Mobilise, Peer Review, Annual Conference, Leadership Briefings, Governor Briefings, Stronger Governance, LeadLincs and Caring2Learn.

It was reported that during 2018/19 there had been a number of school improvement projects which Lincolnshire schools had participated in. It was highlighted that schools were engaging and that in the primary phase 89.4% of schools had participated in at least one project.

During the Sector-Led Update, the Committee noted that the co-ordinated approach to working in Lincolnshire had enabled £1.2m of school improvement funding to be secured by Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together from the Department for Education (DfE) to fund targeted programmes of support. Reference was also made to the LEAP, LAMP, and LENS programmes which had been funded through the Strategic School Improvement Fund.

The Committee was advised of the success of the Small Schools Project which had enabled project schools to see a year on year increase of 7.0% in their Maths attainment figure compared to 3.4% for those schools not involved in the project. Reference was also made to the Year 6 Booster project which had supported 42 schools to provide additional learning opportunities for children in Key Stage 2 who had been assessed as requiring additional support.

The Committee noted the benefits of the 'One Plan' co-ordinated approach to working in Lincolnshire and to the fact that this had enabled an alignment in vision, values and aims of the whole system to create a shared vision of:

- Every learner and school deserves to be known, valued and supported to achieve;
- Our focus is on the learner, therefore no school is more important than an individual learner's needs; and
- All partners will work together relentlessly to unlock our potential and deliver our shared goals.

The Committee was advised that a full system review of the sector led school improvement in Lincolnshire was currently being undertaken with the final report due in the summer of 2020.

During discussion, the Committee made reference to the following points:-

- The challenges facing smaller schools with mixed aged classes;
- The success of the LAMP Programme;
- The success of the LEAP Programme, although some concern was expressed to less schools being involved in the programme. Officers confirmed that the number involved had to be sustainable; and
- One member requested further information and feedback from service users on the various projects and initiatives.

RESOLVED

That the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership and Sector-Led Update report presented be received.

61 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report from Tracy Johnson, Senior Scrutiny Officer, which enabled the Committee to consider and comment on the content of its work programme to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

Details of the Committee's planned items were shown on pages 37 to 40 of the report.

RESOLVED

That the content of the Committee's Work Programme as presented be agreed.

The meeting closed at 12.03 pm