



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8 MARCH 2019**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R L FOULKES (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors R J Kendrick (Vice-Chairman), M D Boles, Mrs W Bowkett, M T Fido, C Matthews, S R Parkin, M A Whittington, L Wooten and R Wooten.

Added Members

Church Representative: Mr S C Rudman.

Parent Governor Representative: Miss A E I Sayer.

Councillor: D Brailsford (Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services) was also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:-

Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Roz Cordy (Interim Assistant Director of Safeguarding), Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer), Jo Kavanagh (Assistant Director Children's Services (Lead Early Help)), Geraldine O'Neill (Lead Consultant - Early Years Entitlement), Heather Sandy (Interim Director of Education) and Sally Savage (Chief Commissioning Officer - Children's Services).

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A P Maughan, P J Barnett (Parent Governor Representative) and Reverend P A Johnson (Church Representative).

An apology for absence had also been received from Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE, Executive Councillor for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services.

57 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

Mr S C Rudman wished it to be noted that in relation to agenda item 8 – Performance – Quarter 3 2018/19 (pages 56/57) he had been involved in an adoption process. He advised that he would remain in the meeting for the debate on this item, but would not enter into any discussion thereon.

Councillor M A Whittington advised that he had an adopted son aged 22 and, although he was not receiving services available up to the age of 25, he was eligible to them.

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COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2019****RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 January 2019 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**59 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR
FOR ADULT CARE, HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND CHIEF
OFFICERS**

The Chairman advised the Committee that agenda item 5 – Fostering Allowances had been withdrawn from the agenda, as further work was necessary on the content of the report. The Committee was advised further that the report would now be considered by the Committee at its 26 April 2019 meeting.

The Chairman advised that since the last meeting he had visited the Ark Nursery School, Stamford, which he had found very informative.

The Committee also noted that the Big Conversation 18 had taken place on 19 February 2019 at the Gainsborough Academy Youth Centre, Gainsborough. Councillors D Brailsford, R J Kendrick and Mrs W Bowkett had attended the event, which had focussed on 'Development of Participation Groups – V4C and Barnardo's'. The Committee noted further that Big Conversation 19 was due to be held in May 2019 half term and would focus on 'How can our Care Pledge be improved'.

It was also highlighted that on Saturday 22 June 2019, 'FAB! 2019' was due to be held at the Isaac Newton Building at the University of Lincoln. The Committee was advised that the theme for this year's awards was 'ECO FAB' and that further details would be sent out to members of the Committee. The Chairman encouraged all members of the Committee to attend.

The Chairman invited the Executive Support Councillor and Senior Officers to update the Committee.

Councillor D Brailsford, Executive Support Councillor for Children's Services advised that at the Music Teacher Awards of Excellence, Lincolnshire had won the Music Education Council Major Award 2018. Congratulations were extended to staff and the young people for their success. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Music Service on behalf of the Committee to congratulate them on their success.

60 FOSTERING ALLOWANCES

The Chairman had in his earlier announcement advised the Committee that the Fostering Allowances item had been deferred to the 26 April 2019 meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

61 LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2017/18

Consideration was given to a report from Martin Smith, Interim Assistant Director of Education, which invited the Committee to consider and comment on Lincolnshire Local Authority School Performance for 2017/18.

Attached to the report for the Committee to consider were the following Appendices:-

- Appendix A – Key Number Report for 2018;
- Appendix B – Free School Meal Closing the Gap Report; and
- Appendix C – Key Stage 2 LEAP and LAMP Disadvantaged FSM Eligible Outcomes for 2017/18.

In guiding the Committee through the report, the Interim Director of Education advised that the report presented provided an analysis of the current performance within the Lincolnshire schools system. It was noted that the data shared used validated figures for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

It was highlighted that as of 31 August 2018, Lincolnshire had 85% of schools rated as good or better. It was noted that Lincolnshire remained above the National average of 84.5%.

The Committee was advised that peer review continued to be utilised to support school improvement; and that over 50 schools had added their peer review outcomes to the database in addition to the entries from the academic year 2017/18.

Details of the strengths and areas for improvements within schools were shown at the top of page 18 of the report.

The report made reference to the following key stages:-

- Early Years (Aged 5)
- Phonics Screening Check (Aged 6)
- Key Stage 1 (Aged 7)
- Key Stage 2 (Aged 11)
- Key Stage 4 (Aged 16)

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that the Local Authority, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership and Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together were aware of the outcomes and were taking the necessary action to support improvement in standards within the sector led model. Details of the core offer to all settings in Lincolnshire; the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Mobilise programme; and the Lincolnshire Teaching Schools Together supported delivery were shown on pages 20/21 of the report. It was highlighted that there were approximately 220 schools engaging with Mobilise.

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It was highlighted further that the priority was to address the gap between Lincolnshire and national attainment figures in reading, writing and mathematics, and that this was the continued focus of the sector led model.

During discussion, the Committee raised the following comments:-

- The local position – The Committee was advised that the local authority in conjunction with its partners were taking action to support improvement in standards within the sector led model and that a strategic plan had been put in place. It was highlighted that the strength of partnerships had benefitted Lincolnshire by providing all schools with the opportunity to engage in professional development and school improvement activity. The evidence based approach to school improvement was a long term project, which was beginning to show reward. It was highlighted further that Lincolnshire was quite unique; as not all areas were as fortunate to have such a collaborative approach to school improvement. The Committee was advised that the biggest difference for those areas doing well was that they were better funded. The Committee noted that lobbying groups had been set up who were lobbying the government for better funding for Lincolnshire. The Committee noted further that there had not been a lot of engagement from church schools;
- Where Academies were not performing well - Reassurance was given that in a situation where there was concern relating to improvement, the Council would have a meeting with the school; if a school refused to engage with the Council, then the Regional School Commissioner would be engaged if it was an Academy Trust; otherwise OFSTED would be engaged as deemed necessary. The Committee was advised that the Council had a good relationship with most schools. The Committee members were encouraged to visit their local schools; as most schools would welcome the visit;
- Definition of LEAP, LAMP and LENS. The Committee was advised that LEAP was the Lincolnshire English Achievement Project; LAMP was the Lincolnshire Attainment in Maths Project; and LENS was the Lincolnshire Educational Needs Support Project;
- The effect of 38 new Head teachers coming into post. Confirmation was given that most brand new Head teachers were taking up positions in smaller schools. Once Head teachers had gained experience, they would then move onto a larger school. The Committee was advised that there was an induction programme for all schools; and that maintained schools received enhanced support through the de-delegation budget. It was highlighted that work with governors also formed part of the induction programme;
- A question was advised as to whether there was a network to help Lincolnshire get better funding for education in Lincolnshire. The Committee was advised that there was a Workless pressure group; as well as a group of Head teachers. It was noted that the local authority had written to all schools to encourage them to write to their local MP, as well as the Minister for Education;

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- Monitoring of trends – The Committee noted that the Appendices to the report provided a breakdown of data for the previous three years; and from this data trends would be able to be identified;
- Early Years Foundation Stage – Some concern was raised that the good level of development had reduced in 2018; dropping below the national average by 2.4%. Reassurance was given that Early Years had been brought back in-house and that there was a strategy for improvement. Officers offered to bring back the Early Years Strategy to a future meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for further consideration later in the year. Some concern was expressed that it was important to get a balance between meeting the needs of young people, rather than just measuring for measuring sake;
- Some concern was expressed to the fact that some of the C of E Schools had not been able to gain sponsorship. The Committee was advised that the Executive Councillor had written to the Education Secretary and the Executive Director for Children's Services had been in contact with the Regional Schools Commissioner; and that a meeting had been held with the Bishop. It was highlighted that everything was being done that could be done; and
- Progress 8 – Officers advised that Progress 8 was a measure of the progress children made between the end of primary school and the end of secondary school. It was noted that it was designed to encourage good quality teaching across a broad curriculum. Officers agreed to send some data out to members of the Committee. Some reference was also made to the fact that grammar schools did not always provide a broad spectrum of activity. One member advised that non-selective schools were doing well, despite losing their more academic students to grammar schools.

RESOLVED

1. That the Lincolnshire Local Authority School Performance report for 2017/18 be received.
2. That consideration be given to the Early Years Strategy at a future meeting.

62 DELIVERY OF 30 HOURS CHILDCARE

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Michelle Andrews, Children's Service Manager, Early Years, which provided an overview of the Government's commitment to 30 hours per week of funded education for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds; and advised of Lincolnshire's current position regarding the implementation of the offer.

In guiding the Committee through the report the Lead Consultant, Early Years Entitlement made reference to the background to the government's commitment to doubling the amount of free childcare from 15 hours to 30 hours from September 2017.

Details relating to the eligibility criteria were shown on pages 33 and 34 of the report.

Appendix A to the report provided an overview of helping to pay for childcare.

It was reported that in Lincolnshire 582 private and independent providers, 22 Academies and 49 schools were now registered to deliver the extended 30 hours. It was highlighted that this represented 90% of the funded childcare sector.

The Committee noted that the quality of provision had continued to improve, with 96% of early providers in Lincolnshire being rated as Good or Outstanding at an inspection completed on 31 August 2018.

It was reported that 95% of all 3 and 4 year olds were accessing Early Education places. It was reported further that the take-up levels by the summer term 2018 had reached 5,322 children; which was above the Department for Education estimate of 5,010 eligible families in Lincolnshire.

The Committee noted that providers had been fully committed to delivering the extended entitlement.

The report advised that Childcare Works continued to deliver the DfE's national support contract for the 30 hours free childcare programme; and that Lincolnshire was actively engaging in the national and regional process, which had helped the local authority to implement the agenda successfully.

The Committee was advised that the local authority had been successful in securing DfE funding to provide a digital solution for childcare providers; and that this had now been fully implemented; and had supported the Early Years Providers to move to a monthly payment process.

It was highlighted that additional funding had been available via the DfE to support localised pressure on places for 30 hours. It was noted that the local authority had secured £1,594,138 of capital funding from the DfE to develop six capital projects, and to create 259 new 30 hour places in Lincolnshire.

The Committee was advised that following the implementation of the 30 hours free childcare, a parental consultation had been undertaken to establish if the market place in Lincolnshire was meeting the needs of working parents. Feedback from the survey had indicated that those parents using childcare were happy with the quality and 93% had reported they were satisfied with the quality of childcare used; and 95% reporting that they were satisfied with the childcare arrangements they had in place.

It was also highlighted that some parents had found the government gateway a frustrating system to use, when confirming eligibility every three months. It was reported that feedback regarding the government gateway had been fed back to HMRC and the DfE.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

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- One member provided the Committee with an update on their recent visit to a local nursery school. Officers responded to questions raised. The member highlighted that the nursery had been thankful of the support received and thanks were extended to county council staff, with particular mention being made to Julie Grindley;
- Funding Formula – The Committee was advised that the Lincolnshire Schools' Forum had given consideration to the government funding formula;
- Some concern was expressed to the document detailed at Appendix A; and to the fact that the average busy parent would find it hard to understand. One member enquired whether the Council produced any documentation. The Committee was advised that a toolkit had been developed, and that information had been sent out to staff in the localities, so that they were aware of what was on offer;
- Problems encountered with the renewal application process – The Committee was advised that the feedback received from some parents had been that the government gateway was a frustrating system to use, especially when reconfirming eligibility criteria every three months. The Committee was advised further that when parents were experiencing difficulties using the government gateway system, members of the Early Years and Childcare Support team were referring parents to the HMRC customer interaction service through a Freephone telephone service for support. The Committee also noted that the feedback from parents had been reported back to HMRC and the Department for Education at regional meetings;
- Access to Early Education places. The report highlighted that 95% of all 3 and 4 years old were accessing Early Education places. It was highlighted that for the 30 hours entitlement which had begun in September 2017, the take-up levels by the summer term 2018 had reached 5,322 children, which was above the DfE estimate of 5,010 eligible families in Lincolnshire. It was noted that the 5% not accessing could be as a result of various reasons, i.e. some parents not working and some had grandparents looking after the child/children; and
- One member advised from personal experience of the 30 Hours Childcare that the experience had been a very positive one.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended thanks to the Lead Consultant, Early Years Entitlement for a very informative update.

RESOLVED

That the Delivery of 30 Hours Childcare report be received.

63 PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3 2018/19

Consideration was given to a report by Sally Savage (Chief Commissioning Officer), which provided key performance information for Quarter 3, 2018/19 that was relevant to the work of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

The following Appendices were attached to the report:-

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- Appendix A – Council Business Plan Measures;
- Appendix B – Complaint and Compliments Report;
- Appendix C – Ofsted School Status Report; and
- Appendix D – Performance Monitoring of Contracts – Exempt Paper.

The Committee was reminded that Appendix D to the report contained exempt information and if the Committee wished to discuss details pertaining to Appendix D, a vote would need to be taken to move into exempt session.

The Committee was invited to ask questions relating to the content of the report. During discussion, the Committee raised the following issues:--

- One member extended thanks to officers that the Looked After Children (LAC) indicators had achieved their target; and to the fact that the waiting time for young children waiting for adoption had been reduced. The Committee was advised that LAC were a priority for the Council and for Children's Services; and that there was still progress to be made;
- Page 47 – Juvenile First Time Offenders – This indicator for the first time indicated better performance, as a result of the new diversionary project in Lincolnshire. The Committee was advised that the Committee would be able to explore this indicator further as an item on Restorative Practice - Lincolnshire Joint Diversionary Panels would be considered at the 26 April 2019 meeting;
- Page 49 – Juvenile Re-offending – The Committee was advised that there was a time-lag with the data provided; and that this indicator would be explained further at the 26 April 2019 meeting;
- Complaints – Officers advised that the complaints report required further work; and that the complaints procedure would be coming back in-house to be administered. The Committee was advised further that a report setting out an annual review of complaints would be presented to the June meeting, so that a better in-depth picture would be provided. A request was also made for better information relating to Ombudsman complaints;
- Appendix C – Table 2a/2b - Some concern was expressed to the 50% attributed to the PRU/AP and whether the measure was inadequate. Some reference was made to increased knife crime and the problems associated with knife crime. Confirmation was given that one of the PRU facilities had been good and one had been inadequate. Reassurance was given that the PRU facilities had now improved due to them being academised by a national provider, who had an outstanding PRU and teaching school. It was noted that there had been applications for 4 new free schools and that 3 of them would be open in 2019/20. The Committee was advised that the issue of knife crime was a matter for Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board to consider and better understand the Lincolnshire profile. It was agreed that a letter would be sent on behalf of the Committee to the Chairman of the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board setting out the Committee's concerns regarding knife crime in relation to children and young people;
- Page 66 - Table 5 – Schools currently judged to be inadequate and/or under an Interim Executive Board. Particular reference was made to Skegness

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Academy. Officers confirmed that the Head teacher from the academy was willing to work with the Council; and with the community;

- Page 66 – Table 6 – Schools not yet inspected under current Ofsted URN/ DfE Number. Concern was expressed to the position of the Gainsborough Academy. It was highlighted that some schools were a challenge and that sponsorship would not bring about easy improvements, as some schools engaged better than others. A suggestion was made for local Councillors Mrs W Bowkett and C Matthews to visit the Skegness Academy; and for Councillor M A Whittington to visit the West Grantham Academy, as part of their community role.

At this point in the meeting, it was moved, seconded and:

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Appendix D to the report on the grounds that if they were present there could be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

The Chairman invited members of the Committee to ask questions in relation to Appendix D of the report and officers present responded to questions raised.

RESOLVED

1. That the performance report for Quarter 3, 2018/19 and the comments of the Committee be noted.
2. That a letter be written to the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board setting out the Committee's concern regarding knife crime in relation to children and young people.
3. That arrangements be made by the Interim Director of Children's Services for Councillors Mrs W Bowkett and C Matthews to visit the Skegness Academy and for Councillor M A Whittington to visit the West Grantham Academy.

64 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 for the coming months.

Appendix A to the report on page 71 provided a copy of the work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider.

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Appendix B provided a copy of the Forward Plan which advised the Committee of decisions relating to Children's Services from 1 March 2019.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the report and advised that from the meeting, two items had been suggested to be considered at a future meeting. These were:-

- A more comprehensive annual review of the Complaints report for consideration at the 7 June 2019 meeting; and
- The Early Years Strategy to be considered at the 6 September 2019 meeting.

The Committee expressed its thanks to Children's Services officers for their continued support; and for their seamless transition into their interim roles.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be agreed subject to the inclusion of the above mentioned items.

The meeting closed at 12.25 pm