

Contact Officer: Helen Kilroy

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL

Wednesday 30th March 2022

Present: Councillor Andrew Marchington (Chair)
Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds
Councillor Joshua Sheard
Councillor Paul White

Co-optees Dale O'Neill
Linda Summers

In attendance:

Observers:

Apologies: Councillor Richard Smith
Councillor Jackie Ramsay
Helen Kilroy (Clerk)
Toni Bromley (Co-Optee)

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Richard Smith, Councillor Jackie Ramsay and Toni Bromley (Co-optee).

Councillor Marchington advised the Panel that Dale O'Neill and Linda Summers were due to step down from their role as co-optees and thanked them for their hard work and valued contributions to the Children's Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Marchington welcomed Graeme Sunderland, Ramzan Mohavuddin and James Ryan to the meeting and advised the Panel that they were newly recruited co-optees who were observing the Children's Scrutiny Panel today.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1st December 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

3 Interests

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Councillor Marchington declared an interest regarding his position as a member of the Kirklees Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SCARE) in relation to agenda Item 8.

4 **Admission of the Public**

All items were considered in public session.

5 **Deputations/Petitions**

No petitions or deputations were received.

6 **Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Transformation Update**

The Panel considered a report giving an update on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transformation presented by Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director for Learning and Early Support.

Jo-Anne Sanders highlighted the following key points:-

- In March 2019 Cabinet received a report in relation to parent / carers perspectives regarding SEND and work had developed since then as a partnership.
- A SEND inspection took place in February 2022, of which the outcomes was still to be provided.
- There was a clear SEND strategy in place and the vision across the partnership was that every child with SEND aspirations were no different from any other child and they should have the best start in life.
- There had been challenges during the pandemic which had affected the ability of schools to provide education, however, wrap around support had been provided across the partnership.
- Additional help had been sought from an improvement partner INPOWER to help co-produce inclusive ambitions that had underpinned the transformation journey, which were:
 - Collaborating at the earliest opportunity
 - Building trust with parents, carers, young people
 - Inclusion, removing barriers to ensure inclusive practice for families
 - Thriving in education but also in life and in hopes and aspirations
 - Co-produce with families to have clear aspirations for adulthood and the longer term.

Jo-Anne Sanders highlighted page 11 of the report and the context relating to the number of children / young people educated across Kirklees and those receiving additional help or support and advised the Panel that:

- Demand had grown at a national level and the response was to be open in terms of challenges
- The SEND transformation plan had been co-produced with partners.
- There were 5 key areas, practice, systems and processes to be learner focused and person centred, inclusive, orientating the system to early intervention, clear on what needed to be commissioned and transition through to preparing for adulthood.
- The ambition was to be bold, innovative and invest heavily in change.

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- There were strong collaborative relationships with the parent / carer forum who provided support and challenge to get things right.
- In terms of improvement there was a refreshed Local Offer and an Inclusion Support Officer (ISO) had been introduced. This was to offer early advice and support to professionals.
- Work had been undertaken with professionals in schools to develop revised guidance in relation to the graduated approach which was due to be launched in April 2022. The co-production made it a valuable resource.
- Work had been undertaken with INPOWER to develop and trial a tool called 'valuing friend' which helped to understand the needs of children / young people early and provide holistic support.
- An external review was commissioned of specialist and alternative provision which had helped shape the sufficiency strategy and identified what was needed to support the needs of children.
- In October 2021 significant investment of 36 million was approved for the development of schools and to increase school place so young people could be educated locally.
- A Joint strategic assessment had helped provide a shared understanding of the needs of the children / young people.
- There was a robust sufficient strategy so people were clear about the needs of children / young people and how these could be supported locally.
- SEND were inspected in February 2022 by OFSTED and Care Quality Commission which was very robust and had been a busy period.
- The inspection provided an opportunity to share a self-evaluation, being clear on strengths and opportunities for development.
- It also provided an opportunity to share the SEND transformation plan, the key strategies and policies document and included the parent / carer voice.

Jo-Anne Sanders advised the Panel that she would be keen to bring back the outcomes of the SEND Inspection for the Panel to consider at a future meeting.

The Panel acknowledged and praised the work that had been undertaken in relation to ensuring the voice of the child / young person was heard and how it contributed to better decisions being made.

The Panel acknowledged that it was pleased more resources and attention had been being given to SEND services and acknowledged there had been a 100% increase in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's) since 2015.

The Panel highlighted the difficulty children / young people faced in getting an EHCP and questioned how we ensured that children / young people who needed an EHCP were properly assessed. Jo-Anne Sanders advised that this could be achieved by looking at data and making sure that the right support was provided for children / young people when they needed it and as early as possible. Jo-Anne Sanders further advised that there were robust processes in place to consider the needs of children / young people and that it was about the quality of information and the right professional support.

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The Panel shared its intention to visit PCAN (Parents of Children with Addition Needs) in the next municipal year to talk to parents / carers about their experiences and gain their feedback on the SEND transformation plan.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the update on the SEND Transformation and thanked Jo-Anne Sanders for her valued contributions.

1. The Panel agreed to consider an update on the outcome of the SEND inspection at a future meeting.
2. The Panel agreed to visit PCAN during the 2022-23 municipal year

7 Educational Outcomes - draft Kirklees Annual Education Quality and Standards Report update

The Panel considered the draft Kirklees Annual Education Quality and Standards Report Update presented by Chris Jessup, Head of Educational Outcomes which outlined:

- The challenges faced by schools in 2020/21.
- There was little assessment and examination data to report on but there was positive activity to highlight.
- Information in relation to how the system responded to the pandemic.
- The supportive challenge throughout the academic year and the impact as a result.
- Ongoing school improvement priorities aligned with the Kirklees Learning Strategies 'Our Kirklees Futures'.

The Panel highlighted the recent white and green papers and suggested that the Panel could look again at the priorities for 2022/23 and beyond to address the extra challenges the education services was going to be faced with. Chris Jessup responded and agreed that would be useful.

The Panel acknowledged how educational settings had responded brilliantly to the challenges over the past 2 years and although there was little data available, a huge amount had been achieved. The Panel also highlighted the extent to which students had risen to the challenge, whilst acknowledging the increase in mental health needs.

The Panel highlighted the Key Stage 5 results and that compared with national benchmarks, it had shown a dip. The Panel noted there had been less grade inflation in larger institutions and due to Kirklees having larger institutions a different process had been adopted which would explain this. The Panel also noted that there had been no evidence that would suggest a dip in quality.

The panel advised that it was pleased to see the inclusion of happy children in the aims and that this should be highlighted and that it was interesting to see the measures in relation to 'working with people' that had been used to inform the commitment to high aspirations. The Panel noted that it had been agreed at

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Corporate Parenting Board that information on Looked After Children's study and employment destinations would be provided to the Panel, this was to identify where young people were and ensure their aspirations.

The Panel highlighted point 3.3 in the report and suggested strengthening what had been said in relation place-based working, in that strong partnerships existed but also continued to develop.

The Panel acknowledged it was good to have a framework in place to look at the future and help children / young people to achieve the best outcomes. The Panel noted that the data told its own story, acknowledging that it opened appropriate doors for the future and provided good foundations for lifelong learning, and for children / young people to be happy and healthy in Kirklees.

Jo-Anne Sanders acknowledged and thanked the Panel for their feedback which would help inform the 'Our Kirklees Futures' report. Jo-Anne also noted it was important to reflect back over the past 2 years, particularly in relation to the dedication and commitment of colleagues which needed to be amplified.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the draft Kirklees Annual Education Quality and Standards Report Update and thanked Chris Jessup and Jo-Anne Sanders for their valued contributions.

1. The Panel agreed that information in relation to place based working and strong parentships which existed and continued to develop be added to point 3.3 of the report to help strengthen it.

8 Kirklees Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report 2020-2021

The Panel considered the Kirklees Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report for 2020 – 2021 presented by Mark Janes, Chair of Kirklees SACRE, which highlighted that:

- SACRE was a Statutory body and was responsible on behalf of the Local Authority for Religious Education (RE) within schools.
- Although RE was not part of the national curriculum, all children were entitled to RE being taught as part of the syllabus.
- It advised the Local Authority (LA) on all things concerning collective worship, school assemblies and on RE in line with the locally agreed syllabus which was set by SACRE and revised every 5 years.
- It monitored the effectiveness and appropriateness of the syllabus.
- 4 bodies made up the SACRE, which included the legacy of having an established church (Church of England), Councillors, Teachers and representative of other faith communities.
- Work was ongoing to increase the breath of representation within SACRE.
- RE helped with cohesion and was an integral part of children within the community.
- SACRE was a delegated body within the work of the Children's scrutiny and needed the provision of a clerk.

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- In 2020 – 2021 due to the pandemic, some elements of SACRE, including CPD (a training programme) for Teacher's had to be administered online which brought challenge for faith communities.
- SACRE responded in partnership with the welcome school initiative and created virtual visits for children to places of worship which enabled leaders of faith communities to speak to many more children.
- In 2021, as well as regularly revising guidance to schools, SACRE widened its participation and shared in creating a hub across 5 boroughs in West Yorkshire and formed a group in relation to RSHE.
- A Sensitivity to Faith document was being developed, to help consider the needs and questions children may have in respect of faith and provided guidance on how education could be delivered whilst respecting faith.
- Well delivered RE fired up the imagination, curiosity and wonder of Children.

The Panel noted the various groups within the membership and asked a question regarding how the perspective and views of other faiths were considered who were not in the group. Ian Ross, Associate Learning Partner with responsibility for RE and SCARE responded and advised that SACRE sat within a national organisation, NASACRE (National Association of SACRE) where advice was sought from representatives of faith groups that were not represented in Kirklees. Ian Ross also advised that SACRE were members of the RE Council which represented all faiths and people of no faith who they could also go to for advice.

Mark Janes advised the Panel that SACRE was actively seeking to recruit members from other faith communities that were not currently represented and advised that Ian Ross had engaged in some work regarding the balance of overall teaching.

The panel highlighted the poor attendance and questioned whether there had been an issue in terms of encouraging people to attend. The Panel also asked about the funding formulas and whether Kirklees was honouring its funding, which appeared slight in terms of importance. Mark Janes responded in relation to poor attendance and advised that colleagues in the Church of England could step up to their responsibility and there were other forums where the issue could be raised. Mark Janes further explained that as in person meetings had resumed, they could become more topical and raise participation.

Ian Ross further added that 4 councillors had been appointed to SACRE and traditionally attendance had been low. Ian suggested having an alternative representative would be helpful.

Ian Ross advised the Panel that in relation to funding, the recommended amount was 2% of the CSSB (annual budget that was available to Local Authorities). A freedom of information request sent to all Local Authorities highlighted Kirklees was near the top, nearly at the 2% mark. Ian advised that there were other creative ways to raise funds.

Councillor Marchington highlighted the need to encourage people who might be interested in SACRE to attend, including those people with links to communities of different faith or who have other world views, who could make a positive contribution.

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The Panel acknowledged Relationship, Health and Sex Education (RSHE) was valuable in ensuring appropriate and quality education, and that there was a need for a varied and balanced view which SACRE helped with.

Councillor Marchington highlighted that the message from SACRE was about the importance of healthy relationships and promoting that, which would equip children and young people to view relationships in a positive context.

The Panel highlighted the virtual visits and agreed it would be good for this to happen in a variety of places of worship, acknowledging that in terms of capturing children and young people's interests, what they can see is more attractive than what they are told or can hear.

The Panel highlighted the membership and number of vacancies, and that the most concerning vacancies were primary school and secondary school teachers.

In response to a question by the Panel regarding the difficulty in relation to filling the vacancies, Ian Ross advised that Headteachers had been spoken to personally with an incentive to have resources for free, and meetings could be accommodated locally. The Panel was informed that there were a few Headteachers who had agreed to take this matter to the Heads Forum to consider who could be responsible and join the meetings. Mark Janes added that attendance seemed slightly better when there was a specific task relating to schools. Jo-Anne Sanders agreed to speak with constituent groups. Jo-Anne acknowledged the past couple of years had been difficult for Headteachers but that this was a real opportunity to shape, link up and secure representation.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the Kirklees Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report 2020 – 2021 and thanked Mark Janes, Ian Ross and Jo-Anne Sanders for their contributions.

9 Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Corporate Parenting Board

Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds shared an update on issues considered by Corporate Parenting Board, and highlighted that:

- There were 615 Children Looked After and 490 Special Guardianship Orders.
- The Board had been joined by Colin Parr, Strategic Director for Environment and Climate Change and David Shepherd, Strategic Director for Growth and Regeneration who shared the opportunities for Children Looked After within their Directorates.
- The 3 key areas were in relation to apprenticeships, the Climate Youth Festive and the Year of Music, and to see how Children Looked After could be represented.
- The Statement of Purpose highlighted challenges in recruitment and retention of Foster Carers in Kirklees and nationally.
- The Children Ambitions Board Update outlined Our Kirklees Futures, SEND Transformation and Contextual Safeguarding.

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RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Corporate Parenting Board.

- 10 Children's Scrutiny Panel Work Programme and Agenda Plan for 2021-22**
The Panel acknowledged a very busy year for Children's Scrutiny and highlighted their visit to the Multi Systemic Therapy team, and that it was interesting to see how they collected and used data. The Panel agreed it would be useful to have some longer-term feedback as well as feedback on positive partnership interactions.

The Panel advised that two further visits were scheduled to Dewsbury and Batley Social Work teams in the 2022/23 municipal year.

The Panel also advised that a meeting with parents and young people who contributed to SEND was also due to take place in the 2022/23 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the Work Programme and agenda plan for 2021-22 and agreed that:

1. The work programme for 2022-23 would be planned and agreed at Informal Panel meetings scheduled to take place in June 2022.
2. Longer term feedback be provided in relation to Multi Systemic Therapy data and positive partnership interactions.
3. Visits to the Batley and Dewsbury Social Work teams would be scheduled to take place during the 2022/23 municipal year.
4. A meeting be arranged during the 2022/23 municipal year with parents and young people who contributed to the SENDACT report.