

Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Education, Skills and Employment

At 5.00 pm on Tuesday 25th October, 2022 held as a remote meeting, via Zoom

Present:-

Members

Councillor Scott Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Wendy Brackenbury
Councillor Leanne Buckingham
Councillor Philip Irwin

Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
Councillor Lee Wilkes

Officers

AnnMarie Dodds, Executive Director of
Children's Services
Neil Goddard, Head of SEND

Jo Hutchinson, Senior School
Improvement Manager
Ben Smith, Democratic and Electoral
Services Manager

112 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

113 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2022

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2022 were not yet ready and would be submitted to the next meeting for approval.

114 Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those members who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

115 Proposed Amalgamation of Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School - Update on Formal Consultation

The Executive Advisory Panel considered a report informing it of the outcomes of the statutory period of formal consultation approved by the Executive on Thursday 25th August 2022. Its views were sought on the proposed amalgamation for Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School as requested by the respective governing bodies. A copy of the report was attached to the agenda, marked as 'item 4'.

Arising from queries, it was clarified that the amalgamation would result only in the technical closure of one of the school's unique identifier and that neither of the school buildings would be closed as a result of the consultation. The proposed new school would continue to operate from both current sites, but combine under one new school name.

Over the course of 12 months, the real risk of one of the school sites requiring closure had been addressed and demand for places had now risen following very positive work with the governing bodies. The proposed merger would provide for financial stability, address the previously falling pupil rolls, and maintain infant and junior education provision in Rushden.

The Council was committed to working with both sets of governors to provide for a positive and effective transition into a combined school, with it being further clarified that the shadow governing body would address issues such as back office functions and access issues following the conclusion of the technical phase of this process.

Having considered the proposal and following discussion, the Panel was supportive of the amalgamation, noting that it would provide for a stable and viable combined school.

Resolved:-

- a) That the outcome of the formal consultation be noted;
- b) That the proposals for amalgamation of Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School be supported.

116 School Effectiveness Update

The Executive Advisory Panel considered a briefing note detailing the impact of the work of the School Effectiveness Team (SET) in 2021/22 and the (currently unvalidated) outcomes at Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Early Years (EY) in the North during July 2022.

The Panel noted the following principal points arising from the update:-

- i) Although many improvements were evident for 2021/22, standards overall in North Northamptonshire for Key Stage 2 and Early Years were just below the national average;
- ii) It was clarified that the data from July 2022 should be treated with caution as it was the first collection of outcome data since before COVID;
- iii) It was important to note that when the School Effectiveness Team worked with schools, data would be considered as part of a triangulation with other information such as inspection outcomes, the quality of leadership and management, the quality of the curriculum, assessment and delivery, and other broader information such as attendance for all pupils and groups of pupils, suspensions and exclusions, progress made by SEND pupils etc. rather than being treated in isolation;
- iv) The Panel also noted positively the future work that the School Effectiveness Team was engaging with, which included:-
 - Co-production and planned school improvement activities and priorities with all schools using locality data;

- Improving outcomes for all pupils across North Northants, identifying good practice in locality areas;
- Continuing to focus on and improve the 'quality of education' so that schools would maintain an ambitious curriculum that was aspirational for all pupils;
- A focus on reducing the gap for disadvantaged pupils;
- Continuing to develop partnerships and working practices to facilitate improvement in the quality of provision and outcomes for all children and young people; and
- Ensuring effective transition between schools and settings to secure a positive start to the learning journey for all children and young people.

It was confirmed that once the data for 2021/22 had been validated, a further report would be provided to the Panel. It was requested that this report include student progress since 2019 in comparison to national figures, containing an analysis of performance since Covid.

Resolved:-

That the update on School Effectiveness be noted.

117 Update on the Educational Psychologist Service

The Executive Advisory Panel considered a presentation which provided an update on the work of the Educational Psychologist Service (EPS).

The following principal points were noted:-

- i) Overall the Service was broadly staffed, with recruitment ongoing to fill outstanding vacancies. There were currently slightly over 14 qualified psychologists in the Service;
- ii) The timeliness in provision of psychological advices had improved between the 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years but there remained some distance to go to reach the target of 95% advices submitted on time;
- iii) Arising from a June/July 2022 survey of 114 schools 44% (an increase from 18% the previous year) agreed/strongly agreed that 'working with the EPS had helped to prevent permanent exclusions';
- iv) Overall it was considered that the EPS was making a positive contribution to supporting schools towards outcomes, with 97% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Service related to and worked well with school children, and 88% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Service provided practical and helpful advice.

Arising from discussion, the Panel received assurance that of the 7% of advices not submitted to schools up to 4 weeks late, that the school children had been seen during

that period, albeit that the advice for wrap around support had not been completed during the time frame.

Resolved:-

That the update on the Educational Psychologist Service be noted.

118 Forward List of Executive Items - November 2022 - February 2023

The Executive Advisory Panel considered the forward list of Executive items from November 2022 to February 2023.

Resolved:-

- a) That the contents of the Executive Forward Plan for November 2022 to February 2023 in relation to children's services be noted; and
- b) That the disaggregation of the joint sensory impairment service be considered at the 22 December 2022 meeting of the EAP.

119 Forward List of Items for Education, Skills and Employment EAP

The Executive Advisory Panel considered the forward list of items for future meetings.

Resolved:-

That the Forward List of Items be updated, reflecting the discussion held, to include consideration at the 25th November 2022 meeting of:-

- a) The Local Area SEND Peer Challenge;

and at the 22nd December meeting of:-

- b) Disaggregation of the Joint Sensory Impairment Service and Establishment of new NNC Operating Model; and
- c) Outcome of the Children's Services OFSTED inspection.

120 Any other business - North Northamptonshire Local Area SEND Peer Challenge

The Executive Advisory Panel considered an item of urgent business, to enable the Executive Director of Children's Services to provide interim feedback on the Local Area SEND Peer Challenge that had taken place on 20 and 21 October 2022.

The following interim feedback was noted:-

- i) Three SEND leaders from within the East Midlands had challenged the area, with a focus on co-production, a central plank of all SEND/Inclusion strategies;
- ii) A number of positive strengths, together with some areas for development and recommendations had been provided in relation to individual co-production, operational co-production and strategic co-production;

- iii) A draft report would be available from 4 November 2022, with a final version developed thereafter;
- iv) Over 90 people had been interviewed from a range of backgrounds and the Director wished to thank everybody for their contributions during the Challenge period.

Resolved:-

That the interim feedback received on the Peer Challenge taking place on 20 and 21 October 2022 be noted.

121 Close of Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, the Chair thanked members and officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm