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Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 12th February, 2024

6.00 pm

Meeting Room A

Town Hall,

Blackburn

AGENDA

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
2. **Minutes of the last meeting**
Children & Young People OSC Nov 2023 (2) **2 - 5**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM **6**
4. **Youth MPs Update**
Youth Voice Progress Report Feb 2024 **7 - 9**
5. **School Effectiveness Strategy**
CYP Scrunity Paper - SES Jan 24 **10 - 11**
6. **Academic Outcomes**
CYP Scrunity Paper - SES Jan 24 - Education Data RV **12 - 15**
CYP Scrunity Paper - SES Jan 24 - SpLC RV

Date Published: 2nd February 2024
Denise Park, Chief Executive

PRESENT – Councillor Sylvia Liddle (in the Chair) Councillors McCaughran, Gee, Gibson, Raja and Jackson.

YOUNG PEOPLE REPRESENTATIVES – Fatima Asif, and Faisal Ahmed (Youth Forum representatives).

ALSO PRESENT – Executive Member – Julie Gunn, Officers – Jo Siddle, Emma Ford, Michelle Holt, Imran Akuji, Andrea Sturgess and Phil Llewellyn.

RESOLUTIONS

15. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and made reference to recent political changes at the Council, which meant that Councillors Ali and Salma Patel were no longer on the Committee.

Apologies were received from Councillor Julie Slater.

16. Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2023 were submitted for approval.

It was noted that the Glossary of Terms had been circulated to all Members of the Committee, and that the information requested on Special Guardianship Orders had also been circulated to all along with the answers to the questions raised by Youth Forum representatives about the Wellbeing Champions at the last meeting. The Chair requested an update on future funding for the Wellbeing Champions, which Jo Siddle agreed to arrange

Under Matters Arising, Jo Siddle and Emma Ford advised that the Council was a pathfinder in relation to Fostering Recruitment Hubs and referenced differences in payments between the public and private sector, as well as giving information on Supported Accommodation for under 18's, which was now OFSTED regulated, and reassured the Committee that children were placed in regulated accommodation wherever possible, and if this was not the case, it would be for a very short period and the Chief Executive would be advised. The recently established Regional Fostering Recruitment Hub would also help ensure more foster carers were available. Councillor Julie Gunn welcomed the development though pointed it out will not fix all the challenges. She referenced the need for a cap to be introduced to stop private providers charging whatever they liked.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17. Declarations of interest

No Declarations of interest were made by Members of the Committee.

18. Youth Forum Update

The Youth Forum representatives verbally reported on recent events and activities including :

- Participation in the Summer Programme and residential visit.
- Interview training for Young People.
- Attendance at the recent Children and Young People OSC to present on the Young Inspectors Programme
- Youthforia – which focussed this time on Black History Month and types of racism.
- Forthcoming attendance at the Annual Sitting at the House of Commons, where the next campaigns would be voted on.
- Involvement in consultation on the new Darwen Youth Centre.
- Plans for the next Climate Change event in February

RESOLVED- That the updates be noted.

19. Changes to Corporate Parenting Meetings

Imran Akuji verbally updated Members on ongoing discussions to strengthen Corporate Parenting governance arrangements, following discussion between the chair, chief executive, director and executive member and also recommendations from the recent Peer Review .

Potential models had been reviewed, and it was suggested that the Corporate Parent Executive Board and Corporate Parenting Specialist Advisory Group (CSPAG) merge to form a new Corporate Parenting Panel, which would involve Members, Officers and key partners.

Changes were subject to Full Council approval, and the LGA would be involved in delivering training, and it was anticipated that the next scheduled meeting of the CSPAG would be a training session (January 10, 2024).

Members commented on the need for the new Panel to reinforce scrutiny and challenge other areas of the Council, to ensure full corporate responsibility, and to challenge key partners, as well as adding value.

The Chair also commented on the need to ensure consistency of representatives were possible.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

20. Local Safeguarding Assurance Partnership Update

The Committee received a presentation, which had been circulated in advance to all Members of the Committee and update on the progress of the Local Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (LSAP) since the update presented to the June meeting of the Committee from Jo Siddle and Emma Ford.

The presentation and update highlighted:

- The previous Pan-Lancashire Board Structure
- The Governance Review, which decided there would be three place based partnership models, with BwD CSAP priorities being Contextual Safeguarding, Neglect and Domestic Abuse, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews would be undertaken by each local partnership, and the Child Death Overview Panel would remain Pan-Lancashire and hosted by the Lancashire Business Unit.
- Proposed Structure
- Visions and Aims

- Principles – 1. The child's lived experience is central to effective safeguarding, 2. Partners, communities and families are working together to deliver on safeguarding, and 3. Confident, competent practitioners, skilled in trauma informed practice, professional curiosity and the sharing of information are able to identify and meet safeguarding need.

- Forward Plan
- Considerations
- Meeting Schedule

Much of the last six months had been focussed on the JTAI and Action Plan and embedding of the new arrangements. The first meetings of the sub-groups would be held during November 2023.

The new BwD Business Unit would be in place on 1st January 2024. The Business Unit had a number of key tasks, including involvement in development of a new website, and the Learning and Development offer.

Members commented on the improvements already been seen of the move to a place-based approach, which gave more assurance.

Jo Siddle, in response to a question on links with ex partners and sharing of information, advised that the links had continued, with monthly meetings still taking place, which also involved both Cumbria local authorities, with shared learning still being shared across the Pan-Lancashire footprint.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

21. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 12th February 2024, where the main agenda item would be scrutiny of the School Improvement Strategy. The Committee also agreed that there would also be an agenda item on Academic Outcomes.

The Chair also requested that, following on from the recent LGA training, that key performance dashboards should be attached to reports wherever possible, and also that reports be circulated much earlier to the Committee.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

Members attending a Council, Committee, Board or other meeting with a personal interest in a matter on the Agenda must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and, if it is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or an Other Interest under paragraph 16.1 of the Code of Conduct, should leave the meeting during discussion and voting on the item.

Members declaring an interest(s) should complete this form and hand it to the Democratic Services Officer at the commencement of the meeting and declare such an interest at the appropriate point on the agenda.

MEETING: **Children & Young People OSC**

DATE: **12TH FEBRUARY 2024**

AGENDA ITEM NO.:

DESCRIPTION (BRIEF):

NATURE OF INTEREST:

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY/OTHER (delete as appropriate)

SIGNED :

PRINT NAME:

(Paragraphs 8 to 17 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Council refer)

Scrutiny Committee Meeting 12th February 2024

The following is a brief feedback report of the activities from Blackburn with Darwen Youth Forum for the period November 2023 to January 2024.

In November 2023 young people from the youth forum went on a residential trip to London, where we had the unique opportunity to visit the House of Commons for the MYPs event. The Youth MPs engaged in insightful discussions and gained first-hand experience in parliamentary proceedings discussing the issues around the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

Throughout the day Youth MPs had the opportunity to debate on 5 topics. These were, holiday hunger, quality of food, standardisation, finance and funding and additional pricing. Following the debates on the 5 topics, Youth MPs were given the opportunity to vote on their top priority, which would then be actioned and worked on by the Youth parliament in the coming year.

The top vote in the House of Commons Youth parliament event was 'finance and funding'. Youth MPs throughout the country will focus and work on this topic for the coming year. Finance and funding will focus on discussing and strategizing how free school meals could be financed, and how funds will be raised to support the aim of each school aged young person having access to healthy and nutritious meals in schools.

Additionally, our itinerary included visits to the Supreme Court, offering valuable insights into the judicial system. Beyond the educational aspects, the group explored the rich history of London through guided tours, immersing ourselves in the cultural and architectural marvels of the city. A highlight of the trip was a cruise along the historic River Thames and a visit to the Greenwich observatory. The experiences gained from this trip not only broadened the YP's perspectives but also fostered personal and professional development.

We have recently met between our YP and Councillor Damian Talbot along with Martin Eden regarding the potential reduction in pricing for student memberships to access the BwD Leisure Centre.

The meeting was both productive and collaborative, with our YP presenting a compelling case for the importance of affordable fitness options for students in our community. Councillor Talbot and Mr. Eden expressed a genuine interest in supporting the well-being of our younger demographic and are open to exploring viable solutions. We are currently working together to assess the financial feasibility of reducing the membership costs while ensuring the continued sustainability of the Leisure Centre.

Further discussions will take place to finalise the details of this initiative, and we are optimistic about the positive impact it could have on both our students and the community at large. I will continue to keep the executive board informed as we progress in these discussions, and we thank you Councillor Talbot and Martin Eden for attending and your positive support.

In addition, Francis Riley from the Boroughs' Public Health team also came to our Youth Forum to consult us on the draft, Mental Wellbeing, Mental Health, Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Strategy. As well as the Youth Forum having their input into the development of the strategy, we have also advised the public health team to carry out further consultations with our new Young BwD Forum (formerly known as SYA). We feel this will further add to the strategy.

We also attended this month's Youthforia meeting which was based on a variety of workshops such as civic identity and contribution to the YoFo research project. We also voted on the new steering group candidates for the 2024 term.

In the SYA forum's successor the Young BwD Forum we discussed the future of the project and rebranding with logo's, we met with Hannah Dean from BwD Public Health to discuss the co-production of the child poverty strategy and had a presentation from a representative from the NSPCC, on all the different support mechanisms they can provide to young people.

Collaboration with Chiara Rinaldi's PhD Research:

The BwD Youth Forum actively engaged with Chiara Rinaldi, who is conducting a PhD research project on childhood obesity and the broader scope of how local authorities prioritise action on public health and food environments. This partnership continues to evolve, reflecting our commitment to contributing to meaningful research in these areas.

Youth Interviewing Skills Training

Our Youth Participation Staff conducted training sessions to enhance the interviewing skills of young people. This initiative not only empowers our young people but also prepares them for their future endeavours. Feedback has been that our panels are more intense than the adult panels!

Our work in recent weeks has mainly centred around preparing for the Youth election 2024. 9 young people have come forward to be candidates for the youth election, with a good mixture of both gender and backgrounds. Some of the issues they hope to and are campaigning on, range from mental health issues, good quality education for young people, job opportunities for young people in the Borough, to concerns around young people being involved in online gaming gambling.

Some of the candidates also attended a training Residential in January at Coldwell Inn near Nelson. The main theme for the Residential was training around democracy, and how this works in the UK, young people also looked at areas such as representation, looking at how budgets work and how to take forward the views of young people in important meetings.

Voting to elect the new Youth MP will take place, in the week beginning 26th February until 8th March, in schools, colleges, youth clubs and in places such as youth zone and other partner agencies. The result will be announced on Monday 11th March in the Town Hall. And hopefully there will be new Youth MPs at these meetings next time to represent the voice of young people in Blackburn with Darwen.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

Recently, we undertook a consultation around renewing the Borough's Corporate parenting strategy for Children in Our Care and Leaving care young people. Approximately 30 young people from these groups participated. Issues/areas covered included, what is a corporate parent, what are their priorities, and what they liked/disliked about the previous strategy. This piece of work will continue next week with more young people from these groups of young people and care experienced young people. The views and input from young people from this consultation will be included in the renewed Borough corporate parenting strategy.

Going forward we have several projects and voice activities planned which we will report back on in the next scrutiny committee meeting; however, our priority now is to carry out a successful youth election in the coming weeks.

In summary, our commitment to the well-being and development of young people in our community remains steadfast, as evidenced by our ongoing youth voice activities and research collaborations and continue develop plans for future participation and youth empowerment initiatives. We look forward to further discussions and guidance from the Executive Board as we continue to make a positive impact on the lives of young people in Blackburn with Darwen.

Blackburn with Darwen Youth Forum.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY BRIEFING PAPER

REPORT FROM: Education

LEAD OFFICER: Michelle Holt - Deputy Director for Education

DATE: 12th February 2024



1. SUBJECT: School Effectiveness Strategy 2023-2026

2. BACKGROUND:

Blackburn with Darwen have operated a school led school improvement system for over 10 years. However, given the changing educational landscape and with the move to more schools becoming academies BWD commissioned an independent review of the School Improvement Strategy. This took place around 18 months ago, included key stakeholders and was conducted by Steve Munby (CBE and former CEO of Education Trust). Following the review, there was a further period of consultation on the recommendations made. The review findings and consultation feedback were shared at BWD's Partnership Conference in March 2023. In September 2023 we launched the co-produced revised School Effectiveness Strategy for 2023-2026.

3. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS:

The strategy builds on the Council's Corporate Mission,

'Every child and young person have the opportunities to fulfil their potential.'

And it outlines the following:

5 Missions,

- Every child and adult in the borough to feel proud to belong to Blackburn with Darwen.
- Every child and young person to be a powerful learner, continuing to improve on previous best. Progress is our key focus.
- Every teacher in every classroom to be as good as they can be in what they teach and how they teach.
- Strong and transparent commitment across all schools and partners to collective responsibility for the children and young people of Blackburn with Darwen
- A rich and broad educational offer that is powerful and outward facing so that Blackburn with Darwen is a compelling place to teach, to lead and to learn.

6 Public Commitments,

- We will work together to provide civic leadership in Blackburn with Darwen and as schools and trusts we will act as "anchor institutions". We will do all we can to advance education as a wider common good, creating the conditions for purposeful collaboration with other schools and with other public sector partners, the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector and stakeholders.
- We will be ambitious for children and young people. Always setting the bar high, even if it makes us feel uncomfortable, because by working together anything is possible.
- We will seek to be a learning community. We will identify best practice and research to generate a professional learning community. We will not be afraid to ask for help and we will offer support and expertise wherever we can, openly sharing and exchanging data and intelligence.
- We will focus on quality and impact. We will hold ourselves to account with clear goals that clearly link to outcomes for children and young people. We will be open to the scrutiny of others, knowing that accountability and review is key to the continued success of any learning community.
- We will celebrate diversity. We will respect the diversity of schools across the borough and we will see this as a strength, whilst ensuring no one is excluded or left behind. We will continue to acknowledge the respective accountability roles of the Dioceses, the Regional Department for Education Director, the boards and CEOs of multi-academy trusts and the Local Authority with regard to schools, academies and early years settings in Blackburn with Darwen.
- We will lead with moral purpose. We will be committed to the success of children and adults in all of our schools and settings across the borough. We will celebrate the successes of our partners as we would our own.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY BRIEFING PAPER

6 agreed joint priorities that all schools across the borough will collectively work on,

- A common speech, language, and communication framework delivered across all Early Years settings.
- Improving attainment for all children.
- Improving emotional health and wellbeing of all children of young people.
- A consistent approach to improving school attendance.
- Delivering on a high-quality RSHE curriculum.
- Improving provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The School Effectiveness Strategy also provides details on how the School Effectiveness Strategy works and how these priorities will drive forward improvements in schools over the next 3 years.

6. Financial Implications

The Monitoring and Brokering Grant is utilised in accordance with the grant stipulations to provide each School Improvement Group (SIG) with a small financial resource to work towards the identified priorities in the strategy (£2000 per school on receipt of annual improvement plan). The accountable board is the School Effectiveness Board which is independently chaired by Steve Munby.

5. Next Steps

- Ensure that the SIGs work on 6 key priorities over the next 3 years.
- Ensure that the SEB runs effectively and monitors, challenges, and supports the progress of SIGs towards identified priorities.
- Fulfil the 5 missions and 6 public commitments.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY BRIEFING PAPER

REPORT FROM: Education

LEAD OFFICER: Michelle Holt - Deputy Director for Education

DATE: 12th February 2024



1. SUBJECT: Education Data 2022-2023

2. BACKGROUND:

In 2023, tests and exams returned to being administered in accordance with pre-pandemic standards. We also saw a return to the publication of data for the first time since 2019. The aim of releasing data is to provide transparent and consistent information about what results are achieved at a school or college and to allow parents to see on a school-by-school or college-by-college basis how schools or colleges have performed. That said we know that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the education system and this disruption has affected schools and pupils differently and because of this, it makes it more difficult to interpret why the results are as they are, especially if just using the data alone. So, the DFE strongly discourage people from drawing conclusions based on comparisons with performance data from earlier years and based on direct comparisons with other schools' or colleges' performance data. They also advise caution when comparing a school or college's performance with national or local authority averages.

3. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS:

Early Years Foundation Stage Data

GLD (Good Level of Development) in BwD is up 0.6% on last year, but nationally it is up 2.1% and regionally is up 2.6%. COM AOL (Comparisons on Areas of Learning) in BwD and national are both up 0.2% on last year.

Overall, the data for the 'Communication Area of Learning' in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile is longer the lowest for us, which indicates the impact of the Speech, Language and Communication (Wellcomm) work.

This cohort of children were born Sept 2017 – August 2018 and were therefore around 2.5 -3.5 years old when lockdowns started in March 2020. Given the differential impact on the BwD area children of this age it may be that these children have missed more early education that others nationally.

Phonics Data

Children achieving the expected standard on the phonics screening check has risen this year by 2% from 77.7% last year to 79. % which is again above national averages of 78.8% for the second consecutive year.

KS1 Data

Although we are slightly below national averages in all subjects there has been an improvements in writing, maths.

	National 23	BWD 23	National 22	BWD 22
Reading	69%	66.3%	67%	66.9%
Writing	61%	56.7%	58%	55.9%
Maths	72%	69.6%	69%	66.5%
RWM	56%	53.3%	54%	51.8%

KS2 Data

Nationally, overall children's attainment in individual subjects increased in maths, writing and science compared to 2022. Attainment remained the same in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling and fell in reading. In reading, 73% of pupils met the expected standard, down from 75% in 2022.

In maths, 73% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 71% in 2022.

In writing, 71% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 69% in 2022.

In grammar, punctuation, and spelling, 72% of pupils met the expected standard, unchanged from 2022.

In science, 80% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 79% in 2022.

Attainment in all of reading, writing and maths (combined) remained the same as in 2022.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY BRIEFING PAPER

Key Stage 4

Grades for GCSEs this year were much closer to 2019 levels with attainment slightly above 2019 levels. 22.7% of GCSEs were graded 9-7, compared to 21.9% in 2019.

70.5% were graded 9-4, compared to 69.9% in 2019.

Grades were higher during the pandemic, as in both 2020 and 2021 all public exams were cancelled and grades were awarded using different systems, known as Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) and Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). CAGs and TAGs grades were higher, on average, than those awarded in more typical years. Last year, to avoid a sudden sharp fall in grades, they were adjusted to a level between their peak in 2021 and the level in 2019, the year before the pandemic affected exams.

5. Financial Implications

The Monitoring and Brokering Grant is utilised in accordance with the grant stipulations to provide each School Improvement Group (SIG) with a small financial resource to work towards the identified priorities. This resource supports priority 2 , 'Improving the Academic Attainment for all Pupils'.

6 Next Steps

- Continue to support schools and hold to account through the School Effectiveness Strategy
- Continue to closely monitor the performance, achievement of schools across the borough.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY BRIEFING PAPER

REPORT FROM: Education

LEAD OFFICER: Michelle Holt - Deputy Director for Education

DATE: 12th February 2024



SUBJECT: Speech, Language and Communication Initiative

2. BACKGROUND:

Last September 2022, a borough wide initiative was launched to improve Children's Speech, Language and Communication outcomes as we know that this is the biggest barrier to securing strong children's development and academic outcomes. This was evidenced In 2022, our school readiness data suggested that just 26% of our children were ready for school.

The initiative included:

- An Early Years Speech and Language Audit Tool – this was developed to support Quality First Teaching within schools and settings. The LA and Speech and Language Therapy teams paired up to support ten schools and settings with completing this audit, as part of a pilot. Feedback from this pilot has been excellent and the decision has been made to continue this joint LA / Speech and Language Therapy support into the academic year 2023-2024, where another ten schools and settings will be supported.
- WellComm Toolkit: a Speech and Language screening toolkit has been provided universally to all Primary Schools and Early Years settings within the borough. External training was commissioned by the Local Authority via 'Communicate SLT' and data has been collected from the Local Authority via the WellComm wizard throughout the academic year. This project reflects a full system led approach to addressing early Speech, Language and Communication difficulties and clearly identifies the difference between lack of experiences/learning/development and/or SEND.

3. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS:

WellComm data analysis across the LA:

Progress data from October 2022- May 2023

There has been a significant improvement in the number of children achieving green (age-appropriate language levels) in the most recent assessment.

Progress over 2022-2023:

1. **Low level of Speech, Language and Communication across the LA:**

IMPACT: significant progress has been made across the LA from October 2022 to May 2023, with the number of children achieving green (age-appropriate language levels) rising from 33% to 58%.

2. **English as an Additional Language**

IMPACT - significant progress has been made for children with English as an Additional Language, with the number of children achieving green (age-appropriate language levels) rising from 17% in October 2022 to 40 % in May 2023.

3. **Children's Centres**

Two Children's Centres are part of the pilot Speech and Language audit tool project and can share their best practice across our network.

IMPACT – progress has been made by the children with the highest level of need within our Children's Centres, with the number of children achieving green rising from 14% in October 2022 to 17% in May 2023.

4. Financial Implications

This was funded via the Monitoring and Brokering Grant for 2022-23 in accordance with the grant stipulations. All settings now have the resources they need to deliver the Wellcomm intervention, and the Audit is an LA produced resource, but the licences run on a 12 month subscription and need renewing annually.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SCRUTINY BRIEFING PAPER

5. Next Steps

- Continue to support settings to improve Speech, Language and Communication provision.
- Support settings to deliver the high-quality Language Interventions.
- Deliver WellComm refresher training on a rolling programme to keep settings upskilled.
- Continue to collect, share, track, monitor and challenge settings.