
Meeting	Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date	23 January 2024
Present	Councillors Nicholls (Chair), Nelson (Vice-Chair), Clarke, Crawshaw, Cuthbertson, Knight, Waller, Wells, Wilson and Runciman (Substitute for Cllr Pearson)
Apologies	Councillor Pearson
In attendance	Councillor Webb – Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education Martin Kelly – Corporate Director, Childrens and Education Maxine Squire – Assistant Director for Education and Skills Derek Sutherland – Head of Primary School Effectiveness and Achievement Barbara Mands – Head of Education Support Service

30. Declarations of Interest (5:32pm)

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest they might have in respect of business on the agenda if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. Councillor Wilson declared an interest in that she had delivered Early Talk for York in the past and received free childcare in the past in relation to item 6 on the agenda.

31. Minutes (5:33pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings held on 7 November 2023 and 5 December 2023 be approved as a correct record.

32. Public Participation (5:34pm)

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

33. SACRE Annual Report 2022-23 (5:34pm)

The Assistant Director for Education and Skills presented the report.

In response to questions from members, the Assistant Director for Education and Skills confirmed that:

- SACRE's school monitoring framework was developed using guidance provided by the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE);
- Independent, external providers of Religious Education to schools were not directly monitored as part of this process;
- The school survey could be adapted to include parental views on religious education in school.

Resolved: That the committee received the SACRE Annual Report and noted the work of SACRE during the academic year 2022-23.

Reason: So that members were updated on the work of SACRE during the academic year 2022-23.

34. Attainment Gap (6:03pm)

The Head of Primary School Effectiveness and Achievement presented the report and the committee heard that attainment for disadvantaged children in York was not as high as the national average, but for non-disadvantaged children attainment was higher than the national average.

The Head of Primary School Effectiveness and Achievement issued a correction to the report, it was noted that paragraph 22 of the report should have read "...In York, from the outcomes in 2018/19, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, to the latest outcomes in 2022/23, the gap between the disadvantaged cohort and their peers has widened from -0.33% to -0.64%".

The Head of Primary School Effectiveness and Achievement noted that attainment for disadvantaged children had been disrupted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, and that this was having an effect on attainment and attendance.

In response to questions from members, the Head of Primary School Effectiveness and Achievement confirmed that:

- Different class sizes in schools had an effect on averages taken from cohorts;
- The report's statistics focussed predominantly on pupils eligible for funding under the Pupil Premium grant, children eligible for free school meals, and children looked after (CLA);
- Early Talk for York was adopted when data showed speech and language as a key issue, and data would be analysed to investigate future intervention;
- Work into trauma response was to be revisited by the Primary School Effectiveness and Achievement team.

Resolved: That the committee noted the report's contents and considered plans for ongoing scrutiny of the issues raised within the analysis of the data and the key priorities for improvement.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee fully discharged its responsibilities where a local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards Section 13A of the Education Act 1996.

35. Early Years and Childcare Reforms (7:00pm)

The Head of Education Support Service presented the report, and in response to questions from members confirmed that:

- City of York Council (CYC) would signpost early years childcare providers to specialist organisations, and the Department for Education (DfE) and their strategic support partner may offer scheduled training events in order to provide early years childcare providers with business support;
- Based on intelligence at the time of the meeting, including surveys of the sector, there should not have been imminent closure of settings, although it was noted that the sector continued to be a challenging operating environment;
- CYC had shared indicative hourly rates with early years childcare providers, some local authorities (LAs) had not done this. It was too early to understand the impact of the funding investment on business models;

- CYC was to test a new payments system during the summer term with a view to moving all providers, including childminders, onto this new system;
- A further report on the implementation of the Early Years and Childcare Reforms could be brought back to the Committee in a year's time.

Resolved: That the committee noted the content of this report.

Reason: So that members understood the proposed new early years and childcare reforms and the benefits, challenges and risks to successful local implementation.

36. Work Plan (7:16pm)

Members considered the Committee's work plan for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

- That a verbal update on the committee's task and finish groups would be received at the next meeting;
- That a further report on the attainment gap be received by the committee in summer 2024, with a focus on actions to improve outcomes for disadvantage children and young people;
- That a review of CYC's pilot year of its' Free School Meal Policy be received by the committee in the autumn of the municipal year 2024/2025.

Reason: To keep the Committee's work plan for the 2023/24 municipal year updated.

Cllr Nicholls, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.32 pm and finished at 7.25 pm].