

Minutes



Meeting GCSE ATTAINMENT AND DEPRIVATION SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 15 December 2008 (commencing at 2.00 pm)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

COUNCILLORS

Yvonne Davidon (Chair)
Andy Stewart (Vice Chair)

A Peter Barnes
Jen Cole
Philip Owen

A Martin Suthers
A Kevan Wakefield
Yvonne Woodhead

STATUTORY CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A Mr E Hayes (Diocese of Nottingham)
Mr D Richards (Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham)
A Mrs I Wooding (Parent Governor)
Vacancy (Parent Governor)

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The appointment by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 October 2008 of Councillor Yvonne Davidson as Chair and Councillor Andy Stewart as Vice-Chair of the Select Committee was noted.

MEMBERSHIP

The statutory co-opted members appointed for the purposes of the select committee were reported orally.

The membership of the Committee, as set out above was noted.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillors Peter Barnes
Martin Suthers
Kevan Wakefield

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Yvonne Davidson declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 Scoping and Work Programme.

GCSE ATTAINMENT AND DEPRIVATION SELECT COMMITTEE SCOPE AND WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Yvonne Davidson welcomed everyone to the meeting and referred to the objectives of the review.

PRESENTATION BY JOHN SLATER AND COLIN SHEPHERD, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

John Slater, Service Director Learning and Achievement, Children and Young People's Services gave a presentation to members on the GCSE attainment for pupils eligible for free school meals.

13.9% of Nottinghamshire pupils in receipt of free school meals (fsm) achieved 5 A* to C passes at GCSE including English and maths compared with 45% of pupils not in receipt of fsm for the academic year 2007. This measurement was used by the DCSF in its KS4 achievement and attainment tables and by schools to work towards when improving standards. Provisional KS4 results by fsm for 2008 were expected to be available in January.

Mr Slater explained that the most accurate predictor of school attainment was social class and that free school meals entitlement was a fairly accurate indicator of economic status. He pointed out that Save the Children data showed Nottinghamshire to have the biggest gap in England of 37%, between non fsm and those who did receive fsm. Mr Slater said it was important to note that a particular reason for this was due to Nottinghamshire having a wide range of communities compared to many local authorities and among different types of community, the gap widened. Students claiming fsm in a small minority perform closer to the majority and vice-versa.

The Select Committee heard about the challenge for the authority to address the gap which worsened between KS2 to KS4. In terms of a response, £1.5m had been made available exclusively to schools to enable them to look at best practise and help one another. It was hoped that continued funding up to 2011 would see the authority coming in line with the national average by 2010.

The authority's strategic priorities included raising standards in core subjects, improving the quality of teaching, learning and curriculum provision. There was a lot of work ongoing to extend the curriculum in schools and improve student motivation. A major part of the work to improve the authority's position was to develop leadership and management at all levels and to support schools with additional needs, such as those which served disadvantaged communities and

received students from low performing primary schools. Also to improve the spread of good practice to raise standards, support professional development and improve the quality of provision through further strategic development of the AST role. Work was also being done to broaden the range of the curriculum through the 14-19 initiatives to ensure more participation for young learners. This was working particularly well in Mansfield.

Mr Slater referred to the National Challenge Initiative launched in June, which was an intervention programme for all schools on or below 30% 5 A* - C including English and Maths. Nottinghamshire had 13 schools on the list which ensured focus was placed on those pupils eligible for fsm.

He explained about contextual value added (CVA) used by the DCSF to measure the progress children, schools and local authorities make between key stages. These varied depending on a number of contextual factors, for example whether the child had a special educational need, was in public care or eligible for free school meals. Mr Slater explained that the first phase of the National Challenge was launched in June and required schools below or around 30% 5+A*- C GCSEs or equivalent including English and Maths to produce an improvement plan. The next element of the challenge was expected to be announced in January and focus on "coasting" schools. Schools with over 30% 5+ A*- C GCSEs or equivalent including English and Maths, where there was low contextual added value (CVA), little or no improvement between KS2-KS4 over time, adequate or poor Ofsted judgements and significant variation in performance of groups.

Colin Shepherd, Principal Officer, Performance Review and Statistical Analysis, talked about the data provided to the Select Committee on achievements at GCSE and Equivalents for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, in maintained schools. The data included was by local authority and free school meal eligibility for 2007. He reported that provisional data for 2008 had shown Nottinghamshire to be broadly in line with its statistical neighbours. Mr Shepherd said that although progress had been made efforts were still needed to close the gap further.

Mr Richards wondered why there was a significant drop in student's results at key stages 3 and 4 and whether students drifting to faith schools had a bearing on this. It was pointed out that there was a cohort of children aged 11 who moved to faith schools or drifted to a school outside of the county. The county was also a net importer of children for entry into secondary school and that the performance of those lost was better than those gained. Faith schools also tended to recruit far less a percentage of students eligible for fsm.

There was also discussion about the tracking of students between KS2 and KS4, the quality of teaching and data considered to be useful for the Select Committee.

Following discussion the Select Committee agreed that the following information and data be produced for discussion at its meeting on 9th February 2009:-

1. Progress on the County's 13 Schools identified under National Challenge Criteria.
2. The 2007 data on Achievements at GCSE and Equivalents be amended to show.
3. A breakdown of Nottinghamshire's schools on an individual basis.
4. Figures on KS2 improved schools.
5. Contextual value added (CVA) data on Key Stages 2-4.

WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme for future meetings was discussed. It was agreed that arrangements be made for the March meeting be re-arranged to take place on Monday, 16th March at 2:00pm.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm.

CHAIR