

Members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present this report, a detailed scrutiny review of educational attainment within the Bradford District and on the barriers that exist which may prevent progress.

I make no apologies for repeating the following extract from the Council's Education Improvement Strategy:

"Raising Educational Attainment across the District is still one of the most important challenges we face and one of the Council's top priorities. There is a determination to provide all our children with an education that will allow them to get the best possible start in life and we know that providing them with the right skills and knowledge is crucial to their future success and well being."

This Scrutiny review has sought, by means of seeking the opinions of educational professionals, parents, young people, trades unions, School Governors and indeed anyone interested in education, to establish if we are missing something from our strategic thinking or operational work, that prevents or hinders progress towards excellence in educational attainment – is there a "silver bullet" that we need to find, which is still proving elusive and hidden within all the significant talent that already exists within the Educational system. The report does not identify a "quick fix" and recognises that the sustained commitment of everyone is essential to ensure progress. I do believe that despite the occasional setback, which is inevitable, significant progress is happening.

Members of the Committee have engaged with a range of interested parties and I thank them for their thorough and exhaustive interest, together with my thanks to all the consultees who provided us with invaluable information, opinions, and insight.

We must dispel any notion of poverty of aspiration for our children and young people and replace it with a realistic and positive approach. The recommendations contained in this report do exactly that and represent achievable and realistic ways of sustaining continued improvement in Educational attainment within the Bradford District and I commend them to you.

Councillor Malcolm Sykes

Chair, Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

October 2013

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Background

The overall aim of the Committee was to determine what were the barriers to improving Educational Attainment within the Bradford District. The Committee's Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix 1.

The Scrutiny Process

Members have received and gathered a range of information from a number of different sources, including:

- Bradford Council Officers;
- Young People
- Head Teachers
- School Governors
- Parents
- The Youth Service
- Trade Union representatives
- Faith and Denominational Board representatives
- Members of Parliament

A list of the Hearings and those who attended is attached as Appendix 2.

The primary objectives of the Committee were:

Overall Aim

The key lines of enquiry for this scrutiny review are as follows:

- An understanding of past and present arrangements for managing the whole school estate
- An understanding of the funding regime, and the decision making process
- An understanding of the statutory requirements and the relationship with the Department for Education
- An understanding of the partnership working in local education
- Expert viewpoints on Teaching & Learning
- The views of Young People themselves
- An understanding of the Inspection regime
- Understanding the influence of new buildings / facilities
- Understanding the complexities of the population mix of Bradford and its effect on Education

Chapter 2 – Local Context

Background

In July 2001 the government outsourced Bradford Council's education services following a critical Ofsted report. It was decided that there should be a ten-year contract, which was one of the largest of its type to be awarded to a private sector provider in Europe. The contract was awarded to Serco, operating locally as Education Bradford.

In July 2011 the Secretary of State judged that the Council had the ambition, expertise and resources for the education function to be sourced back within the Council.

In June 2012 the Council published The Education Improvement Strategy, which provides a clear statement of the collective intention to raise attainment and identifies the priorities for action over the next three years. An Education Improvement Strategic Board was established to bring together the overall strategy for raising achievement and ensure that there is significant pace and drive. This Strategic Board is chaired by the Leader of the Council.

The Bradford Context

Recent analysis of the Index of Deprivation (ID 2007) highlights that Bradford has 126 (41%) of Lower Super Output Areas that fall into the most deprived 20% in England. 42% of Bradford's population live in these 20% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas.

The District is ranked the 32nd most deprived Local Authority out of the 354 English Local Authorities (average overall deprivation score). Further evidence of the diversity of Bradford is that some of these deprived neighbourhoods are adjacent to much more affluent areas.

523,100 people live in the Bradford District according to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (mid-year estimates, July 2011). The population of the district is increasing. During the 1990s, population numbers were relatively stable, however since 2001 the population has increased by 52,000 (11%). Most of this gain is due to the rising number of births and a slight fall in the number of deaths, but the number of new arrivals from other countries has also contributed to this growth, as well as the changing character of the District's population. The District's population is expected to increase further and if current patterns of growth continue, the most recent ONS population projections forecast the District's population will rise to 568,900 by 2021, a further rise of 8.8%

Population growth and ethnic diversity among young people is one of Bradford's biggest assets provided we can inspire and challenge them to give of their best.

Although much of this growth is expected to be in parts of the district which are relatively deprived, the challenge is to make sure these children have the best possible start in life and we must ensure that enough high quality school places are available. It is a great opportunity to have a pool of young workers who, with the right skills and knowledge, will help our businesses to thrive, and increase prosperity across the district.

The District's population has become much more ethnically diverse over the past ten years and will continue to do so in the future. In 2001, 76.1% of the population was White British. By 2011 this figure had fallen to 63.4% (333,600). About half of this fall is due to a 6% increase in the proportion of the population with a Pakistani ethnic background. The Pakistani population now accounts for 20.4% of the District's total population (106,600). Most other smaller ethnic groupings have also increased in size over the past ten years, such as White Other (largely due to recent arrivals from Central and Eastern Europe) and the Bangladeshi and Black communities. Although much smaller in size they have doubled. It is expected that the ethnic make-up of the district's population will continue to change through natural population change and migration.

Estimating the future level of new housing required helps determine the amount of land needed for new development. A final figure has not yet been formally adopted, but a range has been established, based on analysis of population and household growth, migration, and jobs growth. The range identified is between 1,695 and 2,565 homes per annum. A mid point within this range would suggest an annual need for approximately 2,200 new homes.

This demand for housing places pressure on all services and public infrastructure – particularly schools. The ability to meet demand will be of increasing importance to Bradford. Other challenges include pressure for new development and loss of countryside and green belt. Regional plans and government policies seek to increase the level of housing that the District should provide which shapes the school organisation challenges that the District will face in the future.

School population and pupil places

In January 2012, the Bradford District had a total of 93,124 pupils and is an area in which 85 different languages are spoken. There are more than 55,000 pupils in primary schools and more than 35,000 in secondary schools.

The District has a diversity of provision with 97 community schools, 12 foundation schools, 5 trust schools, 33 Voluntary-Aided and 13 Voluntary-Controlled schools belonging to 1 Church of England diocese and 1 Catholic diocese. As of 1st September 2013 there are 31 Academies/Free Schools within Bradford.

There are 28 sixth forms in schools and academies, 4 special schools with post-16 provision and 3 General Further Education colleges with significant sites in the District. Post-16 participation is in line with national trends.

Information provided by the Health Authority identifying all children living within the Bradford District is crucial to primary school forecasting. The data is provided once a year around October.

Over the last 7 years the numbers in many cohorts have increased over time indicating an inward migration of children as well as an increase in the birth rate. Between 2005 and 2011 the number of registered children aged 0 – 16 increased by almost 10,000. In the academic year 2012/13 the Local Authority administered over 7,000 in-year admissions to schools.

Chapter 3 – Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That all schools be requested to provide the Schools Forum with detailed information on how they have spent their Pupil Premium each year, and ensure that this information continues to be published on their websites.

Recommendation 2

That the rigorous methods of measuring pupil progress, increasingly recognised by Ofsted as valid, be highlighted.

Recommendation 3

That schools not engaging with partnership working be identified and approaches be made to those schools to ensure they become fully involved with the appropriate partnership.

Recommendation 4

That the composition of governing bodies should be monitored and changed as necessary by the governing bodies themselves, to ensure that their representatives have the necessary skills and expertise.

Recommendation 5

That all Elected Members should explore becoming a school governor.

Recommendation 6

That each school is actively encouraged to use its Parent Teacher Association or other forums to engage with parents and community leaders.

Recommendation 7

That school governing bodies should not condone approval of authorised absence from school.

Recommendation 8

That the Council should continue to communicate the high aspirations that it has for its young people and should continue to work with the schools partnerships and other partners to promote the positive aspects of education and to improve standards in Bradford.

Recommendation 9

That Primary Schools should look at ways to improve oracy by building on the rich range of languages encountered by children in other settings and work with parents and carers to further develop their knowledge and skills in supporting their children's learning.

Recommendation 10

That schools give appropriate prominence to the essential role of Play in improving children's attainment, health, sense of well being, confidence and sense of community.

Recommendation 11

That the Schools Forum consider effective ways of using headroom, thus driving up attainment across the District and narrowing the inequalities gap.

Recommendation 12

That school partnerships be encouraged to further develop ways of sharing leadership expertise and quality of teaching.

Recommendation 13

That the Council's Human Resources department reviews its policies to ensure that there is a less risk averse approach whilst adhering to statutory expectations to tackle capacity.

Recommendation 14

That the Schools Forum explore the possibility of the Council employing a core of skilled and competent teachers to provide an "Agency Service".

Recommendation 15

That the Local Authority should work with the school partnerships to identify good practice in schools that have high levels of pupil turnover, and disseminate the successful approaches.

Recommendation 16

That all schools ensure that they have an effective transition programme in place.

Chapter 4 – Findings and Recommendations

This report presents the findings and conclusions the Committee has made, as a result of its research. It also makes a number of recommendations for action by the Council and others.

The findings and recommendations of this scrutiny review are detailed under the following areas of improvement.

Although as an authority attainment trends are improving over recent years, there is still a gap when measured against national figures. The purpose of these scrutiny hearings is to hear from different people, not just the educational experts, but from all walks of life - parents, young people. Members want to understand what the reality is and whether or not there is something that we as a Council should be doing that we're not doing so that we can improve the lot of our young people.

Funding

Members received a report from the Senior School Finance Officer, addressing funding allocations. Children's Services is predominantly grant funded mainly due to funding related to schools. Details of the various funding streams can be found at Appendix 3.

The main decision makers are the Schools Forum, which has a statutory role in determining the funding allocation to schools, and the Council in setting the Children's Services base budget.

Members agreed that additional funding would have an impact, but were unsure if it would make a significant impact. However, Members did feel that the Pupil Premium will have a significant impact, but the fact that Pupil Premium is not ring fenced means that it is subject to competing demands. The school league tables system often means Secondary schools focus their resources to ensure pupils achieve level C grades at GCSE.

There was agreement that Pupil Premium funding needs to be targeted appropriately and be used to best effect. The Committee heard that it is the responsibility of a school's governing body's to ensure that Pupil Premium is being spent properly, targeted at supporting Free School Meals students. The Committee questioned what checks were in place to ensure this was happening. What schools spend pupil premium on should be more transparent.

At present roughly 20-25% of the districts children are taking up Free School Meals, but more will be eligible. One of the issues is how to increase the take up of free school meals which in turn will mean an increase in the amount of funding schools will receive (currently £600 per pupil rising to £900 in September 2013).

Schools that are not performing well are likely to have behaviour issues. This means that they will have to spend money on trying to put this right, which is money that could be spent elsewhere.

The key issue is, if a school starts to fail, the Local Authority needs to identify what other resources the school could draw on to help it improve, finance is not the only answer.

The Committee agreed that the Council needs to stand up for the funding it needs. A third of the authority's early intervention grant has been lost, which has hit the district grossly disproportionately.

It was important that School Governing Bodies focus their attention on how they have spent their Pupil Premium each year and how this has impacted on pupil outcomes. Since September 2012 Ofsted have required schools to publish on-line specific information about the Pupil Premium.

Recommendation 1

That all schools be requested to provide the Schools Forum with detailed information on how they have spent their Pupil Premium each year, and ensure that this information continues to be published on their websites.

Performance Management

Educational Attainment is focussed on being a number of passes at certain grades, and schools are judged on this academic ability all the time. Everybody is measured by one measure and unfortunately one size does not fit all, as some schools have problems that other schools don't have.

Currently the focus of education is what happens in school. However, there are groups of pupils who do not do so well in the education system. Therefore more support needs to be provided to help them and their families.

However, attainment is more than that. Some schools do fantastic work with families, but that sort of achievement is never measured.

The levels of excellence in certain schools need transposing to others that are performing less well. There was a feeling from union representatives that the Local Authority needs to get better at intervening in schools that are not performing well and give more support for teachers.

Some commentators have argued that the present system of school league tables may inadvertently cause teachers to neglect the needs of the least academically able children.

Unfortunately parents judge schools on where they are in the league tables, rather than what the school as a whole can offer.

The view was expressed that it is important not just to look at Ofsted inspections when looking at schools. There is a need to look at schools in the round. We need to introduce a more sophisticated method of measuring attainment including measurement of added value throughout the time spent at school.

Members considered how the framework could be tailored for some of the less academic students. They were concerned that if these pupils were not engaged then schools will end up with a swathe of young people who don't want to be there, who are not interested in learning, whose parents had a bad experience of school themselves, and this will inevitably create another generation that doesn't want to be bothered and does not see the advantage of learning or obtaining qualifications.

The young people who attended one of the scrutiny sessions said they felt that young people should be taught more about life skills to prepare them for adult life, such as using a cheque book and financial management.

Schools should focus more on measuring progress as Ofsted does, and less on the other headlines such as 5 A*-C grades at GCSE, which the Department for Education seem to focus on.

Recommendation 2

That the rigorous methods of measuring pupil progress, increasingly recognised by Ofsted as valid, be highlighted.

Partnership Working

Members received a presentation on the work of the Bradford Partnership from its Chief Executive Nick Weller.

The Strategic Director highlighted the benefits of partnership working, and explained that many other Local Authorities don't have the relationship with their academies that Bradford does. She added that continued work in this area will lead to a real step change in outcomes. The union representatives agreed that partnership working with regard to school improvement is working well. They felt that the partnership approach delivered results as schools were sharing best practice.

There was agreement that staff in schools will respect others who come in from other schools to work with them on school improvement issues, as they have the perspective of a school, on how things work and how to improve. They can share those experiences and people can learn from them.

The best model of school improvement, is not doing things by numbers and passing judgments, but by people who you have confidence in, coming in and working with the school.

There is a lack of money available to schools for partnership working, but it is essential that this arrangement continues, as no one school has all the answers. There was concern expressed that the arrangement is patchy, and not all schools are fully engaged with the partnership.

Recommendation 3

That schools not engaging with partnership working be identified and approaches be made to those schools to ensure they become fully involved with the appropriate partnership.

Community Engagement

The Chairs of the Head teacher's partnerships (Primary, Secondary and Special) were invited to attend one of the sessions.

Bradford is an extremely complex and diverse city with pockets of isolated and mono cultural groups, this spans a variety of cultures and socio economic groups. Many of these communities are so well catered for locally that they rarely mix or experience what other areas have to offer. This is particularly true in the Bradford District where some of parents and families have little or no knowledge or need to discover places close to hand.

Where groups become isolated and insular they are often inward looking and concentrate only on their immediate problems or successes. They often cannot relate to what is going on nationally. It is our job as educational leaders to ensure that our children experience a wide variety of activities and understand where they are in the context of the rest of the country both geographically and educationally.

There are parts of the city where communities seem to be locked into themselves.

The Head teachers who attended the sessions felt that more work needs to be undertaken with the community. More engagement work needs to be done in the community. Community Leaders should use their positions to point out that there are many different careers open to young people.

There needs to be more parental involvement. Research shows that children are more likely to do well at school if their mother has been educated beyond GCSE level. Children who receive good support from parents at home tend to have a good attitude to learning and do better than those whose parents lack the confidence or know- how to support the school. Attendance at school meetings, concerts, parent's evenings and workshops differs from area to area; some communities value these more than others.

Many families have priorities that many of us can't recognise. Some parents never ask schools for information about how well their child is performing. It is often difficult to engage with parents about academic progress, because they have different priorities such as looking after children, and keeping the home going.

Communication with parents presents problems – not because of language but because of attitude. Parents often do not respond to letters and prefer a personal phone call. However with over 500 pupils schools often do not have the resource to do this.

An example was given of a school with a very active and successful "friends of" group, that had a lot of activities that raise money, but the response to setting up a formal parents' forum, which was a bit more educationally focused was zero.

It was pointed out that there are a range of different communities in Bradford and they constantly change, with children from different backgrounds coming into schools. As soon as schools begin to understand the issues, a new group from other communities arrive, bringing different issues.

It raised an issue about how much the people teaching in the schools and governing the schools understand all the communities and their perceptions of education and the degree to which they're involved in their children's education. This is an area where further work could be undertaken. An example would be trying to make sure that you get people onto governing bodies that are from the community, making sure that you get parents involved in their children's education by getting other people from that community working in the schools to engage with them in ways they understand.

However, whilst trying to make sure that the local community is represented on governing bodies, it is important to ensure that all school governors are qualified and trained. Governors need to be competent to do the job, and should between them provide a wide range of skills and expertise to support school leaders. The school governors should, with advice / assistance from the school governor service, ensure that the governing body reflects the necessary competencies such as Legal, Human Resources and Finance expertise.

Recommendation 4

That the composition of governing bodies should be monitored and changed as necessary by the governing bodies themselves, to ensure that their representatives have the necessary skills and expertise

Recommendation 5

That all Elected Members should explore becoming a school governor.

A Committee member suggested that the Council's difficulty in talking about things which are crucial issues peculiar to smaller communities could be an issue, and raised concerns regarding how the authority would focus attention on the places where some sort of intervention was needed? This is not something that should be done in a hurry; it's about understanding, it was suggested that this was an area for the youth service to engage in.

There is an important role for the community, voluntary sector and council in educating children outside of the school structure. Parents, governors and the wider community need to become more involved in the future education of their children.

Key features of supporting successful parental involvement intervention include using facilitators from the same community as the parents.

It's not just about potential engagement, it's about sending a message to the community, about what the school expects, such as parents not taking their children out of school during term time. When engaging with the community it is important to ensure that that everyone is working for the benefit of the child.

Recommendation 6

That each school is actively encouraged to use its Parent Teacher Association or other forums to engage with parents and community leaders.

Recommendation 7

That school governing bodies should not condone approval of authorised absence from school.

Aspirations / Positive Attitude

Members agreed that the Authority was not “selling” itself, and that people need to see more of the strengths of the Bradford district. There appears to be a poverty of aspiration. A cultural shift needs to take place and we need to ensure aspirations are realistic.

The Committee heard that there are a myriad of reasons for the current level of achievement in Bradford. Some of them are local and some of them are national. The culture of aspiring to money and not education is a national problem. Aspiring to fame and fortune without necessarily the back-up of an academic qualification appears to be something of a national problem.

A head teacher reported that she had asked her staff not to relate negative stories about the school as it gives a totally skewed view of what goes on, instead she has encouraged staff to repeat the positive stories about the school.

Schools should assist with the creation of a positive learning culture for parents of children who are not traditionally inspirational. They need to support parents and families in increasing aspirations for their children.

Creating a positive attitude to schooling and education is vital to engendering high aspiration.

A study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation revealed that improving the home learning environment and helping parents from poorer families to believe their own actions and efforts can lead to improved outcomes.

The real difficulty for many children is in knowing how to fulfil their ambitions. Rather than raising aspirations in order to raise attainment there is a real need for children and parents to be offered support to learn more about education and career options so they can make more informed decisions about their future.

Recommendation 8

That the Council should continue to communicate the high aspirations that it has for its young people and should continue to work with the schools partnerships and other partners to promote the positive aspects of education and to improve standards in Bradford.

Early Years

The clearest link with lack of educational attainment is deprivation. It is difficult to lift attainment of poorer schools, but it is possible to raise attainment levels of the pupils within poorer schools. It is evident that Early years work is crucial, the earlier children can get into the education system the better.

Teaching unions expressed concern at the age children start primary school. Their view was that many three and four-year-olds aren't ready to start primary school. They're still too young for that. Equally, we expect children to attain GCSE levels at 16. Some 16-year-olds aren't ready for that. They need extra time, yet everybody has to do them at 16, and you become a success or a failure at 16 years of age.

The UK is one of the few countries that introduce children to that sort of formal education at such a young age. In other countries that perform better than the UK such as Finland and France, children are allowed play constructively until they're about six or seven, and they then start a more structured and formal education later, but by the age of 11, they've outstripped our children who started at four. People learn in different ways, but the UK seems to have developed a system where every child is meant to learn the same things in the same way at the same time at the same pace.

If children don't live in a safe environment where play is part of their upbringing, where play is fun, then they are not going to learn in the way that we'd like them to.

Of the "outstanding" primary schools in the district, many are in the inner city, some with a large proportion of pupils who speak English as a second language, so that would not appear to be the problem.

Members heard from the Chief Executive of the Bradford Partnership, who explained it was important to target skills of literacy and oracy in Primary schools. He stated that the oracy deficit is far more prevalent in Bradford than in London. He also felt that schools are not harnessing best practice locally at the moment.

Schools should look at harnessing the bilingual element of children's learning. Children should not be taught that what they have learned outside the classroom should be left at the door.

In many settings the children come into Bradford's schools functioning very much lower than anywhere else in the country. This means that our children and teachers are under tremendous pressure to catch up from day one. Many children regardless of ethnicity come to school with very poor language and cognitive understanding. The settings need to identify a clear base level at entry and at regular intervals thereafter.

In some areas there is only one parent at home who speaks English and consequently mother tongue or local dialects are spoken the majority of the time. In these cases children over summer months may spend as much as 6 weeks in an environment where no English is spoken and as a consequence the good progress they made from September to July is not continued seamlessly the following September. Schools are again on catch up as vocabulary is lost.

Some parents however are very keen that their children have a good start to school and engage well at the beginning of their child's career. Many schools do a great deal of work engaging parents and encouraging them to support children's learning at home. This takes time and money which means Head teachers are sometimes distracted from the day to day education. In some areas deprivation is high and this is not necessarily financial but may relate to families ways of life and where their values lie. Many of the children in some of these communities spend more time with their older siblings than with their parents, who work long and unsociable hours.

There is a need to accept that the education journey of a child starts at a very early age and not just when a child starts primary school.

The Chair of the Committee learned that in Denmark, new arrivals (parents) are required to undergo Danish language training. They take part in a one year programme then are

tested at regular intervals. Pupils' language skills are evaluated at the ages of 3, 5 and 6 years.

There is a broad mix of languages in Bradford and there continues to be an emphasis on language and language development. We need to work with parents with regard to English speaking.

Recommendation 9

That Primary Schools should look at ways to improve oracy by building on the rich range of languages encountered by children in other settings and work with parents and carers to further develop their knowledge and skills in supporting their children's learning.

Recommendation 10

That schools give appropriate prominence to the essential role of Play in improving children's attainment, health, sense of well being, confidence and sense of community.

Leadership / Teaching

The Committee heard from a member of the public who stressed that parents are only able to judge a school on the information they are given (by the school). An example was given that parents had been given the impression that the school was good, only for it to be paced in special measures shortly afterwards. There is a need for more external assessment and we need schools to be more honest about their position.

One of the Head teachers reported that governance can present challenges with the LA finding it increasingly difficult to recruit LA Governors. Some schools have vacancies that remain unfilled for long periods of time. Finding hardworking and committed volunteers with the correct motives to put the school and the children's education first can be problematic – being a Governor can be seen as a position of power and influence – something to support a CV rather than a post of responsibility, hard work and time commitment. The School Governor Service should continue encouraging the more experienced governors to share their skills with more schools.

Bradford needs to have a very positive attitude about its image and opportunities to recruit the very best people to join the school governors who are already working alongside Head teachers to improve our pupil's life chances. The Head teachers said that there is a climate of optimism within schools and that they felt that Council and education leaders are determined to work tirelessly in order to achieve the very best for the children of the district.

Leadership isn't just about one person in a school. It's about the system that the school is running. Sometimes there is a very strong system in a school, and the school can go generations without bringing anyone in from outside to lead, because the people have learned how to lead from inside the school, and those are the best schools. A good leader

is someone who has people on their side, and makes them realise that change has to take place.

Sometimes it's good to have a colleague that you can trust from another school to come and give you an honest assessment of where you are.

It is also important for schools to have an effective system in place to control behaviour, one that supports teachers and students to make sure there is the right level of behaviour in the class to enable teachers to teach. It should be a supportive system to identify the kind of quality of teaching that's required to raise attainment.

One of the District's MPs commented that good schools are created through management and leadership, but unfortunately there is no way of ensuring that the very best teachers go to work in the worst performing schools. Underperforming smaller schools can't afford to pay more to secure the services of an excellent head teacher, as they don't have a big enough budget.

Leadership is key, but retention of high performing staff / teachers is essential.

Recommendation 11

That the Schools Forum consider effective ways of using headroom, thus driving up attainment across the District and narrowing the inequalities gap.

Recommendation 12

That school partnerships be encouraged to further develop ways of sharing leadership expertise and quality of teaching.

Recruitment / Retention

Recruitment and retention of good staff is also a key issue. Generally when advertising it is very difficult to gain applications from experienced teaching staff elsewhere in the country and the majority of applications come from Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) trained locally.

The issue of Ofsted grading of schools in challenging areas becomes self-reinforcing because it is extremely risky for a young deputy head to apply for a headship at a school which is required to improve, let alone one in special measures. It is already becoming increasingly difficult to get the right would-be head teachers into those schools.

Similarly with middle leadership an example was given of a school where in three years they have lost two key stage 2 leading assistant head teachers to take up deputy headships in much more affluent areas, where they will no doubt move through to headships, where that hazard to their career isn't present. This is a serious issue in Bradford schools in terms of attracting decent fields.

There is a need to promote and champion schools within the district to ensure that they do not lose pupils as a consequence of poor perception.

A head teacher raised the issue that when education leaders feel they have staff that need challenging and may in fact not be right for our schools the Council's policies on Human Resources, although supportive, are risk averse. Human Resources officers and policies, need to support Head teachers in ensuring all members of the work force are capable of doing their job well.

The district needs to give itself better opportunities in recruitment because as it is not always possible to fill jobs, and often the District attracts smaller fields of applicants than other places do.

People have a perception that Bradford will be a difficult place for them to go and work, and we do have to get round that. We have to find some way of making it seem better and more attractive. Selling ourselves better is very important.

Coupled with this was the use of agency staff on a regular basis does to tend to be a problem, especially at primary level.

Recommendation 13

That the Council's Human Resources department reviews its policies to ensure that there is a less risk averse approach whilst adhering to statutory expectations to tackle capability.

Recommendation 14

That the Schools Forum explore the possibility of the Council employing a core of skilled and competent teachers to provide an "Agency Service".

Attendance / Pupil Turnover

The use of extended leave creates problems as children's continuous learning is interrupted and gaps are presented that are difficult to fill. School Inclusion Officers spend a great deal of time meeting with parents to help them overcome the barriers to full attendance. Poor health is one of these.

Head teachers pointed out that many primary age children work extremely long hours attending supplementary schools after school. This means they get little or no rest from study and are under a lot of pressure. The amount of time young people spend at the mosque was also a point of concern for some. Schools provide extended services and extra classes and sometimes children are not given enough time to play and be children. This is because of the national pressure on Bradford. Children come to school tired from late night shopping in a 24-hour store. Many children have been seen out with their parents late at night.

The shortage of places is a significant problem in Bradford and nationally. This coupled with people not getting their first option impacts on attainment. How does the school cope with, say, 40 per cent of their intake not wanting that first choice? They must experience difficulties for at least 12 months, settling those children down.

The turnover of pupils is a considerable problem. An example was given of a school where a third of pupils left the area and new families came in. Some schools have had to admit up six and seven children in a week with their families, and then they have to encourage those families to engage with other services in the area, such as children's centres, effective systems need to be set up to do that. The turnover of pupils in any school is a considerable barrier to sustaining attainment.

Recommendation 15

That the Local Authority should work with the school partnerships to identify good practice in schools that have high levels of pupil turnover, and disseminate the successful approaches.

Youth Service / Young People

Students taking part in the National Citizen Service course attended the meeting. They told Members that negative news about the city affects students.

Some of the stress that students feel can be due to the fact that young people often choose 'A levels' their parents want them to take, rather than what they feel they are best at.

Representatives of the Youth Service attended one of the meetings to tell members about the work they do.

The bottom line is that young people choose to engage with the Youth Service. Everything they do is informal and it starts with the individual young person or peer group of young people and the things that they're going to enjoy, the things that they're interested in. Some of the young people come from very difficult circumstances. Some of those circumstances are difficult on a temporary basis; some of them are ongoing issues that the young people have to deal with. In formal education, there are limitations as to how much those individual circumstances can be considered.

One of the things the Youth Service would like to do more of is support young people in their school environment because they are aware that they are not reaching every single 13 – 19 year old in Bradford. Those they are reaching, they we know because of the relationships that have been built up, can have a significant impact. It may not be that the impact is achieving 10 Grade A*s, but they still have the opportunity to achieve something, whether it's increased confidence and self-esteem or a Duke of Edinburgh accreditation. They feel part of something, they feel their worth and they feel that there is somebody who cares about those individuals, and for some young people, they don't have that, and that is inevitably going to have an impact on their performance and attainment.

The question was raised as to how far are young people are involved in school improvement plans, should they be more involved in having their say in addressing some of the problems?

Young people start very early to talk with their feet and the time they go to school if it's not meeting their needs, and very often, those young people who are on reduced curriculums within the school day succeed very successfully with the Youth Service in the evening provision, achieving accreditations like Duke of Edinburgh awards. There are a number of

accreditation options, and staff work really hard to listen to those young people about what is working for them, what their interests are.

There is a need to perhaps look at how some of that can be taken back into that education setting, that those young people who are starting to hit the triggers of anxiety about their attendance, their participation in activities. We need to consider earlier intervention with those young people prior to them actually falling through the system because they've become a statistic for us in a failed way. We very often find when we must come along picking them up; we've got quite a journey sometimes because they've fallen quite a long way in their aspirations for what they see as a being achievable to them.

School Size

Concern was expressed about the growing size of our secondary schools, as this may potentially have a detrimental effect on educational attainment.

However, Bradford isn't different from the rest of the country in having this two tier education.

Fantastic transition work goes on, but it must still be a shock to those youngsters moving from a small primary school to one of these massive institutions.

It must be much harder for a governing body to keep a handle on what goes on in such large institutions than in primary schools. It must also be a lot harder for the leadership teams with much larger teams and larger cohorts.

When a child starts a school, the school doesn't only have that new child starting at the school, they have a whole new family starting at that school and new challenges surrounding them. The size of secondary schools could be one of the reasons why the relationship with parents isn't as strong in secondary schools as it is in primary schools.

A parent expressed concern regarding plans to bring places in for two-year-olds, with the school age ranging from 2-18 years. You're going to have a huge school. It's an awful lot of children to deal with, and you were talking about the peer pressure. You're getting then the younger 11-year-olds going into secondary school and being influenced by much older children.

If transition is handled well, there shouldn't be a problem. An example was given of a school where the sixth formers are actively encouraged to do mentoring with the year 7 pupils, and it works very well. Not only are the pastoral staff aware of potential transition problems, but they realise that giving the older students some level of responsibility in mentoring those younger students is working well.

The large sizes of our secondary schools could mean an increase in peer pressure / bullying. Peer pressure is an impediment to successful education, where the child is encouraged down to the lowest common denominator in the school.

Recommendation 16

That all schools ensure that they have an effective transition programme in place.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Scrutiny of Educational Attainment in the Bradford District

Terms of Reference

See Part 3E paragraphs 2.1-2.11 of the Council Constitution

1. Background

At its meeting on 3 July 2012 the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolved:

"That the Committee notes the content of the report (The Analysis of Teacher Assessment, Test and Examination results 2010-11) and expresses concern at the lack of progress in "narrowing the gap" in certain areas and in view of this concern agrees to undertake a detailed scrutiny of educational attainment within the District and on the barriers that exist".

2. Context

The following is an extract from the recently published Education Improvement Strategy document which sets the scene for this in depth scrutiny of the issues surrounding Educational Attainment and any barriers which prevent significant and sustainable improvement in the Bradford District:

"Raising Educational Attainment across the District is one of the most important challenges we face and one of the Council's top priorities and there is a determination to provide all our children with an education that allows them to get the best possible start in life. We know that providing young people with the right skills and knowledge is crucial to their future success and well being. It is also vital if we are to have a thriving local economy.

Above all, our intention is to put children and young people at the heart of what we do so that decisions we make and the direction we take provide them with the best education possible".

3. Key Lines of Enquiry

Using the key lines of enquiry the Committee will seek to understand the background and circumstances in which Education is delivered in the Bradford District and seek reasons why attainment in some areas continues to be below national standards.

The key lines of enquiry for this scrutiny review are as follows:

- An understanding of past and present arrangements for managing the whole school estate
- An understanding of the funding regime, and the decision making process

- An understanding of the statutory requirements and the relationship with the Department for Education
- An understanding of the partnership working in local education
- Expert viewpoints on Teaching & Learning
- The views of Young People themselves
- An understanding of the Inspection regime
- Understanding the influence of new buildings / facilities
- Understanding the complexities of the population mix of Bradford and its effect on Education

4. Methodology

The Committee will receive and consider a variety of evidence/ information provided by a range of interested parties. The Committee may adopt one or more of the following methods to collect evidence/ information:

- Request specific briefing materials and/or reports from officers of the Council including current strategies, performance data, Ofsted reports;
- Invite written evidence from other interested parties;
- Commission specific research and consider any subsequent findings;
- Hold open meetings at which members of the public or interested organisations can present their views and evidence;
- Undertake site visit(s) to relevant organisation(s);
- Hold “Committee hearings” i.e. meetings in public, with specific interested parties invited to give a brief presentation (with a previously submitted written submission), followed by questioning by the Committee;

5. List of Interested Parties

An indicative list of interested parties is provided below. This is not definitive or exclusive and can be developed as the scrutiny progresses.

- Department for Education
- Children’s Services Department
- Schools Forum
- Head Teachers
- Teachers
- Young People
- Trade Unions

- Youth Service
- Governors
- Parents
- District MPs
- Portfolio Holder
- The Bradford Partnership
- Telegraph & Argus
- Free Schools and Academies
- Faith and Denominational Boards

6. Indicative Timetable

Tuesday 9 October 2012 – Information gathering session

Tuesday 20 November 2012 – Information gathering session

Tuesday 4 December 2012 – Information gathering session

Tuesday 29 January 2013 – Information gathering session

Information Gathering Sessions

Session 1 – Tuesday 9 October 2012

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Kath Tunstall | Strategic Director Services to Children and Young People |
| Cindy Peek | Deputy Director Children's Services |
| Paul Makin | Assistant Director Education/School Improvement |
| George McQueen | Assistant Director Access and Inclusion |
| Phil Weston | Secondary School Improvement Service |
| David Thompson | Senior Area Achievement Officer |
| Yasmin Umarji | Senior Area Achievement Officer |
| Ken Poucher | SIP Manager |
| CLlr Ralph Berry | Portfolio Holder |

Session 2 – Tuesday 20 November 2012

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Andrew Redding | Senior School Finance Officer |
| Fiona Beevers | Church of England Faith Representative |
| Angela Dobson | Chair of Governors Clayton CofE Primary |
| Farooq Mohammed | Governor - Whetley Primary |
| Nick Weller | Chief Executive – The Bradford Partnership |

Session 3 – Tuesday 4 December 2012

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Heather Wilson | Integrated Youth Support and Extended Services Senior Manager |
| Heather Esiri | Senior Youth Service Manager - Bradford West |
| Karen Crowley | Parent Governor |
| Ann Nash | Trade Union Representative |
| Sandra Firm | Trade Union Representative |
| Ian Murch | Trade Union Representative |

Session 4 – Tuesday 29 January 2013

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Liz Lawley | Chair – Bradford Primary Head teachers |
| Gill Edge | Chair – Bradford Primary Head teachers |
| Sue Haithwaite | Chair – Bradford Special School Head teachers |
| Jessica Courtman | Student |
| Elisha Speck | Student |
| Erin Bridge | Student |
| Bilal Akhatar | Student |
| Tayyab Shahzada | Student |
| Mick Chandsoor | Youth Worker |
| Graham Hutton | Youth Service Manager |

11 February 2013 – The Committee Chair met with David Ward MP

Funding of streams

The table below provides a breakdown of the funding allocations for 2012-13 and states the decision makers. Children Services is predominately grant funded as highlighted by the table below main due to funding received in relation to schools. The main decision makers are the Schools Forum who has a statutory role in determining the funding allocation to schools and the Council in setting Children Services base budget.

| Funding Streams | Description | Amount in 2012-13 £M | Decision Makers |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) | The DSG supports expenditure in relation to the schools budget. The DSG is currently split into 2 elements, the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) which is devolved to schools and Central Budgets used to fund central support to schools. The ISB is allocated to schools based on a local funding formula. | 400.971 | Bradford's School Forum makes recommendations to the Council's Executive for ratification. |
| Early Intervention Grant (EIG) | The Early Intervention Grant (EIG) was set up in 2011-12 and replaced various former funding streams. The grant is not ring fenced to enable local authorities to target resources at areas in need locally. | 31.100 | The grant amount is determined by the government but allocated locally by the Council. |
| Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Grant | This grant was allocated to the local authority in support of the unitary charge payments for the Buildings Schools for the Future (BSF) Phase 1 and 2 programmes. The grant is paid annually for 25 years. | 27.301 | The grant is allocated by the government to support the Unitary Charge payments for 25 years. |
| School Six Form Funding | The School Six Form Funding is allocated to the Council to support pupils in school. The funding is paid to the local authority which is then passed on to individual schools. | 24.338 | The grant is set by the government based on six form pupils in schools. |
| Pupil Premium (Grant) | The Government introduced the Pupil Premium grant in 2011-12 to target extra money to pupils from deprived backgrounds in order to support them in reaching their potential. The allocation is £600 per pupil including Looked after Children and £250 per pupil for pupils from Service families | 14.463 | The allocation is determined by the government based on pupil data and the funding is paid to the local authority to forward to schools. |
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|----------------------|--|----------------|--|
| Council Base Budget | This funding is supported from Formula grant and Council Tax income. | 76.129 | The government decides the amount of Formula Grant allocated to each local authority and Council members make decisions to the amount of Council Tax for the district. The reduction in the Formula Grant from the government means that members are required to make decisions on which services will be reduced in other to make budget savings. |
| Total Funding | | 574.302 | |