

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE - PUPIL PREMIUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Pupil Premium held in the Swale 3, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 2 September 2019.

PRESENT: Mrs L Game (Chairman), Mr A Booth, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Ms S Hamilton, Mr J P McInroy and Dr L Sullivan

ALSO PRESENT: Mr R W Gough

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr K Abbott (Director of Education Planning and Access), Mr J Roberts (Chief Executive Officer – The Education People) and Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. One year on update report
(Item 1)

1. Mrs Game welcomed Select Committee Members and invited guests to the one year on reconvened meeting of the Pupil Premium Select Committee. She invited Mr Gough to introduce his report.

2. Mr Gough (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education) explained that this issue continued to be very topical. Validated data would be available in January 2020 which would demonstrate the impact of the work done so far. There were a number of overlaps between the work done following the publication of the Select Committee recommendations and work done across the Education Directorate.

Recommendation 1

3. James Roberts (Chief Executive, The Education People) explained that the key point in relation to Recommendation 1 was work with external communications groups. Officers would provide information on the take up of the focus groups held with schools to better understand techniques and incentives that work best with families to promote registration.

4. In response to a question Mr Roberts would provide clarification on whether children with SEND had to register for Pupil Premium Funding (and Free School Meals). A Member commented that some schools informed Members that they could register for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Funding and Members discussed the cycle in deprived areas with little parental support at home and low adult literacy levels. This should be considered by schools when communicating with families.

Recommendation 2

5. Following a discussion Officers would provide further information on the percentage of Kent schools that had identified a school governor to act as champion for all children in receipt of any type of Pupil Premium.

Recommendation 3

6. This was work in progress with the pilot project originally located in five Swale schools. Officers were considering ways in which the project could be scaled up to have the biggest impact and how it could be best targeted. Officers would provide further information on the pilot project in the five Swale schools including cost and experience of those schools.

Recommendation 4

7. The Directorate were reviewing the Transition Matters Framework and Toolkit, it was considered that the way in which the transition from primary to secondary school was handled was essential.

Recommendation 5

8. Mr Gough commented on the comprehensive approach taken with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, he referred to work undertaken on the use of a nationally recognised framework supported by Marie Gascoigne. This was part of Workstream 4 and was within the written statement of action.

9. Members discussed the difference in cost of prevention versus speech and language therapy once children are at school. There were concerns that there was too much focus on the end product, it was important to tackle the issues but also important to look at ways of preventing the issues. Keith Abbot explained that it was possible to access government grants for parenting courses and the option to adapt courses through adult education centres and family learning, however there were concerns about the engagement of hard to reach families, the ways in which the courses were delivered was crucial. Pre-school settings had a good track record of picking up development issues with young children.

Recommendation 6

10. Mr Gough confirmed that he had written to the former Secretary of State, asking that, given the strong interest in social mobility and early years, Pupil Premium was given serious priority. The response confirmed that the Government recognised the need to keep the evidence base on early years up to date, KCC was assured that the comments made were taken into consideration and would inform the next spending review to which any future funding would be aligned. The Select Committee instructed Mr Gough to write again to the current Secretary of State enclosing the previous letter written and response provided asking that Early Years Pupil Premium is given sufficient priority in future spending reviews.

Recommendation 7

11. Members asked for clarification around the response to this recommendation, whether it was possible to undertake a pilot to get evidence? Officers to confirm whether there is a regulation that states that KCC cannot top up the Early Years Pupil Premium funding rate. Was it possible to choose one or two schools to pilot and monitor results?

Recommendation 8

12. A discussion was had around whether the placing authority had really considered what was in the best interest of the child and had the placing authority really liaised with KCC?

Recommendation 9

13. James Roberts confirmed that toolkits would be distributed towards the end of September. Officers would circulate the Pupil Premium Toolkit to Members of the Select Committee.

Recommendation 10

14. Improvement advisors were picking up best practice and feeding it back. Members considered it would be useful to have further information on the progress made by Suffolk County Council. Officers to report back on the progress made by Suffolk County Council.

Conclusion

15. The Clerk confirmed that the minutes of the reconvened Select Committee would be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in October 2019 and from there the Scrutiny Committee could decide what further discussions should be had around the follow up of recommendations. It was suggested that Scrutiny Committee would be asked for a further meeting to take place at the beginning of February 2020.

16. The Chairman thanked the guests for attending the meeting and for answering Members' questions.

RESOLVED that the Select Committee note the progress to date of the Pupil Premium Select Committee recommendations and recommend to the Scrutiny Committee that a further meeting take place (either of the Select Committee or the main Scrutiny Committee) in February 2020.