

Select Committee - Grammar Schools and Social Mobility

24 February 2016

Biographies

Michaela Lewis, Headteacher – Upton Junior School, Broadstairs

Michaela is Headteacher of Upton Junior school in Broadstairs. Upton Junior school was recently a national finalist in the Pupil Premium Awards, recognising their success in improving the attainment of their most disadvantaged pupils.

Michaela has an 11 year old daughter currently in a Year 6 class in a Thanet Primary school so for the first time is seeing the Kent process as a parent and mother as well as a Headteacher.

Cliff Stokes, Headteacher – Newington Community Primary School, Ramsgate

Cliff has been a Headteacher for the past 16 years and has worked in a variety of schools and circumstances. His substantive experience has been in schools which serve economically deprived communities, where raising the aspirations of families and their children has been the key focus. Further to this he serves as a Magistrate on the East Kent Bench and runs marathons as a hobby. He has two children in their twenties, one of whom is at University, whilst his daughter is currently waitressing her way around the world!

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Hearing 8: Wednesday 24th February 2016

Witness Guide for Members

Below are suggested themes and questions. They have been provided in advance to the witnesses to allow them to prepare for the types of issues that Members may be interested to explore. All Members are welcome to ask these questions or pose additional ones to the witnesses via the Committee Chairman.

Themes and Questions

Michaela Lewis, Headteacher – Upton Junior School, Broadstairs; and

Cliff Stokes, Headteacher – Newington Community Primary School, Ramsgate

- Please introduce yourselves and provide an outline of the responsibilities of your post.
- Why are disadvantaged students, who are eligible for FSM, less likely to enrol in a grammar school, despite the fact that they may be academically high achieving?
- Our data shows that whilst some primary schools are successfully narrowing the gap between FSM and non FSM children the number of FSM children taking and passing the Kent Test is still low. Why is this and what can we do to remove any barriers?
- How do schools work with parents to identify high achieving children who could take the Kent Test? Does this process work? Could a different approach such as all children taking the Kent Test (i.e. Buckinghamshire model) be more beneficial?
- What role do School Improvement Advisors play in helping Primary schools identify academically high achieving FSM and CIC children who could be put forward for the Kent Test?
- How does your school encourage parents of high achieving FSM children to apply for, and support them to pass, the Kent Test?
- What support does your primary school offer to ensure pupils are able to successfully take the Kent Test? How do we ensure that this process supports fair access?
- Please discuss how you use the Pupil Premium and whether this has had an impact on the number of FSM and CIC children obtaining a Grammar school place?
- What is your relationship with local grammar schools? Do you work together to offer opportunities such as enrichment classes, taster days, and pupil mentoring to demystify secondary transfer and grammar schools?
- How are grammar schools perceived by families of children eligible for FSM? What impact can outreach and school marketing have to change any negative perceptions and raise the aspirations of low income families with academically high achieving children?
- To what extent does the cost of education, for example uniform, travel and school trips influence parents and pupils choice of school?
- Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with the Committee?