

Children's Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 13th July 2022

Meeting commenced: 6.30pm

Meeting ended: 8.25pm

Present:

Councillors: Councillor Adrian Brocklehurst (Chair)

Joshua Brooks, Adam Kealey, Lewis Nelson, Michael Pevitt, Teresa Pepper, Neil Reynolds, Madeline Wade.

Co-opted Members: Judith Elderkin, Jacqui Morrissey

Church of England Diocesan Representative: Reverend Keith Archer

Representative from the Jewish Faith: Alex Klein

Parent Governor: Zoe Brown

Officer/s Present:

Christine Wood – Democratic Services (Democratic Services Officer)

Officers(online):

Victoria Ross – Children's Services

Samantha Wells – The Lowry Academy

Members of the public:

None

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and apologies were received from Charlotte Ramsden, Becky Bibby, Debbie Blackburn, Zoe Fearon, Cathy Starbuck and Councillor Madelaine Wade.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday, 8th June 2022

Resolved: That, the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 8th June 2022 be approved as a true and correct record subject to the following amendments:

6b. Membership

- A Labour Party vacancy: to fill the place left vacant by former Councillor **John Walsh** to be amended to Councillor **Joan Walsh**.

- Councillor Nelson advised that currently there were two vacancies in addition to those referred to in the previous minutes - Roman Catholic Diocesan representative and Free Churches representative.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

5. Transition between Primary School and Secondary School in Salford – July 2022

- Victoria Ross introduced the report reminding the panel that the Salford Primary/Secondary Transition Policy had been first published in 2018 and had been updated in January 2020 following meeting with primary and secondary leaders.
- The policy was a guide for everyone supporting pupils with transition from primary to secondary school and helped to ensure that all educational settings in Salford were meeting statutory legislations for inclusion and equality as stated in the Children and Families Act. The policy was a 'living' document and may be amended or adapted to reflect changes needed.
- The panel was advised of the aim of the policy which was to ensure that all children in Salford had a consistent, quality and inclusive transition experience in order to enhance their wellbeing and performance as learners.
- The policy advised that in order for effective transition in schools in Salford the following actions were required:
 - Consent for information sharing obtained from parent/carer should usually be obtained in the primary setting when a child joins the school.
 - Open day/evenings allocated on different dates at all secondary schools to allow parents to attend more than one.
 - Secondary schools will have a Year 7 or Transition section on their website that contains information such as uniform, equipment, behaviour policy or expectations, key dates and events etc.
 - Key dates shared and easily accessed on school websites.
 - Secondary school application deadline 31st October
 - Parents/carers have access and support to complete the online admissions form from gateway centres and primary schools, should they require it.
 - Two induction days for all Year 6 children held on, Thursday and Friday, the same week, across Salford
 - In 2022: Thursday 30th June and Friday 1st July
 - In 2023: Thursday 29th and Friday 30th June
- Recommendations of the policy were also outlined as follows:
- Induction days should include activities such as:
 - Completion of a 'This is me' booklet
 - Meeting the form tutor and other pupils in their form
 - A tour of the school to orientate pupils
 - Lessons in different parts of the school so pupils get used to moving from one classroom to another
 - Team building activities with peers
 - Introduction to routines and systems

- Early lunch away from older pupils to introduce new pupils to lunchtime routines and systems used for purchasing lunch
 - Opportunities for pupils to learn how to organise themselves, e.g., books, equipment
 - Opportunities to meet and get to know key staff such as the Head of Year and pastoral staff.
- Basic transfer of information to be completed by the primary school **by February Half Term** and sent to school.admissions@salford.gov.uk. This information will be collated and shared with secondary schools once places are allocated. The LA transition coordinator will collect this information from primary schools and distribute to secondary schools. Updates will be sent as necessary.
 - ‘Face to face’ meetings (or phone call conversations for small numbers of pupils) to take place between primary and secondary colleagues in March and April to share information about individual pupils highlighted as needing additional transition support.
 - Follow up information sharing conversations to take place between primary and secondary schools where a pupil’s circumstances change following the face-to-face meetings, e.g., if the pupil is excluded, experiences a bereavement etc.
 - Accessible information to be provided to parents/carers by primary and secondary schools about the transition process including:
 - The role of the parent/carer during transition
 - The role of the primary school
 - The role of the secondary school
 - Transition Timeline for children and parent/carer
 - Key dates for events
 - Ensure effective pupil tracking and transferring of information to support continued progress e.g., best piece of independent writing, most recent maths book etc.
 - Common Basic Data Set, maintained for every child, in a school’s management information system transferred from the primary to secondary school using a Common Transfer File in the summer term. (Statutory Obligation for all maintained schools)
 - Packages for transition were outlined to the panel and explained as follows:
 - **Transition 1:** Need for some targeted help for a successful transition
 - **Transition 2:** Need for more targeted help for a successful transition
 - **Transition 3:** Need for individualised specialist help for successful transition
 - **Universal Transition:** Advice and guidance for transition for every child in Salford.
 - Samantha Wells spoke of her experiences in relation to the Transition process in her role as Assistant Principal at the Lowry Academy and advised of an evaluation of the policy that had taken place in the Spring Term of 2022 and had involved discussion with a sample of primary and secondary school staff. The evaluation had also included a small number of pupils and parents about their experiences of transition from primary to second school.
 - Findings of the evaluation in relation to current practice in Salford were outlined to the Panel around:

- Awareness of Policy
- Information Sharing about pupils in writing and in discussion
- Additional Support provided by the LA/Other Agencies
- Transition Days in secondary schools
- Transition for vulnerable pupils
- Additional Partnership Working between primary and Secondary Schools
- Curriculum and transition
- Parental and Pupil views of transition

Areas for Development and recommendations were outlined the Panel as follows:

For the Local Authority

- To hold a briefing session on transition for all schools, but particularly for transition leads and year 6 teachers who are new to the role.
- To facilitate a sharing of practice session for senior leaders on transition.
- To update the policy with a list of key contacts in the Local Authority so schools know who to get in touch with.
- To review the information sharing form in the light of responses made by schools.
- Consider how pupils that are late joining primary schools are included in information sharing.
- Organise a collaborative meeting for secondary and primary English and Literacy leads, and Numeracy leads. This will assist secondary teachers to understand the standards at Key Stage 2 in English and Maths to enable them to build upon these.
- Ensure descriptors of the transition packages are clear to ensure consistency
- Organise training on the transition packages.
- Ensure communication about Looked After Children (Cared for Children), including any involvement with social workers etc. is shared with all schools, as appropriate.

For Schools

- Secondary schools should share best practice in transition with each other, particularly on how curriculum links can be made with their partner primary schools.
- Secondary schools to ensure key information is shared with all staff, where appropriate.
- Secondary and primary schools to consider how they can best work together to understand curriculum plans and discuss standards.
- Secondary schools to review their approaches to transition of vulnerable pupils to ensure the support they are getting is appropriate and that it has the impact is intended to.

Victoria and Samantha were thanked for the very comprehensive report. Several panel members reflected on their own experiences of transition from primary to secondary school and commented on the excellent policy.

The Chair invited questions and comments from members and the following was raised:

- A panel member enquired around the process for children who had not been allocated the school of their choice and the period of uncertainty prior to the school appeals process. The panel was advised that children and families in this situation were still invited to school events where the pupil has been offered a place. If a pupil missed a transition day, they would be invited to a tour of the school and to summer school events.

- A panel member enquired around monitoring of pupils that had not applied for a place at a secondary school. The panel was advised that the School Admissions team are aware of pupils in this situation and follow up where necessary.
- A panel member enquired around support for SEND pupils who may find the transition particularly difficult. The panel was advised of support around the child as referred to in **Transition 3** (as above).
- A panel member enquired around support to children who may be bullied but did not seek help. The panel was advised of the strong school pastoral teams that were available in the Lowry Academy and other schools advising that staff would notice issues of this nature as the problem would manifest and become apparent in a pupil. The panel was further advised that action would be taken quickly to support the victim and perpetrator in such a situation.
- A panel member enquired around support for Asylum Seeker students. The panel was advised of the Schools of Sanctuary accreditation which is a national network of over 350 primary and secondary schools, nurseries and sixth forms all committed to creating a culture of welcome and inclusion for refugees and people seeking asylum. Some schools in Salford were involved in this national network. It was suggested that Schools of Sanctuary maybe an item for the Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23.
- A panel member enquired around the complaints process in relation to the school transition process. The panel was advised around the complaints process.
- A panel member referred to children transitioning to schools outside of the Salford border. The panel was advised that the Transition Policy had been shared with other schools out of the GM area and that the Policy was viewed as good practice. The panel was further advised that the situation was more challenging in relation to schools outside of the border.
- A panel member enquired around the perceived dip in performance for some pupils following transition. The panel member was advised of comparison of books of year 6 and year 7 work and initiatives to address dips.
- A panel member referred to the future in which many schools would become part of Multi Academy Trusts and the potential risks of pupil places in schools becoming scarce and the potential effects on EHCP pupils. The panel was advised that issues of selectivity and non-inclusivity had not been highlighted. It was recognised that this issue may become a challenge in the future. This issue as highlighted would be conveyed to Cathy Starbuck for further discussion.
- A panel member highlighted that there was no reference to identifying and supporting young carers in the policy. The panel was advised that primary schools may not be aware that a pupil was a young carer but acknowledged that this should be referred to in the policy.
- A panel member highlighted that there was no reference to transport issues in the policy. The panel was advised that a web page had been created at the Lowry Academy with a 'to do' list providing practical advice around preparation for the school day which included advice that pupils and families are required to make their own arrangements around transport to school. Good practice such as this will be shared.
- The panel was again reminded that the policy was a 'living' document that could be amended and adapted to reflect change.

Resolved: That, the the Children's Scrutiny Panel note the report.

5. Children's Scrutiny Panel meeting times

A discussion took place around meeting times of the panel.

Resolved: That, an email be circulated to the panel summarising suggestions of meeting times and requesting preferences of panel members.

6. CSP Work Programme 2022/23

- The current work programme was noted.
- Priorities for the work programme 2022/23 were discussed following the panel responses to the recent survey that had been circulated to panel members.
- Councillor Brocklehurst reiterated the suggestion from the recent LGA review that Scrutiny Committees should focus on fewer subjects and investigate issues in greater depth.

Resolved: That:

1. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel to attend a meeting of Lead Member Briefing for Children and Young People to consider the Children's Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2022/23; and
2. To note the suggestion that Schools of Sanctuary (as referred to in minute 5) maybe be included in the Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23.

7. Any Other Business

- No items were reported.

8. Date, time and venue for next meeting

- Wednesday, 14th September 2022 at 6pm, Salford Suite, Salford Civic Centre. Members must attend in person.