

## **EDUCATION MONITORING PANEL**

Meeting: 18 March 2008  
At: 6.00 pm

### **PRESENT**

Councillor John Pantall (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Jenny Humphreys (Vice-Chair); Councillors Ben Alexander, Owen Breen, Colin Foster, and Paul Porgess.

### **Officers**

Richard Bates	-	Service Director (Learning & Achievement), Children & Young People's Directorate
Sue Guy	-	Head of School Improvement, Leadership & Governance, Children & Young People's Directorate
Judy Davies	-	Head of Service (School Leadership & Pupils), Children & Young People's Directorate
Maria Kidd	-	Head of Services for Young People, Children & Young People's Directorate
Helen White	-	Senior School Improvement Advisor - Primary, Children & Young People's Directorate
Chris Braithwaite	-	Democratic Services Officer, Chief Executive's Directorate

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

### **2. MINUTES**

The minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 8 January 2008 were approved as a correct record.

### **3. ATTENDANCE PERFORMANCE**

A representative of the Corporate Director, Children & Young People, submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which detailed the performance of Stockport's schools on persistent absence rates.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- The need to focus on addressing the underlying reasons for absence.
- Poorer performing schools have received more support, but it is important that strongly-performing schools are not neglected as a result.
- The difference in levels of absence between schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. It was felt that it would be interesting to discover the reasons for this.
- The difference in levels of absence between schools being reduced.
- It would be desirable to develop an evidence base of practices which work in reducing persistent absenteeism.
- The potential benefits which could arise from investigating the practices of

successful Education Authorities.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **4. OVERVIEW OF INCLUSION SERVICES**

A representative of the Corporate Director, Children & Young People, submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which gave an overview of Inclusion Services in Stockport.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Monitoring the level of uptake of training opportunities by schools.
- The importance of having well trained nursery staff who were able to identify children with special education needs early on in their education.
- A reflective report in the future of the success of the policies currently pursued by the Inclusion Services would be welcomed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **5. CHEADLE PRIMARY**

A representative of the Corporate Director, Children & Young People circulated copies of the Ofsted Inspection Report for Cheadle Primary School and gave an oral update on performance of the school. The Inspection had been triggered by a number of parental complaints to Ofsted with respect to class size and refurbishment of the school. After inspection, Ofsted found no grounds to support the complaints from the parents.

It was felt that a Parents Forum should be established to improve relations and reduce tensions between the parents and the school and to avoid a similar situation arising in the future.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **6. MEADOWBANK PRIMARY**

A representative of the Corporate Director, Children & Young People circulated copies of the Ofsted Inspection Report for Cheadle Primary School and gave an oral update on progress made by the school.

It was reported that the school has been judged to have made satisfactory progress since its last inspection, and was no longer subject to a Notice To Improve.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- The need to continue providing support to the school to allow the improvement to be continued.
- The excellent performance the school has shown at foundation level.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Panel welcomes the progress made by Meadowbank Primary since its last inspection.

## **7. TAME VALLEY PRIMARY**

A representative of the Corporate Director, Children & Young People gave an oral update on progress made by Tame Valley Primary.

It was reported that after since the last meeting of the Panel the Children & Young People's Directorate has been in effective control of day-to-day administration of the school due to the absence of the Headteacher and Deputy Head. A Consultant Headteacher was appointed. After discussion with the Board of Governors and the Executive Councillor (Children & Young People) it was agreed that a consultation towards the closure of the school be carried out, with the intention that the Tame Valley Primary site remained open under the management of Westmoreland Primary until buildings work has been completed so that both schools can be housed on the existing Westmoreland Primary site.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- The importance of project management so that projected timescales are met.
- The lessons the authority has learnt through the process.
- The importance of strong leadership in underperforming schools.
- The inclusion of early warning signs in the Protocol for Schools Causing Concern.
- Governor training.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Panel requests a further analysis of the circumstances leading to the consultation on the closure of Tame Valley Primary be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

(3) That the Panel requests that the Executive Member (Children & Young People) investigate the possibility of early warning signals for the deterioration of standards in schools.

(4) That the Panel recommends that greater levels of training for Governors be investigated.

## **8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT FUTURE MEETINGS**

At the request of the Chair a discussion took place with respect to future areas of discussion for future Panel meetings. Potential items for discussion included further informational reports similar to the items discussed earlier in the Panel meeting and the results of the annual online survey of schools' perceptions of the Education Authority.

The meeting closed at 7.58pm

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