

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 May 2018

YOUNG PEOPLES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Support for learners: Use of the Pupil Premium

1. Pupils in North Yorkshire generally attain well at school, with educational performance at levels above the national average. However, this masks an underlying pattern of low achievement and slow progress for pupils in many of the more vulnerable/disadvantaged groups, and there are some pupils for whom this general picture of good attainment is not true. The latest 2017 data indicates that at all key stages our outcomes for disadvantaged learners are improving, however not at the same rate as other learners. As a result the attainment gap between our disadvantaged learners and their peers continues to widen at all key stages.
2. For many, the very definition of a 'disadvantaged' pupils is eligibility for the Pupil Premium at the time of the relevant assessment. At our last meeting we saw many examples of the excellent work being promoted with the Pupil Premium to narrow the attainment gap between those eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils in North Yorkshire. We saw a strong commitment to ensuring this is being used so that pupils are being supported with high quality teaching and learning strategies.
3. NYCC officers and some teaching professionals have spent time understanding why some areas, and some schools in particular, are recognised as best practice locations. Going by what we observed, the visits to schools in London/Essex and Suffolk to see what and why they are doing well was time very well spent. Values that emerged from these visits, and which are underpinning approaches and activity to improve outcomes for disadvantaged learners in schools, included:
 - Strong visionary leadership, culture and values
 - Clarity, Consistency, Insistency
 - High Expectations For ALL pupils irrespective of background
 - High focus on literacy, language and vocabulary
 - Extensive modelling (curriculum, talk, behaviours)
 - Trust and Investment in all staff
 - Having the right staff in place
 - A focus on the importance of good adult – pupil relationships
 - Reflective and Solution focused - A reflective, evaluative culture, where data and evidence is used intelligently for improvement.

4. One of the headteachers told us how the experience of finding out how these schools were approaching the issue had caused her to re-think her expectation that high performance could, in the main, be attributed to increased resources:

"It was so valuable to see that what these schools are achieving isn't solely down to the additional funds that they have. Rather it is down to the clear vision and high expectations of the headteachers and their ability to surround themselves with the right staff."

5. There is, though, still too much inconsistency in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged learners across North Yorkshire schools. Disadvantaged learners are still over represented in absence and exclusions.
6. We recognise that there are differing groups of vulnerable children whose attainment needs similar scrutiny and challenge: for example, those from 'working poor backgrounds', summer-born children, children from service families and those living in isolated or coastal communities. Thinking about the latter group, the committee learned more about the Opportunity Area programme, which will invest at least £6M in Scarborough, Whitby and Filey to support social mobility of children and young people, particularly disadvantaged learners. Investment has already been provided to support regular, extra-curricular activities, innovative, community-based literacy events and additional training to improve maths outcomes in Primary School. This investment is being prioritised for schools with the highest numbers of pupil-premium children and those pupils that require additional support to attain.
7. The programme will be the major item at our next meeting.

Careers Guidance Update

8. I have previously reported on the Committee's interest in the two-year project to improve careers guidance in twenty schools. An independent formal evaluation has now found impressive outcomes resulting from the project. We noted in particular:
 - More staff receiving training to deliver effective careers education and guidance
 - Schools demonstrating quality in their provision
 - Stakeholders recognising the important role that they play in supporting schools;
 - Young people enjoying and using their experience of career development to make career decisions
9. Sir John Holman, Senior Advisor to the Gatsby Foundation and author of the Gatsby Career Benchmark report, sums it up:

'I am pleased to see the progress being made in North Yorkshire by the 'Progression for Success' project. I am particularly pleased that the project uses as its organising

framework the eight Benchmarks that we developed for the Gatsby Foundation in the report Good Career Guidance. This can bring international best practice to North Yorkshire, and will give schools a head start in implementing the DfE's new national careers strategy for schools.'

LGBT Young People in NY

10. Supporting LGBT learners was the subject of a members scrutiny review a couple of years ago. Progress against the recommendations of that review have been impressive.
11. The Education and Skills Service has been the lead for the past four years on the Stonewall Education Equality Index. Completing the index enables local authorities to assess their performance and benchmark their own progress year-on-year on the work being done to celebrate difference, support LGBT young people and prevent and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. The good news is that North Yorkshire's score on the index has risen from 52% in 2011 to 98% in 2017 when we came 2nd out of 39 local authorities.
12. The investment of time and resources and the commitment shown has clearly lead to a favourable outcome. Whilst resting on our laurels is never an option, the capacity for making similar strides in improvement in the coming years may not be so considerable.

Looking ahead

13. At our next meeting Nick Frost, Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Board will return - probably for the last time before he retires from Chairmanship - to update us on Board activity. We will also hear more from Nick about changes to local safeguarding arrangements and Child Sexual Exploitation.
14. By the time the council considers this statement, we will have held a special meeting on the consultation proposals for North Yorkshire's Strategic Plan for SEND provision 0-25

JANET JEFFERSON

Chairman, Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall,
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1 May 2018

Background Documents - Nil.