

AT A MEETING of the EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL  
held at The Castle, Winchester on 19 December 2012

**PRESENT**

Councillors: P Edgar (Chairman), B Collin, B D Dash, M Kemp-Gee, R J Kimber (Vice-Chairman), J Porter

Co-opted: D White, P Clarke, T Blackshaw

**103. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R McIntosh and F Cowper, for medical reasons, and D Mewes.

**104. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should, normally at the time of the debate, declare their interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 8, 9, 10, and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 12 of the Code.

With relation to items on the agenda, Councillor Edgar declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as a life member of the National Association of Headteachers.

Councillor Porter registered an interest in preschools that might arise in Agenda Item 6 and Tony Blackshaw in St Columba Church of England Primary Academy in Item 7.

**105. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**106. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman informed Members that he had attended the Academy Show in Birmingham, which had been very useful. One speaker had said that anyone could be an academy sponsor. The panel of speakers all had a vested financial interest in academies. They had stressed the freedoms to be gained by becoming an academy. The conference panel had agreed with his question that academies should buy their services from the provider producing the best, at the most competitive cost. This could be a Local Authority; and he noted that of 28 secondary academies in the county, 26 of them currently buy all or most of Hampshire's services to schools. He indicated that the government's policy on introducing academy schools was due to several Local

Authorities failing to take the necessary interest in Education and provide support for the schools in their local area.

Members were informed that in practice the 'freedoms' that academies have, which maintained schools do not, were very few; the DfE lists four, the freedom to change the length of the school day, decide how to spend their central government grant, devise their own pay and conditions package, and to follow their own curriculum, although they were still subjected to the same National Curriculum tests and examinations.

The Chairman informed Members that the Buildings Land and Procurement Panel on 18 December 2012 had authorised the building of a new two-form entry primary school in Waterlooville which would open in 2014. Hampshire County Council would design and build the school which would be a sponsored academy, as all new schools have to be. It was noted that Hampshire has expertise in designing and building schools and would be looking to sell this service. The Chairman commented that the County Council was becoming more of a business and would have to sell its services to others. There was discussion among Panel Members on the 'freedoms' that academies have, and the position of Local Authorities in regard to selling their services to schools. Some services would continue to be offered free to all schools.

The Deputy Director for Children's Services (Education) reported to Members the main findings of Ofsted's Annual Report as it related to Hampshire's primary schools, of which 6 out of a total of 406 were now academies. Members were pleased to hear that Hampshire was ranked third in the country, compared to other counties, for children attending good or outstanding schools. The proportion of Hampshire schools below the government floor standards at Key Stage 2 is 1.3%, compared with Portsmouth's 16% and the government's expectation that an outstanding percentage is 1%. Members were informed that a report would be brought to the Panel in March 2013 on the role of the Local Authority in primary school performance.

Commenting briefly on secondary schools, the Deputy Director explained that, although the Local Authority had concerns about some secondary schools, Hampshire was ranked fifth out of 27 county councils for children attending good or outstanding schools. He stressed that the reasons for Hampshire's excellent performance in both primary and secondary schools was due to the interest and commitment to education in Hampshire from the top with the Cabinet and Councillors through to the officers on the ground. He also asked for it to be noted that he believed that Hampshire currently has its best school improvement team for 15 years both at the centre and in the localities.

## 107. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made.

## 108. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2011/12

Members received the report of the Director of Children's Services (Education) on the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the actions being taken in 2012/13. (Item 6 in the Minute Book)

Tracey Sanders explained that her report was concerned with children's progress from 0 to 5 and the assessments that were done at the end of the Foundation Stage (at 5 years old). She was pleased to inform Members that 2012 had produced the best ever results. The two elements to the assessment were explained to the Panel; the first was the threshold element, where children were observed and judged on 117 different aspects and need to achieve 78 points with 6 in communication, language and literacy and 6 in personal, social and emotional development. This score had improved in 2012 by 6% with 64% of children attaining 78 points or above. She was particularly pleased with the second element which measures the gap between the median of all children's scores and the mean of the bottom 20% – this had reduced by 2% and was well below the national average. She highlighted that the greatest improvements were in some of the most deprived areas of the County, with a 10% improvement in language skills and 5% in social and personal skills; a 5% improvement in the attainment of children who had free school meals and 22% for those in care was also emphasised. It was explained that to achieve this the Early Years Advisory Team had focussed their efforts on strategies in language and social skills that would make a difference. Early Years' improvements were also attributed to better qualified Early Year's staff, a better understanding of the assessments, the use of leading Foundation Stage practitioners to support staff, and, within the pre-school settings, the formation of clusters of providers and schools to disseminate best practice.

Tracy was asked about how the most vulnerable children could be picked up at the earliest opportunity, before they reach school age; Members were informed that partner agencies such as Job Centre Plus and health visitors pass the information to Children's Centres where they know about families who might benefit from services. A new check for 2 year olds was also being introduced which aims to identify vulnerable children earlier; this would be carried out by health visitors and pre-schools. Members were informed about Children's Links, which the Local Authority commissions to work with pre-schools which need support with their procedures and policies relating to safeguarding, health and welfare.

There was discussion about improving life chances for children in the more deprived areas of the County. It was explained that tracking children through from the Early Years Foundation Stage to GCSE was complicated, due to different and continually changing criteria within the assessment processes for the different Key Stages. It was agreed that it was important to improve attainment chances through better intervention at an earlier age.

Members expressed their thanks to Tracey Sanders and Simon Francis for their comprehensive and encouraging report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Education Advisory Panel were delighted to note the:

- Progress made during 2011 – 2012 in raising outcomes for children in the EYFS.
- Work underway to achieve further improvements in outcomes for 2012 – 2013.

**109. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN EASTERN HAMPSHIRE CAUSING CONCERN**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of Children's Services identifying the schools in Eastern Hampshire that were causing concern (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The Area Director was pleased to report that 17 schools that had previously been below the floor standards in 2011 were now above it; he indicated that the work to achieve this had been on-going for three years.

**RESOLVED:**

- That the Panel noted the report.

**110. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

That in relation to the following item the press and public be excluded from the meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information for the reasons set out in the report.

**111. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN EASTERN HAMPSHIRE CAUSING CONCERN**

The Panel considered the exempt appendix of the Director of Children's Services on schools in Eastern Hampshire causing concern (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

Members discussed in detail issues relating to those schools.

[SUMMARY OF AN EXEMPT MINUTE]