

AT A MEETING of the EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL
held at The Castle, Winchester on 28 March 2013

PRESENT

Councillors: P Edgar (Chairman), B Collin, B D Dash, R J Kimber (Vice-Chairman), F Cowper, K Evans, R McIntosh

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

112. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Porter and M Kemp-Gee

113. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with 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.

114. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

115. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman informed Members that the Local authority was budgeting £165 million to create 8,000 new school places in the County, which included two new schools in Whiteley and Winchester.

The Panel were updated on the position regarding academies; there were now 29 Secondary academies, with Neville Lovett Community School converting in September 2013, of which 6 were sponsored academies; and there were 8 Primary academies, with a possible 2 further ones, of which 2 were sponsored. It was noted that since January the attitude of the DfE towards schools in Special Measures becoming sponsored academies was becoming

more hard line, particularly in rejecting the Local Authority's arguments that this was not the only solution. It was indicated that the Local Authority was already writing to the heads, governors and sponsors of academy schools which had declining results to express concern.

It was commented by Tony Blackshaw that the Church of England Diocesan Board of Education had indicated that they would instruct trustees of church schools to reject any moves by the DfE to force a school to become an academy if they were in disagreement with the decision.

The Chairman commented that relationships between the Local Authority and all Hampshire schools were generally as good as ever. It was noted that Ofsted would inspect the administration of Local Authorities that had a number of failing schools.

A brief mention was made of the safe-guarding issues at Stanbridge Earls School which had been in the news and which the Local Authority was having to act on, even though it was not an authority School.

Finally the Chairman mentioned the new strategic partnership that was being set up between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to deliver children's services on the island.

116. DEPUTATIONS

No deputations were made.

117. ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN ON FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM)

The Panel received a verbal presentation from Melanie Saunders on the attainment of children in receipt of free school meals. (Item 6 in the Minute Book)

The presentation began with an explanation of the Pupil Premium, which is a major government initiative specifically targeting funds at pupils on free school meals with the intention of improving their educational achievement. It was explained that research over the last thirty years showed that in all developed countries disadvantaged children do not do as well as their non-disadvantaged peers on a whole range of indicators. The Pupil Premium is the latest in twenty years' worth of policies by governments to try and tackle the problem. From 1 April 2013 schools would receive £900 for each FSM child; any child who had received FSM in the last six years would be entitled to this. In addition schools would receive £900 for each Looked After child and £300 for each Armed Services child. Schools would be expected to show how they are spending the Premium, its impact on achievement and how this is being measured; Ofsted is expected to assess these closely.

It was indicated that, for Hampshire, figures for the achievement gap between children on FSM and those not, show that in the Early Years there is no gap, at Key Stage 2 the gap is slightly above the national average but has narrowed considerably, but that at Key Stage 4 the gap has widened and is

10% above the national average. Drawing attention to the graph of GCSE performance by postcode deprivation, it was highlighted that some of the poorest children perform as well as their less-disadvantaged peers, but that none of the less-disadvantaged do as badly. She expanded on findings in an Ofsted report from February 2013 on what made schools successful or not in raising achievement in disadvantaged children. Finally she mentioned the activities that were planned within Hampshire to support schools in using their Pupil Premium effectively.

There was a wide-ranging debate by the members on the issues surrounding the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and measures that had been tried to remedy the achievement gap. There was a consensus that schools need to understand their community as well as their children and families. It was commented that children from non-Western ethnic groups, such as Chinese and Indian communities, often do not have the same achievement gap as there can be substantial community support. It was further noted that, because the inspection regime was getting tougher and there was a concentration on league tables at Key Stage 4, disadvantaged pupils, particularly in secondary schools, are very aware of targets and are likely to give up when they are continually being told that they are not achieving.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, thanked Melanie Saunders for a stimulating presentation which had provoked a broad and interesting debate.

RESOLVED:

- That the panel noted the report.

118. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN WESTERN HAMPSHIRE CAUSING CONCERN

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

RESOLVED:

- That the Panel noted the report.

119. 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.

120. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN WESTERN HAMPSHIRE CAUSING CONCERN

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

Members discussed in detail issues relating to those schools.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, expressed thanks to David Hardcastle for his report and with the Panel's agreement gave a vote of thanks to all the officers that support the Panel and the staff in HIAS that work to make the difference in Hampshire's schools.

[SUMMARY OF AN EXEMPT MINUTE]

The Chairman thanked all members of the Panel for their support over the last four years and the conscientious interest they had shown in some extremely important issues, expressing a hope that those who would not be continuing after the County Council elections in May would still retain their keen interest in education. The Panel also gave their thanks and appreciation for the work of the Chairman over the last four years.