

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee met on 20 March 2017.

Present: Councillors Kathryn Field (Chair), Stephen Shing (Vice-Chair), Kim Forward, Roy Galley, Alan Shuttleworth, Barry Taylor and Francis Whetstone, Councillor Julian Peterson (Borough and District Representative) Dr Ann Holt and Simon Parr (Diocesan Representatives).

Also present: Councillors Nick Bennet, (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability) and Councillor Sylvia Tidy (Lead Member for Children & Families).

1. Scrutiny Review of Review Educational Attainment at Key Stage 4

1.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee has completed its Scrutiny Review of Educational Attainment at Key Stage 4. A copy of the Committee's full report is attached as Appendix 1.

1.2 The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee decided a scrutiny review of Key Stage 4 Educational Attainment was timely as it would build on previous reviews of educational attainment. More specifically, and following a discussion of the barriers to sustained improvements in educational attainment, it was decided to focus on issues relating to teacher recruitment and retention. The Board agreed therefore that it would explore the issues/challenges schools and academies face in relation to the recruitment and retention of teachers and its potential impact on attainment.

1.3 The Board identified a wide range of issues which contribute to the pressures local schools are facing when trying to both recruit and retain existing teaching staff. These include:

- **Secondary school population increase.** The secondary school population is projected to increase to 3.04 million by 2020 and further until 2025 when it will peak at 3.33 million. The implication of this projection is that unless class sizes increase, a significantly higher number of secondary teachers will be needed in the coming years.
- **Workload Pressure and Accountability.** The Board considered evidence from both local and national sources relating to workload pressure as an issue impacting on teacher recruitment and retention rates. At senior teacher levels, the issue of accountability, and especially the implications of Ofsted judgements and school performance was seen by many as being a significant factor in recruitment.
- **East Sussex as a place to live and work.** There may also be issues which are peculiar to East Sussex. For example, East Sussex is a coastal authority. This means the county does not have access to the same number of potential recruits living in neighbouring areas compared to a 'landlocked' authority. East Sussex also has relatively high number of rural schools and recruiting to such schools can be more challenging (smaller schools can be perceived as having less career development prospects).

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1.4 Having identified the above factors, consideration was then given to the types of teacher recruitment and retention problems these pressures are causing. These include:

- **Subject specific issues.** Evidence from national and local sources indicates that there are subjects where recruitment is more challenging. For example, many schools report problems with finding staff to teach maths, science and English. In addition to these more widely known challenges, many schools also struggle to recruit teachers for geography and history.
- **Leadership roles.** The Board were presented with evidence relating to the importance of leadership roles and the shortages schools often have in this area. Evidence considered indicated that these shortages maybe set to increase and are most acute within secondary schools.

1.5 The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee **recommends** to the County Council –

East Sussex Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy 2015-2017

1.5.1 Additional work is undertaken to understand the scale of the recruitment challenge in East Sussex. This would help the Children's Services Department and local schools establish clear targets for teacher recruitment and in turn, enable progress to be effectively monitored.

1.5.2 More focus is given to the retention of existing teaching staff. This would include developing a clearer understanding of why teachers are leaving the profession and whether there are factors which are specific to East Sussex.

Succession planning and leadership

1.5.3 Work is undertaken to identify those schools with effective succession planning policies.

1.5.4 Having identified the range of successful policies which local schools have adopted, work is undertaken to update the current succession planning policy statement and to actively promote the new succession planning policy with governing boards and local schools. This would mean that governing boards and schools are better placed to promote suitably trained and motivated teachers to leadership roles at all levels as vacancies become available.

Recruitment Strategy - East Sussex as a unique place to live and work

1.5.5 The Education Secretary's announcement of the expansion of the 'Opportunity Areas Programme' to include Hastings and the further funding it attracts be investigated as a possible resource for improving teacher recruitment and retention rates.

1.5.6 Where appropriate, the scope of the investigation into the viability of developing housing projects as a way of attracting teachers as 'key workers' is widened; this should include exploring with all local borough and district councils the potential for including teachers as key workers within plans for future affordable housing projects.

Broadening the scope of the recruitment strategy

1.5.7 Consideration should be given to broadening the scope of the recruitment and retention strategy so as to explore other potential sources of recruitment and aligning these proposed developments within the 'Find Your Spark' recruitment campaign. This could include:

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- a) activities aimed at inspiring young people within our local schools to become teachers; and
- b) finding ways of encouraging parents who might be interested in teaching as a career.

Partnership working between schools

1.5.8 Schools should be encouraged to work together to find innovative ways to develop teacher training models which share resources and good practice, are cost-effective and produce quality teachers which meet the needs of our schools. Such partnership working should be encouraged and promoted by the Children's Services Department through the Schools Direct and SCITT programmes.

Broadening the geographical area of search for recruits

1.5.9 Work is undertaken to investigate developing an 'East Sussex Ambassador' role. This role would involve the Ambassador travelling to recruitment fairs across the country to promote East Sussex as a place to live and work. The role would require partnership working between schools, as the Ambassador role could be performed by appropriately trained senior staff and/or governors from different schools.

20 March 2017

KATHRYN FIELD
Chair