

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Performance Panel held in the Municipal Buildings, Falkirk on Thursday 29 September 2016 at 9.30 am.

Core Members: Stephen Bird
Cecil Meiklejohn (Convener)
Rosie Murray
Baillie Joan Paterson
Depute Provost John Patrick

Members Jim Blackwood
Attending: Brian McCabe

Officers: Tony Bragg, Education Team Manager
Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology & Improvement
Matthew Davies, Service Manager
Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services

PP11. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 11 August 2016 was approved.

PP12. Rolling Action Log

Decision

The rolling action log was noted.

PP13. Children's Services Performance Update

The panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services setting out a summary of performance for the period January to September 2016. Robert Naylor provided an overview of the report.

The panel sought information on engagement work with parents. Tony Bragg stated that traditionally there had been good levels of engagement with parents who had a positive experience of education. The Service worked to engage with parents who were more reluctant to be involved in their child's

education. Robert Naylor highlighted the growth of early years provision to 600 hours and that more early intervention programmes had helped to improve educational outcomes. There were improved transition arrangements between nursery and primary school and there were parenting programmes run in small groups on literacy. The Service often took a bespoke approach and reached out to vulnerable families to support parents to support their child's learning.

Members asked for an explanation of 'value added'. Tony Bragg stated that this related to how an individual's learning progresses. A baseline measurement is taken at the start of the academic year and the child's progress is assessed at the end of term. The degree to which they have developed beyond the average level is referred to as the "added value".

A question was asked on the involvement of parents in the school improvement planning process. Tony Bragg stated that nearly all schools engaged with parents in the school improvement planning process. Previously, parents were only informed, rather than actively involved. Information on the level of parental engagement at schools in the Braes cluster would be provided after the meeting.

Information was sought on the Partnership Schools Scotland initiative. Tony Bragg stated that this work was supported by the Scottish Parent Teacher Council and funded by Skills Development Scotland. A web link to the information would be provided to members.

The panel asked for an explanation of the role of SQA nominees. Tony Bragg advised that there were SQA nominees in place in high schools. There were specific individuals for specific courses and there were 37 nominees throughout Falkirk. Two Quality Assurance Moderation Support Officers (QAMSOs) would be nominated by each cluster and there would be two further QAMSOs from the centre. QAMSOs would be released from schools to take forward their work in delivering excellence. This would have local benefits as the Service would be better informed of what was being expected of young people in their examinations. Robert Naylor stated that the QAMSOs would cover all curricular areas and that there would be two dedicated to literacy and numeracy respectively.

Members asked for further information on the number of subjects students were presented in. Robert Naylor advised that the Scottish Government's guidelines recommended that 6 or 7 subjects were taken in the fourth year of high school. In response to a question on early presentation Tony Bragg advised that the previous rationale had fallen following the introduction of the Broad General Education approach.

The panel sought information on how the Service compared the performance of young people in areas of deprivation to the results in other authorities. Robert Naylor stated that previously Falkirk had been grouped with four comparator authorities. Falkirk had consistently been either first or second of that group in relation to overall attainment. However, following the

introduction of Insight, the Service would be able to make comparisons of attainment in relation to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Insight would also allow school by school and subject by subject comparisons within the authority.

Members discussed their role in monitoring the performance of looked after children and how better analysis of the data could be achieved. They acknowledged that making year to year comparisons with such a small data set was challenging. Robert Naylor stated that there had been a lot of discussion on how to get more meaningful data on the overall wellbeing of looked after children and young people. The Service had developed a tool to measure improvements in a variety of areas. The approach of the Service would be to determine progress made from the time that a child or young person became looked after to when they left care. Tracking this distance travelled would be a focus going forward. It was important to recognise other achievements made by looked after young people alongside educational attainment such as development of their social skills.

The panel then asked how the Service sought to raise the educational ambition of the looked after population. Robert Naylor stated that work to increase a child's sense of ambition was tackled on an individual basis. Each looked after child had a key worker. At service improvement meetings the progress of each looked after child was discussed and the Service ensured that all class teachers with a looked after child in their class knew who they were.

Members asked for information on the Service's commitment to meeting the needs of all looked after children. Matthew Davies highlighted that each looked after child and young person would have a plan and that this would be reviewed through the statutory reviewing framework.

Information was sought on the long term positive destinations of former looked after children. Matthew Davies advised that work had been undertaken on this area previously and that the Falkirk cohort's outcomes reflected the national picture. This information would be circulated to members after the meeting.

The panel asked for further information on the use of e-learning in staff training. Robert Naylor stated that the appropriateness of using e-learning modules was assessed by topic. He highlighted that for data protection, e-learning had been particularly successful as this was a compulsory area and the system allowed tracking of who had completed the module. He advised that young people were used to using virtual learning environments and that all staff were engaging well. In relation to the use of e-learning in schools, Tony Bragg highlighted the use of SCHOLAR which had been developed by Heriot-Watt University, which provided subject based content to supplement classroom learning. The tool could be accessed by young people at home.

Members sought an update on the Scottish Government's paper "Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education" and what the likely impact on teacher workloads would be in terms of collecting data. Robert Naylor advised that Head Teachers were expected to engage in this work and that small groups of Head Teachers would look at specific actions. The Service had asked Head Teachers to respond to the governance review but this was not mandatory.

The panel asked for an update on the young workforce indicator which was not on target. Robert Naylor stated that in terms of publishing the "Developing the Young Workforce Plan" that funding had been received to take forward the associated work and would result in the establishment of a Forth Valley wide board. This board would include Forth Valley College along with the three councils. The Service was working with Development Services in conjunction with the college on work with modern apprentices.

Members sought further information relating to the percentage of school leavers entering a positive destination at the initial survey stage. Robert Naylor stated that there was usually liaison between Skills Development Scotland and the Service regarding the date for the 'data lift'. This allowed the Service to update the information and have the results be based on the most up to date position. In 2014/15 there had been a miscommunication and the data which was used for analysis was not the finalised picture for Falkirk. However, the six month follow up survey showed that the figure was 92.6%, Falkirk's highest ever follow up level.

The panel asked why the number of daytime respite weeks provided to children with a disability had decreased. Matthew Davies advised that a cause for the decrease was not known but that the approach of the 'gate keeping' group had not changed and judgements were being made on the same grounds as previous years. The situation was being looked at going forward.

Members asked why the amount of self directed support used for daytime respite had decreased. Matthew Davies advised that work on self directed support had largely been focussed toward adult services but that work would be undertaken to understand the decrease and then be provided to members.

Decision

The performance panel noted the report.

Baillie Paterson and Councillors Blackwood and McCabe left the meeting during consideration of the previous item.