

Report to:	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Item number	8
Relevant Officer:	Steve Sienkiewicz, Scrutiny Manager.
Date of Meeting	16 th October 2014

EDUCATION SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The Committee to consider the report of the Education Scrutiny Review Panel.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the ongoing work of the Education Scrutiny Review Panel and make comments or recommendations as appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure the scrutiny process continues to be fully accountable and an important part of the democratic process.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 Tackling child poverty, raising aspirations and improving educational achievement.

5.0 Background Information

- 5.1 At its meeting on 25th October 2012, the Scrutiny Committee appointed a Panel to undertake scrutiny of education matters including consideration of school performance information and Ofsted Inspection Reports.
- 5.2 The Panel is supported by Delyth Curtis, Director of People, Carl Baker, Deputy Director of People (Children's Services), Charlotte Clarke, Head of Education Standards and Effectiveness and Chris Kelly, Senior Democratic Services Adviser (Scrutiny).
- 5.3 The membership of the Panel comprises of Councillors Stansfield (Lead Member), D Coleman, Green, Hutton and O'Hara.
- 5.4 The Panel has agreed a timetable of meetings based around school term times, with a total of six meetings scheduled for the academic year. Since the last report to the Scrutiny Committee the Panel has held three meetings and an additional two special meetings have been held to monitor the implementation of the Local Authority School Improvement Action Plan. This report to Committee summarises the work undertaken by the Panel in those meetings.
- 5.5 The Panel meets within schools across Blackpool and prior to each meeting receives a tour of the school utilised as a venue. This gives Members a chance to speak directly to Headteachers and/or school children about their school.
- 6.0 **School Performance Information**
- 6.1 At each meeting, performance information from a selection of schools is received by the Panel comprising a mix of schools e.g. maintained, academy, primary, secondary and special.
- 6.2 Since the last report to the Scrutiny Committee, the Panel has considered school performance information from Bispham High School, Kincaig Primary School, Our Lady RC Primary School, St. Kentigern RC Primary School, Hawes Side Primary Academy, Holy Family Catholic Primary School, St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School and Montgomery High School. As well as a composite report on Blackpool Schools Education Performance 2013/2014 for all Blackpool schools.
- 6.3 A key theme that Panel Members had considered from the information was that Blackpool schools were improving in most performance measured indicators. However, it had been noted by the Panel that in most areas Blackpool schools were not improving at a rate as fast as the national average. Members queried what was being done to address this challenge and noted that the Schools Improvement Team was working with schools on this issue.

7.0 **Ofsted Inspections**

7.1 Since the last report to Scrutiny Committee in November 2013, the Panel has considered the latest Ofsted inspection reports of Marton Primary School, St. John Vianney's Primary School, Montgomery High School, Bispham Endowed CE Primary School and Roseacre Primary Academy. The results from the inspections have been mixed and range from 'good' to 'inadequate'. The Panel is continuing to monitor Ofsted inspections and in particular those schools that receive judgements of 'inadequate.'

7.2 Members also receive an overview of current Ofsted gradings for all Blackpool schools and identify key points and actions from this data. The overview continues to highlight that over 75 per cent of primary school places in Blackpool are rated as 'good' or better, but only 25 per cent of high schools have that rating. Members continued to query what was being done to improve this statistic.

8.0 **Schools Causing Concern to the Authority/Register of Support**

8.1 The Panel has continued to receive information regarding schools causing concern and information relating to the Register of Support. Members have continued to receive HMI special measures monitoring inspection letters to monitor the progress being made by schools.

8.2 Academies have continued to be monitored by the Panel and the authority was holding discussions with a number of schools to determine how best to provide support to ensure improvement.

9.0 **Statistical First Releases**

9.1 At each meeting Members have been advised of any relevant information published. Information has been received regarding Participation in education, training and employment 16 – 19, Qualifications at 19, Looked After Children attainment, Neet statistics, Pupil absences in schools in England, Special Education Needs in schools in England, National Curriculum assessments at Key Stage 2 and School applications and offers.

10.0 **Local Authority Data Matrix**

10.1 The Panel continues to receive an up to date data matrix at each meeting. This matrix includes the data used by the Department for Education and Ofsted to measure the authority. Data is highlighted by exception with Members noting and questioning key characteristics.

11.0 **Local Authority School Improvement Action Plan**

11.1 Since the last report to Committee, the Panel has held two special meetings to consider the authority's progress against the Local Authority School Improvement Action Plan.

11.2 The Panel received information regarding the school improvement priorities, which were:

- Improving the quality of school leadership
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning
- Improving school attendance
- Raising attainment at KS4 especially in Maths and English
- Raising attainment of more able pupils
- Managing pupil behaviour whilst reducing exclusions
- Closing the attainment gap for different groups of pupils

11.3 Members asked questions regarding the plan and were provided with details of the actions undertaken and the progress by themes.

12.0 Witnesses/representatives

12.1 Councillor Stansfield, Scrutiny Lead/Shadow Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Culture and Heritage.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

None

13.0 Legal considerations:

13.1 None

14.1 Human Resources considerations:

14.1 None

15.0 Equalities considerations:

15.1 None

16.0 Financial considerations:

16.1 None

17.0 Risk management considerations:

17.1 None

18.0 Ethical considerations:

18.1 None

19.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

19.1 None

20.0 Background papers:

20.1 None