

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Tuesday 24 May 2016 at 6.30 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillor Tim Briggs, Councillor Edward Davie (Co-Chair) and Councillor Max Deckers Dowber (Co-Chair)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Danial Adilypour and Councillor Vaila McClure

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Councillor Jane Edbrooke, Councillor Claire Holland and Councillor Jane Pickard

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1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ed Davie, co-chair of the commission, welcomed everyone to the meeting and all present introduced themselves. Councillor Davie explained that this was the second annual Education Scrutiny Commission, whereby a number of officer reports would be received and scrutinised and commission members would have the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns.

Councillor Max Deckers Dowber, co-chair, declared that he had recently had an application for an Education, Health & Care (EHC) plan for his son declined by Lambeth and had entered into discussions regarding deferring his first year at primary school.

Apologies for absence were noted.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2015 were agreed as an accurate record of the proceedings. It was noted that various matters arising would be picked up during the course of this meeting.

3. RAISING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN LAMBETH SCHOOLS 2014-15

Cathy Twist, Director of Education, Learning and Skills, and Feyisa Demie, Head of Research, Schools Research and Statistics Unit, introduced the

report, which looked back at the previous year's achievement and attainment in Lambeth's schools, and made the following points:

- The report provided an analysis by gender, ethnicity, English fluency and mobility (noting that Lambeth had a particularly mobile population) and also discussed the achievement gap
- The report was generally positive, with attainment above the national average at Key Stages 1 and 2
- GCSE results were also above average and had been for some time; however, this progress was not reflected so much post 16. It was noted that the post 16 cohort was generally quite different due to pupils changing schools to go to 6th form, or pursuing vocational or other pathways
- Portuguese pupils remained among the lower attaining groups but were making progress
- The picture regarding Black Caribbean pupils – another traditionally underachieving group – was varied, with the gap narrowing at KS1, no further progress at KS2, and GCSE results falling back slightly. Some good progress had been made in recent years but this cohort did remain a concern
- African pupils were at or above the borough average and were the highest achieving at GCSE
- Somali pupils were previously underachieving but now in line with borough averages
- White British pupils achieved well at KS1 and KS2, and had improved at GCSE level over the past 2-3 years
- Girls outperformed boys in every year, and for all GCSE indicators
- Fully bilingual pupils were consistently the highest attainers; this demonstrated that becoming fluent in English was a good indicator of future success for those who spoke English as an additional language (EAL)
- Pupils eligible for free school meals did better in Lambeth than nationally, though were still below the borough average

In response to questions from commission members, the following points were made:

- The underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils was a national issue and had been for decades. In order to explore the reasons for this and identify the key issues, a study was underway involving around seven Lambeth schools. Over 120 teachers, heads, parents, governors, pupils and educational psychologists had been interviewed, and focus groups had been held with first and second generation Black Caribbeans. The detailed findings were expected to be published in November or December 2016 but preliminary recurring issues identified included poverty, single parent families, low wage factors and perceived institutional racism related to disaffection with the system. There would be two reports – one on underachievement and the other on best practice – and there were plans to run a national conference post publication. The reports would contain recommendations for Lambeth, central government and schools, and would be available for next year's education commission to scrutinise
- Black Caribbean pupils were also disproportionately represented in the exclusions data (see also item 6)
- A report was produced by the Head of Research in 2002 on raising

achievement in Black Caribbean pupils; this had influenced national government thinking, and it was hoped the new study would do the same. Good practice identified and taken on board from the 2002 report included involving family members in a positive way, ensuring positive role models and influences in curriculum materials and reflecting the black and minority ethnic (BME) population in staff

- While noting the national context, 25% of the Lambeth population was African or Caribbean and this made addressing chronic underachievement in the borough an even bigger issue
- Regarding GCSE results, these needed to be treated with a certain amount of caution as the way they were marked and assessed, including grade boundaries, was changed in 2014
- There were concerns that the new curriculum did not reflect the diversity of London and there were signs that the performance of a number of groups in the capital may deteriorate as a result. The cause of the drop in Black African achievement over the past year may also be curriculum related, though this was uncertain. Analysis of the outcomes of curriculum change on gender and ethnicity would be carried out and could be reported next year in order that trends could be tracked
- Officers believed that the top three things Lambeth had done to raise standards were: having shared high aspirations for everybody, including the less well performing pupils; intolerance of failure including the challenging of those who were underperforming and better leadership; and having a very inclusive approach to development of school leaders, into whom a great deal had been invested. EAL pupils – who made up 46% of the school population – were also being well supported in Lambeth
- There were different perspectives on the development of school leaders and it was acknowledged that things were not perfect but a great deal of work was done to ensure they were representative of the borough population. It was important to spot potential future leaders at an early stage and ensure they were appropriately developed via secondments and apprenticeships to take on leadership roles
- Officers' three main concerns regarding educational achievement were: changes in methods of testing and assessment – whereby the onus was more on final tests rather than coursework – negatively affecting the highly mobile Lambeth population, with its significant proportion of EAL pupils; the potential for the national policy landscape to lead to the expansion of some schools at the expense of others, thus increasing inequalities and division; and the ability of Lambeth to work coherently together with all the schools in the borough as more of them became largely independent of the local authority
- It would be useful to know how Lambeth compared to other boroughs regarding post 16 / 6th form achievement, and whether an increase in provision could help, if possible

The Cabinet Member for Children and Schools summed up discussion on this item by emphasising that Lambeth should be showing the way regarding tackling the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils and suggested that, following the publication of the research at the end of the year, the borough could seek to pilot any resultant new initiatives; this could also be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny at an appropriate time.

Regarding the comments on institutional racism, the Council and its partners needed to show leadership on this issue at every level and this included improving the diversity of the workforce, including more black police officers. She also echoed the concerns expressed regarding the decreasing influence of local authorities in education.

4. LAMBETH SCHOOL INSPECTION OUTCOMES 2014-15

The Director of Education, Learning and Skills introduced the report, which showed the results of the previous academic year's school inspections. The picture was very pleasing but it was noted that the inspection framework often changed and was constantly getting tougher; this meant schools were working hard to always be "Ofsted-ready". Furthermore, the Schools Improvement Monitoring Group (SIMG), which met three times a year, oversaw the improvement of all schools in the borough, providing challenge and intervention whenever they were struggling for whatever reason.

In response to questions from commission members, the following points were made:

- The report was very reassuring and it was pleasing to see departmental challenge and support in place via SIMG independent of the Ofsted process. Congratulations were offered to all involved, recognising that positive inspection results were hard won
- It was asked how many inspections had been triggered by either safeguarding concerns or parental complaint, and how schools were subsequently supported. Officers replied that no such triggered inspections had occurred. Ofsted did provide feedback if either of these situations arose but did not investigate complaints itself; instead concerns were passed to the LA to investigate or if less serious picked up at the next inspection. At this stage in the meeting, Councillor Davie thanked Annie Hudson, the newly appointed Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services, for attending, and invited her to introduce herself.

The Interim Strategic Director for Children's Services explained that her primary focus was providing additional capacity to help with the pace and momentum of the children's social care improvement journey, though she was also responsible for education matters. She informed members that her background was in social work and she had worked as Director of Children's Services in Bristol and as Chief Executive of the College of Social Work before joining Lambeth. She expressed a view that the education and schools agenda was critical for delivery of good social care and vice versa.

Councillor Davie agreed there was a strong crossover between education and social care and highlighted the high number of looked after children who were not in education, employment or training as a particular issue which needed addressing, though this was being looked at via the Children's Services Scrutiny Commission. He concluded this item by congratulating all concerned at the very positive picture painted by the report, whilst acknowledging that continuing hard work would be necessary to maintain such high standards.

5. PUPIL PLACE PLANNING AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Director of Education, Learning and Skills introduced the report and stated that:

- This was an annual report which would also go to Cabinet later in the year, looking at pupil place planning and school building to ensure the number of school places in the borough was adequate. It explained the methodology, the history and background to the additional places which had been provided via bulge classes or new buildings, and future projections
- Primary school places had been expanded by about a third over the last 6-7 years to accommodate a baby boom, most of whom were now expected to transfer to secondary schools in the borough; planning was therefore focusing on increasing secondary places
- The scrutiny commission had challenged officers last year to have Lambeth's methodology peer reviewed; this review was conducted by a peer from Hounslow Council and the resultant report was included as an appendix to the main report. This exercise was very helpful in providing reassurance that Lambeth's methodology was sound, while also offering recommendations for future improvement

Councillor Davie explained that the peer review was carried out in response to a request from a group connected to Archbishop Sumner (ABS) School, who had concerns pupil place planning was not being dealt with properly. ABS had chosen to take a bulge class in 2015, though this was not authorised by the Council and had also caused some ill feeling among other schools in the Oval cluster. A discussion on this took place and the following points were made:

- Members were pleased that the peer review had shown Lambeth's methodology was sound
- Officers confirmed that ABS had again chosen to take an unauthorised bulge class in 2016 despite the previous concerns which had been raised and the results of the peer review, which had been reported to the school
- The majority of members believed this was unfair on other local schools, who might have their financial viability undermined, and questioned what sanctions, if any, the Council could impose. Officers responded that the Council had made its feelings clear but since the school was its own admission authority, it could choose to take a bulge class
- Councillor Briggs stated that he did not agree with the rest of the commission on this point and wished to note his support for ABS, which was an outstanding school and was responding to demand for extra places from local parents
- Councillor Davie stated that the whole commission acknowledged ABS was outstanding and this was not a question of supporting the school but rather about being fair to all schools in the area; indeed, last year the other 11 schools in the Oval cluster had written to say the ABS bulge would undermine their ability to continue to be outstanding. It was also noted that the diocese did not approve of the unilateral decision to take a bulge class. The commission, when agreeing to recommend a peer review last year in the face of accusations of shortcomings in the pupil place planning process, commented that the level of disagreement was making relations difficult, and he was very disappointed ABS had not taken the opportunity to respond more positively

- Councillor Claire Holland, in attendance as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Schools but also a ward councillor for Oval, echoed Councillor Davie's view and stated that she knew of a number of complaints from parents in the area. The Council had responded positively and proactively by carrying out the peer review and there was great disappointment at the school's actions
- Maggie Harriott, Education and Strategy Manager, confirmed that 48 first preference applications were received for the 60 places which would be available at ABS for the September 2016 intake due to the second unauthorised bulge. Only 56 offers were made in total. Councillor Davie requested that the full breakdown of applications be sent to the commission in writing and that the commission then write to ABS outlining its concerns, while noting Councillor Briggs' contrary view

Members then questioned officers more generally on pupil place planning issues and the following points were made:

- The Gipsy Hill Federation was due to take additional Year 7 pupils from 2017. It was noted that some primary schools in the federation had expanded and would have some additional space which could be used to house year 7 pupils for the first year in the interim, though it was accepted this was not ideal. The schools in question was a free school and it was therefore the Education Funding Agency's responsibility to identify sites and then discuss these with officers, councillors and Planning
- The projections suggested that in 2018-19 the borough would start to have more primary places than pupils, and members questioned whether this could mean schools closing, noting that this had caused problems in the past while acknowledging this was a difficult thing to manage. Mike Pocock, Director of Business, Growth and Regeneration, responded that, since newer schools were more energy efficient and cheaper to run, it was easier for schools to operate under capacity; also the population of London was projected to increase over time so it made sense to hold on to school sites
- Members asked for thoughts and progress on the three recommendations which arose from the peer review. On recommendation 1, officers responded that producing roll-based rather than demand-based projections could constrain projections to the places available, but the GLA were currently producing London-wide roll-based projections and the Council would look at this. With regards to recommendation 2, good links had been created with Housing and Planning. On recommendation 3, the annual report to be shared with schools and other partners had already been started
- In relation to the reasons for secondary school pupils moving out of the borough for education, there were a number of factors including good public transport links, the proximity of many homes to the borough boundary, and people wishing to attend single sex or faith schools. There were similar trends in other boroughs and the patterns did not suggest significant negative push factors
- Faith schools, academies and free schools all acted as their own admission authorities; only community schools had their admissions completely managed by the Council (though the Council oversaw the pan-London applications process and liaised with all schools as

part of this). Officers did however work with all schools to try to ensure they did not expand unless needed. The recent government white paper proposed that Local Authorities would continue to have a responsibility for pupil place planning yet it was likely more schools would become academies and there was a concern that this could mean more popular schools taking unilateral action in an attempt to thrive in what would be a more “market-based” system. Councillor Dyer expressed particular concern at the effect this could have on inequalities and urged officers to start considering how to deal with this. Councillor Briggs objected to the use of the word “market”, which could be seen as a crude term, and expressed a view that the proposed changes would drive up standards generally and result in sharing of good practice

6. SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

The Director of Education, Learning and Skills introduced the briefing paper which had been circulated to members, noting this was still in draft form. It was explained that the Inclusion Team dealt with exclusions, children missing education, home education, teenage pregnancy, safeguarding and alternative provisions, including those that may be unregistered.

In response to questions from members of the commission, the following points were made:

- The exclusions reported related to Lambeth residents, though some were excluded from out of borough schools. However, it was then Lambeth’s responsibility to find a place of education
- It was noted that it was very difficult to get a clear current picture as exclusions were reported in retrospect and reporting was not always accurate
- On fixed term exclusions, these could sometimes be very short and the data may also refer to multiple fixed term exclusions of the same child
- The information in the report was what was reported to the Department for Education (DfE) and used the DfE’s descriptors; it was for schools to summarise the reasons for the exclusion to meet these criteria, and this could explain why so many were grouped under “Other”. Ideally Lambeth would have as much information as possible in order to try to determine whether, for example, “disruptive behaviour” referred to the same or multiple issues, whether an EHC plan was needed, or whether Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) needed to be involved. Schools were meeting DfE requirements, however
- When permanent exclusions took place, documentation was received including a letter from the head and supporting information with more detailed reasons
- Managed moves were agreements between heads, who then notified the Council. They operated on a trial basis; if the trial failed then the pupil would return to their home school where they could then face exclusion
- Regarding the geographical picture of exclusions, the majority related to the south east of the borough as this was where the most schools were situated
- The Inclusion Manager worked with schools and across boroughs to try to ensure advance warning of any potential exclusions and

look at alternatives. This could include managed transfers – this was where all parties agreed on a transfer and resulted in the permanent exclusion being withdrawn – 17 of which had occurred this year. This could only happen when a school could demonstrate they had put all possible measures in place, and almost all schools considered this as an option. Parents had no right of appeal against managed transfers as they only took place with parental agreement

- Regarding ethnicity of excluded pupils, the figures for Black Caribbean children stood out, as did Mixed White and Black Caribbean; these two groups combined comprised the vast majority of permanent exclusions. It was important to work with schools to be notified when there were issues in order that appropriate intervention could be put in place. This could include the police allocating charity-based positive mentors or use of the aspirational families support scheme, where the appropriate criteria were met; in any event, building positive relationships was key
- Councillor Dyer was happy to see managed transfers being used but stressed that the scale of exclusions of young black men was concerning and needed attention. She queried the increased level of primary exclusions and asked for more information on ethnicity, stressing that additional data was needed more generally to get a better picture of the situation and thus help support children better. She also believed Black Caribbean pupils were sometimes excluded for reasons they and their parents didn't understand and this was a concern
- Some schools, such as Dunraven, had particularly useful strategies whereby processes were built in to support families from the school. It was asked what best practice models had been identified that could be used more widely
- It was noted that the current waiting time for CAMHS was around 45 weeks and this was unacceptable. Lack of CAMHS provision could be a factor in exclusions, where it was evidenced that mental health was an issue. In such circumstances, other interventions would be put in place in the interim, such as parenting classes, placing the pupil in a smaller class or setting a series of goals for behavioural improvement
- The Cabinet Member for Families and Young People agreed that the identification of best practice was important, concurring that Dunraven was a particularly good example, and explained that a new CAMHS strategy was now in place which put more emphasis on preventative work in the community and in schools. Councillor Dyer commented that working directly with communities themselves was a particular challenge and she believed the Council hadn't yet found an appropriate vehicle to work with families and communities strategically to help support them in tackling issues, though this had begun to be addressed via the Black Health and Wellbeing (BHWB) Scrutiny Commission, from which learning could perhaps be drawn. She stated that educational issues often arose from family settings such as poverty and mental health issues in parents, and suggested a lead officer could be identified to work with the Black Wellbeing Partnership; this was the proposed vehicle to take forward implementation of the BHWB Commission's recommendations
- Schools were able to purchase a place at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) at an early stage, retain the pupil on roll and work through the issues

- It was rare for families to win appeals against permanent exclusion
- Any educational provision identified as operating in the borough was contacted and assessed as to whether they needed to be registered. In the event of concerns, an inspection could be carried out; alternatively, some may not meet the criteria for having to be registered
- The aim was to avoid exclusions in vulnerable groups by any means possible. A multi-agency vulnerable pupils panel existed to help anticipate issues, including police and health representatives
- There had been an increase recently in very young children with behavioural issues; it was possible this could be related to changes in welfare and family support and this was being looked into
- Links with children's social care and CAMHS, including appropriate referrals, were important
- All children were required to be on the school roll somewhere unless they were home educated, in which case assessments were carried out annually. If the Council was made aware of a child who was not connected to a school, it had a statutory responsibility to find educational provision

7. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Families and Young People introduced the item and stated that two major pieces of work were being undertaken; expansion of special schools for autism and speech and language difficulties, and the move from SEN statements to Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plans. This move was progressing at pace and was on target. Following up on an issue from last year's commission regarding communications, she believed this was still an issue but had improved considerably. She also met with parents of children with disabilities regularly in various forums and relations, though not perfect, had improved.

The Director of Education, Learning and Skills explained that the Council's responsibilities had widened under the Children and Families Act to cover young people up to the age of 25 who were on EHC plans, and attempts were being made to increase the number of SEN places following a programme of building. Sixth forms had been added, resource bases existed in 10 mainstream schools and new units had been opened; in addition the Vanguard Free School was scheduled to open in 2018 and cater for 78 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). It was hoped that this would, in time, also reduce the cost of SEN transport. A SEND area inspection was expected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, and preparations for this were being put in place.

In response to questions from members of the commission, the following points were made:

- It would be good to begin thinking about how effective pre-decision scrutiny could be carried out with regards to such issues as SEN transport, children's centres, adventure playgrounds and One O'clock Clubs in order that scrutiny members and the public could input into the thinking at an appropriate stage. The Cabinet Member for Families and Young People stated she would consider this and suggested autumn may be an appropriate time, though this would be confirmed in due course
- SEN transport was reviewed annually to ensure it was fit for

purpose. It was quite costly to provide and the Council tried to support people to make their own journeys wherever possible

- With reference to the seven key issues related to the Children and Families Act listed on p74 of the agenda pack, it was queried how personal budgets were working and how many families were opting to manage their own budget. Officers responded that there were currently just four families doing this, for such purposes as providing additional support for home education, additional physiotherapy and early years hearing impairment support; however, there were many more families who took direct payments for transport
- The EHC plan conversion process constituted a significant workload and was very time consuming to begin with but was now being done more efficiently. A change had been made to enable EHC coordinators to work closely with families going through the process and this had made it more person-centred
- The change in funding arrangements for schools had been challenging as there was no additional funding for those without EHC plans, who might previously have been on school action or school action plus. Caseloads had been very sizeable with a 25% increase in requests; this pattern was reflected across London
- Work was being done with Early Years providers to identify needs at an early stage and support children in requesting or obtaining EHC plans before they started school

8. UPDATE ON CENTRAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS TO EDUCATION

The Director of Education, Learning and Skills introduced the report, which sought to capture the implications not just of the new government white paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere, but also a range of other central government initiatives which would affect schools and their relationship with the local authority. The following key points were made:

- The Education and Adoption Act was now law; this allowed the Secretary of State to force failing or coasting schools to become academies. The definition of “coasting” would be provided in forthcoming regulations following consultation late last year but would be based on pupils’ progress over a three year period which could be retrospective
- Whilst it had been announced on 5 May that schools would no longer all be forced to become academies, the general direction of travel still appeared to be very much towards the academy model
- Proposals for the national funding formula for schools would give rise to a flatter funding settlement across the country, and this could have a negative impact in Lambeth
- New national and regional schools commissioners would be in charge of academy conversion and oversee academy chains
- A new national curriculum and revised assessment arrangements were being introduced – including a change in gradings from a letter to a number-based system from 2017 – and there would be new definitions of what success and failure looked like
- Lambeth’s schools had been moving towards greater autonomy over the last few years and worked in 10 clusters. These clusters were geographical and included schools of varying governance type and phase

- Half of the secondary schools and three primaries in the borough were academies currently. Quite a lot of networking and mutual support took place and the Council planned to continue supporting this approach
- If clusters wished to convert to multi-academy trusts (MATs) in future, they were in a good position to do so. Whether this happened or not, there was still a desire to work together as a borough
- Local Authorities could not currently sponsor academy chains but were able to set up a trading arm and create a subsidiary which then could do so
- The Council was working with schools on exploring the possibility of an overarching partnership or trust which all schools would be part of regardless of governance

In response to questions from members of the commission, the following points were made:

- Regarding funding, Lambeth currently did well due to its high levels of deprivation and high proportion of EAL pupils, but it was likely these factors would be given less weight in future
- More deprived areas would still get higher levels of pupil premium but there was no plan in the new formula to differentiate between different schools within an area
- Currently, funding went via the Local Authority and was scrutinised by the schools forums; under the new plans budgets would go directly to schools from the DfE so there was no opportunity for the Council to influence or adjust the money given to individual schools (though MATs would be able to do this)
- In response to a question regarding how education officers' posts would be paid for, the Director of Education, Learning and Skills stated that part of the dedicated schools grant could be used, with the agreement of the schools forum. There was also an educational services grant and in future it was likely there would be a Local Authority block grant which would contain an element to cover the responsibilities which would be retained by the Council, such as SEN and pupil place planning, though it was not known how much this would amount to
- The Council had responded to the first funding consultation but there would be a second one looking at finer details. It was hoped responses to this could highlight issues such as pupil need around EAL, deprivation and area costs, such as the cost of recruiting teachers in inner London. Councillor Davie suggested that all councillors be alerted to the consultation and how they might participate, noting that many councillors may also have contact with other interested parties and groups
- On teacher recruitment and retention, Lambeth had two teaching schools which ran teacher training, as well as a support programme for newly qualified teachers. Advice was also offered on a range of issues such as housing, and many younger teachers shared accommodation. However, most of these young teachers could not afford to settle down in the borough and therefore tended to move elsewhere, meaning there was a real gap between younger and older teachers. It was necessary to look at creative ways to tackle this, possibly including initiatives around key worker housing
- Regarding paragraph 5.1, p95, there had been little clarification in

the Queen's speech. It was assumed that the Education for All Bill which was mentioned would be another enabling act and that the detail – such as on local authority involvement in MATs – would emerge in regulations further down the line

- In response to a question concerning retention of local authority staff, it was stated that three school improvement advisors had recently left and another would be going soon. One new advisor had been recruited but the situation was difficult. There were currently two school improvement advisors alongside the Director for Education, Learning and Skills and a number of associate advisors (who tended to be heads elsewhere). It was noted that this was a critical role and improvement advisors needed to be well qualified

The Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Schools summed up this item by stating that schools in the borough greatly valued the role of the local authority in education, particularly in areas such as planning and strategy as well as mediating and communicating. Schools were worried about the future and the report was extremely helpful in pulling together and summarising the key issues. Officers were being vigilant in preparing for likely eventualities, including being ready to work in partnership, but she did not agree with the ideological reduction of the role of local authorities. She and the lead Cabinet Member would do what they could to help as a communication channel between officers and other councillors.

In summing up the commission, Councillor Davie thanked the borough's schools, teachers, pupils, parents and education department for supporting the high level of excellence in Lambeth's schools, noting that this was particularly important in an area with high levels of deprivation such as Lambeth in order to enable people to overcome sometimes impoverished backgrounds and go on to live rewarding lives. He also thanked officers and members of the commission for their valuable input and highlighted the following key issues which had emerged from the meeting:

- The commission recognised and saluted the improvement in the borough's schools as evidenced by the reports, though noted its concern regarding the relative underperformance of certain groups, particularly Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black Caribbean, and Portuguese children, as well as the number of those with Caribbean heritage in the school exclusion data. The research into underachievement in Black Caribbean pupils was particularly welcome, since this particular group were disproportionately represented in so many other cohorts, such as in social care, victims and perpetrators of crime, unemployment and mental health needs. Lambeth had a big responsibility to show leadership on this issue due to the significant proportion of BME residents in the borough, and Councillor Dyer's comments regarding making connections with communities were especially pertinent
- It was noted that officers were of the opinion that the new curriculum could have a negative effect on a diverse borough like Lambeth, and the commission would like to know more about this, including what it could do to help
- More comparative data would be useful to explore the reasons why attainment levels dropped off post 16; it would also be helpful to explore whether anything needed to be done to increase capacity in the borough

- A review of pre-exclusion support was requested, and representations should be made to the DfE to expand its descriptors to provide more information on the reasons for exclusions
- Commission members wished to be informed as to what role they and others could play in the consultation on school funding
- More information was requested on what opportunities might exist to develop some kind of overarching partnership trust in order that links with schools could continue in the way they valued, regardless of forthcoming legislation
- A paper was requested on key worker housing to explore whether more could be done to provide housing for teachers
- A letter would be sent to Archbishop Sumner School reflecting the commission's views on the unauthorised bulge classes it had decided to take

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

CHAIR

Date of Despatch:

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