

CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 11TH NOVEMBER, 2019

Present – Councillors Baines, Brady, Dean, Ibrahim, Khurram, McGeown, Sherrington, Mrs Thomas, Walsh, Weatherby and C. Wild

Also in Attendance

Ms B. Brown – Director of People
 Mr P. Rankin – Assistant Director – Performance, Planning and Resources
 Ms S. Gilman – Assistant Director – Public Health
 Mrs S. Bailey – Principal Democratic Services Officer
 Mr M. Knowles – Head - Essa Academy
 Ms L. Gallagher – Essa Academy
 Ms G. Whitehead – Secondary School Improvement
 Ms A. Hulme – Head - Claypool School
 Ms D. Butler – Primary School Improvement
 Mr S. Laycock – Virtual Schools

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Gibbon, Muslim and Newall

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was agreed that Councillor Walsh be appointed Chairman of the Policy Development Group for the purposes of this meeting.

Councillor Walsh here took the chair

2. PERSONAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Councillor Ibrahim declared an interest as a Governor at Essa Academy

Ms B. Brown gave an introductory presentation on personal health and social education in Schools and the Government requirement for all schools to adhere to the new Relationship Health and Sexual Education (RHSE) Government guidelines by September, 2020.

Schools would be required to adapt their current provision in line with the new guidelines and would involve:

- development of an RHSE Policy in consultation with the Local Government Board and must be on the School's website;
- the school's discretion to decide what constituted sex education;

- the continued right of parents to request to withdraw their child from sex education delivered as part of RSE in secondary schools which, unless there were exceptional circumstances, should be granted up to three terms before their children turned 16 - at this point, if the child themselves wished to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements for this to happen in one of the three terms before the child turned 16;
- consideration of religious backgrounds - although lessons and content should not be changed, sensitivity should be considered;
- staff training on delivery of personal health and social education and preferably a timetabled lesson; and
- LGBT being taught throughout the curriculum and not a one-off lesson which was in line with the Equality Act 2010 - students could not be withdrawn from those lessons.

Mr Knowles, Headteacher, gave a detailed presentation on the work being undertaken at Essa Academy as an early adopter School in implementing the new guidelines from January, 2020. This had involved the development of a policy that was in line with the school ethos and written specifically for that school setting. It would be shared extensively with parents and other bodies including representatives from local mosques and SACRE.

Ms A. Hulme, Headteacher, gave a presentation on the new guidelines for primary schools. They would be required to teach certain key elements by September 2020 including themes of families, people who care for me, caring friendships, respectful relationships, online relationships and being safe. She described a number of tools and measures that were being put in place to ensure that all children had covered the required elements by the time they had completed year 6 and described the approach that the school was planning in order to comply with the guidelines and how parents would be involved to ensure they were aware of what was required. The national curriculum for science must also include teaching about external body parts and changes to the human body from birth to old age, including puberty. There was no right to withdraw from the National Curriculum.

Following the presentation, members discussed the issues at length and made a number of observations and comments:

- the right to withdraw and how this would be managed;
- the need for impartiality when teaching the new curriculum;
- the importance of staff training;
- comprehensive communication with parents;
- openness and transparency;
- impartial and robust policy;
- the need for boundaries and factual delivery of the curriculum;

- the need to adapt teaching and learning to reflect the demographics within an area;
- the importance of sharing good practice between schools;
- ensuring schools were ready to implement the changes;
- the need to ensure that parents were engaging and finding alternative methods to reach those that were not;
- dispelling confusion and building trust between the school, parent and child; and
- building a foundation of acceptance.

Members felt that it would be useful to have a list of schools within Bolton that were early adopters of the legislation and also be provided with a full detailed example of the curriculum. Mr Knowles agreed that members would be welcome to visit the school and examine the curriculum

It was agreed that:

- (i) representatives attending the meeting be thanked for their informative presentations;
- (ii) a list of early adopter schools be provided to members of this PDG;
- (iii) arrangements be made for any interested members to visit Essa Academy to view the new curriculum arrangements;
- (iv) That an update on the main points discussed at this meeting be provided to the Children's Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 9th December, 2019; and
- (v) That a further meeting of this PDG be arranged in due course to discuss progress

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 7.30pm)