

# Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date: January 15<sup>th</sup> 2013**

Agenda item: 8

Wards:

**Subject: Update on Developments Affecting Children, Schools and Families Department**

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley

Lead member: Cllr Maxi Martin, Cllr Martin Whelton

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

Contact officer: Paul Ballatt

---

## **Recommendations:**

A. Members of the panel note the contents of the report.

---

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1. The report provides members with information on key developments affecting Children, Schools and Families Department since the panel's last update report in November 2012.

## **2 DETAILS**

2.1 Ofsted's inspection of Merton's fostering service took place in November 2012. Inspectors examined case records and a set of required documents; interviewed staff, carers, young people and independent members of the authority's statutory fostering panel and reviewed progress in the service since its last inspection in 2008. Merton's overall rating remains as 'good' against what is generally considered to be a more taxing inspection regime than previous models. Inspectors noted improvements since the last inspection – including in information on children provided to fostercarers and support provided to placements; in recruitment and assessment of prospective fostercarers and in the influence of children and young people on the service – and found a culture in the service of continuous development and learning. Recommendations for further improvement were also made in respect of fostercarers' training; record keeping and managerial oversight and plans to address these will be monitored via the department's Continuous Improvement Board chaired by the Director.

- 2.2 Following the conclusion of the required consultation process in December 2012, organisational changes within children's social care, youth inclusion and education services will be implemented in early 2013. Early intervention services will also be reconfigured and the department's commissioning intentions for 2013-14 have also recently been published. These changes, described in detail in a report to CYP Scrutiny Panel in November 2012 are designed to enable the department to respond effectively to central government's MASH and Transforming Families initiatives; to sharpen the focus on achieving permanency for looked after children more quickly; to strengthen quality improvement and also to progress our own aspirations for further improvement in the targeting and effectiveness of services provided by the department.
- 2.3 Three further Ofsted inspections of Merton's schools have reported since the last meeting of the CYP Scrutiny Panel. The rating for Hatfeild Primary School has improved from 'satisfactory' to 'good' and Arragon Primary School and SMART Centre have retained their 'good' ratings.
- 2.4 As part of the Ofsted Chief Inspector's recent Annual Report for 2011-12 a national 'league table' of local authorities was published in November 2012 based on inspection ratings of primary schools. Merton is placed in the top category of local authorities (9<sup>th</sup> in London and 21<sup>st</sup> nationally) with 81% of our primary school pupils attending good or outstanding schools. This position compares extremely well with only c40% pupils accessing good or outstanding primary schools in some authorities.
- 2.5 Officers are currently analysing performance data for 2011-12 published recently by Ofsted in respect of attainment and progress of pupils in both primary and secondary schools nationally. Two of the key indicators of improvement are the progress made by pupils in English and maths. Merton primary school pupils made more progress in English than national average and pupils in secondary schools made more progress in both English and maths than national averages. Data for other key measures and specifically relating to particular pupil groups is also being examined and will be reported in detail to the CYP Scrutiny Panel within the annual school standards report to be delivered in February 2013.
- 2.6 The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics has awarded Merton the 'gold standard' for the provision of continuing professional development for teachers of maths. We have also been accredited as a lead organisation for the provision of professional development in arithmetic proficiency by the same awarding body.
- 2.7 As part of the council's ongoing primary school places strategy, Cabinet agreed in July 2012 to initiate statutory consultations in respect of the proposed permanent expansions of Hillcross, Merton Abbey, Poplar and Pelham primary schools. Council, in July 2012, also agreed to the acquisition of the ex Jamia school site to enable Singlegate school to expand permanently by an additional form of entry than had earlier been planned. Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel were advised of these consultations in the departmental update report in November 2012. Statutory consultations for all these proposed expansions have now been completed and the Director of Children's Services will be

asked to agree to the publication of statutory notices under delegated powers on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

**3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1. None for the purposes of this report.

**4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1. None for the purposes of this report.

**5 TIMETABLE**

5.1. N/A

**6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1. No specific implications.

**7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1. No specific implications.

**8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. No specific implications.

**9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. No specific implications.

**10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1. No specific implications.

**11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

- Appendix One – Provisional school level 'A'-Level results

**12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None.

This page is intentionally blank