

Opposition Priority Business: Children's Services

In recent months many parents, school governors and other interested parties have expressed concern over the performance of the Children and Young People's Directorate. The issues raised affect many aspects of the Directorate's responsibilities (as set out below) and suggests there are systematic failings.

Our recommendation is that a report is brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee then to a full Council Meeting setting out what actions are being taken to address these failings:

- Examination Results
- Lack of Nursery, Primary and Secondary School places and proposals to address the shortfall
- Compliance issues in relation to sensitive personal data
- Lack of support to aspiring organisations that wish to create free schools
- The performance of the school lettings service

Examination Results

The examination results for Key Stage 4 in particular were particularly disappointing. 6 of the 18 (33.3%) Enfield secondary schools and academies achieved a percentage of pupils gaining 5 A*-C grades including English and mathematics that met, or was above the FFT D (Fischer Family Trust) estimate (which is based upon children's prior attainment) 9 of the 18 schools (50.0%) met or exceeded the FFT D estimate for 5 A*-C grades.

5 out of 18 (27.8%) schools met or exceeded the FFT D estimate for making 3 levels of progress in English. 8 out of 18 (44.4%) of schools met or exceeded the FFT D estimates for 3 levels of progress in mathematics.

School Places

The failure to act decisively and build new schools on sites the Council controls (Carterhatch Lane Depot, Southgate Town Hall) over the provision of school places has led to children being educated miles away from their homes across different parts of the borough. This has brought about parent action against the Children and Young People's Directorate – to request better provision for the borough's children.

Compliance Issues with personal data

This Council has found itself in the unfortunate position of being named and shamed in national papers – following discovery of sensitive documentation. When the Conservatives were in control, IT and data handling issues were specifically raised at member level in circumstances where premises were being vacated and services relocated, why was this not raised by Labour members handling relocations?

Lack of support to aspiring organisations wishing to create free schools and academies

The Council's lack of support shows an ideological bias against free schools and academies and is preventing the extra provision of outstanding education in the borough.

School Lettings Service

The School Lettings Service has mismanaged the administration of the schools lettings service. This has caused difficulties for schools, particularly site management staff, in planning and managing their lettings. It has also led to additional delays in issuing invoices to hirers and consequently in passing the income on to schools.

Recommendation

That a report is brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee then to a full Council Meeting, setting out what actions are being taken to address the failings outlined above.