

Tom Hook,
Head of Scrutiny,
Brighton & Hove City Council

7th January 2010

Dear Tom,

Audit Commission 'Oneplace' report – Secondary School performance in Brighton & Hove.

I am writing to request that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee look in detail at the findings of the Audit Commission in relation to secondary school performance across Brighton and Hove. These findings were recently published in the Commission's 'Oneplace' report published on the 10th December 2009 and contain some worrying criticisms. In summary the report indicates that in Brighton and Hove's secondary schools;

- Achievement by Black children is low by national standards.
- At 16, fewer young people achieve 5 good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, compared to other similar areas or the UK as a whole.
- The rate of improvement is not as fast as in other similar areas.
- Fewer than average youngsters achieve 2 or more good GCSEs in science.
- Fewer than average schools have a good standard of behaviour.
- The gap in educational achievement between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those living in more affluent areas is not being narrowed.

The recommendation to Cabinet on the 14th January 2010 merely requests that officers take the issues of concern highlighted by the Audit Commission into account within their general service delivery. Given the very serious nature of the specific concerns relating to the City's secondary schools I would request that the Committee considers the following proposals;

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Labour Member for Hollingdean & Stanmer Ward

- That a report is requested to come to CYPOSC detailing the performance across all secondary schools that will give an indication of trend of educational performance over the past two years.
- That an action plan is requested for consideration by CYPOSC based on the above report that will demonstrate how resources will be targeted to address the specific concerns raised in the Audit Commission report.
- That the Committee considers how educational achievement and school performance trends across the city as a whole can be better reported to all councillors on a regular basis.
- That the Committee considers how the issue of below average standards of behaviour in some Brighton and Hove secondary schools can be examined.
- That the Committee also considers how the issue of closing the educational achievement gap between areas of disadvantage and other areas can be examined in more detail by looking at current council practice along with relevant deprivation indices.

I believe that all of our young people need the very best start in life and as councillors we must assure ourselves that all steps necessary are being taken to achieve this. I do hope that the Committee will give serious consideration to these requests.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Pat Hawkes

Lead Labour Opposition Councillor for Children and Young People.

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