

Additional ASGB Notes to accompany the 2020 January Partnership Presentation

ASGB Notes: Pubic Health Slide

- Parents with concerns should be directed to the above website for up to date information.

ASGB Notes: Ofsted Inspections

- A high number of inspections in Sandwell, three more since this presentation was produced, as at the time of our meeting.
- Difficult for schools being judged on the new curriculum and the new 'bar' that schools are expected to reach.
- The 'deep dive' had also been an issue for some schools as Ofsted could choose what they 'deep dive' on and this might not necessarily be the topic that the school has invested most time in.

ASGB Notes: School Forum

- A move in the Primary/Secondary ratio from 0.123 to 0.125 had been agreed.
- The reduction in the number of hold-backs for SEND/inclusion teams would negate the ratio change in primary schools and still benefit secondary schools.
- Budgets were currently being reviewed.
- A £7.1m increase in high needs would boost all teams, allowing an increase in recruitment (although it would take time to recruit the right quality people especially with regard to psychotherapists.) A much needed increase given the increased number of children waiting in the system.

ASGB Notes: HMI Meeting

- Unregistered and unregulated setting would not normally be covered by Ofsted.
- It would not be illegal to place a child into an unregistered/unregulated setting; the impact of which meant that children may have to be placed away from Sandwell in another region to get the care they needed, thus substantially increasing the cost.
- Sandwell was still expected to be responsible for safeguarding issues in independent schools; HMI stating that they were still Sandwell children.
- HMI questioned take up rates for EY places for 2,3,4 year olds and it was explained that the offer by establishments did not meet the needs of working parents.
- There had been 12 fixed term exclusions of EY children in 6 schools across the borough which Mr Ward would be reviewing.

ASGB Notes: HMI Focus: Schools

- Alternative provision might be necessary to address the unregistered settings issues.
- Secondary schools had improved this year and the gap had lessened.
- Schools with high numbers of SEND exclusions/absence had been noted by the LA
- Approximately 40 elective home educated pupils attended colleges under individual contracts

ASGB Notes: HMI Points in the Meeting

- Mr Ward felt that the proposed increase to three days for Section 5 inspections was probably appropriate under the current rationale but the rationale itself needed review.
- Appointing subject leads for focused inspection work was appropriate as to date, some inspectors did not have the in depth subject knowledge they should have to evaluate a school
- Cumulative disfluency is the latest term used by Ofsted to summarise the issues that make a school become 'stuck'.
- Various issues might such as leadership, aspirations, community might contribute to a school being 'stuck'
- If HMI wish to work with stuck schools then we may return to a process whereby when a school is re-inspected the work of the supporting HMI is also under scrutiny.

ASGB Notes: Stuck Schools

- Sandwell currently had two 'stuck' schools.
- Under the above timescales/guidelines, it was possible for a school to remain labelled a 'stuck school' for eight years, this despite the improvements that might have been made!
- The Ofsted Evaluation Report was expected to be published this week.
- In response to a question, Mr Ward advised that 'stuck' schools would not receive any extra funding. Schools judged 'Requiring Improvement' had a NLE assigned to them, usually a high performing Head Teacher, for a number of days.
- It was expected that a White Paper would include at least some of these issues raised by HMI

ASGB Notes: 23rd March 2020

- Sandwell chose to the third option from the HMI offer; 'focus on curriculum, progress and who we inspect the quality of education' because the quality of education is a limiting judgement.
- There were two places available to each school and Mr Ward encouraged schools to take advantage of this opportunity.

ASGB Notes: New Government & Queens Speech

- Sandwell is already above the minimum per-pupil funding amount.
- Concern expressed about the obvious knock on effect of increasing teachers starting pay
- How much investment for primary school PE teaching?
- Funding for colleges had suffered badly so the investment was much needed.
- Regarding the 20 institutes of Technology; likely to include name changes to existing establishments.

ASGB Notes: What's possibly next?

- NFF: Ratio change this year.
- Stand alone academies may be forced to become part of a larger group and may wish to start looking for a sponsor.
- Asked why a successful stand alone academy should be forced to join a bigger one, Mr Ward explained that from a DfE point of view, such academies were vulnerable to shifts in leadership and stability e.g. could be issues if an outstanding Head Teacher left.
- Even small academy chains of two/three schools would be targeted to join bigger chains.
- Focus on 'stuck' schools and RI schools converting to academies.
- Academy chains themselves were being questioned by the DfE about capacity to expand (30 appeared to be the DfE sustainable optimum) but the location of their schools also seemed to be a subject for discussion.

ASGB Notes: RSC & Mr Gibb MP

- Unusually, Mr Gibb had wanted to discuss how Sandwell was supporting two specific Sandwell schools.
- It was also possibly an opportunity for Mr Gibb to demonstrate support for the RSC.
- However, the meeting had been cancelled.

Responses to Additional Questions from ASGB members:

- Shireland Collegiate was 'up and running' and was over-subscribed.
- Shireland Primary completion was 'on track'
- CBSO: The location of the CBSO in West Bromwich had almost been agreed. The Government funding was awaited.
- Special Schools in Wednesbury: 1 secondary with Future Education Trust and primary, sponsorship with RSC being sorted, both should be ready by 2022 providing 200 additional special school places.
- Acknowledged the huge increase in wellbeing needs. The needs of young people needed to be identified and nurture work with families was important to try and keep them in mainstream

schools. The number of places in the Allbright Centre had been increased but still couldn't cope with demand, capacity needed to be double.

- Asked if there would be more money next year, Mr Ward stated that The Orchard and The Meadows, both special high needs schools, required urgent funding to keep pace with increased PANs. When the two new special schools were opened, they would specialise in autism and moderate learning disabilities, thus relieving some of the stress on The Orchard and The Meadows. Focus provision was also being reviewed but the next two years would be difficult.
- A member highlighted the additional pressure on special schools to keep up to date with refresher training and if therefore, special schools could be allowed an increase in Inset days to complete all the training. This was outside the remit of Mr Ward, who completely understood this issue but all schools had to provide 190 sessions annually.
- Noted that the administration for schools surrounding mental health/safeguarding was a further burden for schools although Mr Ward commented that the electronic system had been the same for some time. He added that the Section 175 audit was a useful focus for Ofsted to see the schools policies, procedures and collective measures to protect children.
- Regarding Ofsted inspections, for interest/information, governors should read the recent Sandwell reports.
- A member noted the very limited reference to the role of governance in Ofsted reports; quite at odds with the pressure placed on the role of governors by the DfE and Ofsted themselves. Mr Ward commented that Ofsted currently did not have enough inspectors and that there was no consistency in the reports, as had been reported to Laura Fitzjohn.