



ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS 18 DECEMBER 2014

The Achieving for Children (AfC) Board of Directors met on 18 December 2014 and considered the following substantive items:

Specialist School Provision

Simon James, Associate Director for Special Educational Need and Disabilities attended the meeting to provide the Board with an overview of Specialist School Provision in both boroughs. The key discussions included:

- The pattern of existing provision, including that almost all provision in mainstream and special schools is full, the greater provision in primary phase, and the difference in levels of provision across the two boroughs.
- The current and future pressures, including increasing diagnosis of autism, demographic growth, budget pressures (especially independent school placements), provision of support for families (i.e. respite / residential)
- The need to ensure that the pattern of provision best meets the needs of children and young people and their families.
- The proposed and potential expansions of provision, including three special schools and encouraging SEN provision within new free schools.
- The expectation that all schools are inclusive and the need to challenge schools where this is not the case.

Simon will return to the Board in September 2015 to present his proposals for the strategic direction of the Specialist School Provision.

The Board were keen to express their thanks to Simon and his team for their commitment during the previous few months, including the significant work involved with the SEN reforms.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards

Deborah Lightfoot, chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in both Kingston and Richmond, and Elisabeth Major, LSCB Professional Advisor. It is recognised that there is excellent engagement from AfC and other parts of the Councils with the LSCB, including the provision of extensive data and information.

The Board agreed a number of actions to strengthen the relationship further and to demonstrate that AfC considers safeguarding implications when it makes 'company decisions' as well as in its commissioned services for the Councils. This will include ensuring the AfC Annual Report includes information that is relevant and useful to the LSCBs, and undertaking a Section 11 Audit for the organisation as a whole that builds upon the audits that already exist for individual teams.

Improvement Plans

Ian Dodds, Director for Standards and Improvement, presented to the Board the two Social Care Improvement Plans and the Protection and Early Help Improvement Plan. The plans are updated each quarter and are due for the next significant review and update in January 2015. The Board discussed a number of actions within the plans that are proving more difficult to complete and requested that completed

actions are monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain effectively implemented.

The Board also expressed the view that it would be of benefit for Education Services to also have an Improvement Plan. Ian will work with Graham Willett, the Director of Education Services, to develop a plan.