
The Consequences of the Trojan Horse Affair and a Possible Way Forward for Birmingham

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ABSTRACT The UK government seized the opportunity of the Trojan Horse affair to launch a damaging Islamophobic attack, eagerly relayed by a racist press, on the Muslim community in Birmingham and beyond, abusing Ofsted and the Prevent strategy as blatant instruments of ideologically-driven policy. The various reports found no evidence of radicalisation or extremism but did find evidence of governance malpractice in some schools, informed by conservative Muslim views and enabled by the lack of local accountability of governing bodies as a result of the government's policies of academy autonomy and disempowered local authorities. The debate now is focused on moving forward, and this article ends by proposing that a Children's Zone approach offers a strategy which ensures that the community is centrally involved in a new democratic partnership.

The Trojan Horse affair first hit the headlines in March 2014 when leaks appeared in the *Telegraph* and *Sunday Times* of a letter purporting to be outlining a strategy, called Operation Trojan Horse, for ousting head teachers in Muslim areas of Birmingham in order to establish schools run on Islamic principles.

The first and most important thing to acknowledge in any discussion of the Trojan Horse Affair is the immense damage that has been inflicted on the people of Birmingham by the way the affair has been handled.

Despite the Department for Education (DfE) having received a copy of the letter as early as December 2013, it wasn't until leaks appeared in the press several months later that they took action. To the growing dismay of the city, its educators and thousands of families across Birmingham, it became clear that Michael Gove's response was based on a narrative of Muslim extremism and a potential link to terrorism.

Gove began by sending in the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), who actually went in twice to some schools after initial inspections proved unexpectedly favourable. Reports began to emerge of unusual practices by the Ofsted teams. These would prove to be inspections unlike any that had gone before; Ofsted used a key policy tool in order to fail the schools – the Prevent strategy, a counter-terrorism policy first introduced by Labour in 2008 and beefed up by the coalition in 2011. The Prevent strategy had never before been the focus of Ofsted inspections in this way. As Birmingham City Council says:

It is important to note that whilst this element of safeguarding is already addressed in the Ofsted framework for school inspections, it has only very recently in this context assumed the significance that Ofsted has now given to it. Up to this point, the Council was unaware of any other inspections that have reported specifically on a school's need to take certain or greater precautions against radicalism and extremism. (BCC, 2014)

In effect Ofsted were sent in to find the schools guilty. Ofsted found no evidence of 'extremism', but by using the Prevent strategy they were able to find fault with the schools for not doing more to protect children against it, applying this principle even to a nursery school! But this is an open-ended criterion against which many, if not most schools, would fall short if they were inspected in the same way.

The Ofsted reports then went unpublished for an agonising length of time while leaks to the press multiplied. Gove resisted calls from 10 Birmingham MPs to publish the Ofsted reports quickly and to work in partnership with Birmingham City Council to conduct one coordinated inquiry. The unnecessary number of separate yet overlapping investigations that ensued by the Education Funding Agency, the City Council and the DfE, and the associated press leaks, has without doubt contributed to a sense of persecution within the Muslim community. There was, it seemed, a deliberate refusal by the DfE to limit the negative impact on the community of east Birmingham. The decision to appoint Peter Clarke, the former National Coordinator for Counter Terrorism, to lead an inquiry was a clearly provocative act. Michael Gove's long-held belief in the threat posed by global Islamic fundamentalism is evident in his book, *Celsius 7/7* (Gove, 2006). Gove may also have been attempting to outbid the UK Independence Party (UKIP) on racism in order to recover lost electoral ground and to bolster his support on the Tory right. Either way, it was a carefully engineered racist political offensive designed to associate Muslims with religious extremism and terrorism, for which Gove knew he could rely on a relentless tide of Islamophobia from the Tory press.

The effect on the Muslim community in east Birmingham has been very damaging and may yet have long-term effects on the job prospects of the children and young people unfortunate enough to have been caught up in it. During the height of the media storm pupils had to brave reporters at the

school gates on a daily basis, including students who were preparing for their GCSE exams. Parents expressed concern that their children would be disadvantaged, perhaps for years to come, when they came to write the names of their now infamous schools on Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) forms and when making job applications. On results day, BBC Midlands Today reported that two of the schools suffered unexpected drops in results. Whether this is attributable to the distractions of the media coverage requires more detailed analysis than a crude comparison of the 5A*-C headline figure with the schools' predictions, but it is entirely possible.

The unprecedented centralised dictatorial power of the Secretary of State over the school system made this racist political offensive possible. Gove has used Ofsted as an arm of government policy. It is widely agreed that Ofsted were sent in with an agenda: to find evidence of religious extremism (see, for example, the 20 questions Tim Brighouse asks in *The Guardian*, June 13, 2014). The ability of the Secretary of State to use Ofsted as a political tool is revealed by a recent Freedom of Information (FOI) request by Janet Downs, reported on the Local Schools Network website on August 20, 2014. Of the 21 schools inspected, 6 were ordered by Ofsted and 15 were on the orders of Michael Gove. Four of these were mentioned in the Trojan Horse letter. The FOI request reveals that of the 21 schools inspected, 6 were ordered by Ofsted and 15 were on the orders of Michael Gove. Four of these 15 were mentioned in the Trojan Horse letter, leaving 11. The FOI request reveals that of these remaining 11 schools, only one had been the subject of complaints to the DfE. This leaves 10 schools about which Ofsted had no concerns and no complaints had been received. Why then were they inspected? Perhaps Gove simply wanted to widen the field of inspected schools in order to make the problem appear larger and so justify his subsequent actions in appointing Peter Clarke? Perhaps it would have been inconvenient, if in using the Prevent strategy for first time to fail schools, there were no schools in the cohort to be given a clean bill of health. This would explain the inclusion of an academy such as Ninestiles – visited and praised by Michael Gove in 2012 and found to be 'outstanding' in all four categories just six months earlier. The head teacher of Ninestiles School described the experience as 'somewhat harrowing in that it was unlike any other inspection' (*The Guardian*, April 23).

The way the affair has been handled by government has done untold damage to children's prospects and to community cohesion in the city and has made the task of putting right what really went wrong and moving forward in a positive way all the more difficult. However, the Muslim community has fought back. On 24 June at a huge public meeting of at least 500 people, a campaign was launched, Putting Birmingham School Kids First. The campaign statement acknowledges that there have been governance issues in some schools, but criticises the government response in linking this to the prevention of terrorism. The manifesto states that:

In order to fix these problems we need greater clarity about the issues these investigations have revealed. This needs to be done

without the sensationalist references to extremism and national security that we have seen so far which have caused confusion and concern across the city and country. Many people now believe that their children's educational potential, achievement and well-being is being threatened by politicians, who wish to be seen as 'tough' on Muslims.

This approach has been deeply unhelpful, hurtful and insulting, and most importantly could prevent us finding the solutions we need to help school children in Birmingham. (Putting Birmingham School Kids First, 2014)

The manifesto contains two aims:

1. Make sure that any issues of governance within Birmingham schools are fixed and fixed fast.
2. Challenge the false and divisive allegation that this is a problem of systematic radicalization, extremism or terrorism.

It goes on to question the impartiality of Ofsted, acknowledges that, in common with all faith communities, there are conservative as well as liberal views within the Muslim community, and concludes by looking forward to a new partnership of stakeholders sharing and developing outstanding practice.

The second thing to acknowledge is the reality of the problems that have existed in five east Birmingham schools.

The five schools at the centre of the affair are Park View Academy and its two sponsored schools (Golden Hillock Academy and Nansen Primary Academy), Oldknow Primary, a free-standing academy, and Saltley, a local authority secondary school.

The two final reports, one by Ian Kershaw, commissioned by Birmingham City Council, and the other by Peter Clarke, commissioned by the DfE, have much in common (Kershaw, 2014; Clarke, 2014). This is unsurprising since the two men agreed to share their evidence. However, where Clarke concludes there was a plot, Kershaw could not find one. Nevertheless, both investigations found evidence of attempts to restrict the educational experience of Muslim children, to impose a narrow view of Islam, and to bully and force the resignation of head teachers.

Neither investigator found evidence of violent extremism or radicalisation of Birmingham school children. Peter Clarke was at pains to make clear that he neither set out to look for this, nor expected to find it.

There is wide recognition in the city, ranging from the community-led Putting Birmingham School Kids First campaign to the Birmingham City Council's joint Scrutiny Committee meeting on 30 July, that while the various reports have disproved any suggestion of radicalisation and violent extremism, they have identified some serious malpractices of governance in several schools. Shabana Mahmoud, MP for Ladywood responded to the Kershaw report as follows:

I welcome this detailed, methodical report which finally lays to rest the myth that there was a organised plot to radicalise children in a small number of schools in Birmingham. It also lays out what we already suspected; that in a handful of schools there were serious governance issues which must be addressed.

Non faith schools in the state sector must remain exactly that and the way they are run must reflect that. It is clear from the Kershaw report that in a number of cases schools deviated from their secular ethos and that the processes in place by the Council and the DFE were not robust enough to either detect or prevent this occurring. (Mahmoud, 2014)

The provenance of the Trojan Horse letter is either unknown or undisclosed, and it is not believed by anyone to be what it purports to be. But while it is widely acknowledged to be fake, it is not a hoax. It is in effect an allegation – the work of an anonymous and apparently well-informed whistle-blower. There can now be little doubt that many of the allegations it contains are well-founded. Yet some on the left, horrified by the Islamophobic and racist response by government and the media, have sought to dismiss it altogether. This is a mistake. To ignore or downplay these issues, insofar as the evidence is accurate, or to fail to put forward an effective strategy to deal with them, would be to collude in the perpetuation of injustice. Below we reproduce a recent statement by the Muslim Women’s Network UK, which is based in Birmingham, and is published on their website.[1]

TROJAN HORSE: Those who have failed children should be held accountable

Muslim Women’s Network UK (MWNUK) welcome the finding in both Peter Clarke’s and Ian Kershaw’s reports, that overall there is no evidence of promoting violent extremism in the schools investigated, although the report by Peter Clarke makes reference to some specific concerns of extremism. MWNUK has maintained that the ‘Trojan Horse’ debate should not have been about extremism but about very serious governance issues. It is important not to conflate religious conservatism with extremist agendas. Given the current hostility towards Muslims, the initial language used to frame the debate by some sections of the media and some government leaders and officials has been unhelpful. It has had the effect of increasing Muslim vulnerability to Islamophobia. However, it is also important that ‘no evidence of extremism’ is not used to continue to downplay the very serious findings of malpractice in the reports either.

We all have a duty to keep children safe and ensure they are treated equally regardless of their race, faith or gender. MWNUK therefore believes any concerns regarding children should always be acted upon. Despite local criticisms, it was right to investigate a

number of schools in Birmingham after the 'Trojan Horse' letter emerged. Community sensitivities should never be prioritised over the safeguarding of children. The findings in the OFSTED reports, the Birmingham City Council report by Ian Kershaw and Department of Education report by Peter Clarke must now be acted upon. Individuals and organisations that have failed Birmingham's children should all be held accountable. No-one should be protected whether they are considered respected members of the local Muslim community or because they are people in high positions of authority in local or central government. Everyone has failed the children and no-one can claim the moral high ground. OFSTED failed because they rated the schools as outstanding during initial inspections as they only focused on results and ignored the quality of the curriculum and safeguarding issues. The local authority and Department of Education failed to act on previous complaints and lacked adequate oversight. A small number of religiously conservative individuals exploited their positions as governors and staff to promote hardline ideologies and behaved like moral police in state secular schools.

Some local campaigners too have failed the school pupils. They seemed to play down serious concerns about school governance by portraying them as 'normal HR issues.' Very real fears of Islamophobia have also been exploited by invariably stating there had been a targeted 'witch hunt.' Their complacency in the face of opposing views being ignored and silenced resulted in witnesses feeling unable to speak out. While we congratulate the schools for their high educational achievements, these should never be used as an excuse to turn a blind eye to misogyny, intolerance towards other faiths and safeguarding failures.

This narrative, which gained predominance, needs to be challenged. It was for this reason that the Chair of MWNUK, Shaista Gohir, began to voice concerns publicly. However, this resulted in a social media hate and abuse campaign being waged against her. When she refused to be silenced the abuse was escalated and her children were threatened; this was reported to the police. The MWNUK board strongly condemns the bullying and harassment that she and others have been subjected to for speaking out on this issue.

We also commend the bravery of those who were courageous and came forward and gave vital evidence to the investigators, some of whom also contacted MWNUK, considered an impartial and trusted organisation. As a women's rights organisation MWNUK are horrified at the numerous concerns raised directly with us especially with regards issues of equality and diversity. We were told about segregation in some classes and assemblies. Expected seating

arrangements were made clear to pupils so they would self-segregate and which is now being presented as the choice of pupils themselves. Not wearing the headscarf has also been presented as a pupil choice. However, it was reported to us that pressure was exerted on girls who did not wear the hijab. We were informed that they would be reminded in certain Islamic Studies lessons and assemblies that 'girls with morals wore the hijab.' Such incidents upset girls and particular male Muslim teachers also told them they were not good Muslim girls because they did not cover their heads. Some boys also picked up this rhetoric and repeated it.

Witnesses also told us that boys and girls were warned not to sit too close to each other at break time and if these warnings were repeatedly ignored parents were called in. In another case a male member of staff allegedly hacked into a girl's mobile phone and informed her parents about its contents. It is clear that there is little regard for the safety and well being of girls as, arguably such actions could increase the risk of honour based violence and forced marriages. School staff have a duty to protect children from bullying and not participate in it themselves.

Violence against women including sexual violence should be condemned, yet marital rape was condoned as some boys were taught that a wife is not allowed to refuse sex. Intimidation was a feature in many of the accounts including pressure to pray. For example, in one incident posters were put on walls to say that anyone who didn't pray was a 'kafir' or unbeliever, considered the worst thing that a Muslim can be accused of. Other concerns included a narrow arts curriculum, anti-Western rhetoric, discrimination and systematic pushing out of any non-Muslim and Muslim members of staff who were challenging the hardline ethos of senior management and governors.

We hope that lessons are learned and that children in the schools concerned are finally put first, through the establishment of mechanisms to prevent such incidents of malpractice happening again and by ensuring that new managers and staff understand their duties as state school educators. It is also important to not only focus only on the tiny minority of religiously conservative Muslims who may be targeting schools as people with hardline religious views exist in all communities. We should be consistent in challenging anyone who discriminates against others because of their, gender, race, faith, disability, age and sexuality – only then can we build strong and cohesive societies.

Both the Kershaw and Clarke reports conclude with a number of recommendations, including a particularly welcome one from Clarke that the DfE:

review the process by which schools are able to convert to academy status and become Multi Academy Trusts, and also consider urgently how best to capture local concerns during the conversion process, and review the brokerage (and re-brokerage) system through which schools are matched with academy sponsors to ensure that the process is transparent and understood by all parties.
(Clarke, 2014, p. 88)

This recommendation, if it were properly heeded, should mean the end of the ubiquitous sham consultations for converter academies and, in the case of forced academies, an end to the current practice in Birmingham, in which sponsorship deals are settled in secret between DfE brokers and local authority officers, before being presented as a done deal to the school community. Bypassing the community in this way has been damaging trust across Birmingham for many years. It escalated when the DfE targeted Birmingham for its programme of forced academies in 2012, and despite recognition by the Birmingham Education Scrutiny Committee in January 2013 of the damage being done, has continued unchecked ever-since.

Clarke makes further recommendations to the DfE. In summary:

- to review the process by which schools support trainees in gaining Qualified Teacher Status to avoid abuses of the system;
- to ensure Child Protection Officers in each school are trained in the Prevent strategy and that implementing Prevent is included in their role;
- to take action against those who have breached teacher standards.

He also makes recommendations to Birmingham City Council:

- to ensure systems, processes and policies regarding the support it provides to maintained schools are joined-up across the range of functions, with particular regard to dealing with concerns, the balance between community cohesion, education and safeguarding, and information sharing;
- To review all compromise agreements signed with head teachers in the last five years.

And finally, he recommends that the DfE, Birmingham City Council and the EFA:

- review their respective existing channels for raising issues of concern.

Kershaw's report was commissioned by Birmingham City Council and its recommendations are all addressed to the Council. They are too numerous and detailed to be reproduced here, even in summary. They can be broadly agreed with, but there are two significant problems. Firstly, they do not address the issues in academies (over which Birmingham City Council of course has no power and little influence), but yet it is in academies where the problems have been most extensive. Secondly, it is questionable whether the Council has the

capacity to implement the recommendations because the Council's budget, including its education services, has been decimated by central government cuts.

With respect to Clarke's recommendations, despite recognising in his report that there is inadequate oversight of academies, frustratingly none of his recommendations addresses this problem. There are also issues with his recommendation respecting the Prevent strategy. The issue here is the Prevent strategy itself and how it is being used. Prevent has never before been used by Ofsted to fail schools, and schools are now in need of direction on this, but the report offers little advice on what schools should actually do. It simply says:

Schools can help to protect children from extremist and violent views in the same ways that they help to safeguard children from drugs, gang violence or alcohol. (The Home Office, 2011, p. 69, para. 10.45)

On the Dangers of Unaccountable Academies and an Under-resourced Local Authority

Of all the many education crises, scandals and irregularities that have come to light in recent years, this one more than any other illustrates the inadequacy of a system in which hundreds of academies are subject to centralised oversight of a DfE that cannot expect to carry out the role to any satisfactory degree. But inadequate oversight also applies, though to a lesser extent, to local authority schools as a result of the drastic reduction in or termination of the powers and resources of local authorities to monitor and intervene where necessary. The consequence is that some governing bodies have been able to interfere in the responsibilities of teachers and impose unacceptable practices, whether from a conservative religious standpoint or not, on the schools. As Tim Brighouse, ex-CEO of Birmingham, said:

So great have been the recent cuts in local authority expenditure that Birmingham and many other local authorities have neither the resources nor sufficient senior and experienced staff to carry out their role effectively. Worse, the arrival of academies and free schools has created an open season for lay people and professionals keen to pursue their own eccentric ideas about schooling: and when trust or governor vacancies occur, some perpetuate the very English tradition of inviting friends to join them. When the community is white it doesn't cause much comment. In mono-ethnic east Birmingham, however, it is seen as a Muslim plot to expose pupils to an undefined 'extremism'. (The Guardian, June 17, 2014)

Without addressing the devastating cuts to Birmingham City Council, the measures proposed by Kershaw and Clarke cannot hope to be implemented effectively. An urgent review of the capacity of the depleted local authority to carry out the necessary reforms must be conducted and appropriate funding restored to the City.

Clarke states in his report that, 'The autonomy granted to those who run academies is generally a welcome development yet can make those institutions vulnerable to those without good intentions' (2014, p. 87). While the first part of this statement is a matter of dispute, the truth of the second part is now undeniable. The freedom from scrutiny that academy status conveys has been attractive to groups with an agenda to impose from the outset. Approved sponsors include hedge fund managers pretending to be philanthropists, out-and-out profiteers, and an assortment of faith groups ranging from the mainstream to the fundamentalist. The DfE has been singularly unconcerned about this whether under New Labour or the coalition and has stubbornly ignored the warnings from groups on the left, who now appear as modern-day Cassandras. See for example this from a national Campaign for State Education (CASE) briefing on academies dating from 2007:

Sponsors can be corporate bodies or individuals from business, faith groups or the voluntary sector. There may be more than one sponsor and they need have no prior experience of running schools. Despite this open door, there has been no stampede of local benefactors. In October 2004, Tony Blair met with private schools and American businessmen to encourage them to become sponsors. One indicator of the low levels of interest from credible sponsors is that the list of academy sponsors maintained by the Specialist Schools Trust includes both Enron (the discredited energy company) and organisations with fundamentalist Christian philosophies. Surprisingly in this context, the Secretary of State was reported by the Times Educational Supplement (TES) in October 2004 to have ruled out the vetting of potential sponsors. (CASE, 2007, p. 1)

Children in the academies involved have been more vulnerable to abuses of power than children in maintained schools, and on two counts: firstly because their rights are not protected under education law; and secondly because of the lack of scrutiny that has already been described. That this vulnerability has been exploited is evident in Peter Clarke's finding that 'behaviours' accelerated after academy conversion. For all the failings of Birmingham local authority, schools were nevertheless safer under their oversight than under the DfE as academies. Yet this central issue has been stubbornly sidestepped both by Peter Clarke and Nicky Morgan. Although Peter Clarke recognised serious failings in the DfE's oversight of academies, he failed to address them in his recommendations. It appears that Clarke is unwilling to tamper with this sacred cow of education policy. This has effectively let Nicky Morgan off the hook. She subsequently stated that the academy programme will continue and that she doesn't accept there is a problem with their oversight.

A further point to be made is the importance of ending of the climate of school take-over that has existed in England since Gove took office in 2010. Fostered through a combination of the rapid expansion of the academy programme and a policy of forced academy status, the climate of school take-

over must surely have been a gift to those with an unwelcome agenda to impose.

On the Prevent Strategy

For the first time in Birmingham, and following Gove's agenda, Ofsted used the Prevent strategy as criteria to fail schools, and this was applied even within a nursery setting. Yet the 2011 Prevent policy itself contains a warning against the kind of disproportionate response that we have seen in Birmingham in the handling of the Trojan Horse affair:

We regard Prevent work with children and with schools as an important part of the strategy. But this work needs to be proportionate. It must not start from a misplaced assumption that there is a significant problem that needs to be resolved. We have seen some evidence of very limited radicalisation of children by extremist or terrorist groups ... But these issues must be kept in perspective. (The Home Office, 2011, p. 69, para. 10.44)

Few teachers may even realise they are familiar with the Prevent strategy itself because it is not mentioned by name in the Ofsted criteria. Schools are so heavily ruled by what is written within the current Ofsted framework that it effectively dictates continuing professional development (CPD) provision and the language of school policy and everyday practice. Teachers may be therefore more likely to have engaged with Prevent as 'community cohesion'. But the coalition removed community cohesion from the Ofsted framework and in many schools Prevent work has become a tick-box exercise in its current guise as social, moral, spiritual and cultural education (SMSC). But the Labour government's original 2008 Prevent policy document recommended a very different approach:

creating an environment where all young people learn to understand others, value and appreciate diversity and develop skills to debate and analyse. Through the curriculum, schools can help young people learn about and explore the values shared by different faiths and cultures, the historical context and issues around citizenship, identity and current affairs. Young people see schools as a safe place where they can explore controversial issues, and teachers can encourage and facilitate this. (HM Government, 2008, p. 47)

This approach has educational value. Prevent becomes part of an ongoing process of education for critical social understanding, including critical engagement with the government's conception of 'British values'. Any training in Prevent should be based on this educational approach.

A Way Forward for Birmingham

The community in east Birmingham has been let down by all agencies. For this reason, if for no other, it is of vital importance that it be fully involved now in the development and implementation of the Council's plans for moving forward. A priority of recent Council policies in Birmingham has been to increase local community involvement in the policy process. To move forward from this with genuine hope of success, the Council must ensure this becomes more than just rhetoric. By community we mean parents, school students, teachers and their unions, head teachers, governors, the wider community and its representatives. A starting point would be to ensure that the position of the Putting Birmingham School Kids First campaign, as expressed in its launch statement, is reflected in the Council's plans.

A Local Education Forum as a Framework for Moving Forward

While each school has its own specific situation and needs, many issues apply across several or all of the schools. Likewise, many concerns and aspirations will be shared across the community. We know that collaboration is the best way to improve. In moving forward from Trojan Horse, Birmingham has a unique opportunity to develop a way of working which could be a model for other areas of the city and beyond – a collaborative approach which brings together schools and community to share and develop ideas and practices on a whole range of issues, such as anti-racist teaching, how to respond to Prevent in educationally valuable ways, and developing a curriculum that critically engages with life in Birmingham and celebrates multiculturalism.

A local Education Forum as a partnership body bringing together all the stakeholders would be an inspiring example of putting into practice the Council's policies around local democratic renewal.

A Children's Zone Approach in East Birmingham^[2]

At the joint Scrutiny Committees meeting on 30 July, Councillor Miriam Khan asked what is the crucial question about moving forward after the Trojan Horse reports: What plans are there for a new education framework bringing together schools, communities and the council? The concept of Children's Zones can contribute to an answer. A Children's Zone approach has been successfully pioneered in Manchester and is now being launched in the north-east. It could be the way forward in east Birmingham.

The idea of Children's Zones was originally developed to raise standards in education in socially deprived areas. This is what Mel Ainscow, leader and researcher of the successful Manchester Challenge, says:

closing the gap in outcomes between those from more and less advantaged backgrounds will only happen when what happens to

children outside as well as inside the school changes. This means changing how families and communities work, and enriching what they offer to children ... there is encouraging evidence from Greater Manchester of what can happen when what schools do is aligned in a coherent strategy with the efforts of other local players—employers, community groups, universities and public services. This does not necessarily mean schools doing more, but it does imply partnerships beyond the school, where partners multiply the impacts of each other's efforts. (2012, pp. 307-308)

What is a Children's Zone?

A Children's Zone brings together all the resources in a local area that can support the educational development of children and young people. They would include the following:

- The schools – their teachers, support staff, governors and parents, and the school students themselves;
- Other support agencies, such as social services, youth services, the police, etc.;
- Local community organisations and groups of every sort;
- Local community facilities – libraries, community centres, allotments, sports facilities, 'places of interest';
- Local workplaces and companies;
- Ward Committee meetings, Neighbourhood Forums, etc.;
- Other resources outside the Zone area: universities, arts and cultural organisations, etc.;
- And of course the City Council.

The case for a Children's Zone approach in Birmingham is currently being put forward in the context of the city council's policy initiatives to promote local democracy and empower communities (Hatcher, 2014).

Notes

- [1] The ideas here about a Children's Zone are taken from a briefing paper which was published by Birmingham Campaign for State Education (CASE) in early 2014 (before the Trojan Horse issue became public). 'Children's Zones: bringing together Birmingham's school support policies and its devolution and neighbourhood development policies to raise attainment and reduce inequality in education in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods' is available at: <http://birminghamcase.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/childrens-zones.pdf>. A detailed response to the Trojan Horse affair can be found on the Birmingham CASE website: www.birminghamcase.wordpress.com

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