

Scrutiny Committee supporting paper

Terms of Reference

1. To consider the current attainment levels and transition arrangements operating across Nottinghamshire schools

The key stage 4 national results will be published at the end of October and an addendum will be provided upon receipt of the outcomes

Nottinghamshire's key stage 3 outcomes are detailed in the attached DfES report. It appears that they are trialling a new formula for statistical neighbours which aligns us with 2 new counties, Durham and Cumbria and removes West Sussex and Kent.

The information provided is raw scores. The national information produced in January will also provide contextual value added information which will demonstrate whether Nottinghamshire has been more or less successful than other LAs in raising achievement.

The Nottinghamshire overall average points score is above Durham and within 0.5 of Essex.

English key stage 3 results are above Durham, below in maths and in line in science.

Nottinghamshire is 1% below the national average in English, 2% below in maths and in line with national averages in science. Nottinghamshire boys performed above the national average for the first time in science.

At level 6+ Nottinghamshire is above Durham in English, science and in line in maths.

Nottinghamshire is 3% below the national average in English, 1% below in maths, having improved by 4% and 1% below in science having improved by 5%.

At key stage 4, 5 A*-C the results demonstrate an improvement of 4.3% with some significant increases. 10 schools improved by more than 10%, the highest being 21.1%.

The county transition arrangements are highly regarded by the National Strategy and some of the work is used as a model of practice by the national team.

As part of the on-going commitment to analyse achievement and use it to challenge practice, we have identified and funded four families of schools where a significant number of the feeder primary schools either perform below the floor target in English and maths or have low contextual value. These programmes are focusing on skills development especially in literacy and numeracy and cognitive development. This is a two-year programme and researchers from Sheffield Hallam University will support analysis of language development issues. Warwick University will provide research into the links with parents to support children's learning.

2. To examine successful Nottinghamshire schools and to promote good practice across the school fraternity

At the Headteacher Conference in January 2006, the LA identified a range of funded programmes that would support schools in raising standards at key stage 4. As well as the community programme identified in section 1, a total of 28 schools are engaged in subject-specific development for English, maths, science and ICT. Each programme is serviced by one good practice school and LA officers.

18 schools are engaged in network development through 3 programmes. Each is supported by a good practice school and LA officers. A further 17 schools have an individual plan and 11 are engaged with a good practice school. Of these, 7 schools had improved results this year.

Headteachers were asked at the conference to identify strategies that could be shared and a number have been utilised across all 47 schools. These include coursework mentors, study skills programmes, early exam revision, booster activity, removing study leave for students and devising certain courses that better suit some student need.

Most schools undertook the Adult Literacy and Numeracy tests for students who were unlikely to gain English or maths at GCSE. This had a very positive motivational effect on a large number of students.

The Educational Psychology Service used the booster materials for work with individual LLD pupils and the Education Welfare Service supported schools in challenging attendance for C/D borderline students.

Networks for some foundation subjects are being established to complement those already in place for the core subjects.

95% of schools are in the 14-19 strategy network.

ASTs are deployed across the LA. We have the largest proportional number of ASTs in the country and they now provide linkage with our strategy consultants in the pursuit of achievement across a range of subjects. Common inset days have been established for 3 years in the secondary phase.

A widely used LA programme of Quality Assurance training has included paired school/LA observation to ensure consistency. School strategy managers meet half-termly to devise appropriate programmes and share practice.

The majority of schools are in a SEF (Self Evaluation framework) network. Six schools are in a pilot collaborative leadership programme and 23 schools have now completed a middle leadership programme.

Conferences for headteachers, deputies and assistant heads have promoted the key stage 4 agenda.

3. To liaise with statistical neighbours to identify good practice elsewhere and to suggest recommendations to cabinet regarding using this practice in Nottinghamshire

A number of headteachers and LA personnel; have visited Durham LA. Contact has been made with Derbyshire and Leicestershire. Good practice schools from Essex, Blackpool and Manchester are amongst a number who have provided training for school colleagues in Nottinghamshire.

Nottinghamshire programmes have been bought by Bradford and Kirklees. LA officers have provided training for other LAs, the DfES and the NCSL. The LA has joined a national network for schools facing challenging circumstances. Termly meetings are held around the country to explore good practice.

Nottinghamshire is also part of a 4 counties programme for schools in challenging circumstances. The other LAs are our statistical neighbours, Leicestershire and Essex. Northamptonshire is the fourth county.

Addendum to Scrutiny Report

Packs of information have been produced for all schools showing outcome by board and course. Successful schools are identified enabling others to contact them as appropriate.

4. Suggestion for information to go to schools chosen by the Scrutiny Committee

The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Committee are:

- To consider the current attainment levels and transition arrangements operating across Nottinghamshire schools.
- to examine 'successful' Nottinghamshire schools and to promote good practice across the school fraternity.
- To liaise with statistical neighbours to identify good practice elsewhere and to suggest recommendations to cabinet regarding using this practice within Nottinghamshire.

Would each school please share with scrutiny committee visitors:

- (i) Identified practice in school that supports these three aspects.
- (ii) Identified LA support that reflects the three aspects.
- (iii) Areas for further development both within the school and LA that could improve standards in Nottinghamshire.

The issues scrutiny committee members are keen to explore are:

- Community expectation
- Vocational education
- Pupil behaviour
- Recruitment and quality of staff
- Workforce remodelling
- Funding
- Transition programmes