



meeting	EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE		
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## REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

### **Analysis of Targeted Support: April 2003 – March 2004**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report is the analysis of targeted support provided for schools, presented annually to Select Committee. It covers the financial year 2003-2004 and includes a review of support, an analysis of its effectiveness together with information about developments in the targeted support process.

#### **Information and Advice**

##### **The Targeted Support Process**

2. The purpose of targeted support is to provide:
  - early intervention to schools facing temporary difficulties, at risk of failure and underperformance
  - support, challenge, monitoring and intervention to schools in the Ofsted categories of special measures, serious weaknesses, underachieving and inadequate sixth form, to help them eliminate weaknesses and improve rapidly
  - an exit strategy for schools leaving Ofsted categories to ensure that improvements are maintained.
3. Schools are identified for targeted support in three ways:
  - by the school, including governors, staff, parents and the leadership team
  - by link inspectors using both statistical and qualitative data, agreed in discussion with the school

- through meetings of area school effectiveness groups (ASEGs) when officers from key services meet termly to discuss emerging issues and concerns about schools in the area.
4. Targeted support provides additional consultancy and advice from officers, inspectors and associates, additional support from strategy consultants, advanced skills teachers and leading mathematics teachers and funding to provide schools with additional non-contact time for staff. In schools in the greatest need limited funding permits the staffing establishment of schools to be increased temporarily.
  5. The link inspector is the key person to plan and coordinate action to support schools and to review progress. Schools in Ofsted categories have an LEA action plan and those schools identified by the LEA have targeted improvement plans. These plans are shared with the school and copies of termly targeted support forms are provided for the headteacher and chair of governors.
  6. In 2003-2004 73 schools received targeted support at level 1 or level 2. In March 2004, 40 schools received targeted support at level 1 to improve specific weaknesses and seven further schools, at risk of failure, were receiving level 2 support. This is a slight decrease on the previous year when the figures were 43 (level 1) and 10 (level 2). Details of the number of schools receiving targeted support in the summer and autumn terms 2004 is attached as an **Appendix**.

### **Key Messages**

7. There is a changing pattern of schools causing concern. Generally better key stage 1 and 2 test results, effective leadership and good teaching in the majority of primary schools means that there is a reduction in the number of primary schools in Ofsted categories and in the targeted support programme. There has been a similar trend in the number of special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) causing concern. However, improved data, especially in terms of value-added measures at key stage 3 and key stage 4, and a challenging national context has increased the risk for secondary schools. For the first time there are more secondary schools than primary or special requiring special measures. This has implications for targeted support because bringing about improvement in large secondary schools is often long term, complex and expensive. There has been a similar increase in the number of secondary schools identified by the LEA as needing additional support.

### ***Strengths, improvements and impact***

8. The number of primary schools requiring special measures is decreasing. In 2003-2004 three primary schools improved sufficiently to no longer require special measures. One additional school went into the category. At the end of the year in March 2004 one primary school required special measures compared to three in March 2003.

9. The time taken for schools to improve to the point where special measures is no longer needed has been reduced. The three primary schools removed from the category in 2003-2004 were in special measures for an average of 17.5 months, just below the national primary average of 18 months. The three year average from March 2001 is 18.6 months, so the overall rate of improvement is increasing steadily. The LEA continues to set ambitious and realistic targets for removal from special measures to reduce further the overall average.
10. In all schools in special measures support to the school from the LEA was judged to be good by HMI on their termly monitoring visits.
11. In March 2004 eight schools were in the Ofsted category of serious weaknesses, a reduction from March 2003 when 11 schools were in the category. In total five schools were re-inspected during the year and of these four had eliminated serious weaknesses successfully, three of these schools were judged to be good schools having improved rapidly. One secondary school had made insufficient progress and was moved into the more serious Ofsted category of special measures.
12. 41 schools improved significantly during the year and no longer required targeted support.
13. The LEA continues to intervene successfully in schools using experienced serving headteachers and deputy heads in addition to consultants, officers and inspectors. Effective partnerships have been established between successful schools and schools causing concern. This has increased the capacity of the LEA to provide support. Importantly schools find the support from partner schools and serving school leaders relevant to their needs. Similarly the deployment of advanced skills teachers (ASTs) to schools causing concern has continued to increase, teachers respond well to the positive modelling given by effective teachers and often the impact of ASTs is significant in improving teaching and learning.
14. In 2003-2004 the LEA's good knowledge of Nottinghamshire schools meant there were no surprises in the outcome of Ofsted inspections. All schools inspected in the year and judged to require special measures were in receipt of targeted support.

### ***Weaknesses and areas for improvement***

15. The number of schools in special measures is too high although it is in line with the national average. In March 2004 there were five schools in special measures, one primary, one PRU and three secondary schools. Of the five schools four went into the category in 2003-2004. A review of additional support needs to secondary schools identified by the LEA has taken place. Paired visits of senior inspectors and link inspectors to schools with emerging concerns means intervention will come at an earlier stage. Evidence from test and examination results show that where intervention strategies are in place the overall impact is positive.

16. Sustaining improvement remains a challenge for schools and for the LEA. Given intensive support, many schools improve, but changes of staff, leadership and a reduction in support can lead to a halt in school improvement or decline. There is a small proportion of schools where, despite high levels of support, sustained improvement is difficult to secure. The LEA continues to work with schools and their communities to build long term sustainable provision.
17. Evaluation from schools shows that improvement continues to be needed in the coordination of support across LEA services so that there are no gaps in programmes. Improvements are also needed in monitoring and reporting progress to schools.

### **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Support**

18. The progress schools make is evaluated termly against success criteria built into LEA action plans and targeted improvement plans. For schools in Ofsted categories external evaluation on their progress is provided by LEA termly reviews and HMI monitoring inspections. Schools are invited to comment on the effectiveness of LEA support at case conferences and termly reviews and adjustments are made accordingly.
19. Each year schools receiving targeted support are sent an evaluation questionnaire. In 2004 108 questionnaires were sent out and 58 completed forms were returned. Generally the schools' responses are positive. 98% of schools judged targeted support to be good or better, and 74% felt it had been very good. No school judged targeted support less than satisfactory. All schools are clear about why they are receiving additional support, and feel the support is well planned and matches the school's identified needs effectively. In addition all schools felt that the support had been of benefit to the school and it has promoted improvement. Just over 5% of schools do not feel that support services have been well coordinated and 7% do not agree that progress is monitored and reported to governors and headteachers effectively. The outcomes of the evaluation are used to identify areas for improvement in targeted support for the next year.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, Crime and Disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been described in the text of the report. Members' attention is however drawn to the following:-

### **Personnel Implications**

21. There are no personnel issues arising directly from this report. However, in many schools in special measures, serious weaknesses, and on targeted support there are often personnel issues including

competency and conduct issues which mean Education Personnel work closely with inspectors.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

22. The major thrust of targeted support is the deployment of resources to schools in most need to ensure that all pupils in Nottinghamshire have access to a high quality education.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

23. That the Committee note the report and identify any issues for further scrutiny.

**PAM TULLEY**

Director of Education

### **Director of Resources' Financial Comments (PWH)**

Nil.

### **Background Papers Available for Inspection**

List of schools in receipt of targeted support in the spring term 2004

M19C1232