

minutes



Meeting EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Tuesday, 18th October 2005 (commencing at 10.30 am)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

COUNCILLORS

Kevan Wakefield (Chair)

A Martin Suthers (Vice Chair)

A Steve Carroll

A Sybil Fielding

Glynn Gilfoyle

Ellie Lodziak

Philip Owen

Peter D Prebble

Darrell Pulk

Mark Spencer

A Yvonne Woodhead

Brian Wombwell

Statutory Added Members

A Mr K Daly

Mr D Richards JP

Ms P Burbidge (Parent Governor)

Ms L Wooding (Parent Governor)

Non-Voting Co-optees

A Mr L Jefferies (Teacher Trades Unions)

Mrs G Lane (School Governors)

A Mr N Lewis (F E sector)

Mr A McAllister (Ethnic Minority Communities)

A Dr B Ramsey (School Governors)

A Ms L Regan (Teacher Trades Unions)

Ms F Ridgwell (Teacher Trades Unions)

Karen Brookes (Head Teachers)

David Cokeham (Head Teachers)

Others invited to attend

Ms T Carnachan (Support Staff Unions)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor M Storey
“ M Brandon-Bravo
Ms C McReadie
Mr B Pardon

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

It was noted that Councillor Darrell Pulk had been appointed to the Committee in place of Councillor Jim Creamer, and that Ms F Ridgwell had replaced Mr A Ross as the ATL representative.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 13th September 2005 having been circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Di Morton, Assistant Director (Strategic Support Services) stated that she would report to the next meeting about GCSE and A Level grade boundaries.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor Martin Suthers
“ Steve Carroll
“ Sybil Fielding*
“ Yvonne Woodhead*

Mr K Daley
Mr N Lewis

* - denotes on other County Council business

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

REVIEW OF PUPIL AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN FORMER NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COALFIELDS – FEEDBACK FROM CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

The report gave the Cabinet Member for Education's responses to the review which had been carried out by the Select Committee in 2004/05. Councillor Storey invited questions and comments on the report. Councillor Brandon-Bravo asked about the impact of the Children Act on such matters. Councillor Storey replied that the County Council as Local Authority would still have responsibility for aspects of the performance of Nottinghamshire schools. Councillor Owen asked about the resources available for extended schools.

Councillor Storey replied that monies were available, and members would learn more through their member forums. Councillor Wakefield observed that Joseph Whitaker School was considering extended use, and believed that other schools would also be doing so. Councillor Owen believed that a more positive response was needed to the recommendation about the LEA's links with schools. Councillor Storey said he looked forward to Councillor Owen's support during the budget round.

Mr Richards commented that the Study Group had noted that schools were missing the role of the former community teachers. Ms Brookes stated that she had found that the turnover of education welfare staff had made it difficult to build up relationships with families.

It was agreed to note the report, and take account of the information provided when considering future reports on pupil performance in Nottinghamshire.

REVIEW OF DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICE IN THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE EDUCATION SERVICE

The report provided the Cabinet Member's response to the recommendations of the Review of Dissemination of Good Practice which had also been carried out during 2004/05. Councillor Prebble recommended help to gifted and talented children. Councillor Owen asked whether the service learnt anything from practice in Derbyshire. Mrs Morton referred to links between the School Improvement Services in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and visits by Nottinghamshire inspectors to Derbyshire schools. She referred to similar work with County Durham. Councillor Wakefield believed there was much good practice. Councillor Storey observed that the DfES often recognised Nottinghamshire for its good practice.

PERFORMANCE OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SCHOOLS COMPARED WITH STATISTICAL NEIGHBOURS

Mrs Morton introduced the report, which compared the performance of Nottinghamshire schools with that of its statistical neighbours. In summary, the figures showed Nottinghamshire primary schools doing relatively well, with improvement in English, maths and science. However performance in Key Stages 3 and 4 was worse than in the statistical neighbours. The key focus was therefore improvement in performance during the secondary phase.

Mrs Burbidge asked why children were performing so badly in Key Stage 3 compared with Key Stage 2. Mrs Morton replied that this was being closely monitored, with schools and the LEA doing much during children's transition from primary to secondary education. Ms Brookes agreed that much was being done. She believed it important to build on children's enthusiasm in Year 7, and not to have too low expectations of them. In reply to Councillor Prebble, Mrs Morton said that information was available for Years 12 and 13. It showed that Nottinghamshire children did not perform well at AS or A Level.

Mrs Burbidge asked what was being done to give every child the same opportunity during the transition. Mrs Morton replied that the provisional 2005

Key Stage 3 results were excellent, with improvements in English which needed to be extended. The Authority was giving special attention to families of schools where the transition was a problem. Councillor Wakefield suggested that a headteacher involved in a Key Stage 3 pilot could speak to the Committee. Mr McAllister asked for information on the preparation of children for the transition. He wondered whether work should start earlier, and whether families of schools were the right mechanism. Mrs Burbidge referred to the lack of involvement with parents once children started in Year 8, with, for example, parents evening being at the end of the year.

Mr Cokeham commented that as a secondary headteacher, he had tried hard to encourage parental involvement. He referred to the fact that a teacher had to speak to so many parents during a parents evening. He believed that schools needed to look at how they interacted with parents, with as one suggestion, tutors who could give an overall picture of a child's performance. Ms Brookes agreed, saying that the most useful contact was with the form tutor. Councillor Gilfoyle believed that preparation for transition should start early. He believed the Committee should speak to secondary and primary headteachers about the issue, and also scrutinise where the transition was not working well. Councillor Prebble referred to the expression that primary schools taught children while secondary schools taught subjects. He believed that the pastoral system could continue from primary through to secondary school. Mr Pardon referred to the need to keep sight of the national agreement and the work-life balance for teachers.

Mrs Morton commented that transition was difficult between any stage in education. The School Improvement Service worked with schools with poor attainment, but it was difficult to target schools which handled the transition poorly. She referred to the new 3-18 years school recently opened in Harworth, which was an opportunity to develop good practice and learn lessons.

Councillor Owen observed that poor performance seemed to be consistent. He suggested that committee members visited schools and talked to teachers. He gave Derbyshire as an example of how performance could be better, and stated that Nottinghamshire's ranking had improved only because other LEA's had got worse. Councillor Wakefield did not agree, and referred to the good performance by some schools. Councillor Gilfoyle was of the view that officers were better equipped than members to talk to teachers about specific issues. In response to a suggestion by Mr McAllister that the committee looked at schools, the transition and communication with parents, Councillor Wakefield stated that he would discuss this with Mrs Morton after the meeting.

Councillor Prebble asked how good practice was being shared. Mrs Morton replied that some 28 secondary schools were paired with each other to learn from each other. She referred also to training which was available, and offered to provide further information.

It was agreed to pursue the scrutiny of standards through the Study Group on the Education Development Plan. It was also agreed to consider further

scrutiny of the transition from primary to secondary education, and to provide further information on good practice and training.

FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Forward Plan for October-January and work programme for 2005/06 were noted.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am.

CHAIR

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