

# minutes



Meeting SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND SUPPORT SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 28 April 2008 (commencing at 2.00 pm)

## Membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

## COUNCILLORS

Edward Llewellyn-Jones (Chair)

Brian Wombwell (Vice Chair)

A John Carter  
S Fielding  
A Haynes  
P Lally

P Owen  
M Suthers  
A L Sykes

## STATUTORY CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A Mr E Hayes (Diocese of Nottingham)  
Mr D Richards (Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham)  
A Mrs I Wooding (Parent Governor)  
Vacancy (Parent Governor)

## ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor J. Barnes.

## MINUTES

That subject to Mrs I Wooding being marked absent, the Minutes of the last meeting of the Select Committee held on 7 April 2008, having been circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor John Carter  
Mrs. I. Wooding

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Prior to the presentation on exclusions he informed Members of the proposal to hold an extra meeting of the Select Committee on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> July, when he hoped that work would be completed.

## **SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS**

Mr. Rob Lancaster, Head of Education Otherwise than at School (EOTAS), Neil Hesketh (EOTAS) Policy and Performance Manager and Mr. Geoff Read, Head Teacher of the Nottinghamshire Learning Centre, drew out the main points of the performance data concerning exclusions from Nottinghamshire schools, attached as appendices to the report.

In terms of exclusions in Nottinghamshire (appendix 1), the Behaviour and Support Team used exclusion data to identify schools with a high frequency of fixed-period exclusions and those young people at risk of permanent exclusion. Data was also circulated showing the rate per 1000 pupils. In terms of primary schools, there had been a decrease in the number of days lost to learning. Permanent exclusion had remained consistent over the last four years. In terms of secondary schools, fixed period exclusions had risen by 5%, there had also been a decrease in the number of days lost to learning. Permanent exclusion was at its lowest in six years.

Councillor Wombwell expressed his concern about the issuing of permanent exclusions and the amount of staff time used to deal with them. It was pointed out that a number of schools were receiving support. There were currently 17 schools being supported by the Partnership Focus Group (PFG). Each area had its own School's Effectiveness Group also used to identify schools experiencing difficulties and to use resources more effectively from within the local area. The importance of strong leadership by the school's head teacher and managers was seen as important to reduce exclusions.

The main reason for exclusion in secondary schools was due to persistent disruptive behaviour (appendix 2). Jayne Deas, Acting Head of the Behaviour and Support Team explained to Members some of the strategies developed; behaviour attendance and anti-bullying as well as the de-escalation strategy currently being developed to improve behaviour in schools.

Data was provided on statistical neighbours (appendix 4) for 2005/06. Members were informed of the network meetings with the County's statistical neighbours. A recent meeting of head teachers had taken place to discuss how they could work collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes. It had been acknowledged that they could achieve more if they had more resources.

Dr. John Bradley, Head of Inclusion Services and Principal Educational Psychologist presented information to Members on work being done to reduce secondary permanent exclusion (appendix 5). He explained to Members that the seven districts had a partnership group on which all secondary schools could be

represented. The group's aim was to commission alternative provision, arrange managed moves and use a shared budget to target support for pupils at risk of exclusion. Another effective way to support children at risk was through local integrated services. Pilot Joint Area Teams (JAT) in each district had been developed which services were actively engaged in, to co-ordinate support to those who needed it. The family of schools that became pilot for JAT developments had seen a reduction in both fixed-period and permanent exclusions. In addition work was ongoing to share good practice across the county.

Dr. Bradley referred to the new regulations that had come into force in September 2007. He said that schools appeared to be issuing permanent exclusions in cases which, in the past, would have led to fixed-period exclusion. He said that a positive consequence of this strategy by schools was a dramatic drop in the number of school days lost to learning which had seen a 40% decrease.

Rob Lancaster talked about out of school places for those permanently excluded and other learners provided through the Nottinghamshire Learning Centre (appendix 6). There was a statutory duty for suitable full time education to be provided from the sixth day of permanent exclusion, in most cases, this was met by the Nottinghamshire Learning Centre (NLC). The Centre provided suitable full time provision for children and young people on its roll. The national changes to the regulations on education of excluded pupils had seen a 33% reduction in days lost to exclusion in secondary school compared to autumn term 2006; an 88% reduction in 6+ day fixed-period exclusions and 13% increase in permanent exclusion.

Members also heard about the re-integration to school from the Learning Centre and were given further information on strategies used by NLC to improve re-integration. In response to a question from Councillor Lally, it was explained that children in care were a priority since they could be at significant risk. There had been no permanent exclusions of children in care over the last five years.

Mr. Read, Head Teacher Nottinghamshire Learning Centre, circulated information to Members on the strategies in place for improving re-integration. He explained that the Government would be looking more closely at this area, particularly those students who did not want to go back into education. The number of children the NLC provided for had increased over the last 3 years. This was mainly due to a significant number of pupils staying longer. Returning young people to school was proving difficult, since they all had a different level of additional needs. He said that the cost of providing education in the NLC was significantly higher than that of a mainstream school. It would be more cost effective to prevent exclusion and work more closely with young people in schools. He also explained that whilst there was a significant area of work around prevention to be done resources were stretched with the learning centres being full.

There was discussion about the relocation of the learning centres and the possibility of having staff based on school sites.

The Select Committee agreed the additional meeting of the Select Committee to be held on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> July at 2.00pm.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm.

**CHAIR**