



meeting	DRUGS EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE		
date	19 November 2007	agenda item number	4

Report of the Drugs Education Select Committee

School Visits

Purpose of the report

1. To provide Members of the Drugs Education Select Committee with the opportunity to consider issues arising from the recent visits to the Garibaldi Maths and Technology College and Priestsic Primary School.

Background

2. At a meeting on the 9 July 2007 Members identified a range of options available to them to collect information as part of the review. As part of the evidence gathering process, on 5 November, a number of Members of the Select Committee undertook school visits. This enabled them to examine the content and delivery of the current curriculum around drugs education and discuss with children, young people and parents their experiences of, and views on, drugs and the drugs education programme in their schools.
3. The programme for the visit included:
 - meeting students from key stages 3,4 and the 6th form at Garibaldi
 - watching a presentation by the PDL (Personal Development of Learners) Team Drama Support Workshop and an opportunity to discuss their work in schools
 - a discussion session with key stage 2 children at Priestsic Primary school
 - a meeting with a group of parents and the Head Teacher from Priestsic School

Issues

Garibaldi Maths and Computing College

4. Members met, discussed and asked questions of students. The students comments included:

- drugs can be used by some young people as a means to relieve stress and help some cope with the pressure of exams, for some young people it is easier to get hold of drugs than contact a helpline
- not all students had been through the DARE programme. Those who had could not remember it in any detail and felt its messages needed reinforcing throughout their school lives
- a sixth former raised concerns about HDS (Human Development Studies) sessions (which include drugs education) not fitting into her school time table
- pupils felt it would be constructive to meet and discuss with people who had first hand experience of taking drugs. They felt drugs education in its present form gave information about drugs but did not give enough information about the effects and should include more visual images
- peer pressure and an element of 'daring' were seen as reasons why some young people started taking drugs. They felt that scare techniques were effective as a deterrent
- drug taking by celebrities was seen as endorsing use and making it attractive
- that lessons on drugs should be more frequent and a worthwhile lesson should supply information about the effect and classification of the drugs, the risks of long term use, other options for coping with stress and where to get help
- students were unclear who they should talk to in confidence about drugs. Teachers had to report to the Child Protection Officer on disclosure of drug taking, this is not necessarily the case with a school nurse. Nottinghamshire has a multi agency protocol for reporting drug use. A one off offence could be treated as confidential, repeated use has to be reported to the police. This was seen as a problem for many because of the fear of being reported. 6th form counsellors are available in the school
- drugs were defined as heroin, Class A drugs and alcohol; most students were concerned about alcohol and cigarettes as they are more readily available. They felt that alcohol education should teach them to drink sensibly
- personality was a major factor that led young people to take drugs, they felt it was often the sort of person that wanted to "fit in" and that not every one has a strong enough personality to say no
- it was felt that drugs were not talked about enough, particularly at home and that some parents did not have enough information to be able to discuss fully with their children
- that more interaction between parents and schools using different forms of communication would be beneficial. It was apparent that many students did not and would not talk to their parents/carers about such issues
- more information should be available concerning where they can get help. This should be accessible using different formats, leaflets, posters, videos and DVDs.

Priestsic Primary School

5. The Head Teacher, Dave Binks, outlined the programme of drugs education provided in the school and the underlying emphasis on healthy lifestyle choices and the inclusion of parents. A number of outside providers are included in the provision, nursery age and year 2 receive Life Education, Year 3 have safety education using CASE, in year 6 pupils have DARE training. At the present time Years 4 and 5 are not included in the programme. WAM (What About Me?) a support service for children affected by their parents and carers drug and alcohol misuse is available in the school. He emphasised the influence of outside educators and the need for an ongoing programme to reinforce lessons in every year.
6. Select Committee Members talked to a group of 6 children who were able to demonstrate that they had understood the information they had been given during lessons and were able to talk knowledgeably about the issues raised. They were able explain that they understood the difference between good and bad drugs and the effects that taking drugs had on both themselves and others and had clear views on the problems associated with drugs and alcohol.
7. The parents from the school welcomed the programmes in place; felt that anything that raised awareness was useful and that it was never too early to get the message across. They felt that children needed life skills education to enable them to become confident enough to resist and that little and often was the most effective approach. It was agreed that parental involvement had a very important part to play in reinforcing what had been learnt in school, inclusion of parents in activities and providing them with information was vital. Different mediums for learning were also important art, drama and sport were identified.

PDL ((Personal Development of Learners Team) Drama Workshop)

8. The PDL team demonstrated an example of one of the workshops they provide for years 7 and 8 concerning tobacco and cannabis and the influence of family members. Workshops are available on a range of issues that affect young people, designed to enhance personal development and are accompanied by follow up lesson plans and packs of support material. The workshops enable young people to explore their feelings and attitudes as well as gain skills and knowledge. Members felt the workshop was very effective and the combination of using drama to stimulate discussion would allow pupils to consider their own views around the subject of legal and illegal drugs and the consequences of misuse.
9. Members acknowledged that the team could have a very successful input into all schools drugs education programmes but were informed that as the team was a sold service not all schools would be able to afford the programme. A discussion took place about how much it would cost to expand the service to make it more accessible to all schools.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that

the Drug Education Select Committee review the summary of evidence received from the visit and consider possible areas for recommendations.

Councillor Edward Llewellyn-Jones
Chair of the Drug Education Select Committee

Background papers: nil.