

meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 19th May 2011

agenda item number

11a iv.

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Conversion of maintained schools to academy status

1. A total of five maintained schools have now converted to academy status since the start of the current academic year. The latest schools successfully converting from 1st April, 2011 are:
 - The West Bridgford School
 - Carlton-le-Willows School & Technology College
2. The three schools that have previously converted are the George Spencer, Redhill and Barnby Road Academies. In addition, the Samworth Church Academy was established in September 2008 to replace the former Sherwood Hall School. A note of the official opening of its new buildings is provided later in this report.
3. The opportunity to convert to academy status without a sponsor or partner has been extended to all schools that are performing well. Each application will be considered on a case by case basis. Factors that will be taken into account include:
 - the schools last three years exam results
 - comparisons, locally of attainment and progression
 - the last Ofsted inspection, in particular the schools capacity to improve
4. In addition schools can apply to convert with an approved partner or sponsor approved by the Department for Education (DfE).
5. A number of other schools are actively considering or are progressing toward academy status and the status of these schools can be summarised as follows:
 - (a) **Schools proposing to convert without a partner or sponsor where an Academy Order has been issued by DfE**
 - Toot Hill School – expected to convert 1 July, 2011
 - Tuxford School – proposing to convert 1 July, 2011

- National C of E Technology College (linked to the Tuxford School) – expected to convert 1 August, 2011
- (b) Schools proposing to convert with a partner or sponsor and for which an Academy Order has been issued by the DfE; all expected to convert 1 September, 2011**
- Dayncourt School & Specialist Sports College
 - Serlby Park
 - Portland School
 - Retford Oaks High School
 - Valley School
 - The Wheldon School
- (c) Schools proposing to convert with a partner or sponsor and for which a Statement of Intent has been issued by the DfE**
- Dukeries Community College

Safeguarding Improvement Programme – DfE Review Meeting April 2011

6. On 15th April 2011, colleagues from the DfE Intervention Unit led the second review meeting of the Improvement Notice. I am pleased to report that the review was positive. The DfE acknowledged a number of key achievements to date, including:-
- improvements in the timeliness and quality of frontline assessments and the implementation of a quality management framework;
 - the recruitment of additional frontline capacity; and
 - the successful roll-out of the Pathway to Provision thresholds across the Council and its partners.
7. Overall it was acknowledged that the Council had moved during the course of the Improvement Notice from crisis management to development and ongoing improvement.
8. A number of current issues were discussed, including quantitative targets (numbers and percentage of re-referrals); workforce issues (absence and turnover rates); social worker workloads; and quality/audits.
9. The next steps for the Council were also discussed, including:-
- the upcoming Peer Challenge in May 2011;
 - the appointment of an external partner to work alongside/challenge the internal transformation team in developing a new operating model for Children’s Social Care;
 - inviting Ofsted to undertake a full re-inspection of our safeguarding arrangements, in response to their recent correspondence; and

- continuing with the current Improvement Board arrangements until any such inspection takes place, as part of the planned transfer of governance for the improvement programme to the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board (NSCB).
10. The DfE officials confirmed that Ministers would take a view as to the Government's next steps when they had received results of the Peer Challenge, and when Ofsted makes a decision on whether and when to undertake a full re-inspection.

Safeguarding Improvement Programme - Peer Challenge, May 2011

11. As part of our Safeguarding Improvement Programme and progress towards exit of the DfE improvement Notice, the Safeguarding Improvement Programme Board has requested a peer challenge of Safeguarding Children's Services and this will take place during the week 9th – 13th May 2011.
12. A peer challenge allows a team of people who understand the pressures and challenges of Children's Safeguarding Services to review practices in a challenging but supportive way, to acknowledge our services that work well, and to identify areas for improvement. The Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID) Group has organised a team to spend a week in Nottinghamshire to deliver the review, and this team will be representative of a variety of interests in an integrated children's sector. The main purpose of the review is to stimulate local discussion about how the Council and its partners can be more effective in delivering improved outcomes for children and young people.
13. It is not an inspection, though it follows a very similar format. Key lines of enquiry have been provided to the peer challenge team who will talk with a cross section of staff, either through face to face interviews or in workshops, and also undertake a number of site visits during the review. The team will gather and analyse the findings of the onsite activities, as well as evidence from key local documents and data. At the close of the onsite week the team will present their findings, and within three weeks we will receive a written report that sets out the review's findings.
14. This will inform our Safeguarding Improvement Programme going forward, making the progress secured to date sustainable in the future and informing our readiness for formal re-inspection. I hope to provide an update on the initial outcomes from the peer challenge to the meeting on 19th May.

Spring Concert – Sunday 10 April

15. On Sunday 10th April, Councillor Allen Clarke attended a Spring Concert by the county youth music ensembles at Kelham Hall, near Newark. The evening featured the county concert band, choir,

advanced music ensemble and swing band in 'For Your Ears Only - a concert inspired by film music.

16. Over 250 people attended the performance. The programme included a variety of music from films, old and new, including 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' from *Fantasia*, *The Blues Brothers*, 'The Best of Bond' and 'I See You' from *Avatar*.
17. Councillor Clarke was impressed by the standard of performance and congratulated the young musicians and staff on producing a thoroughly entertaining evening.

Official Opening of the Samworth Church Academy, Mansfield

18. On 18th April 2011 I attended the opening of the Samworth Church Academy with a number of other distinguished guests, including the Chairman of the County Council. The official opening was carried out by HRH The Princess Royal.
19. Approximately 90 guests attended and enjoyed a tour of the new school followed by afternoon tea served in the main dining area.
20. The Academy was established in September 2008 to replace the former Sherwood Hall School. The new buildings opened to pupils in July 2010, with the remaining works to the site completed earlier this year.

Annual Governors Conference, Saturday, 12 March, 2011

21. On Saturday, 12th March, 2011 I attended the annual conference for school governors held at Mansfield Civic Centre. I opened and closed the conference and noted that around 100 governors from school across the County Council were in attendance.
22. The key note speaker was Professor John West-Burnham, Professor of Educational Leadership, St. Mary's University College, Twickenham. He gave a well received presentation on 'Transforming Schools Through Partnership' and the fundamental role of school governors in ensuring the quality of education in our schools.
23. There were morning and afternoon workshops showcasing examples of good partnership working by County schools including:
 - setting up a formal partnership between a family of schools (Chris Pickering and Wendy Ramshaw – Tuxford Federation),
 - working in partnership with the community (Paul Goodman and Phil Pearson, Candleby Lane School)
 - partnership working between schools (Bob Shield and Chris Stevens, Southwell Minster Church of England Voluntary Aided Comprehensive School)

24. Kelvin Peel, from the National College for school leadership ran a workshop on alternative governance arrangements. There were entertaining performances by young people from the Nottinghamshire County Performance and the Magnus Church of England School Dancers.
25. This was a very well organised conference provided by Governor Services in partnership with the Nottinghamshire Association of Governors, which received excellent evaluations from governors who attended.

Official opening of the new Ranskill Nursery on the 19th March 2011

26. The nursery was officially opened by the vice-chairman of Nottinghamshire County Council, Councillor Keith Walker. Work started in August 2010 on the brick-built extension to Ranskill Primary School and the keys were handed over ready for the Nursery to open in February this year.
27. The Nursery has been funded through the Early Years Quality and Access Capital grant to support the continued need for childcare in Ranskill and surrounding villages, there are 37 children on roll at the nursery this term and 42 already for next term, with more coming over the next year. The new building can accommodate up to 30 children aged between 2 and 4.
28. The official opening was a very celebratory event attended by local families, representatives from the school and the village and staff from Nottinghamshire County Council. Families were able to see first hand the premises and activities the children will be able to benefit from. Around 60 people attended the event and enjoyed the chance to look around the new premises. The project has taken well over 5 years to complete due to difficulties in finding a suitable site.

COUNCILLOR PHILIP OWEN

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services

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