

Minutes



Meeting GCSE ATTAINMENT AND DEPRIVATION SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 20 April 2009 (commencing at 2.00 pm)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

COUNCILLORS

Yvonne Davisdon (Chair)
Andy Stewart (Vice Chair)

	Peter Barnes	A	Martin Suthers
A	Jen Cole	A	Kevan Wakefield
	Philip Owen	A	Yvonne Woodhead

STATUTORY CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A Mr E Hayes (Diocese of Nottingham)
Mr D Richards (Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham)
Mr J Rudd (Parent Governor)
Mr J Parry (Parent Governor)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor V H Dobson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jen Cole, Martin Suthers and Yvonne Woodhead.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

None.

PRESENTATION

Mr Slater gave a presentation to the Select Committee on the School Improvement Services and wider Children and Young People's Services response to the achievement gap. In doing so, he outlined the projects that were being used to improve performance and achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals.

The use of free school meals eligibility was only one indicator of deprivation that had an effect on pupil attainment and which the Department was working with schools to support all pupils. It was explained that schools were classified according to need in order to facilitate resources and support. The work was based upon tracking of individual pupils and the progress of vulnerable groups. It was important to be able to identify and overcome problems such as special learning needs as early on as possible. Mr Slater referred to the importance of the early work taking place within the Sure Start and Children's Centres to overcome poverty and establish special learning needs. He drew attention to the vast improvements being made in primary schools focussed mainly on children falling behind expectations, in particular, the intensive reading recovery programme which was being rolled out across the County. Other areas of concern being tackled included:

- Strengthening links between schools and early years settings
- Boys' writing
- CAME (Cognitive Acceleration in Mathematics Education)

Mr Slater pointed out that the initiatives were working, with Key Stage 2 (KS2) English and Maths at 82% for Level 4 which was above the national average in 2008 for the first time in Nottinghamshire. In terms of additional funding, 17 schools received an extra £3000 to focus on level 3 children at the end of KS2. There was also a new government initiative to target funds for 1:1 tuition focused upon children at risk of not attaining level 4 at KS2. This tuition would take place outside of the school day.

In terms of secondary age pupils, developments were being made to better match the curriculum, in particular, for 14-16 year olds, through more vocational and work based learning. From September 2009 there would be a new programme introduced that offers 1:1 coaching for 1,837 Key Stage 3 places in all schools and 262 Key Stage 4 places for schools in the National Challenge programme.

The work of School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and National Challenge Advisors was prioritised using data such as school absence and key stage targets. Wider support included the rolling out of extended services in and around schools, with some targeted young people also receiving funding to participate in this provision. Work was also ongoing in Newark and Ashfield through Joint Access Teams (JATs) which focused on children and young people at risk of exclusion or under performance.

Following the presentation the Select Committee discussed matters in relation to bi-lingual problems faced by some schools, the collection and management of pupil data and the issue of recruiting and improving the quality of teaching in schools and the importance of sharing good practice.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Select Committee had undertaken a number of school visits to ascertain what work was taking place to identify underachieving pupils and what support was given to improve learning and attainment. Members discussed what they had learnt from these visits.

There was also discussion around Advanced Skills Teachers and the shortage at a specialist level especially for Maths. Mr Slater referred to a teacher first programme coming on board in Nottinghamshire in September 2009 in which highly successful graduates would spend 2/3 years teaching Maths.

Following discussion it was agreed that the following be included as recommendations in the draft report:-

1. That the tracking and use of data to improve attainment in schools be encouraged.
2. That initiatives in place be given time to work.
3. That consideration be given to a task and finish group to look at Durham as a comparison.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm.

CHAIR