

meeting **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

date **2 March 2011**

agenda item number **7(a)**

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Report back on an approved visit abroad: British Council Connecting Classrooms School Partnership Programme School and Local Authority Visit to China, 15 to 24 May 2010

Information

1. This report gives details of a recent visit which took place between 15 and 24 May 2010, in China, as part of a British Council Connecting Classrooms project. One Nottinghamshire County Council officer (and 9 schools) took part in the visit.

Background

2. The County Council's travel, accommodation, conference and Member development policies provide for written reports to be produced which describe the business of the event and an evaluation written by the Council's representatives of its success, with particular reference to the business of the Council or the achievement of learning objectives.

Representative's report

Purpose/aim of the visit

3. The main aim of the visit was to lead a group of nine Nottinghamshire head teachers participating in a contact seminar for the British Council Connecting Classrooms Programme for China. A local authority representative was a requirement of joining the project and taking part in the contact seminar.

Achievement of objectives

4. Overleaf is a summary of the main programme for the week:

Monday, 17 May 2010

Meeting with Jinhua Education Authority officials (am) followed by official welcome hosted by the Director of Education of Jinhua where the Nottinghamshire Head Teachers were able to meet with their counterparts for the first time. The officer was able to meet their counterparts from the Local Authority (LA) and with the help of the British Council officers, were able to make a start on the LA action plan.

Tuesday, 18 May 2010

Contact seminar (am) which allowed Head Teachers from both Nottinghamshire and Jinhua, and project coordinators from the Jinhua schools, to put together effective and workable draft action plans. The officer facilitated the contact seminar alongside the 2 British Council officers. During the afternoon visits were arranged to schools in each of the 3 districts represented. Each head teacher visited his / her partner school together with a further 2 schools in that district so that they could see different schools. The officer visited a group of 3 schools (Nanyuan, Jiangbin and Dongyuan) together with the 3 appropriate Head Teachers.

Wednesday, 19 and Thursday, 20 May 2010

Head Teachers spent each day in their partner schools teaching classes and addressing the pupils as well as observing lessons. Further discussions took place with their Head Teachers and project coordinators regarding the action plan. On Wednesday the officer visited Jinhua Foreign Language School and facilitated the negotiations between the Nottinghamshire teacher representing South Wolds School and the project leaders from the Chinese schools. On the Thursday the officer spent the day with the British Council officers finalising the details of the LA memorandum of understanding and the LA joint action plans.

Friday, 21 May 2010

All Head Teachers and the officer attended the District Debriefing session held in Jinhua where the memoranda of understanding were signed and speeches were made by all the Head Teachers and the County Council representative. In the afternoon we left for Beijing.

Saturday, 22 May 2010

National Debriefing session including presentations and talks for all Local Authorities and Head Teachers from all parts of the UK and China involved in the initiative. The meeting took place at Hanban Headquarters. Included in the debriefing was a tour of Hanban HQ where the Head Teachers were able to view the resources Hanban would be providing free of charge to help the teaching of Chinese culture and language in the UK.

Sunday, 23 May 2010

Return to the United Kingdom

5. During the visit, each individual school partnership and the Local Authority completed an action plan. The main objectives of the partnership are listed below:
 - better understanding of the culture, language and education systems in both countries
 - establishment of sustainable joint curriculum projects to the mutual benefit of pupils and teachers in Jinhua and Nottinghamshire
 - effective and valuable monitoring and evaluation of the projects which will be accountable both internally and externally
 - to promote the mobility for teachers in both Jinhua and Nottinghamshire to secure successful face to face meetings and share teaching and learning experiences
 - develop a greater sense of community cohesion within the schools in the cluster partnerships
 - further development within the wider school family of tolerance, understanding and respect for other cultures
 - all schools to have applied for the Full International School Award jointly organised by the Department for Education and the British Council.

6. Following the visit, a number of actions to disseminate outcomes and objectives of the programme will be carried out as follows:
 - Schools (teachers and pupils) will be encouraged to take part in Nottinghamshire and East Midlands Global Dimension Conferences and workshops as speakers and presenters
 - Head Teachers will report to governors of schools and to their local family of head teachers
 - School websites and newsletters will disseminate information about the links which will include factual information about Chinese schools and the Chinese language, thus enabling all pupils and their parents to have a better understanding of that country and its institutions
 - the teaching of China as a topic in year 5 will take place in primary schools who took part in the visit
 - students of Mandarin at South Wolds School to have a better understanding of the country and the language through their school link
 - information and outcomes will be disseminated by means of the Nottinghamshire and East Midlands Regional International Links Newsletter which is published once a term. We will also contribute to British Council publications such as “Learning World”.

Statutory and policy implications

7. This report has been produced to ensure compliance with the Council’s Travel and Accommodation policy and current arrangements for approving attendance at conferences, seminars and Member training events.

Financial implications

8. The financial implications of this visit were set out in the report to the Administration Committee Urgency Sub-Committee which was approved on 12 April 2010. There was no cost to Nottinghamshire County Council as the British Council met all of the costs of the visit. The officer did not claim any additional subsistence.

RECOMMENDATION

9. The achievements of the visit set out in the report are noted.

ANTHONY MAY

Corporate Director for Children, Families and Cultural Services

Legal Services' comments (LM/16.6.2010)

10. The report is for noting only.

Financial comments of the Service Director – Finance (NDR)

11. The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background papers available for public inspection

Report approved on 12 April 2010

Electoral division(s) affected

Nottinghamshire