



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 31 July 2003

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

The Education Development Plan for Nottinghamshire, evaluation of the 2002 - 2003 actions and planned actions for 2003 - 2004

Purpose of Report

1. To consider and approve the actions for the Education Development Plan for 2003 – 2004 (**document attached for Members only**).

Information and Advice

Background

2. County Council approved the Nottinghamshire Education Development Plan (EDP) covering the period 2002 - 2007, in April 2002. **The plan was agreed in full by the Secretary of State and judged by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and by Ofsted to be a good plan.** This is a key statutory plan that is the vehicle through which the Local Education Authority (LEA) sets its statutory targets for improving pupil achievement and school performance and identifies its priorities for improvement.
3. The EDP is a five-year plan but each LEA is expected to produce an annual programme setting out the activities that will be delivered in the next twelve months to contribute to the achievement of the LEA's statutory targets. The programme of actions is the second annual programme and covers the period from April 2003 to April 2004. Each LEA is also expected to evaluate the progress made against this programme each year and to submit both the evaluation report and the planned actions for the coming year to the DfES. The timeline set by the DfES for submission of this report is the end of July 2003. The DfES will provide feedback on the quality and acceptability of the plan.

4. Nottinghamshire's EDP contains six priorities for improvement. These six priorities remain throughout the five years of the plan. They were identified in consultation with schools, elected members and LEA partners. The priorities are:
 - raising attainment in the early years and in primary education particularly literacy and numeracy;
 - raising attainment in secondary schools;
 - narrowing gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils and tackling underachievement;
 - providing support and challenge for schools causing concern;
 - improving performance in information and communications technology;
 - building learning communities.

The evaluation of progress made with the EDP in 2002- 2003

5. The evaluation report shows that good progress was made in delivering the planned actions for 2002 - 2003 with 93% of actions fully implemented within the planned timeline and those not completed either rescheduled or amended to take account of changes to national requirements.
6. Good progress has been made, in partnership with schools, to improve standards of attainment in Nottinghamshire. In primary schools the rate of improvement in standards in English and mathematics (as measured by national tests) has been significant and considerably greater than the rate of improvement nationally in similar LEAs. For the first time ever the attainment of Nottinghamshire eleven-year-olds was above the national average. Standards for fourteen-year-olds have also risen in English and mathematics in the past year, again at a greater rate than standards nationally. The performance of sixteen-year-olds (Key Stage 4 pupils) locally has not improved at such a rapid rate and standards remain below the national average as measured by the proportion of pupils achieving five or more higher grade passes in GCSE examinations. This is an area of concern and additional funding has been provided by the County Council in the Medium Term Financial Strategy to deliver a focussed Key Stage 4 strategy in order to improve the attainment of sixteen-year-olds. The actions within this strategy will sit within the 2003- 2004 EDP programme.
7. Despite the very positive improvements in pupils' performance across the County the LEA did not achieve its EDP targets for 2002 for Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 4. However, given the rapid rate of improvement together with the implementation of the local Key Stage 4 strategy, the LEA is confident that the targets for fourteen and sixteen-year-olds are challenging but achievable.

The actions for 2003- 2004

8. The actions planned for 2003 - 2004 are constructed to take account of:
 - new national initiatives including the national primary strategy;
 - new local initiatives and policies including the Nottinghamshire Key Stage 4 strategy;
 - the results of detailed and extensive consultation with head teachers and other LEA partners;
 - the evaluation of the 2002 - 2003 actions;
 - a detailed audit of LEA performance.
9. Consultation with head teachers shows that the LEA's priorities remain the right ones and are those shared by schools and translated into individual school improvement plans. Head teachers asked for actions to support small schools in curriculum planning, for support with improving the performance of gifted and talented pupils and for support for acting head teachers. Actions for all these issues have been included in the new programme.
10. Good progress has been made in improving the quality of leadership and management in primary schools where it is now considerably stronger than in similar LEAs and in schools across the country. The quality of teaching in Nottinghamshire schools has also improved in primary schools and again is better than in other LEAs. The 2003-2004 EDP programme does not therefore need to include actions to raise standards in primary leadership or teaching.
11. The 2003 - 2004 programme of actions will be reviewed in April 2004 and a six-monthly report on progress towards the 2004 targets will be presented to the Education and Lifelong Learning Select Standing Committee for scrutiny

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, Crime and Disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been described in the text of the report. Members' attention is however drawn to the following:-

Financial Implications

13. The Education Development Plan is carefully costed within the Education budget and the details of the expenditure of the actions planned for 2003- 2004 have been submitted to the DfES together with an evaluation of the expenditure for the delivery of the 2002 - 2003 programme.

Equal Opportunities Implications

14. The Education Development Plan contains a wide range of actions focusing on promoting and securing equality of opportunity for all

Nottinghamshire pupils. In particular there are actions to support underachieving pupils and those at risk of exclusion.

Implications for Service Users

15. Schools have been involved in the construction of the 2003 - 2004 programme and are asked to consider the LEA's targets when setting their own school targets. The priorities for improvement are shared with schools and are reflected in the majority of individual school's own improvement plans.

Crime and Disorder Implications

16. There are actions within the Education Development Plan programme to contribute to promoting good citizenship and reducing teenage crime and the use and misuse of drugs.

RECOMMENDATION

17. That the Education Development Plan annual evaluation report and activity programmes for 2003-2004 be approved.

PAM TULLEY

Director of Education

Reasons for Recommendation

18. The Education Development Plan is a key statutory plan for the County Council and sets out the Local Education Authority's strategy for improving the performance of all Nottinghamshire schools. The targets set in the EDP contribute to the national performance measures used to measure high achieving councils. The EDP is a key document in achieving the County Council's priorities within the Strategic Plan - Building a Future.

Head of Legal Services' Comments (JF)

19. Approval of the Education Development Plan is reserved to full Council under the Constitution.

Director of Resources' Financial Comments (NDR)

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

Background Papers Available for Inspection

Electoral Division(s) Affected

All.

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