
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 22nd August 2007

SUBJECT: Termly Report on Standards in Leeds High Schools and Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report summarises the outcomes of Ofsted inspections of secondary schools in Leeds in 2007, and since the introduction of the new inspection framework in September 2005. The report also evaluates the progress of schools which are working in an extended or focused partnership with Education Leeds. These schools are either in an Ofsted category, or recognised as facing particular challenges for improvement.
- 1.2 The public interest in maintaining the exemption of Appendix 2, including the Addendum, on this subject outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because Education Leeds has a duty to secure improvement and increased confidence in the schools concerned. The Addendum provides an update on the Statement of Action for South Leeds High School. This would be adversely affected by disclosure of the information

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In September 2006 only one secondary school in Leeds was causing concern and placed in an Ofsted category. Since then a number of schools with weak standards and progress, and therefore vulnerable to an adverse inspection judgement, have been inspected.

3.0 MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 OVERVIEW OF OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF LEEDS HIGH SCHOOLS

- 3.2 Since the last report to Executive Board, ten more schools have been inspected, seven secondary schools and three SILCs. One high school and one of the SILCs were judged to be outstanding. A further SILC was judged to be good. Three high schools were judged to be satisfactory, despite low contextual value added scores. They were able to demonstrate signs of improvement and the capacity to improve further. Only two schools were given a notice to improve. One of these schools already had a notice to improve and

was, unusually, given a second as the progress it is making is too good for a special measures category. Low exam results from the previous year prevented a satisfactory judgement. The second school has seen strong improvement over the last two years and the notice to improve is an achievement for the school; a step on the way to further progress. One SILC and one mainstream high school have been placed in special measures. The likelihood of this was mentioned in the previous report to the Board in November 2006.

3.3 Overall, since the introduction of the new framework in September 2005, there have been 37 inspections of high schools, PRUs and SILCs in Leeds. 86% have been judged as satisfactory or better. Two schools are outstanding, fourteen have been judged as good, 16 as satisfactory. Three schools have been given a notice to improve, and furthermore all three are improving well. One SILC and one mainstream school have been placed in special measures.

3.4 The new School Improvement Policy allocates schools to four types of partnership. Including the SILCs and the PRUs there are two schools (4%) who are leading partners, 16 who are 'learning partners' (33%), 22 in a 'focused partnership' (46%) and eight in an 'extended partnership' (17%). Over half of those in a 'focused partnership' have performance indicators (usually related to a history of low value added scores) that make them vulnerable to an Ofsted inspection. There are seven schools expecting an inspection next year who are in the lowest quartile of contextual value added. They will need to demonstrate signs of improvement in this year's results and a capacity for further improvement, if they are to achieve a satisfactory result. Work with these schools is having some success. A number of these schools who have already been inspected were able to demonstrate sufficient capacity to improve to be judged as satisfactory.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

4.1 Whilst the cost of supporting vulnerable schools is high, the cost of supporting schools placed in an Ofsted category is much higher. Support is allocated according to risk and need, but cannot be increased without withdrawing support from existing programmes. The number of schools placed into an Ofsted category are clearly monitored and are managed effectively.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Taken overall this has been a further successful period with Ofsted judgements reaffirming the positive progress made by schools in raising standards. External evaluation from HMI, and from regional national strategy coordinators and independent consultants comments favourably on the effectiveness of school support. However, over the next year more schools will be inspected with low critical indicators.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Executive Board is asked to consider the main findings for the report and note the strategies for improvement that have been developed to support future increases in achievement for all pupils, groups and schools.

Agenda Item:

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REPORT TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 22nd August 2007

SUBJECT: Termly Report on Standards in Leeds High Schools and Biannual Update on Ofsted Inspections and Schools Causing Concern

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in (Details contained in the Report)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make Board Members aware of the actions being followed to ensure that the schools causing the most serious concerns are being monitored, supported and challenged through planned interventions.
- 1.2 This report summarises the outcomes of Ofsted inspections of secondary schools in Leeds in 2007, and since the introduction of the new inspection framework in September 2005. The report also evaluates the progress of schools which are working in an extended partnership with Education Leeds. These schools are either in an Ofsted category, or recognised as facing particular challenges for improvement.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In September 2006 only one secondary school in Leeds was in an Ofsted category but since then a number of schools with weak standards and progress, and therefore vulnerable to an adverse inspection judgement, have been inspected. While most have been judged satisfactory or better, two

further schools have been given a notice to improve and two schools placed into special measures.

3.0 MAIN ISSUES

3.1 OVERVIEW OF OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF LEEDS HIGH SCHOOLS

3.2 Under the revised framework for inspection introduced in September 2005 inspections are shorter and more frequent. Typically schools are informed three working days ahead of an inspection, and are inspected by a team of four or five inspectors for two days. The emphasis has shifted from lesson observation to a focus on the school leadership and the effectiveness of the school's self evaluation.

3.3 Schools are placed in one of four categories: outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate. If a school is judged as inadequate it is either given a notice to improve or placed in special measures. Judgements are also made about achievement and standards, leadership and management, provision (teaching and learning, curriculum, and care guidance and support), and personal development.

3.4 Since the last report to the Executive Board, seven secondary schools and three SILCs have been inspected. One high school, Garforth Community College, and one of the SILCs, the North East SILC, were found to be outstanding. Three high schools were judged to be satisfactory, despite low contextual value added scores. They were able to demonstrate signs of improvement and the capacity to improve further. Two schools were given a notice to improve. One of the schools already had a notice to improve and was, unusually, given a second as the progress it was making was too good for a special measures category. Low exam results from the previous year prevented a satisfactory judgement. The second school has seen strong improvement over the last two years and the notice to improve is an achievement for the school, a step on the way to further progress. One SILC and one mainstream high school have been placed in special measures. The likelihood of this was mentioned in the previous report to the Executive Board in January 2007. The other SILC was judged to be good.

3.5 Overall, since the introduction of the new framework in September 2005, there have been 37 inspections of high schools, PRUs and SILCs in Leeds. Two have been classed as outstanding, fourteen have been judged as good, sixteen as satisfactory. Three schools have been given a notice to improve, although all three are improving well. One SILC and one mainstream school have been placed in special measures. The SILC is now in a strong partnership and has had a successful monitoring visit from HMI which recognised progress being made. Education Leeds is negotiating a partnership for the mainstream school to address the weaknesses described in the report.

3.6 Nationally it is reported that one in eight schools are unsatisfactory, and in Leeds currently this figure is similar with five schools placed in a category out of 37 inspected schools. Education Leeds has identified a number of schools which are waiting for an inspection and are at risk of being placed in an Ofsted category primarily because of a history of low achievement. These schools are

a priority for work with Education Leeds consultants and advisers. Evaluation shows that similar support in the past has helped a number of schools to achieve a satisfactory judgement.

- 3.7 Summary reports on schools inspected since the previous report in January 2007 are provided in Annex 1.

4 OVERVIEW OF SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN: HIGH SCHOOLS

- 4.1 The School Improvement Policy allocates schools to four types of partnership. Schools with a history of offering support at a whole school level are 'leading partners'. Other schools with strong features that they are willing to share are 'learning partners' and will lead developments in particular areas or exchange practice around a particular focus with other schools. Schools in a 'focused partnership' have a limited number of areas for improvement, while schools in an extended partnership are engaged in whole school improvement with a range of support on different issues.

- 4.2 Including the SILCs and the PRUs there are two schools (4%) who are leading partners, 16 who are 'learning partners' (33%), 22 in a 'focused partnership' (46%) and eight in an 'extended partnership' (17%). Over half of those in a 'focused partnership' have a need for improvement (usually related to a history of low value added scores) that makes them vulnerable to an Ofsted inspection. However, a number of these schools who have already been inspected were able to demonstrate sufficient capacity to improve to be judged as satisfactory.

- 4.3 In July 2007 there are two schools in special measures in Leeds. There are three high schools with a notice to improve.

- 4.4 In the next few months there will be inspections of up to 15 schools. Several of these are vulnerable because of low value added scores over the past three years. Ten schools have been identified within category 3 as a priority for support and have been allocated intensive support from the national strategies consultants and from school improvement advisers.

5 Schools in an Extended Partnership : Category 4 Schools

- 5.1 Schools in an extended partnership are those facing the severest challenges. Crawshaw school has a second notice to improve from Ofsted. A recent re-inspection noted the improvement that is being made and the good work of the executive headteacher recruited by Education Leeds that has brought the school onto a stable and improving footing. Even though the school could not be judged satisfactory because of the weak 2006 exam results, it was not placed in special measures as the guidelines suggest because of the good progress made this year. John Smeaton has also made good progress in the past two years. Standards have risen considerably in the last two years, particularly at Key Stage 4. The notice to improve is an indication of the further progress that inspectors expect to see in twelve months' time, and is an encouraging indicator of the school's improvement. The judgement of Education Leeds' own school improvement partners and advisers firmly indicates that the inspection that gave Cockburn a notice to improve was seriously flawed. The excellent HMI monitoring visit, which recognised more

clearly the achievements of the school, supports that view. The BESD SILC was placed in special measures early in 2007. Since then a consultant headteacher and an additional adviser have been engaged to support the senior leaders in the school and there are signs of improvement. A recent monitoring visit from HMI judged progress to be satisfactory. South Leeds High School was placed in special measures in June 2007 with key areas for improvement relating to learning, teaching, behaviour, and management at all levels. A statement of action is being drawn up by Education Leeds.

5.2 Intake was removed from special measures in 2006 and, in order to reflect the continuing collaboration between the school and Education Leeds, is in an extended partnership. Both schools in the Central Leeds Federation had satisfactory inspections in 2006 but the pace of improvement has been relatively slow. The schools have had to deal with a range of events in recent months from moving to a new building to admitting over 40 pupils in one term. They are a priority for support. Tinshill is a pupil referral unit (PRU) providing education for approximately 120 Key Stage 4 pupils. It was inspected by Ofsted in July 2005 when the overall provision and effectiveness was judged to be good. The longer term future of the PRU is currently subject to a city-wide review of support for behaviour and in the meantime, Tinshill PRU is classed as a focussed partnership school.

5.3 Evidence of the effective impact of support is seen in the reports of monitoring visits from HMI. For example, following the intervention by Education Leeds and the engagement of an Executive Headteacher at Crawshaw, leadership and management is no longer considered to be a key issue for improvement. Rigorous attention to school policies and practice led Ofsted to state that 'students' behaviour is now mostly good' and that 'the incidence of referrals and exclusions for misbehaviour has reduced dramatically'; this area is no longer considered to be a key issue for the school. Following a programme of work by the national strategy consultants and collaborative work between advisers and senior and middle leaders, the overall quality of teaching and learning was judged by Ofsted in their 2007 inspection to be 'satisfactory', compared to the 'inadequate' judgement in 2006. Similarly at John Smeaton, the focus on improved outcomes through Key Stage 3 and 4 projects involving advisers and consultants has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Ofsted judged that the school has improved and has good capacity to improve further. They recognised that middle leaders are growing in confidence and the quality, and consistency of middle leadership is improving with support from the Local Authority.

5.4 A confidential, not for publication, report on all schools in an extended partnership is provided in Annex 2.

6 Schools in a Focused Partnership : Category 3 Schools

6.1 This group of schools covers a range of situations. A few of these schools have had recent inspections and been judged as satisfactory even though they face very challenging circumstances. Other schools in this partnership category have had a history of lower value added scores but are now showing evidence of marked improvement and are approaching inspections with more confidence. There are seven schools expecting an inspection next year who are in the lowest quartile of contextual value added. They will need to demonstrate signs of improvement in this year's results and a capacity for

further improvement, if they are to achieve a satisfactory result.

- 6.2 Headteachers, including all of those from this group of schools, have met to discuss strategies for improving contextual value added, and are taking steps to raise the indicator through a variety of measures. Some impact will be evident this year through more rigorous management, but more substantial gains will come from restructuring the curriculum and meeting the different needs of pupils who currently are not achieving the equivalent of eight GCSEs. A school improvement adviser is supporting two headteachers in leading development work on the curriculum and will present to the headteachers' conference in July. The 14-19 team continue to improve the quality and consistency of external providers and ensure that courses are accredited and suitable for students.
- 6.3 The national strategies secondary team, comprising three advisers and twelve consultants, plays a significant role in raising secondary standards. They provide a lead in the training and development of English, mathematics, science and ICT, whole school teaching and learning, behaviour for learning and attendance. They have designed a differentiated offer to schools that prioritises those in extended and focused partnerships. Support will target improvement from level 6 to level 7 and higher for selected schools. Other projects will offer a concentration on consistent themes across a school with leadership from the senior team during a period of residency when a number of consultants will work in the school together for a period of time. School improvement partners or advisers have joined lead consultants to negotiate programmes of support for 2007-8 with schools that match the school's priorities.
- 6.4 School improvement partners have this term concentrated on school's provision for lower attaining groups of pupils, and in particular, the care and guidance given by schools to assist pupils in their choice of courses and their progress. School improvement partners will take their reports to governors and aim to improve their understanding of the issues, school evaluation and improvement.
- 6.5 School improvement advisers have given intensive support to schools facing an inspection. Longer term preparation with senior and middle leaders, building on the school improvement partner's work on self evaluation, and developing systems for monitoring and tracking student progress and targeted support. Advisers have also given intensive support ahead of the inspection to ensure that schools present their work in a consistent and positive manner. This strategy has contributed to a successful outcome for a number of schools.
- 6.6 Although the School Intervention Strategy project (SISP) has not been extended by the central national strategies network, it is strong and expanding in Leeds. Schools are realising that it is a powerful and different way of engaging staff in school improvement and utilising the creativity and problem-solving skills of a wider group of people. Three additional schools have asked for and received training this term.
- 6.7 While there is evidence of progress across the majority of schools in focused partnerships, advisers who support schools in challenging circumstances understand that the package of support for the school, including for attendance and extended curriculum opportunities, has to result in higher achievement,

particularly for identified groups of pupils and lower attainers. Improvement to contextual value added and to core skills of literacy and numeracy are essential if schools are to face inspections with more confidence.

7 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

7.1 The new inspection framework places additional pressure on schools and particularly on school leaders, who receive support from Education Leeds. Low contextual value added places schools at risk of being placed into an Ofsted category. The continued low performance of many minority and vulnerable groups means that tackling inequalities remains a very high priority for Education Leeds.

8 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The low achievement that is evident in secondary education and the scale of the challenge faced by a number of schools, particularly in inner Leeds means that this must remain a high priority when allocating resources.

8.2 The cost of supporting vulnerable schools is high; the cost of supporting schools placed in an Ofsted category is much higher. Secondary support is allocated according to risk and need.

9 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Although external evaluation about the effectiveness of school support has been good, over the next twelve months, a number of schools will be entering an inspection with low critical indicators.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Executive Board is asked to consider the main findings for the report and note the strategies for improvement that have been developed to support future increases in achievement for all pupils, groups and schools.