



**Agenda Item:**

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## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

**EXECUTIVE BOARD: 18 OCTOBER 2006**

**SUBJECT: Report on schools causing concern**

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**Electoral wards Affected:**

**ALL WARDS**

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in

(Details contained in the Report)

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### 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to make 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.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The terminology 'school causing concern' refers to those schools that have been identified by Ofsted as requiring special measures or those being given a notice to improve. In addition, schools are also identified by Education Leeds (School Improvement Policy April 2006) as needing immediate intervention and support due to them being a cause for serious concern which if not addressed would result in them being placed in an Ofsted category. Schools may also be a cause for concern due to temporary or short term circumstances that leave them vulnerable.

2.2 There are 14 primary schools judged as causing concern. There is one school in the Ofsted category 'special measures'. Two schools are in the Ofsted category 'notice to improve'. All of these schools are being provided with intensive support by Education Leeds and are making reasonable progress.

- 2.3 Eleven primary schools are in category 4 in accordance with the Education Leeds School Improvement Policy 2006. These schools will now take part in an Extended Partnership with Education Leeds, which includes the provision of intensive support, and the establishment of a task group and a governing body monitoring group, the Joint Review Group.
- 2.4 Two primary schools have undertaken full reviews with Education Leeds officers and have been found to be at least satisfactory and no longer causing concern.
- 2.5 This report evaluates the effectiveness of support from Education Leeds for schools causing concern. It reviews the impact of task groups, private consultants, school partnerships and school improvement partners.
- 2.6 Overall, support is effective where headteachers recognise the need and share this perception with governors, and where the school feels in control. Good relationships and trust in dealings with services are crucial and the reliable, persistent involvement of the adviser helps to maintain this climate. Support is most effective when it is part of a coherent strategy where services work well with each other and the school.
- 2.7 The new framework is more rigorous than before and places at risk a group of schools where attainment (or even overall achievement) is average or above but where the achievement of particular groups of young people is unsatisfactory. Advisers have worked with a broader range of schools this year, in particular working with leadership at all levels on evaluation.
- 2.8 A more detailed report is in the confidential part of this agenda under Access to Information Rules (10.4 1&2).

### **3.00 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

- 3.1 The new Education Leeds School Improvement Policy describes a revised system of categorising schools. This describes the contribution that schools can make in partnership, and help to establish priorities for support and intervention.
- 3.2 The public interest in maintaining the exemption in relation to the main report on this subject outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information by reason of the fact that the duty of Education Leeds in securing improvement and increased confidence in the schools concerned would be adversely affected by disclosure of the information

### **4.00 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There is an increased emphasis in the new Ofsted inspection framework on achievement, including the progress made by pupils in higher attaining schools, together with a close scrutiny of the school's self evaluation procedures. This extends the risk from inspections to schools who formerly would have been judged as satisfactory or even good. The acting chief inspector talks of 'raising the bar'. It will be important to maintain the support for schools to develop their self evaluation and improve achievement. Nationally, about 10% of schools have been judged as inadequate.

## **5.00 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The inspections since September have presented new and rigorous challenges to schools. Leeds schools overall have responded well. However, the expectations of inspectors have increased and Education Leeds will need to support schools in continuing to improve achievement and self evaluation.

## **6.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Executive Board is asked to note the contents of the report and to consider the actions taken in schools causing concern. The Board is also asked to note the impact of the change in the inspection framework.