

Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) Inquiry

The Implications of Trust Schools for the Local Authority

Draft Terms of reference

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Education and Inspections Bill, which is expected to come into force in the summer of 2007, will enable schools to become Trust schools.
- 1.2 According to the DfES:
"Trusts offer schools greater opportunity to secure the support of partners to strengthen their leadership and to develop their own ethos. In doing so, they will build diversity in the school system."
- 1.3 In September 2006 the government announced 28 pathfinder projects to develop and refine ideas about how Trust arrangements could work for individual schools. A number of different models are envisaged.
- 1.4 Garforth Community College in Leeds, in partnership with Trinity and All Saints Higher Education College, is one of the national pathfinders.
- 1.5 At this stage, it is too early to know how many other schools may wish to explore Trust status in the short to medium term. Many rumours are circulating already. Whatever the situation, the council will still be seeking to provide locally integrated services to children and young people, and needs to understand the implications of Trust status for this obligation.
- 1.6 At this early stage in the development of the Trusts schools concept, the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) felt it would be timely to look at the implications of Trust schools for Leeds as a Children's Services Authority, to ensure that we can be proactive in responding to the opportunities and any concerns associated with this potentially hugely significant change.
- 1.7 The board hopes that this inquiry will assist the council in preparing for the impact of the introduction of Trust Schools in the summer of 2007.

2.0 Scope of the inquiry

- 2.1 The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of, and where appropriate make recommendations on, the following areas:
 - The developing arrangements for Trust Schools
 - The potential impact in Leeds
 - Ways in which Trust Schools can help deliver the universal and targeted elements of children's services provision

3.0 Comments of the relevant director and executive member

3.1 In line with scrutiny board procedure rule 11.4 the views of the relevant director and executive member have been sought and have been incorporated where appropriate into these terms of reference. Full details are available on request from the scrutiny support unit.

4.0 Timetable for the inquiry

4.1 It is envisaged that the inquiry will take place over two sessions. The inquiry will conclude with the publication of a formal report setting out the board's conclusions and recommendations.

4.2 The length of the inquiry is subject to change in the light of emerging evidence.

5.0 Submission of evidence

5.1 The organisation of evidence between the two sessions will be partly dependent on the availability of external witnesses.

5.2 Session One – 8th February 2007

To consider general background information on:

- The government's Trust Schools proposals
- Work being undertaken by Education Leeds in response to the proposals
- Any intelligence on the number of schools in Leeds that may be actively considering Trust status

5.3 Session One or Two (dependent on witness availability)

To consider information on

- The Schools Commissioner's views on developments in Leeds
- The Garforth Community College/Trinity and All Saints College pathfinder project
- The David Young Academy as an example of alternative provision
- The views of Children Leeds on the impact of trust schools for the children's services authority and partnership working
- The initial views of trade unions on the implications of Trust Schools for employees

5.4 Session Two – 8th March 2007

To consider the board's emerging conclusions and recommendations

6.0 Witnesses

6.1 The following witnesses have been identified as possible contributors to the Inquiry:

- The Schools Commissioner
- Education Leeds
- Headteacher and Chair of Governors of Garforth Community College
- Trinity and All Saints College
- Director of Children's Services
- Principal of David Young Academy
- Joint Consultative Committee representative

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