

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC INCENTIVE PERFORMANCE TARGETS (SIPT) PANEL

Report and recommendations: November 2006

1. Process.

1.1. During November the Panel considered the self-assessment reviews by Education Leeds (EL) of key areas of their work during the period since the 2005 self-evaluation. The reviews cover the year up to 31st August 2006 (including examination results from Summer 2006). It does not take account of events since then. The report validates and comments on the grades proposed by Education Leeds.

1.2. The Panel undertook its work in meetings and by electronic communication. Meetings included discussion with strategic managers of Education Leeds to clarify aspects of the self-assessment and service performance. The Panel also took into account the 2005 and 2006 Audit Commission School Surveys. Documentation was based on the Ofsted self-evaluation process which was used nationally until the Ofsted LEA inspection regime ended in Spring 2005. Evidence was prepared electronically by Education Leeds and comprised an assessment against the Ofsted Judgement Recording Statements (JRSs), supported by electronically-linked documents. Copies of the documentation and other information requested by the Panel are available in the Members' library.

This will be the last report by the SIPT Panel as it relates to the final period of the partnership contract with Capita.

1.4. The Panel met in the Merrion Centre on 3rd and 13th November and with Education Leeds staff on 17th November at Weetwood Hall.

Members:

Nick Henwood	External Independent Adviser (Chair)
Keith H Burton	Deputy Director of Children's Services
Diane Reynard	Headteacher (SILC)
John Townsley	Headteacher (High)
Alan Tootill	Headteacher (Primary)
Stephen Rennie	Governor
Eileen Hallas	Governor

2. Overall Performance

Judgement	2005 Education Leeds Self-evaluation.	Education Leeds Self-evaluation 2006	SIPT Validated score
Overall performance	3 (Ofsted 0.2 grade: "Overall Effectiveness")	3	3

2.1. Education Leeds judged that performance overall remains highly satisfactory, as it was at the time of the 2004 inspection and the 2005 self-evaluation. The panel agrees with that overall judgement.

2.2. The Panel's task was to validate evidence of actual improvement in terms of outcomes for learners and schools. The Panel looked in detail at areas where the self-assessment indicated an improved grade.

2.3. In general the Panel felt that the process of self-evaluation had been robust and that is reflected in the number of evaluation grades which the Panel supports. This year the self-evaluation identified improvement in 11 areas, compared with 4 in 2005. Nine of the improved scores increased the grade by one point; the remaining two areas were self-assessed as improving by two points. There were two areas where, on the basis of the evidence available, the panel concluded that the improvement in the self-assessment grade could not be supported. They are described in paragraph 3.2.

2.4. Part of the work of the panel involves looking carefully at changes between the 2005 and 2006 Audit Commission Schools Surveys and the Education Leeds self-evaluation (also using the 2004 Ofsted inspection for comparison). That is not a simple task, because some questions have changed over time, complicating direct comparison. The panel noted a number of areas where the survey identified an apparent worsening in satisfaction as 'significant'. The role of the Panel is confined to validation of the self-evaluation, and not to identify the reasons for this shift. Our conclusions are therefore based on the evidence before us. It will be important to watch trends in the school survey over time to assess the real significance of any changes.

3. Validation.

3.1. Areas reviewed

After taking an overview, the Panel agreed to continue the previous practice of providing a commentary where the overall assessment had changed from the previous year or could not be supported. It took particular notice of areas where schools appear much less satisfied than the assessment indicates. The Panel reviewed all areas where self-assessment indicated an improvement in grade since the 2005 self-evaluation. These are listed in paragraph 3.2. Below.

3.2. Areas reviewed in detail, with summative comments.

JRS	Title and Panel Comment	2005 Self-assessment	2006 Education Leeds Self-assessment	2006 SIPT Panel Validation
JRS 1.5	The extent to which the LEA has in place strategies to promote continual improvement including Best Value <i>Comment: The self-evaluation showed continued improvement in this area, which is now strong.</i>	3	2	2
JRS 1.8	The effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration between agencies in support of priorities <i>Comment: In addition to important developments in partnership with schools, there was also evidence of increasing work with other agencies, both within Leeds and more broadly.</i>	3	2	2

JRS 2.2	<p>The progress in implementing the LEA's strategy for school improvement</p> <p><i>Comment: Improving outcomes in a significant number of areas reflect the continued development and strengthening of support for school improvement.</i></p>	4	3	3
JRS 2.7	<p>The effectiveness of LEA identification of and intervention in under-performing schools.</p> <p><i>Comment: Leeds is now well below the national average and, at the time of the self-evaluation (end of August) had no schools in Ofsted categories and a range of differentiated strategies in place to support under-performing schools.</i></p>	4	3	3
JRC 2.8	<p>The effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning</p>	3	2	2
JRS 3.9c	<p>The effectiveness of its (the LEA's) services to support school management: property services</p> <p><i>Note: The Panel considered 2.8 and 3.9c together because of their obvious interconnection, also reflected in the way the self-evaluations were presented.</i></p> <p><i>The evidence supported the high self-evaluation in respect of recent capital developments, where the successful identification of resources and the detailed planning with schools for implementation is undoubtedly very good. That process inevitably does not reach all schools and we identified scope to increase overall school engagement and awareness – which is not yet at the same high level as in, say, school effectiveness issues.</i></p> <p><i>We were not yet able to agree the initial self-assessment of property services as a "good" service. It is not well perceived by schools (on the basis of the AC survey) and does not compare well with statistical neighbours. We saw clear evidence that major changes are afoot but relatively late in the review period (e.g. the August 2006 review of the Capital project Board terms of reference). The 2004 Ofsted recommendation relating to property maintenance has only just been addressed in this period, which is slow. The one-stop-shop, which appears to have excellent prospects, is currently on a pilot basis. The headteacher induction visits appear to be a worthwhile innovation and training session are now being offered (but in this academic year, after the review period).</i></p> <p><i>Education Leeds submitted a revised self-evaluation of grade 3 ("highly satisfactory") and the panel recognised that changes under way show good prospects. However it was felt that outcomes directly affecting the quality of support to schools in the period up to August 2006 would be better reflected in a grade 4 ("satisfactory").</i></p>	4	3 (initially 2)	4

JRS 3.3	Support to schools for raising standards in and the curriculum use of information and communications technology <i>Comment: The evaluation showed continued improvement. The AC survey views of schools are not positive, but the self-evaluation showed clear improvements in measured outcomes. (There may be continued concern in schools about technical support, which they have the responsibility to purchase)</i>	4	3	3
JRS 3.12	The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness service <i>Comment: A significant range of improved outcomes support the self-evaluation</i>	4	3	3
JRS 5.2	The LEA provision for pupils who are educated other than at school <i>Comment: Progress has been made since the last inspection and this provision is at least satisfactory, as self-evaluated.</i>	5	4	4
JRS 5.4	Support for behaviour in school <i>Comment: The panel agrees that support for behaviour is now satisfactory, and recognises the hard work which has gone into this improvement after a long period when it was unsatisfactory. Future prospects appear good and the Panel agrees that the planning framework is very sound with the support of many schools. Area Management Boards, a key element, are developing well. However, they were not fully in place during the review period. For the period up to August 2006, the evidence would indicate a "satisfactory" rather than "highly satisfactory" service</i>	5	3	4
JRS 5.7	The effectiveness of the LEA in promoting racial equality <i>Comment: This service was highly satisfactory and the Panel now agrees that the evidence now indicates it as good.</i>	3	2	2

3.3. Areas not reviewed in detail

The following JRS areas are unchanged. They are all satisfactory or better and have not been reviewed in depth by the panel.

Although the JRS scores around Special Education Needs were also unchanged, the Panel looked closely at this area because of a deterioration in the views of schools. After careful scrutiny of the grade descriptors and discussion with Education Leeds, the panel agreed with

the self-evaluation, especially in view of evidence of a significant number of improved outcomes. The Panel would wish to emphasise that its role is to moderate self-evaluation, not attempt to inspect. We feel this is an area where the confidence of schools and key output indicators will continue to deserve close attention. The views of schools are obviously important but the SEN framework seems secure.

Judgement recording statement	Area of activity	Self-assessment grade 2006
JRS 1.6	The leadership provided by elected members (including the quality of advice received)	Graded 2
JRS 1.7	The quality of the leadership provided by senior officers	Graded 2
JRS 2.1	The LEA's strategy for school improvement	Graded 3
JRS 2.4	The extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge and intervention	Graded 2
JRS 2.5	The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve, including the use made of performance data	Graded 3
JRS 2.6	The extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need	Graded 3
JRS 3.11	The planning and provision of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services	Graded 3
JRS 4.1	The effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for SEN.	Graded 2
JRS 4.2	The effectiveness of the LEA in meeting its statutory obligations in respect of SEN	Graded 3
JRS 4.3	The effectiveness of the LEA in exercising its SEN functions to support school improvement.	Graded 2
JRS 4.4	The extent to which the LEA exercises its SEN functions in a way which provides value for money	Graded 2
JRS 5.3	Support for school attendance	Graded 2

4. General observations by the Panel.

At the conclusion of the process, the Panel made the following general observations:

4.1. Education Leeds has continued to make strong progress during the past year. The self-evaluation was broadly accurate and there has been further improvement in the overall quality of service.

4.2. Communicating change, and the reasons for it, is a major challenge in a city the size of Leeds. The Panel sought out and found evidence of good practice in working with schools but also some evidence of schools not being fully aware of new policy directions. The 2006 School Survey reflects some increased concern on the part of schools and needs to be monitored closely. Working together is of course a shared responsibility for schools, Education Leeds and Leeds City Council.

4.3. There has been good progress in the development of local partnerships and we also found evidence of the successful development of broader partnership with other agencies and communities both in Leeds and more widely.

4.4. Aspects of work in some key areas of the education service in Leeds are now seen to be examples of good practice to be shared nationally with other local authorities.

5. Progress since 2003

The SIPT Panel was convened in 2003, 2005 and 2006. It was not convened in 2004 because of the Ofsted inspection in that year. This is the final review by the Panel and it may be helpful to make some general observations.

5.1. The first and obvious one is the direction and speed of travel since the establishment of Education Leeds. Change and improvement have been rapid, well focused and well led. Standards are rising.

5.2. Processes which did not exist in 2002 are now largely secure and showing results. Outcomes for learners are improving – in almost all areas. Many of those changes are sufficiently great to be described as transformational.

5.3. The longer-term (and very difficult) issues in areas of support to individual learners have now been addressed. For the first time there are no areas which are judged to be unsatisfactory and standards are rising. That does not mean that issues such as support for behaviour have reached a steady state of high performance. – but the issues have been identified, strategies for improvement determined and the journey is well under way.

5.4. Relations with schools continue to challenge but the panel has seen clear evidence of skilled work in developing partnerships in a wide range of activities. That work is generally consistent although it is felt that some aspects of school asset and property management would benefit from an earlier engagement on principles (rather than mainly on specific projects) – as happens in other areas of the work of Education Leeds. Effective consultation is, however, clearly evident around major capital schemes.

5.5. Looking back over four years, it is clear that the panel has concentrated on areas for improvement, as the system requires. We would also wish to record that some areas of work (such as support for finance) have continually scored highly with the support of schools throughout that period –and we would not wish these areas of excellent performance to go

unrecognised. They have been critical to the improvement of support to schools and learners in the city, although not written up by the Panel due to its particular focus.

5.6. The Panels have found their work interesting and, from their perspective, have felt that a process of scrutiny and challenge of performance on behalf of school, learners and governors has been helpful – both in validating self-evaluation and in developing their understanding of the work of the education service. Although the SIPT process now ends, there may be value in carrying forward this element of its work into the future in some way.

6. Thanks.

The Panel wishes to thank Education Leeds for the quality of evidence they provided and their prompt response to requests for meetings and further information.

Sincere thanks are also due to the head teacher and governor members of the Panel for generously giving their time to panel meetings and in reading and reviewing the large amounts of evidence.

November 2006