



**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS
REPORT TO SCRUTINY BOARD (Children's Services)
DATE: 13 July 2006**

SUBJECT: Inquiry into Secondary Achievement: Officer's response to the Report of Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People)

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic Minorities
Women
Disabled People

Please indicate that the following have been addressed within the report:

Resource Implications:

Finance
Personnel
Accommodation/Buildings

Policy Implications:

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This report is an officer response to the report of Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) published in April 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In April 2006, Scrutiny Board (Children and Young People) published a report of its Inquiry into Secondary Achievement. The report concluded with an overarching recommendation:

"That Education Leeds continues to promote and foster the ethos of a collaborative approach to the education of Leeds children with senior school staff and governing bodies, and that they continue to provide the supporting infrastructure to develop these collaborative partnerships further."

To this end, the report detailed 14 specific recommendations.

2.2 This report identifies actions in response to each of the recommendations.

3. THE REPORT

3.1 The response

3.1.1 Several officers were involved in formulating the responses to each recommendation. Some have been already been implemented.

3.1.2 Officers found the scrutiny process very helpful in highlighting the issues and stimulating a fresh look at many elements of the strategy for secondary education.

3.1.3 In the spirit of the overarching recommendations, teachers and headteachers have been consulted in the process.

3.2 The response to each recommendation

3.2.1 Recommendation 1

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds ensures that the necessary infrastructure is in place to ensure that secondary schools receive timely and accurate transfer data for the September 2006 intake.

Response:

- (a) Education Leeds has established an on-line facility by which primary schools can up-load teacher assessment and pastoral data for high schools to access. By mid-June this year, 60% of primary schools had uploaded data for local high schools to access. This system complements the national school to school (S2S) system which allows access across LEA boundaries.
- (b) It is clear that some primary schools are not aware of the facility or have not agreed an approach with their high schools. Education Leeds, through its Quality Assurance Advisor team, the National Strategies Team and the Transfer Headteacher Consultants, will further promote the strategy and encourage more collaboration between schools in providing the early transfer of data.

3.2.2 Recommendation 2

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds considers how to evaluate the various transfer techniques and initiatives, in order to assist teachers in identifying the most appropriate and effective methods to use with specific groups of pupils.

Response

- (a) A set of standards and case studies will be written to illustrate a range of transfer practice and, for each of these, there will be an evaluation of benefits for specific groups of children.
- (b) In the light of case studies, there will be a dissemination of models of effective transfer practice including innovative curriculum models for year 7
- (c) An existing on-line questionnaire will be used to gain feedback from young people about their experience of the transfer process
- (d) In the light of existing evaluations, we will implement a cross-phase teaching programme and remodel the 'Moving On' web site

3.2.3 Recommendation 3

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds commissions the production of a 'transfer entitlement' for pupils and parents.

Response:

- (a) The standards and case studies referred to in (3.2.2 a) will embrace the notion

of a 'transfer entitlement'. They will be published as a toolkit for schools to use in evaluating their current arrangements for transfer and to assist schools in developing their plan for the effective transfer of learners. These standards have been integrated into the Education Leeds Quality Standards Framework for school self evaluation.

- (b) The link advisors working with schools will be briefed on effective transfer practice so, where appropriate, they can assist schools in developing their strategies
- (c) The response team were also keen not to overlook the centrality of the learner in the transfer process. To this end, Education Leeds will work with schools to pilot the use of individual learner's plans as a basis for 'learning conversations' between pupils and their teachers, particularly on leaving a school and during induction into a new school or college. These conversations would allow learners to:
 - ★ highlight their successes,
 - ★ talk through their strengths as learners and the areas in which they need to develop
 - ★ articulate their thoughts about the future and what they want to get out of the next phase in their learning

3.2.4 **Recommendation 4**

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds reports back to us on progress in meeting the targets for implementing Individual Learning Plans.

Response

- (a) Education Leeds has facilitated a Steering Group which has developed guidance on the development of individual learning plans (ILPs). The group comprises headteachers, Education Leeds officers, other officers of Leeds City Council and representatives of FE and training providers. The guidance was published in March 2006 and there have been a series of conferences for high schools, primary schools, the SILCs and PRUs.
- (b) Several pilots have been established to develop the approach and these mainly focus on transition
- (c) There is a particular emphasis on implementing for KS 4. A target has been set in the 14-19 Strategy Action Plan for 50% of all learners in year 10 to have ILPs by September 2006. Although this target will prove highly challenging, there is more optimism that schools will have the necessary arrangements in place for implementation in September 2007.
- (d) An ICT solution to facilitating ILPs is also being explored through the development of a city-wide solution based on LLN2 and the piloting of a commercial package in one of our schools to gain valuable experience of using a live system.

3.2.5 **Recommendation 5**

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds considers local terminology to describe this wider curriculum offer.

Response

- (a) The use of the term "alternative programmes" has not been used in any 14-19 documents or reports for some time and is generally being replaced with the

- term “vocational and work-related learning programmes”. However, even this term tends to reinforce the academic/vocational divide. The issue will be discussed at 14-19 Strategy group and a suggestion will be made that whenever possible the term ‘personalised learning pathways’ is used to describe the wider curriculum offer.
- (b) The term ‘alternative’ is still much used in conversation and it is likely to take some considerable time before it sees its final demise from the vocabulary of all those involved with education and training..

3.2.6 Recommendation 6

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds considers appropriate mechanisms to facilitate the opportunity for teachers to explore and develop new methods of delivering the curriculum.

Response

- (a) The key vehicles to support teachers in this enterprise will be the 14 curriculum networks, one for each of the specialised Diploma vocational lines. Currently, there are six and work is underway to have all 14 networks up and running by 2007.
- (b) For each vocational line we will ensure there is a strategy for:
- ★ teacher placement programmes allowing teachers to familiarise with a business or service and gain inspiration for developing vocationally related materials
 - ★ teacher release for development work such as writing teaching materials which can be shared across the network
 - ★ supporting businesses in working with schools and colleges to develop pathways into employment for learners.
 - ★ engaging specialist schools as lead schools for forging links in particular vocational areas. This would centre primarily on specialist schools and colleges
- (c) So that all schools are aware of what is available we will develop a brochure of support available across all the vocational lines.

3.2.7 Recommendation 7

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds considers the current arrangements for the city-wide co-ordination of the work placement programme through Education Bradford and whether there are any potential benefits of this co-ordination being undertaken within Leeds.

Response

- (a) Education Bradford is used to undertake the administration of work placements with their primary role being to ensure all placements are health and safety checked. We do not rely on this service for establishing links with local business and this work is on going through a number of other initiatives. However, this recommendation is timely in prompting a review of the value gained from the service.
- (b) Education Leeds EBP and Work Experience Coordinators from schools in Leeds have worked closely with the team at Education Bradford with the result that the database of work places offering placements now has 5,600 entries.

Schools now have online access to companies in Leeds and Bradford and a formal arrangement with Wakefield LEA to gain access to companies in that area.

- (c) Health and Safety checks on companies are now carried out more quickly through the use of up to three providers and the use of mobile technology to speed the communication process. Incident reporting procedures have proved to be robust.

3.2.8 **Recommendation 8**

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds facilitates an event to raise employer awareness of the need for, and benefits to be gained from, providing work placements.

Response

- (a) The arrangements for securing Education Business Partnerships have been stabilised over the last 18 months. Education Leeds believes that arrangements are sturdy enough to move up a level. To this end, a new steering arrangement will be established to coordinate and facilitate business engagement. This will also engage the specialist schools for business and enterprise and link to the vocational line networks
- (b) Previous arrangements for developing partnerships with business have not helped sufficient businesses to engage. There is a need to provide greater progression in engagement so that, for example, businesses can 'put their toe in the water' before building to more substantial engagements. We will therefore develop a clearer framework stimulating and securing 'safe progression' in business engagement. e.g. Through a menu system embracing mentoring, teacher placement, enterprise days, student work placement and longer term placement. The menu will clarify expectations and benefits for all concerned.
- (c) For businesses new to links with schools, we will develop 'starter programmes' so that businesses can familiarise themselves with the current education climate in local schools and gain insight into the benefits of effective links with schools

3.2.9 **Recommendation 9**

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds works with partners to explore the potential to develop further work placements within the Council and constituent organisations of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, as well as potentially through the procurement process, seeking placements from approved contractors.

Response

- (a) Education Leeds and schools are working with the Council to refresh and expand the Job Guarantee work placement initiative through the Re-engagement Project. In addition, £100,000k of LSC Local Intervention Development funding has been secured to help roll out the programme to other organisations outside the Council.
- (b) The starter programme and framework described in (8) will be used to secure greater engagement of Education Leeds and Council services

3.2.10 Recommendation 10

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds reports back to us on progress in relation to funding of the vocational and practical learning programme.

Response

- (a) A model for the funding of vocational and practical learning opportunities has been agreed by Leeds High School Heads and 14-19 Strategy Group.
- (b) It brings together all the available sources of funding, including the new Dedicated Schools Grant, into one coherent and sustainable model for supporting vocational and practical learning opportunities for all young people.
- (c) In 2006-7 schools will receive a minimum of £400/pupil towards the cost of a young person attending a one day per week programme through an approved external provider. Due to the external requirements of some of the funding streams a number of specific programmes are also free to schools.
- (d) The model also provides funding support for the development of vocational programmes within schools

3.2.11 Recommendation 11

That the Director of Children's Services reviews the adequacy of the safeguarding arrangements in relation to work experience and work placements, to ensure that children and young people are not being exposed to risk when accessing these opportunities.

Response

- (a) It became clear through the scrutiny process that there needs to be some further clarification of expectations in this area. This will be done through the further development of policy and through a clearer defining of the processes that need to be adhered to
- (b) The revised arrangements will be 'health checked' by the office of the Director of Children Services

3.2.12 Recommendation 12

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds develops contingency plans to cover the costs of work placement checks, should this become necessary.

- (a) The cost of health and safety checks for the two week work placements for all young people Year 10 is currently covered by the LSC contract that is discharged by Education Bradford.
- (b) A number of programmes that involve longer periods of work placement also require health and safety checks. Funding for these checks is generally available through project funding.
- (c) We are currently reviewing the arrangements for checking these extended placements to ensure we have a co-ordinated, efficient and cost effective model.
- (d) With the systems now well established and functioning to the satisfaction of most schools, a charge is now being made. However costs are often

- negotiated with schools and in some cases capped dependant upon numbers.
- (e) Although the 2006/07 Education Business Partnership (EBP) funding from LSC has yet to be confirmed, it is our understanding that the work experience element is secure.

3.2.13 **Recommendation 13**

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds works towards ensuring that there is a range of appropriate accredited routes for demonstrating functional skills.

- (a) The new functional skills in maths, English and ICT will be introduced as part of Specialised Diplomas, General Diplomas, Apprenticeships and as standalone qualifications.
- (b) They will also be an integral part of the GCSE maths, English and ICT qualifications.
- (c) Functional Skills will also replace the existing key skills qualifications.
- (d) Leeds should be involved in the initial piloting of the functional skills in 2007 through the Diploma Partnerships (schools, colleges and other training providers) that are successful in gaining approval to be involved in the first round of Specialised Diploma pilots.
- (e) A cross-sector network is being developed to support the introduction of functional skills in Leeds.

3.2.14 **Recommendation 14**

That the Chief Executive of Education Leeds reports back to us by December 2006 on what has been done in response to our recommendations and their impact on secondary achievement in Leeds.

Officers will formulate a report of progress at the requested time

4. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 Scrutiny Bard are asked to note the contents of the report