

Self Evaluation of the Education Functions of the Council

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To note the findings of the self evaluation and to endorse the proposed actions (paragraphs 3.13 to 3.16).
- 1.2 To note any comments from the Education Commission, which will be considering this report at its meeting on 21 February 2005.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The self evaluation exercise marks a final check on progress through the post-inspection action plan, after the inspection carried out by Ofsted and the Audit Commission in September 2002. It provides a secure basis for benchmarking the quality of the Council's performance as a Local Education Authority (LEA), in preparation for the new regime of inspections and assessments of Children's Services. Action planning will address the findings of this self evaluation, and ensure work towards even higher standards.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Process and validity

- 3.1 Self evaluation has increasingly been recognised as a central part of the national regime for inspecting Local Education Authorities and schools. In the current final cycle of such inspections, Councils are expected to conduct a systematic evaluation against the published framework. The results of this evaluation are validated by inspection teams, and fieldwork conducted only in national priority areas or where the self evaluation evidence is insecure.
- 3.2 The last inspection of the Council's functions as an LEA, which reported in January 2003, concluded that "The LEA has improved since the last inspection and now performs nearly all of its functions at least satisfactorily. It has made some improvement in almost every aspect criticised in the last inspection and those aspects that were good at the last inspection have continued to be good." A post-inspection action plan was approved by Council Cabinet and submitted to the Department for Education and Skills.

- 3.3 This plan has now concluded and improvement planning is now fully embedded in normal business planning. Nevertheless, it was appropriate to carry out a summative evaluation, both to ensure that performance improvement was secure and to act as a baseline for planning for further improvement.
- 3.4 This self evaluation was closely based on the process for inspection of local authorities. An Assistant Director of Education, who has been seconded on a part-time basis to Ofsted to undertake these inspections, moderated and facilitated the process to ensure full adherence to the inspection criteria.
- 3.5 The exercise was very thorough, going through several iterations, involving officers collating materials, assessing performance against the Ofsted criteria, and writing self evaluation statements. The basis for officer judgement was open, honest evaluation against the criteria. Internal challenge was robust, ensuring that final self evaluation statements were as secure as possible.
- 3.6 Final officer judgements were then subjected to a validation exercise using head teachers, governors and staff from Derby schools, drawn from existing liaison and advisory groups. Panels were convened to review the evidence presented by responsible officers, and question judgements against the published criteria.
- 3.7 In the large majority of instances, validation panels endorsed the grade proposed in the self evaluation, confirming the strength of the process. In two instances, panels thought that the evidence presented merited a grade one level lower than suggested. In four instances, panels concluded that the final grade should be one level higher than suggested. After further consideration with officers and panel members, the reported grades are those recommended by the panels.
- 3.8 All grades were reviewed by the Heads' Liaison Group before overall grades for effectiveness, progress and capacity were awarded.

Outcomes

- 3.9 The evaluation covered 46 component judgements. This is one more than in the last inspection – two judgements are new and one current judgement formerly had two grades. Of the judgements graded in the current exercise and in the last inspection, nearly half show improvement by at least one grade.

Improved	21
Unchanged	18
Worse	5

- 3.10 This indicates substantial improvement in much of the service, as the judgement criteria have changed to reflect higher expected standards since the last inspection. No area declined by more than one grade. Four areas improved by two grades, and one by three grades.

3.11 The following table summarises the outcomes by grade. Details are included in Appendix 2.

<i>Grade</i>		<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>
1	Very good	1	0
2	Good	8	13
3	Highly satisfactory	13	26
4	Satisfactory	19	5
5	Unsatisfactory	3	2
6	Poor	1	0
7	Very poor	0	0
		45	46

3.12 These grades are reflected in the three overall judgements, which are that:

- The Council has continued to make highly satisfactory (grade 3) progress
- The Council now offers highly satisfactory (grade 3) support to education (compared to grade 4 in 2002)
- There continues to be highly satisfactory (grade 3) capacity for further improvement (even after noting current staffing changes)

Next steps

3.13 Although it is not possible to be entirely sure that an external inspection would have reached the same conclusion about all individual grades, this self evaluation exercise provides a strong indication of continued progress. However, the DfES and Ofsted have clear expectations of constant improvement and it is important to plan to ensure this.

3.14 Resource and management priority within the Education Service will be given to ensuring progress in all areas rated 4 or 5. Action in these areas will be overseen by members of the education management team.

3.15 Action plans will be developed to ensure improvement in areas which are graded 4 and appropriate actions will be included in business plans for 2005/6.

3.16 Particular attention is being given to the two areas rated as 5 (support for gifted and talented pupils and provision for pupils out of school).

- Gifted and talented – action has already been taken and this area is already on course to reach grade 3 during the coming year.
- Provision in the pupil referral unit and the reduction of exclusions form part of one of the Education Service's highest priorities – reducing disaffection and disruption. Progress in this area will require joint working with schools.

3.17 Other services will plan for continued improvement through normal business planning.

3.18 The next formal inspection of Derby City Council as an LEA will not take place until 2007-8, and will be under the new arrangements for Joint Area Reviews of Children's Services. However, there will be an Annual Performance Assessment, carried out jointly by Ofsted and the Commission for Social Care Inspection. As part of this process the Council will be required to undertake an annual self evaluation using the new framework. The self evaluation now being reported will provide a useful benchmark for the first year.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4. No other options were considered, as this is a performance monitoring report.

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Detailed grade breakdown

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. Actions proposed are being funded within the budget setting process.

Legal

2. None arising

Personnel

3. None arising

Equalities impact

4. None arising

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

5. The action resulting from the self evaluation supports the Council's objectives of: Education provision that responds to people's needs, and Protecting and supporting people.

Detailed Grade Breakdown

<i>JRS</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>
0.1	The progress made by the LEA	3	3
0.2	The overall effectiveness of the LEA	4	3
0.3	The LEA's capacity for further improvement and to address the recommendations of the inspection	3	3
1.1	The effectiveness of corporate planning for the education of children and young people	4	3
1.2	The implementation of corporate planning for education	4	3
1.3	The effectiveness of LEA decision-making	4	3
1.4	The extent to which the LEA targets resources on priorities	3	3
1.5	The extent to which the LEA has in place strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value	4	4
1.6	The leadership provided by elected members (including the quality of advice received)	4	3
1.7	The quality of leadership provided by senior officers	3	3
1.8	The effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration between agencies in support of priorities	3	2
1.9	Support for Early Years education	-	3
1.10	Support for 14-19 education	-	3
2.1	The LEA's strategy for school improvement	4	3
2.2	The progress on implementing the LEA's strategy for school improvement	4	4
2.4	The extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge and intervention	2	2
2.5	The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve, including the use made of performance data	4	3
2.6	The extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need	2	2
2.7	The effectiveness of the LEA's identification of and intervention in under-performing schools	5	3
2.8	The effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning	3	2
2.9	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to the provision of school places	4	3
2.10	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools	4	2
3.1	Support to school leadership and management, including schools' approaches to continuous improvement	2	2
3.2	Support for national initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy at Key Stages 1 and 2	1	2
3.3	Support for information and communication technology (ICT)	5	4
3.4	Support for the national initiative to raise standards at Key Stage 3	4	3

<i>JRS</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2004</i>
3.5	Support for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsy/Traveller children	2	3
3.6	Support to schools for gifted and talented pupils	5	5
3.7	Support to school governors	3	3
3.8	The extent to which the LEA is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers	2	3
3.9	The planning and provision of services supporting school management	4	2
3.9a	financial services	2	2
3.9b	human resource services	3	3
3.9c	property services	4	3
3.9d	information management services	6	3
3.10	The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school management	4	3
3.11	The planning and provision of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services	3/4*	3
3.12	The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services	4	4
4.1	The effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for special educational needs	4	2
4.2	The effectiveness of the LEA in meeting its statutory obligations in respect of SEN	2	2
4.3	The effectiveness of the LEA in exercising its SEN functions to support school improvement	3	2
4.4	The extent to which the LEA exercises its SEN functions in a way which provides value for money	3	3
5.1	The overall effectiveness of the LEA strategy for promoting social inclusion	3	3
5.2	The LEA provision for pupils who are educated other than at school	4	5
5.3	Support for school attendance	4	3
5.4	Support for behaviour in schools	3	3
5.5	Support for health, safety, welfare and child protection	2	2
5.6	Provision for looked after children	3	3
5.7	The effectiveness of the LEA in promoting racial equality	3	4