

ITEM 8



EDUCATION COMMISSION 29 November 2004

Report of the Chair of the Education Commission

Scoping Reports for the Education Commission's 2004/05 work plan topic reviews

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Commission consider the reports setting out the scope of two topics for possible review in 2004/05.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 18 October 2004, the Education Commission selected the following work plan topics for possible review in 2004/05:
 - a) The recruitment and retention of school governors
 - b) Improving the range of support and provision for pupils with significant behaviour difficulties
- 2.2 Appendices 2 and 3 contain the scoping reports for the work plan topics that the Commission has selected for possible review in 2004/05.
- 2.3 If Commission members approve the scoping reports, it is planned to start the first review, that on the recruitment and retention of school governors, in December 2004 with the intention of completing it and reporting the Commission's findings to Council Cabinet on 7 April 2005.
- 2.4 It planned to start the second review in March 2005 and to report the Commission's findings to Council Cabinet in July 2005.
- 2.5 The Terms of Reference and the provisional timetables for the reviews are included in the scoping reports.

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications
	Appendix 2 – Draft scoping report on the Commission's review of the Recruitment and Retention of School Governors
	Appendix 3 – Draft scoping report on the Commission's review of the range of Support and Provision for Pupils with Significant Behaviour Difficulties

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. The reviews will incur some costs but these can be contained within the Commission's research budget.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Both reviews will be of benefit to Derby Schools, the pupils of those schools and the parents of those pupils, as well as to local communities.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

5. This report links to the following of corporate objectives and priorities for change:
Corporate Objectives: Education.
Priorities for Change: Tackling under-achievement in schools, responding to people's needs.

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Education Commission

Draft Scoping Report on the Commission's review of the Recruitment and Retention of School Governors

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 18 October 2004 the Education Commission agreed to investigate two possible work plan topics for review in the coming year. These were:

- a) The recruitment and retention of school governors.
- b) Improving the range of support and provision for pupils with significant behaviour difficulties.

This report sets out the possible scope of the first of those topics.

It is suggested that the aim of this review should be for the Commission to consider the problems of recruiting and retaining governors for the City's schools and then to see if it is possible to identify realistic measures to address those problems.

2. Background to the Review

School governing bodies comprise between 9 and 20 members and include different categories of governors such as staff governors, parent governors, Local Education Authority (LEA) governors, community governors etc.

Governors can be co-opted by school governing bodies. The LEA also recruits and appoints the LEA governors. These are not political appointments and they are generally from the local community or businesses such as Rolls-Royce, who have a general policy of supporting their staff to become school governors.

Derby City Council's Education Service has a vacancy list for LEA governors and has on-going problems in some schools in recruiting LEA governors. The Education Service has tried a number of initiatives, most recently with the DfES One Stop Shop, which exists to recruit LEA governors, particularly in inner cities. They are also keen to recruit more ethnic minority LEA governors to reflect the make up of a school's population.

Some schools struggle to persuade parents of their pupils to become parent governors. The Education Service would welcome any help the Education Commission can give to exploring ways of recruiting school governors.

Generally governors serve for four years. Many parent governors in primary schools do not want to be reappointed as their children have moved to other schools. The Education Service does not generally have a problem with

governors resigning within their four-year term of office, although this has been a problem in some nursery schools.

Governing bodies have to reconstitute before September 2006 and some that have reconstituted have reduced their number of governors, very often to remove vacancies.

The Education Service would welcome any suggestions the Education Commission might have for recruiting and retaining school governors.

3. Objectives of the Review

It is suggested that the objectives of the review should focus on the recruitment and retention of parent and LEA governors. It is considered that the objectives of the Commission's review should be:

- To identify the barriers that are discouraging people from becoming school governors, either through co-option or appointment, and the issues that make existing school governors resign
- To identify any measures that Derby might put in place:
 - a) to overcome the barriers that are discouraging people from becoming school governors, and
 - b) to resolve the issues that are making existing school governors resign
- To look for examples of best practice in school governor recruitment and retention among other local authorities and to see whether any of it is transferable to Derby
- To identify successful local authority practices in recruiting ethnic minority governors
- To use the information obtained in the course of the review to make recommendations for the recruitment and retention of governors by Derby schools and the Education Service.

4. Stakeholders in the Review

The main stakeholders in this review are considered to be:

- The City Council – primarily the Education Service Governor Support Team
- The current governors of Derby schools
- The head teachers of Derby schools
- Parents of children in Derby schools

5. Suggested Methodology for the Review

For the Commission to develop realistic recommendations it is suggested that the review would need to include the following elements:

1. Interviews with:
 - The Council Cabinet member
 - The staff of the Governor Support Team and other relevant officers of the Council

These interviews should provide Commission members with much of the background information that they will need to carry out the review.

2. Identification of best practice in this field by other local authorities. This could initially be done by a website trawl and follow-up phone calls. It might subsequently be possible to arrange visits for the Commission to some selected local authorities.
3. Input from the current governors of Derby schools and Derbyshire schools whose catchment areas include parts of the City. This might be achieved by:
 - Interviews with representatives of the Governors' Liaison Group
 - A meeting with the City's school governors. This could be an open meeting to which all the City's school governors, or use could be made of one of the scheduled termly meetings with school governors.
 - Individual interviews with school governors who want to give evidence to the Commission

These interviews should enable the Commission to find out what existing school governors see as the problems facing them.

4. Input from the teaching staff to establish how they are affected by current levels of school governor availability. This might be achieved by:
 - Interviews with representatives of the Heads Liaison Group
 - An open meeting to which all teaching staff are invited
 - Individual interviews with head teachers who want to give evidence to the Commission
5. It might be possible to conduct these interviews outside the schools when parents were waiting to collect their children, but this and the other possible methods of conducting the interviews would require consultation, possibly with parent groups, and further investigation. It is suggested that the Commission would need to engage outside consultants to carry out the survey. The survey could be financed from the Commission's research budget

It is thought that the input from these five elements will enable the Commission to achieve the objectives specified in (3) above.

6. Terms of Reference of the proposed Review

The terms of reference of the proposed review are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Terms of Reference		
	Requirement	Action to achieve
1	Development by the Commission of a good working knowledge of the role and function of school governors and of the controlling legislation	Interviews with: a) the Governor Support Team b) the Cabinet member for Education c) other Council officers
2	An understanding of the issues faced by school governors and of how these issues impact on their recruitment and retention	Either interviews with representatives of the school governors or an open meeting to which all Derby school governors and those of nearby Derbyshire schools are invited
3	An appreciation the methods used by other local authorities to recruit and retain school governors	Website trawl Follow-up phone calls Possible visits to other local authorities
4	An understanding of the impact that the current levels of school governor recruitment and retention are having on Derby schools	Interviews or an open meeting with head teacher representatives
5	An appreciation of what the parents of school age children know about the role of school governors, whether they would consider becoming one, and if they wouldn't, why not.	Structured survey of a representative sample of the parents of school age Derby children

7. Timetable and Member input into the review

Table 2 sets out the suggested timetable for the review.

Table 2

	Date	Activity
1.	Early to mid December 2004	Scene setting interviews with: a) representatives of the Governor Support Team b) the Cabinet member for Education c) other relevant Council officers
2.	End November to mid December 2004	Website trawl and follow up phone calls to develop an appreciation the methods used by other local authorities to recruit and retain parent governors and LEA governors including ethnic minority governors
3.	January 2005	Either interviews with representatives of the school governors or an open meeting to which all parent governors and LEA governors are invited
4.	January 2005	Interviews or an open meeting with head teacher representatives

5.	January 2005	Visits to any local authorities identified from the website trawl
6.	17 January 2005	Scheduled meeting of the Commission will include update report on the progress of the review
7.	Late January to mid February 2005	Structured survey of a representative sample of the parents of school age Derby children
8.	21 February 2005	Scheduled meeting of the Commission will include the survey report and an update of the progress of the review
9.	March 2005	Circulation of evidence and meeting to consider draft report and agree recommendations
10.	7 April 2005	Deadline for draft reports for Council Cabinet meeting on 26 April 2004

The review as laid out in Table 2 will provisionally involve Commission members in the following additional meetings:

- Two 'scene setting' interview sessions in early-mid December 2004
- Up to three interview sessions with parent governors and possibly an open meeting in January 2005
- Up to three interview sessions with head teacher representatives and possibly an open meeting in January 2005
- A maximum of three visits to other local authorities in January 2005
- One meeting in March 2005 to consider the draft report and agree the recommendations

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Education Commission

Draft Scoping Report on the Commission's review of the range of Support and Provision for Pupils with Significant Behaviour Difficulties

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 18 October 2004 the Education Commission agreed to investigate two possible work plan topics for the coming year. This report sets out the possible scope of a review of the second of these topics.

The aim of this review is for the Commission to examine the way in which the Education Service supports and provides for pupils with significant behaviour difficulties.

When it has completed the review, the Commission may if it is appropriate, then make recommendations for improving the support and provision offered by the Education Service to this group of children and young people.

2. Background to the Review

Section 527A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 9 of the Education Act 1997), placed a new duty on Local Education Authorities (LEAs). This was to prepare a statement setting out their arrangements for the education of children with behavioural difficulties. These statements are known as Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs).

A Behaviour Support Plan is a statement prepared by the Local Education Authority that details the arrangements available in their area for the education of children with behavioural difficulties. In preparing their BSPs, LEAs are required to consult with stakeholder groups. These include head teachers, the governors of maintained schools and representatives of school teaching staff, support staff and local parents. The BSPs identify the support available to schools and parents for dealing with behavioural problems and help resources to be targeted more effectively.

There is currently still a statutory requirement for Local Education Authorities to produce a Behaviour Support Plan, but the DfES advise that separate Behaviour Support Plans are to be phased out and, subject to the legislation being approved, the arrangements for supporting children and young people with behavioural difficulties will be incorporated into the Children and Young People's Plan. This will come into effect in April 2006.

Taking into account the requirement for the Education Service to develop a Children and Young People's Plan and the importance of providing support for children and young people with behavioural difficulties, it would seem

appropriate for the Education Commission as part of its work plan for 2004/05 to examine the way in which the Education Service supports and provides for children and young people in Derby who have significant behaviour difficulties. A way in which the Commission might do this is set out in the following sections of this report.

3. Objectives of the Review

It is considered that the objectives of the Commission's review should be:

- To familiarise Commission members with the content and circumstances of application of Derby City Council's Behaviour Support Plan
- To look for examples of best practice by other local authorities in the way in which they support and provide for pupils with significant behaviour difficulties.
- To seek the views of teachers' representatives on the content and effectiveness of Derby City Council's Behaviour Support Plan
- To seek the views of parents, and if possible pupils, on the content and effectiveness of Derby City Council's Behaviour Support Plan
- If appropriate, to offer recommendations, based on the evidence obtained in the course of the review, for improving the way in which the Education Service supports and provides for pupils with significant behaviour difficulties

4. Stakeholders in the Review

The stakeholders in this review can be divided into the providers and the users of the service represented by the Behaviour Support Plan. They are:

- The City Council's Education Service
- The teaching staff of Derby schools
- The pupils of Derby schools who are recipients of the Behaviour Support Plan, and the parents of those pupils.

5. Suggested Methodology for the Review

If the Commission is to develop realistic recommendations it is suggested that the review will need to include the following elements:

1. Interviews with:

- The Council Cabinet member
- Staff of the School Inclusion Team
- Any other relevant officers of the City Council

2. Identification of best practice by other local authorities in the content and application of their Behaviour Support Plans. This could initially be done by a website trawl and follow-up phone calls. It might subsequently be possible to arrange visits for the Commission to some selected local authorities.

A report entitled 'An Evaluation of the impact of Behaviour Support Plans' was published in July 2003 by the National Foundation for Educational Research. This compares the BSPs of a sample of 50 LEAs and contains much useful information. It might be possible to persuade one of the authors of the report to come to a meeting with the Commission.

3. Input from teaching staff. This will be one of the most important elements of this review and the Commission will need to consider how best it can be achieved. One approach would be to arrange a series of interviews with individual teachers. An alternative would be a single large meeting between the Commission and a number of teachers. It is hoped that the Commission's trade union representatives will be able to help with the organisation of these meetings and/or interviews.
4. Input from parents and pupils. If the Commission is to conduct an effective review of the range of support and provision for pupils with significant behaviour difficulties it should seek the views of the recipients of the Behaviour Support Plan. It is suggested that in order to do this the Commission will need to interview parents of pupils who are involved, and ideally, pupils themselves. It is appreciated that these interviews may not be easy to arrange and that they will probably be quite difficult to conduct. It is however felt that without feedback from the recipients of the Behaviour Support Plan it will be very difficult for the Commission to make any meaningful recommendations.

It is thought that the input from these four elements will enable the Commission achieve the objectives specified in (3) above.

6. Terms of Reference of the proposed Review

The terms of reference of the proposed review are set out in the table below:

Table 1

Terms of Reference		
	Requirement	Action to Achieve
1.	Development by the Commission of an understanding of the Behaviour Support Plan and an appreciation of the circumstances under which it might be applied.	Interviews with: a) Staff of the School Inclusion Team b) The Council Cabinet member c) Any other relevant officers of the City Council

2.	An appreciation the content of other local authorities' Behaviour Support Plans and the way in which these plans are applied	Website trawl Follow-up phone calls Possible visits to other local authorities Possible meeting with one of the authors of the report entitled 'An Evaluation of the Impact of Behaviour Support Plans'
3.	An understanding of teachers' opinions of the Behaviour Support Plan and the way in which it is being applied	Interviews and/or meetings with teachers' representatives
4.	An understanding of the opinions of relevant pupils and their parents of the Behaviour Support Plan	Interviews with the parents of relevant pupils and possibly with the pupils themselves

7. Timetable and Member input into the Review

Table 2 sets out the suggested timetable for the review. The timetable assumes that the review will commence in April 2005 after the Commission's first review on the recruitment and retention of school governors has been completed.

Table 2

	Date	Activity
1.	Early April 2005	Scene setting interviews with: a) Staff of the School Inclusion Team b) The Council Cabinet member c) Any other relevant officers of the City Council
2.	March/April 2005	Website trawl and follow up phone calls to other local authorities about their Behaviour Support Plans
3.	Mid April/May 2005	Interviews and/or meetings with teacher representatives
4.	Mid April/May 2005	Interviews with parents and/or pupils
5.	Mid April/May 2005	Visits to any local authorities identified from the website trawl and meeting with the author of the report
6.	6 June 2005	Scheduled meeting of the Commission – will include update report on the review and draft evidence pack
7.	Mid June 2005	Additional Commission meeting to consider recommendations to Council Cabinet
8.	Late June 2005	Circulation of draft report
9.	7 July 2005	Deadline for draft reports for the Council Cabinet meeting on 26 July 2005

The review as laid out in Table 2 will provisionally involve Commission members in the following additional meetings:

- Two 'scene setting' interview sessions in early April 2005
- Up to three interview sessions with teacher representatives between mid April and the end of May 2005
- Up to three interview sessions with parents and pupils between mid April and the end of May 2005
- A meeting with an author of the report entitled 'An evaluation of the Impact of Behaviour Support Plans'

- A maximum of three visits to other local authorities between mid April and the end of May 2005
- An additional meeting in mid June to consider the Commission's recommendations to Council Cabinet

DRR 11 November 2004.