

SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIFELONG LEARNING

Wednesday, 31st March, 2004 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Ridney (in the Chair)
Councillors Hart-Bowman (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Burston, Mrs Cowell, Mrs Dunn, Mrs Faulkner, Rahman and
K Turner, together with the following non-Council members: -

Non-Voting Members

Teacher Representative

Primary education – Mrs Hewitt-Clarkson

Free Churches

Mr J Guest

Persons with experience of and interest in education in the Borough

Mr W G Smith and Mrs O D Calder

together with Director of Finance (Lead Officer), Acting Assistant Director
of Education – School Effectiveness and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of
Law and Property).

ALSO PRESENT (BY INVITATION)

Shelagh O'Loughlin, Headteacher and Mr M G Powell, Chair of
Governors – Tenterfields Primary School
Anna Smith, Headteacher and Amajit Cheema, Acting Head at the time
of the OFSTED Inspection – Queen Victoria Primary School
Sue Cameron, Headteacher – Brierley Hill Primary School
David Kemp, Headteacher and Mr R Evans, Chair of Governors – The
Grange Secondary School; and
Brenda Shooter, Acting Headteacher and Mr S Raggett, Chair of
Governors – Blowers Green Primary School

together with the following School Development Advisors:-
Shirley Hackett, Stephen Nyakatawa, Vinod Hallan, Dave Perrett and
Yvonne Pearson.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18th
March, 2004, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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84 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following member declared a Personal Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of the following school which was considered under agenda item 7, namely:-

Councillor Mrs Dunn – Chair of Governors for Rufford Primary School.

85 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Fletcher, Councillor Lowe, Mrs Lonergan, Mrs Sprason, Reverend Morphy, Mrs Roe and Mr Freeman and accepted, in accordance with the relevant regulations, in respect of Mrs Lonergan and Mrs Sprason.

86 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Act, in particular the paragraph of Part I of that Schedule indicated below:-

<u>Description of Item</u>	<u>Relevant Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A</u>
School Performance	1
Progress Reports on Crestwood Park Primary, Kingswinford and Rufford Primary School, Stourbridge	1

87 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

A report of the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning was submitted in respect of OFSTED reports received since the Committee's last update.

Attached as appendices to the report were the OFSTED reports in respect of Tenterfields Primary School, Queen Victoria Primary School, Brierley Hill Primary School, The Grange Secondary School and Blowers Green Primary School.

It was noted that the Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies had been invited to the meeting, for the schools involved, and those able to attend would be present during the scrutiny by the Committee of the Directorate support of the schools arising from consideration of the OFSTED reports.

Prior to consideration of the individual OFSTED reports, the Headteachers and Chairs who were in attendance, were welcomed to the meeting and the Chair invited the School Development Advisor to introduce the report. Headteachers and Governors present were also invited to make comments during the consideration given to the OFSTED report. Following consideration of each Report, the Chair thanked those present for their attendance.

Arising from the introductions given to each OFSTED Report, a number of questions were asked in relation to each school in particular regarding:-

- (a) Tenterfields Primary School – members noted that this School had previously been in the OFSTED category “serious weaknesses” and that it was now a rapidly improving school which provided a good quality of education for its pupils.

It was further noted that this had been achieved through a partnership between the Local Education Authority, the school and governors with improvements in the quality of teaching and the headteacher wished to place on record his appreciation of the support given by officers of the authority in particular, the School Development Advisor.

It was also noted that the governance of the school was satisfactory; that steps had been taken to address the improvements needed and that monies had been spent on refurbishment works at the school from balances held.

With regard to a question asked about Part D of the Report: Summary of the Main Inspection Judgements, it was noted that the information had not previously been presented in this way and so only at future meetings would direct comparisons be able to be made between previous and current reports.

- (b) Queen Victoria Primary School – it was noted that this was a good school with a very caring and positive ethos.

In response to questions asked, it was noted that the weaknesses with regard to library skills was a building issue in the main, the library being in a small classroom; that balances were being used for refurbishment works which would be started shortly and that measures put in place were improving attendance rates although not all parents were supportive of these. Regarding support given by the Directorate, it was noted that:

The school had been offered full support for the Acting Headteacher beyond a Band 2 normal level of support and for the school during its preparation for OFSTED particularly from the School Development Advisor and members of the Primary Strategy Team. The comments made would, however, be reported back to the Directorate. It was also the case that if any school needed support such support would be given in accordance with the School Improvement Policy.

In response to a question about accommodation, it was noted that the school had now received funding approval to remove mobile classrooms on site and provide permanent accommodation.

Issues in relation to the statementing of children were also raised including the identification of children and the length of time taken for children to be statemented.

- (c) Brierley Hill Primary School – it was noted that this was an effective school with improvements having been made in all areas since the last inspection. The school was a Band 2 school as at the time of the inspection the headteacher was a recent appointment and the OFSTED Inspection was pending.

In response to questions asked, it was noted that although the school was below national standards, it nevertheless did well when value added was taken into account; that measures had been put in place in respect of higher attaining pupils and to meet the unsatisfactory behaviour of individual pupils in some lessons and that available balances were used to support the school budget. Arising from a question regarding improvements made, it was noted that the aim was to work with the Sure Start Programme and that the school had a good learning link worker, the aim being to work hard to engage parents and the community at all levels. It was suggested that the Committee may wish to have a report submitted to a future meeting on the Sure Start Programme. It was recommended that the best time for this would be late in the autumn term.

It respect of further questions asked, it was noted that the main reason for children moving on from the school was the use of nearby housing accommodation on a temporary basis so that when housing became available elsewhere the children moved on; that the school has an increasingly high percentage of asylum seeker children and that support was given to children at the school by officers from the EMAS service.

In response to a question asked by the Chair, the work of the Education Welfare Officer in supporting the school with regard to attendance was noted and that the school had been the first school to take a parent to court over the lateness of a child in attending school. A good system was therefore in place to achieve this.

- (d) The Grange School – it was noted that the school was a rapidly improving school and that this had been achieved through a partnership between the school and the Local Education Authority. It was also noted that the Headteacher had only been in post for approximately 2 years.

Arising from questions asked it was noted that the school had a zero tolerance policy with regard to racism; that improvements were being made to assist independent learning; that the balance shown of £75,000 has been spent on improving the appearance of the school; that the teaching of Urdu would be extended to lower forms in the school in future; that security measures had been introduced; that issues with regard to smoking in the toilets at the school had been addressed and counselling sessions arranged with the health authorities; that children at risk were supported and in this regard particular mention was made to the Grange Partnership and that counselling services were available. A concluding remark was made that the schools did receive a lot of good support from the Local Education Authority.

- (e) Blowers Green Primary School – it was noted that this was a good school whose multi-cultural nature was celebrated. Particular mention was made of the reference in paragraph 73 of the report to outstanding practice in music which would be cited as good practice on the OFSTED website.

In response to questions asked it was noted that improvements had been made since the last inspection and that areas identified had been addressed with an action plan having already been set out. One aspect of this was the need to improve parental awareness of the need for regular attendance.

Arising from questions asked it was noted that the school worked hard to achieve it's record of having no excluded pupils; that looked after children were well supported by their foster carers, however, this was not always the case with the Local Authorities involved, it was, however, considered that because of the good relations with foster carers that the children were well supported; that support was received from the Education Social Work service with regard to attendance/lateness and that as the school was in the Education Action Zone and would be part of the Excellence Cluster it did have a learning link worker and there was a good relationship between the workers involved and that level of attendance shown was caused by many children having days off.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the OFSTED Reports submitted, in respect of Tenterfields Primary School, Queen Victoria Primary School, Brierley Hill Primary School, the Grange School and Blowers Green Primary School be noted.
- (2) That the Lead Officer prepare a report celebrating the success and progress found arising from consideration of the OFSTED report submitted and that, once drafted, the report be circulated to all members of the Committee for their comments prior to its publication and circulation to members of the Council, schools and governing bodies and the press.
- (3) That, arising from consideration of the OFSTED Reports submitted and related issues, reports be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee on the issues of supply staff and the Sure Start Initiative and that consideration be given to the work programme for 2004/05 at a Special Meeting of the Committee to be held on 29th April, 2004, and that such work programme possibly include reference to a presentation on Connexions and the Share Project.

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PROGRESS REPORTS ON CRESTWOOD PARK PRIMARY,
KINGSWINFORD AND RUFFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL, STOURBRIDGE

Ms Porter reported orally on the progress made in respect of Crestwood Park Primary School, Kingswinford and Rufford Primary School, Stourbridge since the matter was reported on at the meeting of the Committee held on 11th December, 2003.

RESOLVED

That the information reported on be noted and that further oral progress reports be made to a future meeting of the Committee, when considering school performance, in respect of the Crestwood Park Primary School, Kingswinford and Rufford Primary School, Stourbridge.

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm.

CHAIR