

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Audit Committee - 16 December 2004

Report of the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

After School Clubs - Hurst Hill, Milking Bank, Peter's Hill and Tenterfields Primary Schools

Purpose

1. To update the Committee in regard to the status of After School Clubs - Hurst Hill, Milking Bank, Peter's Hill and Tenterfields Primary Schools.

Background

2. The Committee has requested a report to update on action taken by officers and the response of the schools in regard to concerns raised regarding the legal status of the After School Clubs of the named primary schools. Members indicated a preference that the clubs should become the responsibility of the governing bodies of the schools concerned in order that there should be no confusion regarding the schools' and the clubs' budgets and financial responsibilities.
3. A group of officers from the Audit, Finance and Personnel Sections have written formal guidance to all those providing childcare on school sites. This guidance explains the liability of the Council in such matters as the use of premises and has been shared with all providers.
4. In addition, all the schools and clubs concerned have been contacted by the Early Years Team and the option to have the clubs linked directly to the governing bodies of the schools has been explained, along with the advantages which this may provide. However, to date, only one of the clubs concerned, Peters Hill, has decided to consider relinquishing its Voluntary Management Committee organisation in favour of ceding responsibilities to the governing bodies of the relevant schools. The other three clubs, to date, have decided not to relinquish their Voluntary Management Committee arrangements.
5. While the clubs concerned have chosen to retain independence from their schools' governing bodies, as the law clearly entitles them to do,

officers are now confident that the guidance being given ensures that the appropriate financial arrangements are in place in all the clubs concerned.

6. After school clubs are required to have appropriate insurances as a requirement for OFSTED registrations. All four clubs have this insurance and are OFSTED registered as reported both to the April and September 2003 and the April 2004 meetings of the Committee.

Finance

7. There are no financial implications involved in this report. The work undertaken with schools and clubs and the guidance materials has been financed from existing budgets.

Law

8. The legislation concerning the management and governance of schools and childcare clubs is contained within the Education Act 2002.

Equal Opportunities

9. After School Clubs can contribute directly to Equal Opportunities through the provision of childcare.

Recommendation

10. That the Committee notes the progress which has been made in providing guidance to those providing childcare on school sites.



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