

SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIFELONG LEARNING

Tuesday, 21st March, 2006 at 6.00 p.m.
in the Council Chamber at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Ridney (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Dunn (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Hart, Rahman, Rogers and Wright; Mr. Dudley and Mr. Smith;
Mrs. Roe; and Mr. Guest

OFFICERS

The Senior Assistant Director of Finance (Acting as Lead Officer to the Committee), The Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness), Mrs. Pearson (School Development Adviser) and Mr. Sanders, Directorate of Law and Property)

78 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Boys and Ryder; Mrs. Capell, Mr. Hatton; and Mrs. Hewitt-Clarkson.

79 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs. Ridney declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in Agenda Item No. 5 (School OFSTED Inspection Reports) insofar as it related to Hurst Hill Primary School in view of the Governorship of that school.

80 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on the 8th March, 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed.

81 **SCHOOL OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS**

Consideration was given to OFSTED Inspect Reports on the following schools, which had been inspected on the dates indicated:

Primary Schools

Bramford Mere Primary School - 7th and 8th November, 2005
Hurst Hill Primary School - 9th and 10th November, 2005
Howley Grange Primary School - 23rd and 24th November, 2005
Priory Primary School - 10th and 11th January, 2006
Maidensbridge Primary School - 17th and 18th January, 2006
Hob Green Primary School - 18th and 19th January, 2006

Secondary Schools

Earls High School - 3rd and 4th November, 2005
Cradley High School - 9th and 10th November, 2005
Castle High School - 23rd and 24th November, 2005

Special Schools

Old Park School - 21st and 22nd November, 2005
The Brier School - 7th December, 2005

Regarding the Primary Schools inspected, four of the five schools had been graded at 2 or 3, but one school had been graded at 4 and, therefore, required Special Measures. In relation to that school, the Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness) reported on progress made in strengthening the Governing Body and assisting the Head Teacher and indicated that the Local Authority had worked with the Head Teacher to produce the Action Plan.

Regarding the Secondary Schools inspected, two had been graded at 2 and one at 3. The two special schools had each been graded at 2.

The full OFSTED reports for each school were attached to the report now submitted. The covering report summarised each respective OFSTED report in terms of the overall effectiveness of the school, the action the school should take to improve further and leadership and management (governance) issues.

In relation to Old Park School, the Committee expressed appreciation of the work undertaken in removing the school from special measures to the extent that it had now received a Grade 2 rating.

A discussion ensued on the content and format of the statistical information in the report and a suggestion by the Assistant Director of Children's Services that a yearly summary of the information provided in the OFSTED tables consulted at the meeting be produced, was endorsed.

Letters sent to pupils by the relevant OFSTED Inspector following the inspection of each respective school were reproduced as attachments to the OFSTED reports. Consideration was given to the production of a letter from the Committee to follow up each inspection report.

The representative of the Free Churches on the Committee, Mr. Guest, described the manner in which SACRE were now engaged in the new inspection regime and expressed concerns at the apparent diminution of their role.

A letter dated 3rd March, 2006 sent by the Lead Officer to the Committee to all school Head Teachers, seeking comments on the role of the Select Committee in relation to the effectiveness of Local Authority support, and responses to the letter, received to date, were circulated.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the OFSTED reports and the covering report of the Director of Children's Services, summarising the reports, be received.
- (2) That the current position regarding the school placed in Special Measures, as described by the Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness) be noted and reported on further in due course.
- (3) That the suggestion of the Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness) that a comprehensive annual summary of the tabulated information contained in the paper from OFSTED circulated at the meeting be produced as a continuous record of progress regarding schools in the Borough, be approved.
- (4) That a letter to pupils seeking feedback after OFSTED inspections be drafted and submitted to the Committee for approval and that the letter include an invitation for pupils to attend a meeting of the Committee to express their views orally.
- (5) That a further letter inviting observations from the Schools Council also be drafted for submission to the Committee for approval.
- (6) That the Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness) look into the current position regarding collective worship and the role of SACRE and clarify the situation with Mr. Guest.

The meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN