

## **SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIFELONG LEARNING**

Tuesday, 6th December, 2005 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 2  
at the Council House, Dudley

### **PRESENT:-**

Councillor Mrs Ridney (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Dunn (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Boys, Mrs Coulter, Johnston, Rogers and Wright; Mrs Hewitt-Clarkson and Mrs Roe

### **OFFICERS**

The Director of Finance (Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness Division) and Mr Sanders (Directorate of Law and Property), together with the following School Development Advisers in respect of the schools indicated:

Ms Cutler (Huntingtree Primary School), Mr Lockwood (Thorns School and Community College) and Mrs Pearson (Bramford Primary School).

### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Reverend Bristow (substituting for Mr Guest);  
Mr Noakes (Headteacher) and Mr Rodgers (Chair of Governors) both Bramford Primary School, for consideration of the inspection report for that school.

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### **MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10th November, 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Mrs Dunn and Wright declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of item number 7 on the Agenda (school performance) in so far as the item related to Huntingtree Primary School and Straits Primary School, in view of their respective governorships of those schools.

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48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received and accepted on behalf of Councillors Hart, Mrs Pearce, Rahman and Ryder; Mrs Capell, Mr Guest, Mr Hatton, Mr Nottingham, Mrs Simms and Mr Smith.

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49 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100(A)(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 those paragraphs of Part 1 of that Schedule indicated below:-

Description of item	Relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
Schools OFSTED Inspection Reports	1 and 6
Progress Report on Old Park School	1 and 6

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50 SCHOOL OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

A report of the Director of Children's Services was submitted in respect of OFSTED reports received since the Committee's most recent update.

Attached to the report were the old-style OFSTED reports in respect of the Huntingtree and Bramford Primary Schools and Thorns School and Community College. New style OFSTED reports in respect of nine Primary Schools, Holly Hall Maths and Computing College and The Rosewood School were also attached.

It was noted that the Headteacher and Chairman of Governors of each respective school for which an old style report had been issued had been invited to attend the meeting and participate in the scrutiny of the Directorate Support for the school arising from consideration of the report. Only the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors of the Bramford School, however, had been able to attend. The Chairman thanked them for their attendance.

Each old style OFSTED report was presented by the relevant School Development Adviser. Arising from consideration given to each such report, a number of questions were asked in relation to each school, in particular, regarding:-

Huntingtree Primary School - The overall evaluation had been that this was a very effective school which provided a very good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning was good overall. Standards achieved by pupils were above average and by year 6, pupils achieved very well. There was very good leadership and the Headteacher ensured that the school had very good strategies for inclusion. There was a strong ethos of care and respect which underpinned the hard work that was expected. Pupils' personal development was very well promoted through the school's very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The report concluded that the school had many strengths and few weaknesses and gave good value for money.

In the discussion of the report, Councillor Mrs Dunn, as a Governor, confirmed that the staff were extremely well led and motivated and had the interest to run a number of after-school activities.

Thorns School and Community College - The Section 10 inspection made in May 2005 had concluded that the Thorns was a good school. Its strengths included the academic achievement, pupils' attitudes towards work, and the friendly atmosphere and care given to pupils.

Pupils' overall standard of work was average, this representing good progress for the majority of pupils. Most teaching was good. As a result, pupils learnt well with commitment and confidence. The school was a warm and friendly environment and pupils were well looked after and were all equally valued. Outside agencies were used well. The Performing Arts of Dance, Drama and Music made a major contribution to school life.

The report indicated that the Principal was an enthusiastic and engaging leader and that staff morale was high. The school had improved satisfactorily since its previous inspection, in 1999. Most of the main issues identified at that time had been dealt with. The school gave good value for money.

In the discussion of the report, the Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness Division) agreed to ascertain the position regarding the reliability of some ICT equipment and respond direct to the Member who raised the issue. In response to a further question from the Lead Officer, regarding the processes involved on self evaluation, the Assistant Director indicated that, in her view, the Committee machinery within the school was working satisfactorily.

Bramford Primary School - The Section 10 Inspection Report carried out in response of this school had concluded that the school was providing satisfactory and improving standards of education. The school had an inclusive ethos and parents and their children rightly held very positive views about the caring, supportive family atmosphere that built harmonious relationships and assisted pupils' well being.

Standards had improved for two years after the previous inspection and the school had dealt with all the issues raised. A programme of positive action was being implemented and the school was now moving in the right direction and was well placed to continue to improve. More work was required, however, in certain areas.

The report indicated that the very large group of pupils with learning difficulties was taught well with teaching elsewhere being satisfactory. Work needed to be done regarding teaching for the highest attainers and on target-setting. The curriculum was satisfactory and enriched by effective community links.

Leadership, management and governance was satisfactory. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness was secure and matched the views of inspectors. The school had enhanced its provision recently and new sports hall and additional classrooms were nearing completion. The school was efficient and effective in deploying resources and achieved satisfactory value for money.

In the discussion on the report, reference was made to the involvement of the school in a pathfinder project on the remodelling of the workforce. This had coincided with some building disruption which had had to be managed. Areas for improvement were discussed. The Headteacher and the Chairman of the Governing Body, both of whom were present at the meeting, expanded briefly on the methodologies involved.

RESOLVED

That the Headteacher and Chairman of Governors be thanked for their attendance and that the Head be congratulated on his 25 years of service.

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ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED

That pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c), agenda item No 8 (Progress Report on Old Park School) be considered at this juncture.

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PROGRESS REPORT ON OLD PARK SCHOOL

The Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness Division) reported that, at its last review inspection, Old Park School had been taken out of special measures. In this regard, the Assistant Director gave details of the component parts of the review and the findings of the Inspectorate. The Committee recorded their pleasure in the positive outcome and sent their warmest congratulations to the school.

SCHOOL OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS (CONTINUED)

(During consideration of the item, Councillor Boys declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of the item as so far as it related to Cotwall End Primary School, in view of the three of his children being pupils at the school. The declaration of prejudicial interest was later rescinded by Councillor Boys in an e-mail to Richard Sanders of the Directorate of Law and Property.)

Consideration was given to the "new style" OFSTED inspection reports on the following schools, which had been inspected on the dates indicated:-

Straits Primary School - 15th & 16th September 2005  
 Cotwall End Primary School - 15th & 16th September 2005  
 Milking Bank Primary School - 22nd & 23rd September 2005  
 Highgate Primary School - 22nd & 23rd September 2005  
 St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Dudley) - 22nd & 23rd September 2005  
 St. James' CE Primary School - 29th & 30th September 2005  
 Belle Vue Primary School - 29th & 30th September 2005  
 Gigmill Primary School - 19th & 20th October 2005  
 St. Joseph's (Stourbridge) - 20th & 21st October 2005  
 Holly Hall Maths & Computing College - 29th & 30th September 2005  
 The Rosewood School - 21st & 22nd September 2005

Regarding the nine primary schools inspected, leadership effectiveness in raising achievement and supporting all learners' judgements had ranged between good and satisfactory with being good and two being satisfactory. No schools were judged to be requiring special measures and only one was judged to require a notice to improve. All schools were judged to be successfully enabling pupils to enjoy learning, and to be healthy and safe and were making a positive contribution in enabling learners to gain an understanding of the economic well being. The secondary and special schools inspected, Holly Hall and the Rosewood School, respectively, had been found to be satisfactory.

In the discussion on these reports, particular reference was made to one school, the appropriateness of Local Authority support for which was considered. In response both the Assistant Director and the School Development Adviser expressed the view that the level of support provided currently was satisfactory at present.

The issue of Local Authority support in general, and the role of the Committee in that regard, was then discussed in respect of which the Lead Officer and the Assistant Director agreed to write to the schools whose reports had been reviewed and congratulate them on the outcomes. They would also ask for comment on the quality of the support the schools had received from the Directorate during the previous year in relation to Self Evacuation, School Improvement and the Inspection Process. It was agreed that the main area of Committee responsibility should continue to be to scrutinise Local Authority support for schools.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) That a report be made to the next meeting of the Committee considering OFSTED Inspections on the level of Local Authority support provided for the different types of school and that the report include details of the overall level of support across the Borough.
- (2) That the Lead Officer to the Committee send a letter of encouragement from the Committee to Schools.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

CHAIRMAN