

Select Committee on Children's Services – 11 November 2010

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Elective Home Education Report for the Academic Year 2009/10

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about the work undertaken by Children's Services to monitor and support children who are home educated.

Background

2. The number of children on the Elective Home Education Register continues to be fluid, with five (2.7%) children / young people moving out of the Dudley area and 21 (11.5%) students being referred to admissions procedures or the Fair Access Panel for a return to school.
3. 182 children have at some stage been on the Elective Home Education register during 2009/10. This represents an increase of one from the last academic year. The three-year rolling average indicates that we are now plateauing, namely:

Number of children receiving Elective Home Education

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| 2002 – 2005 | 82.0 |
| 2003 – 2006 | 102.3 |
| 2004 – 2007 | 129.0 |
| 2005 – 2008 | 150.0 |
| 2006 – 2009 | 170.7 |
| 2007 – 2010 | 180.7 |

4. Tracking of children has continued to be successful, with contact having been made with and information established for each child.
5. Reports and / or file notes, together with the Elective Home Education database, are up-to-date and held securely in the School Improvement office.

6. We continue to have well-embedded procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of home education, by the Local Authority's preferred option of a home visit, a meeting at Saltwells Education Development Centre (EDC) or a parent report. In terms of the latter, only four families have chosen to write a written report, rather than have direct contact with the Local Authority.
7. Systems are also well-embedded for cases where the education being provided is deemed to be unsuitable. Contact with parents and children is directly proportioned to need, with more frequent contact where concerns have been identified and have to be addressed, e.g. educational progress, Special Educational Needs, child protection and welfare. Two children have been on the Child Protection list this year and taken into care. Both were returned to mainstream schooling.
8. It is pleasing to note that all of the 21 children who were returned to school this year were with the agreement and support of families.
9. Elective Home Education has continued to work effectively with other departments within Children's Services and other agencies to ensure a two-way flow of information to address individual cases, namely:
 - ✓ Admissions
 - ✓ Autism Outreach Team
 - ✓ Children's Health Department
 - ✓ Children Missing Education
 - ✓ Connexions
 - ✓ Education Business Partnerships
 - ✓ Education Welfare Service
 - ✓ Education Social Workers
 - ✓ Gypsy, Roma, Traveller provision
 - ✓ Parent Partnership
 - ✓ Safeguarding Board
 - ✓ Speech and Language Therapy
 - ✓ Schools and colleges
 - ✓ Special Educational Needs Team
 - ✓ Social Services
10. However, in terms of a return to school, for Elective Home Education students, this continues to be problematic. The lack of spaces in our secondary schools continues to be an issue and, together with Fair Access Panel and Admissions protocols, often results in significant time

lapses before Elective Home Education children, who are not receiving a suitable education, are finally placed. Work is taking place to improve this situation.

11. The number of children with a Statement of Special Educational needs who are Home Educated continues to decrease:

2004 / 05 = 1
 2005 / 06 = 4
 2006 / 07 = 13
 2007 / 08 = 12
 2008 / 09 = 11
 2009 / 10 = 9

12. Protocols are embedded for assessing requests from parents of children in special schools who need to seek the permission of the Local Authority before electing for home education and for the review of the annual statement, since the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that the child's special educational needs continues to be met. Of particular note this year has been the development of outreach support for Elective Home Education children from Pens Meadow Special School and Cherry Tree Learning Centre.

13. The reasons given by parents for electing for home education are given below:

| Reasons | No. | % |
|---|------------|----------|
| Philosophical | 18 | 9.9 |
| Schools not meeting individuals' educational needs | 27 | 14.8 |
| Religious beliefs | 22 | 12.1 |
| Attendance / disciplinary issue with the school | 27 | 14.8 |
| Health problems / school phobia / emotional issues | 19 | 10.4 |
| Alleged bullying | 13 | 7.1 |
| Cultural issues/traveller children / lifestyle choice | 38 | 20.9 |
| Family circumstances | 10 | 5.5 |
| Not accepting school on transfer to secondary or closure / admissions issue | 8 | 4.4 |

14. Relative to last year, the significant difference has been the increase in the numbers becoming Elective Home Education due to attendance and / or behavioural issues within school, i.e. increasing from 8.8% to 14.8%.

15. The age profile, by year and key stage, is consistent with previous years' figures, peaking in Year 10.

| Year | No. of Pupils |
|-----------|---------------|
| Reception | 5 |
| 1 | 8 |
| 2 | 6 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 11 |
| 5 | 11 |
| 6 | 11 |
| 7 | 17 |
| 8 | 25 |
| 9 | 25 |
| 10 | 34 |
| 11 | 25 |

| Year | No. of Pupils |
|-----------|---------------|
| Reception | 5 |
| KS1 | 14 |
| KS2 | 37 |
| KS3 | 67 |
| KS4 | 59 |

16. It is still of concern that parents will remove children at a late stage in their schooling.
17. The gender profile is shown below:

| Gender | No. of Pupils | % of Pupils |
|--------|---------------|-------------|
| Male | 97 | 53.3 |
| Female | 85 | 46.7 |

18. The gender bias of a greater number of girls has reversed over the last two years so that we now have more boys than girls, as shown below. Of particular note is that 70.4% of those electing for Elective Home Education for attendance or behaviour reasons are boys, and 68.4% electing as a result of health or emotional issues are girls.

The breakdown of Elective Home Education children / young people in terms of ethnicity is:

| Ethnicity | No. | Gender |
|--|-----|-------------------|
| Pakistani | 5 | 3 boys, 2 girls |
| White British | 131 | 68 boys, 63 girls |
| Gypsy / Roma & Traveller of Irish Background | 26 | 11 boys, 15 girls |
| Other White | 5 | 5 boys |
| Black African | 1 | 1 boy |
| Black Caribbean | 4 | 4 boys |
| Asian / White | 3 | 1 boys, 2 girls |
| African / White | 2 | 1 boy, 1 girl |
| Caribbean / White | 5 | 3 boys, 2 girls |

19. The picture continues to show an increase in the number of non white-British students becoming Elective Home Education, namely: in the last six years: 2 to 7 to 10 to 12 to 16 to 29, presently.
20. The Connexions Service has continued to provide career interviews for home educated children, and post-16 destinations have been determined for all Year 11 students. It is pleasing to note that there are again no young people in the Not in Employment, Education or Training category and three students have unconditional offers for King Edward 6th Form College. The Year 11 likely destinations are:

| Description | No. | Gender |
|-------------------------|------------|------------------|
| College | 17 | 2 boys, 15 girls |
| Employment | 2 | 1 boys, 1 girl |
| Glass House | 1 | 1 boy |
| Home to Home witnessing | 2 | 1 boy, 1 girl |
| NEET | 0 | - |
| NOVA Training | 2 | 2 girls |
| Traveller Lifestyle | 1 | 1 boy |

21. To tighten procedures in the future, Elective Home Education students will have designated Connexions Personal Advisers.
22. The Education Business Partnership team have continued to provide support for work experience placements.
23. The Local Authority has provided significant support for Elective Home Education and Gypsy Roman Traveller children / young people this year. The weekly provision at Saltwells Education Development Centre and Kingswinford Youth Centre has ensured that some vulnerable children / young people have been seen weekly.

Finance

24. There are no direct financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

Law


25. The duties to monitor children educated at home come under:
 - S436A Education Act 1996
 - S437 Education Act 1996
 - S175 Education Act 2002

Equality Impact

26. This report takes into account the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Recommendation

27. It is recommended that the Committee note and approve this report and endorse the work that Children's Services do with this group of young people.



.....
Jane Porter
Acting Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Dave Perrett
Telephone: 01384 814250
Dave.perrett@dudley.gov.uk