

AT A MEETING of the EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL held at The Castle, Winchester on 17 October 2011.

PRESENT

Councillors: P Edgar (Chairman), B Collin, B D Dash, M Kemp-Gee, R J Kimber, R McIntosh, Mrs J Porter

Co-opted: D White

57. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ferris Cowper, Councillor K Evans, Mr D Walker, Mr T Blackshaw.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should, normally at the time of the debate, declare their interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11, and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 12 of the Code.

With relation to items on the agenda, Councillor Edgar declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as a life member of the National Association of Headteachers.

59. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

60. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman reported his attendance at the National Greenpower Championships for electric cars held at Goodwood on 17 October 2011. He was pleased to announce that Horndean Technology College were represented and that Bay House School had been involved in the challenge, but had not quite made it to the finals. He felt that more children should be involved in this type of educational activity.

61. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made.

62. ACADEMIES IN HAMPSHIRE

The Panel considered the verbal report of the director of Children's Services on the current position regarding academies in Hampshire.

Members were informed that by the end of March 2012, if schools' current intentions come to fruition, 5.7% of schools in Hampshire would be academy schools covering 17.1% of students and that these were mostly large secondary schools. The rush to become an academy seems to have slowed and it was suggested that the lower than expected resources might be one reason. There has been some interest from primary schools exploring becoming academies together but this should not be taken as a firm commitment on their part to see academy status. It was noted that a very few Roman Catholic primary schools have become academies.

The Deputy Director explained to Members the difference between converting and sponsored academies. He drew Members' attention to the fact that the decision to convert is taken by the school's governing body acting alone and the great majority of schools which are academies in Hampshire fall into this category. Sponsored academies are usually those that either fall below the floor standards (35% with 5 GCSE grades A-C including English and Maths at Key Stage 4 or 60% Level 4 English and Maths at Key Stage 2) or have notices to improve or are in special measures. It was explained to Members that where Hampshire schools were likely to need to become sponsored academies the County was working with them to identify the best sponsors for them, in their individual circumstances.

Members had a detailed discussion on the issues around academies. Questioned about sponsored academies the Deputy Director highlighted, in particular the sponsor's ability to performance manage the headteacher in a way in which local authorities have never had the power. Members commented that the County was taking a pragmatic approach to work within the new structure for schools.

The Deputy Director informed Members that his teams would continue to monitor data from all Hampshire schools and would routinely deal with any that they felt were not performing as well as they should. It was noted that there were issues accessing data from the academies and that it may be more difficult to make comparisons in the future but, nevertheless, the County would do all it could to challenge any academies that might be underperforming.

RESOLVED:

That the panel noted the report and were to be kept up-to-date with the situation.

63. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN WESTERN HAMPSHIRE CAUSING CONCERN

The Panel considered the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 7 in the Minute Book) identifying the schools in Western Hampshire that were causing concern.

The Deputy Director was asked about the measures that were taken to provide support to a cohort of 'failing' children prior to and upon their transfer to secondary school and whether these measures could be incorporated in the reports that were presented to the Panel.

RESOLVED:

- To note the schools identified in the report .
- That measures being taken to support 'failing' children be identified during discussion of the schools causing concern.

64. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That in relation to the following item the press and public be excluded from the meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information for the reasons set out in the report.

65. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN WESTERN HAMPSHIRE CAUSING CONCERN

The Panel considered the exempt appendix of the Director of Children's Services (Item 9 in the Minute Book) on schools in Western Hampshire causing concern.

Members discussed in detail issues relating to those schools.

[SUMMARY OF AN EXEMPT MINUTE]

THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS EXEMPT AND THE PRESS AND PUBLIC WERE NOT ENTITLED TO BE PRESENT

65. PROGRESS OF SCHOOLS IN WESTERN HAMPSHIRE CAUSING CONCERN

The Panel considered the exempt appendix of the Director of Children's Services (Item 7 in the Minute Book) on schools in Western Hampshire causing concern.

The Vyne Community College

It was reported that since the appointment of six additional governors and the Headteacher from Aldworth Science College as Acting Head the latest HMI judgement had been that the school had made a significant improvement. It was reported by the Deputy Director that negotiations were taking place to consider federating The Vyne with Aldworth under one Headteacher and management team to generate the budgetary advantages of a larger school.

Brighton Hill Community College

It was reported that following their Notice to Improve in March 2010 the governing body had been replaced by an interim executive board and the Headteacher of Harrow Way had been brought in as Acting Head for two terms, following the resignation of the Head. It was expected that the next HMI monitoring visit would show satisfactory progress.

Balksbury Junior School

Following the placement of the school in Special Measures in July 2010 the school was federated with the Infant School and the Headteacher of the Infant School had been appointed joint headteacher. The school had seen their best set of results ever in 2011 and it was reported that the school was now on track, although would need some continuing support.

Andover CE Primary School

It was reported that there were issues relating to the quality of teaching, low expectations and leadership. The County had applied to replace the governing body and the deputy head had resigned. Results had also fallen in 2011. Further concerns were identified due to the inadequate progress that the school had made over the past term.

The Mark Way School

It was reported that following the resignation of the Headteacher the governors were finding it difficult to find a replacement and an acting Headteacher had been appointed for the coming year. It was felt that progress was being made.

Hardley School and Sixth Form College

It was reported that the school had received a Notice to Improve with issues related to pupil attainment, behaviour and poor quality of teaching, particularly English. The Area Director explained to members why it was felt that a possible option for the school to improve was for it to become a sponsored academy; in particular to ensure that the Headteacher was directly performance managed.

South View Infant School

The Panel were informed that this school had been removed from the Notice to Improve category and had made good progress.

The Panel discussed the group of schools identified in appendix 1 of the report as being below the Government's new floor standards based upon 2010 outcomes. It was noted that most had produced improved results in 2011 and were now above the new floor standards. The Area Director felt that continuing support would be needed for these and some were still underperforming.

Particular attention was drawn to Winton School which had worse results and was therefore likely to become a sponsored academy; the Area Director told members that this was in the best interest of the school as it would bring in more direct accountability. Romsey Primary School was also highlighted as still below the floor standards at Key Stage 2, despite good Key Stage 1 results; there had been no impact seen yet from the support that had been put into the school.

The Deputy Director informed Members that the County Council was negotiating with the sponsored academies to allow their schools to be scrutinised by the Panel. Members agreed that this should be pursued.