

SELECT COMMITTEE ON LIFELONG LEARNING

Wednesday 5th October 2005 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 2
at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Ridney (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Dunn (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Mrs Coulter, Ms Hart, Mrs Pearce, Rahman, Rogers, Ryder
and Wright; Mr Hatton and Mr Smith

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) and the following School
Development Advisers Mr S Hackett (Manor Way Primary School), Mr H
Powell (The Mere Education Centre), Mr T Britton (Rufford Primary
School), Mrs Y Pearson (Crestwood Park Primary School)

25

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th
September 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed.

26

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Coulter 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 it related to the Mere
Education Centre in view of her Chairmanship of the Joint Management
Committee for Pupil Referral Units.

Councillor Mrs Dunn declared a personal interest, in accordance with the
Members' Code of Conduct, in item 7 on the Agenda insofar as it related
to Huntingtree and Rufford Primary Schools in view of her Chairmanship
of the Governing Body of Rufford Primary School and her Governorship of
Huntingtree Primary School.

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Boys and Johnston and Mrs Capell, Mr Guest, Mrs Hewitt-Clarkson, Mr Nottingham, Mrs Roe and Mrs Simms.

28 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:-

<u>Description of Item</u>	<u>Relevant Paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A</u>
School Performance	1 and 6
Progress Report on Old Park School	1 and 6

29 ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED

That, pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c), consideration of item number 8 on the Agenda (Progress Report on Old Park School) be considered as the next item on the agenda and that the report on School Performance at agenda item number 7 be considered in the following order:-

Manor Way Primary School, The Mere Education Centre, Rufford Primary School and Crestwood Park Primary School.

30 PROGRESS REPORT ON OLD PARK SCHOOL

The Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness Division) reported on progress made in respect of Old Park School since the matter had been reported on previously at the meeting of the Committee held on 16th June 2005.

In reporting the assessment of OFSTED on progress in the respective areas identified by them, the Assistant Director indicated that the overall assessment was that the school was making reasonable progress.

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SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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 as Appendices to the report were the OFSTED reports in respect of the Huntingtree, Manor Way, Rufford and Crestwood Park Primary Schools and the Mere Education Centre. Consideration of the OFSTED report on Huntingtree Primary School was deferred until the next meeting of the Committee on School Performance as the Headteacher was unable to attend.

It was noted that the Headteacher and Chairman of Governors of each respective inspected school had been invited to attend the meeting and participate in the scrutiny of the Directorate support for their school, arising from consideration of the OFSTED reports.

Prior to consideration of the individual OFSTED reports, the Headteachers and Chairmen of the respective schools were welcomed to the meeting and the relevant School Development Advisers were invited to introduce reports. The Heads and Governors were also invited to comment on the OFSTED reports pertinent to their respective schools. Following consideration of each report, the Chairman thanked those present for their attendance.

Arising from consideration given to each OFSTED report, a number of questions were asked in relation to each school, in particular, regarding:

- (a) Manor Way Primary School - The Section 10 inspection made in May 2005 had concluded in its overall evaluation that Manor Way Primary School was a good school with children in the foundation stage and pupils throughout the school achieving well. Teaching and learning was good and sometimes very good. The school was well led and managed and the Headteacher provided very good direction for improvement. The school gave good value for money.

In the discussion on the report, the Chairman of the Governors confirmed that the Governors were being well supported by the Local Authority, including in relation to pupils with special educational needs.

While expressing his pleasure at the highly satisfactory nature of the OFSTED report, the Chairman of the Governors reported concerns expressed by the Pre-School group at the wording in paragraph 40 which referred to children achieving well, but from a low starting point. This appeared to be contrary to the terms of the OFSTED report on the Pre-School of some twelve months previous in which the pre-school had been described as good.

RESOLVED

That the Director of Children's Services be asked to raise with OFSTED the concerns of the Pre-School on the wording of paragraph 40 in the report, in the light of the good report on the pre-school made by OFSTED some twelve months earlier.

- (b) The Mere Education Centre - The Section 10 inspection made in April 2005 had concluded in its overall evaluation that the Mere Education Centre was a satisfactory pupil referral unit, with some notable strengths. Teaching and learning were sound overall, enabling pupils to achieve satisfactory results. The teacher in charge provided satisfactory leadership, but the new Joint Management Committee was not yet fulfilling its brief adequately. The Centre provided satisfactory value for money.

In the discussion on the report, the Chairman of the Joint Management Committee reported on the actions taken since the report had been made, which included the Joint Management Committee meeting twice per term, rather than once. The main difficulties with which the Committee was faced was to co-ordinate the management of all four pupil referral units in the light of each unit having had separate governance arrangements previously. Better consistency was being achieved, however, with all meetings now being clerked by the Local Authority. However, some issues arising from the implementation of the Inclusion Strategy still had to be overcome.

RESOLVED

That a further report be submitted in due course on the current situation on the management of pupil referral units.

- (c) Rufford Primary School - This school had received a Section 3 deemed Section 10 inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in March 2005. The school no longer required special measures and had improved considerably. HMI had considered it a very good school with a strong focus on raising achievement for its pupils and had indicated that it was extremely well led and managed by the Headteacher, Deputy Head and Senior Teachers. Teachers and Teaching Assistants had high expectations for the pupils' academic achievement and of their behaviour; along with all support staff they worked together as a strong team and morale was high.

Whilst standards remained below the national averages, they were rising as a result of improvements in teaching, much of which was good. The pupils' behaviour and their attitudes were nearly always good and this was a strong feature of the school provision. The curriculum met national requirements and was amended carefully to make sure that it was matched well to the pupils' different learning needs.

- (d) Crestwood Park Primary School - This school had received a Section 3 inspection, deemed a Section 10 inspection, in April 2005.

The inspection had concluded that Crestwood Park was a good school, well led and managed. The school's progress had accelerated rapidly following the appointment of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher early in 2004. Two further teachers had joined the Senior Management Team in the spring term of 2004. In 2004, standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 had improved significantly, but the end of Key Stage 2 test results remained low. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage was average for their age and they made good progress during the year. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good; they were keen to come to school and enjoyed discussing their lessons. The curriculum met the national requirements and the pupils benefited from educational visits and additional clubs and activities. The Inspector had concluded that the school no longer required special measures, since it was now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

In the discussion on the school, the Assistant Director of Children's Services (School Effectiveness Division) summarised the manner in which the Local Authority, Governing Body and Headteacher and staff had worked together in bringing the school out of special measures. Reference was made in the discussion to the crucial role of governor training in identifying and then dealing with issues within the senior management of schools before they reached a critical situation.

The meeting ended at 7.40pm.

CHAIRMAN