

HERTFORDSHIRE'S STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS PLUS

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

Author: Justin Donovan, Deputy Director – Learning and School Effectiveness

Tel: - 01992 555764

Executive Member: - Robert Gordon

1. Purpose of the report

The Education Panel has reviewed and discussed the draft Strategy for School Improvement. The overall direction and key principles were confirmed so that the strategy could be developed further and consulted upon with schools. The purpose of this report is for the Cabinet to consider and agree the strategy.

2. Summary

2.1 Hertfordshire is a high achieving authority with many schools performing significantly in advance of national expectations. At both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 Hertfordshire performs better than most of its statistical neighbours. However, in the period 2002-2004 results plateaued and the rate of improvement slowed across most of the statistical indicators. In this period the Authority has been less successful than its neighbours in preventing schools entering OFSTED categories. As a consequence there are too many children achieving less than they should.

2.2 This Strategy seeks to align the school standards agenda and the wider promotion of children's wellbeing. The underpinning philosophy includes the belief that the efforts schools make to raise standards are reinforced by a school improvement strategy incorporating wider interventions with vulnerable children and their families, and in communities where there is significant disadvantage. This strategy, therefore, seeks to connect the focus on school standards and the holistic vision for children set out in the Children Bill.

3. Conclusions

The Cabinet is asked to agree the Strategy for School Improvement (Appendix 1), and the framework for the local authority to work with schools, to raise standards, as set out in the Hertfordshire Learning Partnership (Appendix 2).

4. Background

- 4.1 The review of the Strategy for School Improvement was carried out as a consequence of the need to improve standards in all schools. The strategy has grown out of a desire to identify what it is that is distinctive about the work of school improvement in Hertfordshire, given the development of CSF.
- 4.2 The Strategy for School Improvement is a key plank of the CSF policies to raise standards of all pupils. While there is no statutory requirement for this strategy, it is good practice to have a framework so that schools and all stakeholders understand how they fit into the processes.
- 4.3 The implementation of this strategy is supported by the new Hertfordshire Learning Partnership, which includes a framework for monitoring, support, challenge and intervention (Appendix 2). This document also sets out in detail the Code of Practice for LEA – School Relations and details of the arrangements for working with Schools Causing Concern.

5. Financial implications

There are no financial implications from this report. Any costs will be met from within existing budgets.

Background information referred to by the author:

- Code of Practice, LEA-School Relations DFEE 1998, DfES 2001
- Code of Practice in Hertfordshire, LEA-School Relations 1999, 2001
- The School Standards and Framework Act, 1998
- Previous reports to members 1999-2003
- Building a New Relationship with Schools, DfES 2004