

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
ON WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2002 at 10.30 A.M.**

Agenda Item No.

6

MONITORING HERTFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

Author: Gill Jones, Principal Adviser, School Development
Tel: 01582 830360

1. Purpose of the report

The report provides members with some detail on how the County Council monitors the work of schools.

2. Summary

At the 19 June meeting the Scrutiny Committee agreed that a short term Topic Group should be set up to scrutinise this area. This report informs the Committee of the current work in this area, including the work of the Achievement Panel as follows:

- Thursday 4 July 2002: “Preventing School Failure”, detailing a new approach to supporting school self-improvement and the prevention of school failure (including as an appendix the paper “Monitoring Schools” from the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 19 June 2002).
- Thursday 26 September: “School Monitoring”, a presentation from three headteachers from self-improving schools and their School Development Advisers.

3. Conclusion

The Achievement Panel is in the process of reviewing procedures for monitoring schools and will develop policy for approval by cabinet. The Committee will wish to consider whether the Topic Group should proceed to scrutinise the County Council’s arrangements for the monitoring of schools.

4. Background

- 4.1 A series of items have been presented for review by the Achievement Panel:
- A report on monitoring schools;
 - A report on preventing school failure;
 - Oral presentations from expert witnesses from high performing schools.
- 4.2 A programme of targeted support is in place to ensure that high quality education is provided by all Hertfordshire schools. The school visit programme carried out by School Development Advisers (SDAs) is at the heart of this support. Following consultation with schools and taking into account feedback from schools and Members, the visit programme for 2002/2003 includes more choice and differentiation (see Appendix 1, "School Improvement and Advisory Service: School Visit Programme 2002-2003"). This is in line with the principle of intervention in inverse proportion to success embedded within the Hertfordshire and DfES Codes of Practice. The focus of the visits is on key aspects of school self-evaluation resulting in recognition of good practice, identification of areas for development and agreed actions.
- 4.3 The annual programme comprises three main visits:
- The Attainment Review;
 - The Annual Review Visit;
 - The Leadership and Management Review.
- The visits are designed to help build the school's own capacity and focus upon:
- the school's overall approaches to self evaluation;
 - its systems and procedures for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning;
 - progress against Ofsted key issues;
 - the quality of the school development plan;
 - the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- 4.4 The Attainment Review takes place in **all** schools, usually in late October or November. The main purpose of this visit is to review with the school:
- test and examination results;
 - the school's analysis of results;
 - targets for 2004 (or subsequent years);
 - the school's position on the 9-cell matrix (see Hertfordshire Code of Practice);
 - the use of the remaining monitoring visits.
- 4.5 A self-improving school (cells 1, 2 and 3) is able to choose from a flexible programme which best meets its needs. A selection of headteachers and advisers from schools in this category attended as expert witnesses at the Achievement Panel Meeting on 26 September 2002.

- 4.6 Schools in need of some support to become self-improving (cells 4,5 and 6) receive the standard programme of three visits each year and may receive up to two days extra support. A selection of headteachers and advisers for schools in this category will attend as expert witnesses at the next Achievement Panel Meeting on 31 October 2002.
- 4.7 Schools that are causing concern (usually cells 7, 8 and 9), including those in Ofsted categories, will be in receipt of regular visits from their SDA or a member of the Intervention Team, in order to secure rapid progress against the issues for action identified in their Ofsted Report or School Development Plan (see Appendix 2, Preventing School Failure). The visit programme for these schools is subsumed into the pattern of these more regular visits.

Schools in Ofsted categories or in the DfES category of “Schools facing Challenging Circumstances” also receive additional monitoring visits from HMI.

Headteachers from schools causing concern, including one in an Ofsted category, will act as expert witnesses for the Achievement Panel on 31st October 2002.

- 4.8 Governors in their role as ‘critical friend’ play an important part in monitoring and evaluating the work of schools and make a critical contribution to school visits. The Chair of Governors or his/her representative is invited to attend for a part of each visit. They should also receive a copy of all correspondence relating to the visit and of the visit reports; this will include an annual summary of the school's position on standards, teaching and leadership and management.

5. Proposals

Proposals from the report on preventing school failure were approved by Cabinet at their meeting of 16 September 2002. Other proposals revolve around increased choice and differentiation in the school visiting programme

6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Conclusions

Hertfordshire’s Code of Practice is regularly reviewed to ensure monitoring arrangements are as efficient and effective as possible. This review of how schools are monitored will be concluded through the October and November meetings of the Achievement Panel.

Background information used by the author in compiling this report

- LEA-School Relations: Code of Practice in Hertfordshire July 2001
- Code of Practice: LEA-School Relations, DfES 2001
- Monitoring of Schools – Report to Scrutiny Committee June 2002
- Preventing School Failure – Report to Achievement Panel July 2002
- School Visit Programme Leaflet – SIAS Sept 2002

If you would like to know more about the issues referred to in this report please contact Gill Jones, tel: 01582 830360

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
ACHIEVEMENT PANEL
THURSDAY 4 JULY 2002 AT 10.00 AM
COMMITTEE ROOM B, COUNTY HALL**

Agenda Item No:

2

PREVENTING SCHOOL FAILURE

Report of the Director, Children, Schools and Families

Author: Gill Jones, Principal Adviser, School Development
Tel: 01582 830220

Executive Member: Robert Gordon

1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide members with information on the new approach to supporting school self-improvement and the prevention of school failure.

The paper amplifies the suggestions presented to Cabinet on 22 April in the paper titled “Best Value Review of Services to Schools”

2. Summary

- 2.1 Since April 2001 six Hertfordshire schools (3 primary and 3 secondary) have been judged by OfSTED to require special measures (failing to provide a satisfactory standard of education). Nine schools (all primary) have been judged to have serious weaknesses (while these schools are judged to be providing an acceptable standard of education they are deemed, nonetheless to have serious weaknesses), full details can be found in Appendix 1. The Authority has a good track record for supporting rapid improvement in schools in Ofsted categories, but it is not stopping some of them from falling into a category at the time of inspection. This report outlines issues identified through a review of school weaknesses and the outcomes of the Best Value review. It also details actions that have already been taken and proposals for further service improvement.

- 2.2 Action has been taken to accelerate the progress of schools in Ofsted categories and also to identify schools that may be at risk in order to provide the support and challenge that will lead them to become self-improving. This has required radical changes in the work programme in order to be fully effective in supporting rapid improvement and also in ensuring the identification of risks at the earliest possible stage.

3. Conclusions

Members are asked to comment on these more detailed proposals for service improvement.

1 Background

- 1.1 Hertfordshire's record of special measures schools over time compares favourably with that of its statistical neighbours (from 1993-2001 the percentage of schools in special measures in Hertfordshire was 3.3, the median of our statistical neighbours was 4.3 and the national figure was 4.4). Over the last year however, there has been a declining trend against the trends of statistical neighbours and the national (no hard data yet available). There are currently fifteen schools designated as having serious weaknesses (13 primary, 1 secondary and 1 ESC). This represents 2.7% of Hertfordshire schools currently with the percentage over time being 4.8% compared to 5.8% nationally. Six Hertfordshire schools are currently deemed to be underachieving. There is no comparative data available for this category. In addition a further 44 schools are causing the LEA concern. Over time 13.5% of Hertfordshire schools have been identified by the LEA as causing concern as compared to a national figure of 10.9% (there is no common set of criteria for this category).
- 1.2 Hertfordshire provides its schools with regular support in line with the Code of Practice and indicated by their position in the 9 cell matrix. There are 342 schools (62%) judged to be self improving (cells 1, 2 and 3), 140 schools (25.5%) judged to need some support to become self improving (cells 4, 5 and 6) and 67 schools (12.2%), including those in OfSTED categories, causing concern (cells 7, 8 and 9). There is a regular monitoring programme for all schools and particular additional support for those in cells 7, 8 and 9 (see Appendix 2 for the Scrutiny Committee paper "Monitoring Schools").
- 1.3 OfSTED inspections focus particularly on attainment levels and the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management. Particular vulnerabilities are:
- Low attainment (usually indicated by comparative PANDA grades of D or E, or downward trends over time);
 - A weak teaching profile where more than one in ten lessons is unsatisfactory and/or there is insufficient good teaching (the

national picture now shows averages of 95% for satisfactory or better teaching and 75% for good or better);

- Weakness in leadership and management, particularly of the headteacher (these schools often have weak procedures for school self-evaluation and limited capacity for recognising and responding quickly to change or identified weaknesses).

Schools, particularly small ones and those in the most challenging circumstances, can be very fragile and situations can change rapidly. The current recruitment and retention difficulties have brought this to a head in many schools, as the quality of teaching is a critical indicator. For example, one secondary school recently deemed to require special measures had 50% teaching staff new to the school or on temporary contracts, one high risk primary school experienced a complete change of staff, with the exception of the headteacher, during the last year. Overall across Hertfordshire schools there are 270 vacancies, 199 overseas trained teachers employed and 171 vacancies covered by supply teachers (as at April 2002). This varies across schools and, in the main, it is those facing the greatest challenges that have the greatest recruitment difficulties.

- 1.4 Overall the picture in Hertfordshire is positive in terms of performance; Hertfordshire's attainment levels are above the national average. The LEA statistical profile indicates that 71.9% teaching is good or better (94.2% satisfactory or better) and that 72.6% are well led (90.3% satisfactory or better). Our own data shows that 85% of schools have secure self evaluation process in place, however there is still much to be done with some schools.
- 1.5 The Best Value review of SIAS identified the need for a more preventative approach to school capacity building and also a need to know our schools better. Early alerts of difficulties in schools are a critical trigger for intervention. LEA officers and advisers communicate concerns through the regular schools causing concern meetings and through informal communications but currently the collection of data is not fully integrated. For this reason, and in line with the outcomes of the Best Value Review, an integrated electronic database is being developed to capture data from across the service and allow easy access. This database will include attainment data and a single file for each Hertfordshire school.
- 1.5 When schools are in OfSTED categories or causing serious concern to the LEA, they require a high level of support (between 5 and 30 days per annum, average 12) from officers and advisers in order to promote development, monitor progress and accelerate improvement. This can result in too little time and attention being available to support and challenge other schools which may need help to improve in line with the stated policy in the Hertfordshire Code of Practice. For this reason, and in line with the recommendations of the Best Value review, an intervention team is being formed to undertake this intensive support leaving other school development advisers (SDAs) to focus on the regular visiting programme and new preventative measures.

2 Recent developments and issues

2.1 The Intervention Team will comprise a team leader, four primary and two secondary school development advisers. They will work exclusively in OfSTED category schools and other schools causing serious concern, to support accelerated improvement programmes and enable early removal from categories. This will mean a workload, for each member of the team, of between five and eight schools with visits on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Currently three primary team members are in place and one further member is appointed but is acting as headteacher in a special measures school. Primary appointments have been made but after two recruitment drives we have not yet been successful in making any secondary appointments. Further recruitment is underway for January 2003.

Work with schools causing concern will also be strengthened by additional support for processing and analysing data and producing reports. This should ensure that additional SDA time can be focused upon other schools which may be at risk, in line with the Hertfordshire Code of Practice. The work of the Intervention Team will be strengthened through the use of other advisory staff including Literacy, Numeracy and Key Stage 3 Consultants and also through the teacher consultant programme which will provide intensive coaching for inexperienced and overseas teachers. The Intervention Team SDA will co-ordinate the support programme for each school through a Core Project Group (as described in the Hertfordshire Code of Practice, Appendix 3).

2.2 A programme of weekly interventions conducted by the SDA has been put in place to support high risk schools where an inspection is imminent. Particular attention has been given to coaching to improve leadership and teaching and training and also to improve presentation of the school's self evaluation profile (inspection form S4). Since the start of this programme fourteen high risk schools have had successful inspections and four schools have been cleared by inspection of serious weaknesses (two new primary schools were identified to have serious weaknesses).

2.3 A new pattern of meetings is in place to focus upon schools causing concern:

- Weekly meetings between the Assistant Director, School Standards & Curriculum and the Principal and Senior Advisers, School Development;
- Regular meetings between quadrant staff, SDAs and other key staff to discuss the progress of schools causing concern, chaired by the Principal Adviser;
- Regular meetings of the Schools Causing Concern Strategy Group to monitor and develop policy and practice, chaired by the Assistant Director;
- Regular school reviews with all SDAs with more regular reviews for high risk schools with the Principal or Senior Adviser, School Development;

- 2.4 A training programme for SDAs has been put in place to increase their skills in effective intervention and learn from best practice. This programme focuses particularly on the key outcomes for schools and includes modules on data analysis, teaching and learning, leadership and management and OfSTED criteria. Currently five SDAs are OfSTED Registered Inspectors, nine are trained team inspectors (including RgIs) and five are undergoing training. Training for the remainder of the team is planned for 2002/2003 (OfSTED suspended its training programme for two years causing a waiting list)
- 2.5 Targeted support is being provided for high risk schools for staff recruitment and retention. This involves additional adviser and officer time to support recruitment processes.
- 2.6 As part of the preventative strategy a programme of mid-inspection cycle reviews will be provided for schools, mainly on a traded basis. These reviews will support headteachers and governors in drawing up an improvement plan relevant to their stage of development. Where weaknesses are identified training, coaching and monitoring will be provided. This should ensure that these schools become self improving and have successful inspections.
- 2.7 As well as serving teachers a number of serving headteachers have been recruited to support both intervention and prevention programmes. In addition programmes making use of Beacon Schools and Advanced Skills Teachers are being aligned with the Diversity Pathfinder programme.
- 2.8 A review of the visiting programme is being undertaken in partnership with schools in order to better differentiate it to meet their needs in line with the Code of Practice – “Intervention in Inverse Proportion to Success”. This review focuses on appropriate challenge for the most successful schools and is intended to increase the effectiveness of intervention with these schools, reduce the level of school contact time and create more time to work with schools causing concern and to learn from the Best Practice in Hertfordshire schools.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the following measures:
- to maintain the Intervention Team for up to three years until all schools are cleared from Ofsted categories and the review programme has resulted in a shift to a significantly higher proportion of Hertfordshire schools judged to be ‘self-improving’;
 - to implement fully the mid-inspection cycle review programme in the next academic year incorporating the support of serving headteachers, and to evaluate its effectiveness in the autumn term 2003 (at the time the third inspection cycle commences);

- to continue with the high risk programme for schools with inspections prior to the start of the new inspection cycle and to support this with the use of serving headteachers and teachers to act as teaching and learning and leadership and management coaches;
 - to support the adjustment of the school visiting programme to differentiate more closely for the needs of schools, particularly those which are already deemed to be self-improving;
- 3.2 Further options that members may choose to consider are:
- reducing school cluster sizes per adviser from thirty to twenty;
 - seconding two primary and two secondary headteachers for a two year period to act as “super-heads” in schools in serious difficulties;
 - “outsourcing” school support where internal resources do not meet the identified needs.
 - in line with the identified activity in the 2002/2003 Strategic Plan to strengthen further the role of governors in schools causing concern and also their skills in recruiting and retaining high quality headteachers

4 Financial Implications

The programme will be funded from the redistribution of existing resources. The rollout of the next stage of preventative work will be funded through traded activity.

Background information referred to by the author whilst compiling this report

- HMCI Annual Report 2000-2001
- School inspection report
- Ofsted LEA Statistical Profile
- Research with other LEAs on improvement strategies with schools causing concern
- British Educational Journal

If you would like to know more about the issues referred to in this report please contact Gill Jones, Tel: 01582 830360

Special Measure, Serious Weakness and Underachieving Schools

Special Measure Schools

Martindale Primary & Nursery School (845), Hemel Hempstead	Ian Laidlaw-Dickson
Pin Green Primary School & Nursery (148), Stevenage	Tanis Kent
Wroxham School (663), Potters Bar	John Usher
Onslow St Audrey's School (554), Hatfield	Frank Clayton
Nash Mills CE Primary (824), Hemel Hempstead	Gary Cook
St Cross RC Primary (289), Hoddesdon	Alan Searing
St Mary's High (344), Cheshunt	Michael Janes

Schools with Serious Weaknesses

Sir Frederic Osborn (511), Welwyn Garden City	Bob Mays
Millbrook JMI (354), Cheshunt	Moyra O'Neill
Watton-at-Stone Primary (270), Watton-at-Stone	Bryan Hammond
Stevenage Education Support Centre (181), Stevenage	Sherma Batson
Summerville Junior (213), Bishop's Stortford	Bernard Engel
How Wood Primary (466), Park Street	Aislinn Lee
Goffs Oak JMI (355), Waltham Cross	Michael Janes
St Teresa's RC Primary (623), Borehamwood	John Metcalfe
Burydale Junior (143), Stevenage	Ann Webb
Spellbrook Primary (223), Bishop's Stortford	Tony Dodd
Fairlands JMI (123), Stevenage	Michael Downing
Five Oaks Primary and Nursery (580), Hatfield	George Wenham
Sauncey Wood Primary (488), Harpenden	Bernard Lloyd
Meryfield Primary School (618), Borehamwood	John Metcalf

Underachieving Schools

Beechfield Primary (753), Watford	Keith Crout
Kings Langley School (902), Kings Langley	Janet Anderson
Flamstead Primary (908), Flamstead	Julian Taunton
Little Furze JMI (766), Watford	Jane Hobday
St Albert the Great RC Primary (854), Hemel Hempstead	Peter Channell
Kingshill Infants (311), Ware	David Beatty

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN, SCHOOLS & FAMILIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2002 AT 10.30 AM**

Agenda Item No:

6

MONITORING OF SCHOOLS

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

Author: Les Craggs, Assistant Director, School Standards and Curriculum
Tel: 01582 830364

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. This item was requested by Ivor Ambrose for possible scrutiny by the Committee. The report provides Members of the Scrutiny Committee with an overview of how we monitor the work of schools and the process through which improvements are being made to the way schools are supported.

2. Summary

2.1. This report describes:

- the current means of LEA monitoring of schools;
- development work taking place to extend preventative approaches.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Hertfordshire seeks the highest level of achievement for all pupils in its schools. It further expects all schools to be on an improvement trend and those with lower levels of achievement to be making even more rapid progress. The Children, Schools and Families Service supports improvement in a number of ways; a key one is through the implementation of a rigorous system of monitoring.

4. Background

- 4.1. A programme of targeted support is in place to assure quality education is provided in all Hertfordshire schools and to diagnose where improvement should be made. This programme is delivered largely by advisers from the School Improvement and Advisory Service. In line with the Codes of Practice of both Hertfordshire and the DfES, intervention is in inverse proportion to success. As a consequence, those schools who are successful (judged by their performance data and other objective information) are subject only to statutory and light touch monitoring visits whereas those with the most significant needs will receive more. The level of monitoring is determined by the school's position in the nine-cell matrix as follows:

Cells 1, 2 and 3 Self-improving Schools

Three visits per year:

- Attainment Review/Target setting;
- Annual Review, focused on teaching and learning;
- Leadership and Management Review.

All visits focus upon the evidence from the school's own self-evaluation processes. A framework for school self-evaluation is in place against which all monitoring is conducted.

Cells 4, 5 and 6 Need some support to become self-improving

The three visits (see above) and up to three additional days.

Cells 7, 8 and 9

Up to thirty days for the most serious schools, but on average twelve days.

- 4.2. Within the LEA – School Relations: Code of Practice, significant detail is given about how the nine-cell matrix operates. A copy of this document is being despatched with this paper for background reading. It also clarifies further categorisation of schools by the LEA: Schools Causing Concern. This includes all schools which are judged by advisers to have problems including those in an OfSTED category. Strict protocols apply when a school is placed on the Schools Causing Concern register with the aim of quickly addressing the causes of concern.
- 4.3. In February 2002 a 'high risk' programme has been established. For those schools judged to be manifesting significant problems, a programme of measures is put in place.
- a detailed action plan is constructed;
 - the school is visited weekly by its adviser;
 - a focused programme of coaching is provided for any weak, new or temporary teachers;
 - support is provided for the headteachers, governors, and other curriculum leaders;
- 4.4. Since the introduction of this 'high risk' programme, there has been significant rapid improvement in these schools. For example, eleven schools (9 primary and 2 secondary), known to have problems, particularly from teacher shortages, have, through the 'high risk' support programme, come through recent OfSTED inspections successfully.

5. Development

- 5.1. Clearly the overall objective of support programmes is to ensure all schools are self-improving and have the capacity to manage their own development, including scrutiny under OfSTED inspection. A range of other strategies is in place to deliver this.
- 5.2. In the short and medium term, a targeted programme of support is needed to assist those schools who, for a range of reasons, remain in the lower cells of the nine-cell matrix. The 'high risk' strategy described above is one such support mechanism.
- 5.3. Following the recent Best Value Review of the School Improvement and Advisory Service a more preventative approach to school capacity building work has begun.
- 5.4. One recommendation in respect of earlier intervention is being translated into a detailed set of proposals for policy development, and will be reported to the Achievement Panel at its next meeting.

The proposals revolve around:

- re-allocation of the team of School Development Advisers reflecting the need for earlier support;
- one, small, team will provide the extensive support required to ensure that those schools in OfSTED categories and with acute problems are helped to make the rapid improvements required;
- the other, larger, team will continue to provide the basic programme of monitoring, but will extend their programme of support to include a new package of measures, introduced at the mid-way point between inspections. There is evidence to show that this is an optimum time to bring new external focus to the school's own self-evaluation;
- in those schools where latent difficulties are identified a series of interventions will be introduced to ensure rapid improvement.

Further development of this will be considered by the Achievement Panel on 4 July 2002.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1. Our pupils have one opportunity to experience school and achieve. Hertfordshire must ensure all our schools are providing a first class education. In order to promote school improvement and be assured progress is being made, strategies for school monitoring are being strengthened and extended.

Background information referred to by the author whilst compiling this report

- LEA-School Relations: Code of Practice in Hertfordshire, HCC Children, Schools and Families, July 2001
- Code of Practice: LEA-School Relations, DfES, 1999

If you would like to know more about the issues referred to in this report please contact Les Craggs, Tel: 01582 830364

Nine-cell Matrix Analysis by Cell (2001)

	Secondary and Middle		Secondary Special		Primary		Primary Special	
1	16	19%	4	22%	86	20%	6	43%
2	7	8%	4	22%	58	13%	3	21%
3	15	18%	3	17%	137	32%	3	21%
4	1	1%	1	5%	1	0.02%	1	7%
5	14	17%	2	11%	75	17%	1	7%
6	9	11%	3	17%	32	7%	0	0%
7	6	7%	1	5%	7	2%	0	0%
8	12	14%	0	0%	23	5%	0	0%
9	4	5%	0	0%	14	3%	0	0%

Position by group 2001

	Secondary	Secondary Special	Primary	Primary Special
1, 2 & 3 (self-improving)	45%	61%	65%	85%
4, 5 & 6 (some support to become self improving)	29%	33%	24%	14%
7, 8 & 9 (causing concern)	26%	5%	10%	0%

Nine-cell Matrix Analysis by Cell (2000)

	Secondary and Middle		Secondary Special		Primary		Primary Special	
1	13	15%	4	22%	89	20%	9	56%
2	8	10%	2	11%	45	10%	0	-
3	13	15%	7	39%	101	23%	5	31%
4	2	2%	1	6%	11	2%	0	-
5	29	35%	2	11%	103	23%	0	-
6	6	7%	0	-	29	7%	1	6%
7	2	2%	1	6%	18	4%	0	-
8	7	8%	1	-	34	8%	1	6%
9	4	5%	0	6%	12	3%	0	-

Position by group 2000

	Secondary	Secondary Special	Primary	Primary Special
1, 2 & 3 (self-improving)	40%	72%	53%	87%
4, 5 & 6 (some support to become self improving)	44%	17%	32%	6%
7, 8 & 9 (causing concern)	15%	12%	15%	6%

Change from 2000 to 2001

	Secondary	Secondary special	Primary	Primary special
Improved	27%	33%	35%	28%
Static	44%	33%	43%	64%
Declined	29%	33%	22%	7%