

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE 1 DECEMBER 1999

NOTE: A copy of the report mentioned below has been sent to all members of the Education Committee and other members who had requested it. Further copies are available from Julia Harries, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Telephone: 01992 555563)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This report sets out a range of Education Performance Indicators reported in accordance with the framework agreed by the Education Operations Sub-Committee at their meeting on 12 May 1999. The format incorporates a range of the indicators previously reported, indicators required by the Audit Commission and all of the targets included in the Authority's Education Development Plan (EDP), "Achievement for All 1999".

It was agreed at Education Committee in October that three reports to Education Committee (in October, December and May) would produce a reasonable distribution of reporting throughout the year.

The indicators relate to either the 1998/99 financial year or the 1999/2000 financial year. This is because previous reporting arrangements focused on historic data captured after the end of the financial year, whereas the reporting of EDP indicators seeks to capture data during the course of the year.

The report offers an opportunity to analyse the progress being made against EDP targets and the rate of progress being made on all the indicators which fall outside of the EDP.

The data contained in this report indicates that, even in those cases where performance has fallen marginally short of targets in 1999/2000, targets over the three year period of the plan should still be met.

1. Presentation of Data

Appendix 1 sets out those indicators from the new reporting framework reported to Education Operations Sub-Committee in May, where new data is available.

Data from previous years is included to give a comparative base.

The data which was reported to the Committee for the first time (whether it relates to 1998/99 or 1999/2000) is highlighted in bold. These figures are the focus of the report.

Specific targets for the 1999/2000 financial year included in the EDP "Achievement for All" document are also included.

The set of targets included in the EDP for July 1999 are those reproduced for the financial year 1999/2000. The rationale in the presentation of the EDP was that, given academic achievement is the principle focus of the EDP, it made the EDP more accessible to refer to July 1999 as the target date. However, the activities detailed within the plan cover the period April 1999 to March 2000 and in a number of instances the appropriate point to measure progress will be March 2000 when activities have had time to take effect.

Those indicators in Appendix 1 which have a reference number preceded by the letter K are Performance Indicators reported to the Audit Commission.

The previous approach of including comparative data from other Local Authorities has been continued and this data is provided in Appendix 2. The most recent comparative data is that contained within the Audit Commission Performance Indicators for the 1997/98 financial year. Clearly this data may not be as robust because of the time elapsed, and this needs to be taken into account in contextualising this data.

Each of the indicators included in this report (in bold in Appendix 1) are described in the following sections.

2. Pupil Achievement

The percentage of students achieving A*-C in all 3 core subjects (measured as a % of the cohort) has increased from 41.4% in July 1998 to 43%, meeting the EDP target.

The average GCSE points score per student (measure S&C13) increased from 40% in 1998 to 41.4% in July 1999, marginally exceeding the target set in the EDP.

The average points per student entered for 'A' levels (S&C 15) has increased from 17.2 points to 17.8 points, which falls marginally short of our EDP target for 1999/2000.

The percentage of children leaving public care with at least one GCSE grade A*-G (measure S&C17) was 59% in July 1999, which was a significantly better performance than forecast in the EDP.

The performance of Bangladeshi pupils has both increased between July 1998 and July 1999 and has exceeded the targets set in the EDP (measure S&C20). The performance of Pakistani pupils has improved quite markedly in the case of Mathematics, but has fallen short of the forecast levels in the EDP. The performance of African Caribbean pupils has fallen significantly in English, but has increased in Maths to a level exceeding the EDP target.

The performance in the three modern languages (French, German and Spanish) which were identified as priority areas within the EDP has improved at a faster pace than forecast in the EDP (measure S&C22).

3. Staffing and Training

The percentage of LEA Governor posts which are vacant (measure S&T4) has not reduced during the course of the year, and the figure of 7% for 1999/2000 is still in excess of the EDP target. It is anticipated that further activity in the remainder of this year and next year can bring this activity back on track by the time we measure for 2000/01.

4. School Management and Organisation

The number of schools with Serious Weaknesses or requiring Special Measures (measure M2) has reduced significantly from 14 in July 1998 to 8 in July 1999.

5. Community Education

The number of enrolments on adult education courses per 1,000 adult population (measure CO6) has fallen from 44.83 to 41.83, reflecting the reductions in budget provision.

Two new indicators required by the Audit Commission are the total hours for which students are enrolled on adult education classes (measure CO7) and the percentage of those hours for which students attended (measure CO8). Data is included for these measures in Appendix 1, but in the absence of trend data or inter-authority comparisons the scope to analyse the data is limited.

The Authority did not survey its students to find out if they were satisfied with adult education courses in 1998/99. The Audit Commission data for 1997/98 reveals that this was the case in 66% of Shire Counties.

In the case of measure CO10, the Audit Commission prescribe that LEAs should only respond to this particular indicator where they fund 50% or more of the cost of courses. In the case of Hertfordshire this measure is not applicable, although systems are being developed for surveying youngsters.

The data for the destination of 16 year-old pupils (measure CO13) indicates that there has been an increase in the percentage of youngsters remaining at school.

6. Behaviour and Motivation

It was originally scheduled that data in relation to measures BM2 and BM5 would be included within this report. These measures relate to pupil attendance.

However, whilst we have provisional data, this data is the subject of confirmation from the DfEE. We had anticipated that this would be completed prior to this meeting, but the most recent deadline we have been notified of is 8 December.

Consequently, this final data will be incorporated into the next report in May.

7. Budgets and Assets

The percentage of secondary pupils in local authority schools has increased to 62.6% in 1998/99 (measure BA5).

The percentage parental appeals in the primary sector has reduced from 10.3% to 6.10%. However, the percentage of appeals heard resulting in parents receiving schools of their preference fell from 53% in 1997/98 to 49% in 1998/99.

The percentage of parental appeals in the secondary sector remained reasonably constant at 8.42% compared to 8.30% the previous year. It is anticipated that the figures will show a marked reduction for 1999/2000, which is the first year that the revised secondary transfer rules have been in operation. The percentage of appeals heard resulting in parents receiving schools of their preference also showed little movement between 1997/98 and 1998/99.

8. Management Information and Communications

The percentage of enquiries to the Education Department receiving substantive answers within 10 working days (measure MC3) increased from 99.5% to 99.7% in 1998/99.

The number of formal complaints received against the Education Committee (measure MC4) fell to 47 in 1998/99. A more detailed commentary on the nature of those complaints was contained in the "Education Service Annual Report on Complaints" presented to Education Committee in October.

In both of the above cases, data has been included in this report for 1998/99, because as well as being EDP targets, the measures are also Audit Commission Performance Indicators. A further report will be presented to the Committee on 24 May.

Keith Emsall
Chairman
County Hall
Hertford

1 December 1999