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Report to the City Council

Flourishing Neighbourhoods and Flourishing Schools

A Scrutiny Review concerning the Engagement of
Young People In Learning

Further copies of this report can be obtained from:

Scrutiny Support Officer: Yasmin Samaraweera

☎: 0121 303 1730

E-mail: Yasmin_samaraweera@birmingham.gov.uk

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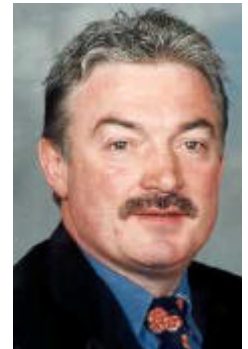
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The Engagement of Young People In Learning

Preface

By Councillor Tony Kennedy
Chair of the Education and Arts Overview
and Scrutiny Committee



'O brave new world, That has such people in't!' – Miranda, The Tempest.
(Act 5, Scene 1)

This Report is the result of a comprehensive examination of issues relating to Engaging Young People with Learning, particularly those who currently underachieve. The study involved a root and branch scrutiny of the experiences of individual schools, services and agencies through to strategic and policy frameworks.

The conclusion present a substantial challenge for us all, some issues which challenge Government policy and others challenge individual schools. Taken together the recommendations represent a modernisation of policies, strategies and resources and the development of coherent and comprehensive means of addressing under-achievement and under-aspiration for many pupils, their families, and communities in our city.

We recognise Birmingham has done much to lead the field in school improvements, however we believe that this report will become a landmark piece of work which will deliver effective engagement of young people and further improve levels of achievement and aspiration, and will help establish a fresh impetus to lifelong learning in the city by ensuring that every individual achieves their maximum potential.

I would like to thank all concerned with the immense effort which has gone into producing this report, especially those who served on the panel and, in particular, Tom Tierney, the Lead Officer and Sue Tombs, who unfailingly ensured our work was intelligently supported, and Yasmin Samaraweera, who kept me focussed on this major scrutiny amongst the 21 pieces of scrutiny conducted last year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Kennedy'.



1: SUMMARY

2.1 Introduction

This scrutiny addresses some of the most intractable and long-term challenges confronting the education service. It is concerned with fundamental issues:-

- Low levels of achievement amongst some communities
- Low aspirations of young people, particularly from economically disadvantaged backgrounds
- Young people "slipping through the net" of support and losing access to learning opportunities

Success in effective engagement of young people in learning is an important goal in its own right but its importance is enhanced further by bringing benefits beyond the young people and their immediate family. It will provide enormous benefits for the wider community in contributing to flourishing neighbourhoods, social inclusion, reduced crime levels and the future economic and social environment of the City.

2.2 Key Principles

Vulnerable children and young people are, by definition, at risk of disengagement and any focus on such children will inevitably test the effectiveness of schools, services and the community's resources.

The principle that every young person is entitled to respect, sensitivity, careful attention to their needs and a celebration of their achievements is at the heart of this review. Each young person is entitled to nothing short of the very best services which will ensure the best chances of their graduating from education with a celebration of their strengths, potential and achievements. Young people are active participants, with unique knowledge and experiences, and their views and concerns need to be heard, understood and responded to effectively.

The Education Service needs to have built into it a number of guaranteed experiences designed to raise aspirations and support the goals of young people. There needs to be clear pathways and safety nets for vulnerable children which can be guaranteed in all areas of the City if we are serious about social inclusion. When the most vulnerable young people are achieving well we can be confident that there is a robust learning culture in the City.



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2.3 Successes

There have been significant improvements in the education service in the City, giving tangible results endorsed in the recent positive OFSTED inspection of the Education Service.

The review found evidence of schools, services and projects making huge efforts to engage young people, often in very difficult circumstances. Some of this is detailed in the evidence taken from witnesses reported in subsequent chapters. Many initiatives and programmes have been developed and there is a considerable will to engage with problems which may seem intractable.

Evidence of improvement is demonstrated in:

- decreasing year on year exclusion rates for a number of years with the exception of the current year
- the inclusion in the city's schools of over 1000 children from asylum seeker or refugee backgrounds in recent years
- improvements in systems for tracking young people who are displaced or mobile
- continuous year on year improvements in educational attainment overall

2.4 Concerns

However there is no time for any complacency. There continues to be strong evidence that the potential of young people in some neighbourhoods is at significant risk because they are not engaged in learning in the current system. Substantial development is necessary to accomplish the vision of successfully engaging all young people.

There is compelling evidence that the initiatives and efforts of schools and services have not worked in all circumstances and that there are difficulties affecting particular groups which need to be addressed.

Key concerns identified were:

- i. The potential for young people with challenging behaviour to become disengaged from schools and to be taken off registers without alternative provision being made, apparently to avoid "exclusion fines" for schools.
- ii. Difficulties in tracking young people who might be out of school, or who are only nominally on a school roll or who are at risk of dropping out of school.
- iii. Schools with larger concentrations of more challenging young people are prone to higher levels of staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting



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staff. The result can be significant problems in maintaining the school's internal stability and major barriers in providing young people with the consistency required to engage and motivate them. The attractions of less stressful jobs elsewhere and the need to gain a break from the accumulation of stress on individuals over a period of time are no doubt major factors at work. There is a potentially vicious circle against which many schools battle - those with the more challenging young people, who require higher levels of consistency and stability in their lives to maintain their engagement, are often the very schools which have higher staff turnover rates.

- iv. There was some evidence that parents, in exercising parental preference, together with some schools trying to protect their position and not acting inclusively, overlaid with selective schools, actively supports flight from certain localities. The key drivers in the system tend to militate against schools which are most inclusive and are already facing the greatest challenges. We cannot avoid the conclusion that effective strategies need to be in place to reverse this process and ensure that there is support for promotion of neighbourhood schools in challenging areas.
- v. Difficulties in identifying vacant school places and ensuring access to school places. Particular difficulties were identified for:
 - Secondary age children who show challenging behaviour
 - Newly arrived children. There are complex reasons for this, and the lack of a pro-active service for helping parents finding school places is significant
 - Children who are temporarily homeless, possibly living in hostels, were reported to be at particular risk of not being able to access a school place

The reality is that a significant number of children appear to be out of school for lengthy periods.

- vi. Transition between primary and secondary phases was identified by both primary and secondary schools as a difficult period for young people and seemed to be a factor in young people becoming disengaged from learning. There was evidence of some good practice but there seemed to be potential to strengthen support to particularly vulnerable young people, who were not always well supported at this time. There are particular difficulties for children in any form of temporary home as they might have missed the dates for secondary transfer or might be moving to a new area which hadn't been anticipated previously.



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- vii. There are particular difficulties in transition and access to school for children who for any reason move home or school mid term and particularly those children who have multiple moves. This affects particularly vulnerable children such as those who are homeless, forced to move because of domestic violence or other traumatic circumstances.
- viii. Shortcomings in the extent to which schools act collectively to meet the needs of a whole neighbourhood. More inclusive schools are often in grave danger of becoming victims of their own success, making it easier for other schools to close doors one way or another to young people perceived as more challenging.
- ix. Some difficulties were reported by schools in identifying services (statutory and voluntary) to support children. This appears to be related to gaps in family support and mental health services in particular, and sometimes difficulties in communication with agencies. There is potential to encourage schools and local agencies to be better informed about each other, and to work more closely together at a planning and communication level. A number of initiatives have begun to connect services and schools together (such as the Behaviour Improvement Programme and the development of extended schools) and there are examples of new services such as the Birmingham Signposting Service making a valued contribution. However, there is scope for bringing agencies and schools close together in a consistent way to support particular neighbourhoods.

2.5 The recommendations from this enquiry aim to:

- Provide a framework within which schools can prosper in especially challenging circumstances and contribute to the development of flourishing neighbourhoods
- Ensure that ALL young people have a guarantee of the most effective support to their learning and development in their own neighbourhood

A serious approach to ensuring that these entitlements are guaranteed should be based on the following key recommendations:

- Radical thinking and systemic change is required. In particular this needs to encompass a perspective rooted in an appreciation of how individuals and the community can be actively engaged in learning processes as the basis for development and growing self-confidence. To achieve this, individuals, groups and the wider community need to be supported and validated in constructing active learning processes which go beyond the boundaries of more institutionalised learning frameworks.



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- The potential for more effective focusing of the combined resources and skills of community, agencies and schools is an essential element in promoting flourishing neighbourhoods and the engagement of all young people.
- There is a need to pilot new ways of engaging with neighbourhoods through the establishment of an "Aspiration And Achievement Zone" focusing on at least one neighbourhood. This is suggested as a means of implementing change in a neighbourhood using a holistic and systemic approach to engagement and regeneration across all schools and agencies. It is suggested that a feasibility study is undertaken into the potential for a zone in an area where engagement of young people is more problematic. It is anticipated that negotiations with government as well as with local schools, agencies and community organisations would be required to ensure an effective and co-ordinated approach.
- Schools should work collectively in a more effective way to contribute to the growth of flourishing neighbourhoods by maximising the totality of resources available and reducing the extreme concentration of pressure which may affect on certain schools.
- Schools in the most challenging environments need significant additional support to contribute effectively to successful regeneration and building flourishing neighbourhoods. Schools in some areas are challenged by high turnover levels of staff and pupils, and are not validated for the added value they impart.

The recommendations developed in this report connect with a recent Government consultation paper "Aiming High", and will be put forward as a submission to the DfES.



2: Summary of recommendations

| Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|--|--|-----------------|
| R1 A feasibility study should be commissioned into the potential for establishing an "Aspiration and Achievement Zone" as a joined up holistic partnership approach in at least one neighbourhood | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 November 2003 |
| R2 That mechanisms are established with schools to work collectively and to be accountable for supporting all young people within a geographical area as a collective rather than as potentially competing individual institutions | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |
| R3 That more coherent frameworks are established for connecting schools with local service providers delivering health services, social services, support for young offenders or children at risk, leisure, sports, arts, family support and family learning | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |
| R4 Improved support for schools in particularly stressful areas is needed to address issues of staff turnover and retention, and to recognise the skills, knowledge and expertise which needs to be retained in these areas. This will require some negotiation with Central Government, as well as actions at the local level | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |
| R5 That improved support is established for children and young people who are in transition between schools, or are out of school, or are particularly vulnerable for any reason | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |
| R6 The Chief Education Officer should establish a co-ordinated education strategy to ensure support to reception and integration of newly arrived children | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |
| R7 That the Chief Education Officer reports on the effectiveness of current measures in engaging parents and best practices identified elsewhere which might contribute to further developments in the City | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |
| R8 That Excellence in Cities partnerships are asked to review the implementation of learning support centres in order to ensure that the original intention to support a whole area, rather than an individual school, is carried out | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |
| R9 That the Education and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers commissioning further Scrutiny reports on: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety of young people and bullying The effectiveness of the new Admissions Forum in establishing greater equity for schools, which tend to receive larger concentrations of more challenging pupils | Chair of the Education and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee | 1 December 2003 |



3: INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Education and Arts Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of its schedule commissioned this review for 2002-2003. Committee members had identified a number of concerns about children at risk of becoming disconnected from education and learning. They decided to prioritise key areas for a fuller examination where there were indications of a need to ensure coherent and effective strategies are in place to guarantee that barriers to learning are overcome. In particular there were concerns about: -

- i. Support for newly arrived children (particularly refugee and asylum seeker children)
- ii. Issues related to displacement and mobility of children
- iii. Issues related to behaviour and exclusion

3.2 Members of the review team were:

Councillor Tony Kennedy (Chair)
Councillor Les Lawrence
Councillor Phil Murphy
Mary Edwards, Diocesan Director of Education (Church of England)
Father Edwin Cownley, Roman Catholic Diocese representative
Ted Eames/ Kate Oliver, Birmingham Children's Fund
Brian Martin, Birmingham & Solihull Connexions Service
Tom Tierney, Birmingham Education Service (Lead Officer)



4: METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The review team held 5 meetings, including three half-day sessions for hearing evidence.
- 4.2 Evidence was heard from schools, projects, officers, statutory and voluntary organisations. A full list of witnesses who gave evidence is attached in Appendix 2. Evidence was received from 44 people. We would have liked to have had more time for dialogue with community organisations, parents and especially young people. A number of witnesses brought information about community perceptions. It is one of the recommendations of this Report that the findings are opened up to community and young people as well as other stakeholders for consultation on the issues and the ways forward.
- 4.3 A number of questions were asked:
 - Is there evidence of all children being engaged effectively or is there any evidence of a lack of engagement?
 - Are children falling through gaps in provision?
 - How can we guarantee systems that ensure schools and other service providers are effectively engaging vulnerable young people in learning?
 - What are the issues for local schools and services to address and what needs to be addressed in the centre?
- 4.4 A potential overlap with the review on early years provision was recognised and linkage was established on some of the issues considered by both teams.



5: NEWLY ARRIVED CHILDREN

- 5.1 The team heard evidence from 2 secondary schools, a representative of a community organisation (Somali Immigrant Resource Development Organisation), the Newly Arrived Children's Service and officers from the Education Service.
- 5.2 Written reports were received detailing induction into school, standards funds allocations, grant claims for schools for asylum seeker children, issues identified by EWS and Pupil Connect, support provided by the Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Team (EMPSU), Corporate Strategy for Integration of Newcomers in Birmingham, "Draft Procedures for Identifying the Learning Needs of EAL pupils causing concern" (referred to below as the Barking and Dagenham model), Work in Progress in Leisure and Community Services.
- 5.3 In recent years a large number of children have arrived from overseas often as asylum seekers and many with a refugee experience in their family. Precise information about the numbers and location of newly arrived children is not available.
- 5.4 The experience of the secondary schools was one in which they had to use their resources creatively for needs which they could not very easily predict.
- 5.5 A key issue for schools is the difficulty planning in an environment of mobility and unpredictability. Nevertheless, there were examples of schools which had clearly applied themselves to ensuring that newly arrived children would be welcomed effectively. Both Moseley School and George Dixon International School were able to demonstrate impressive good practice in meeting the needs of newly arrived children.
- 5.6 George Dixon International School identified 457 pupils as having a refugee background. The school serves an area where asylum seeker families are frequently placed.
- 5.7 A detailed model support structure for pupils was described with the following features:
 - an initial interview with the headteacher or deputy head teacher on arrival
 - assessment using QCA materials in "language"
 - language clubs during registration and after school
 - additional language and literacy class within timetable time
 - support from learning support assistants
 - encouragement in use of mother tongue language
 - on-line dictionaries through the internet



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- vocabulary prompts which had been researched by the school
- monitoring and review of progress of individual pupils
- linkages with external agencies such as Refugee Council and Red Cross for particular purposes
- a 'buddy' scheme to help in the welcome to school
- support for teachers via EL handbook, classroom support and other resources
- employment of staff from newly arrived communities to support teachers and the school

5.8 The Newly Arrived Children's Service (NACS) is funded by Birmingham Children's Fund and managed by Leisure and Culture in partnership with the Education Service. It is a very new service which was commissioned in response to analysis by a multi-agency network. The service will provide: -

- A contact service to families in hostels
- A contact with families referred by schools and helps with their orientation and support in accessing services, including schools
- A contact service for some children prior to school entry
- A welcome pack to be introduced giving information to families in contact with the service about a wide range of matters. This will supplement welcome packs supplied by housing providers and will have specific material for children and families
- A number of activities for children age 5 to 13, including leisure and out of hours learning activities
- Opportunities for parents to be engaged in family learning, helping and supporting their child in reading and writing

5.9 SIRDO is a community organisation, supporting Somali people, with a base in Sparkhill. They offer advice and support on a wide range of issues including benefits, housing and education. They work with a number of schools and want to help bridge the gap between community and school. The community is very poor and is slowly building up support networks. Newly arrived families have no choice in where they wish to live; they are allocated housing in certain areas. They would like to establish supplementary schools to help children particularly with learning English. They also want to help parents to understand the education system and how to help their children in and out of school.



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KEY ISSUES – NEWLY ARRIVED CHILDREN

- 5.10 Ensuring effective induction is essential, involving children and parents supported by interpreting from which the school is able to gain as much information as possible about the child's background and previous educational experience.
- 5.11 There was appreciation by schools of BASS developing a framework based on Barking and Dagenham models.
- 5.12 Because of the experiences of trauma and loss for many children there is a complex set of needs which children bring with them into school, some of which require support from external agencies.
- 5.13 Parents have also experienced very traumatic events and some children were effectively carers for parents because of their emotional and mental health difficulties.
- 5.14 Many newly arrived adults have professional training and qualifications which could contribute to areas of skills shortages with bridging training and support.
- 5.15 There are particular issues for funding in schools for African refugees who have arrived after gaining a passport from another European country. Admissions of these children to schools do not qualify for the £500 grant per for asylum seekers. Between 1999 and 2000 these were the majority of newly arrived children. Numbers of new arrivals from European countries have reduced considerably in the last 12 months or so, although the effects of the first waves of new arrivals is still significant as the children progress through the year groups.
- 5.16 Schools experience great difficulty because of very high turnover rates of asylum seeker children caused by changes in housing for the family (this can be as much as 3 moves in 12 months).
- 5.17 It appears that some schools are seen by the community as welcoming (e.g. Moseley and George Dixon) whilst other schools seem unable to offer places very easily. This concern was reiterated by evidence from refugee support organisations, who reported major difficulties in finding school places for newly arrived children.
- 5.18 Whilst most children developed increasing fluency in the English language a small number of children give rise to concern both about their progress and their behaviour, seeming to indicate a level of difficulty needing a co-ordinated response from agencies.
- 5.19 Support for children with special educational needs can be problematic. The process for assessment takes some time, and may take even longer



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for newly arrived children because of initial difficulties with English language and the lack of professional staff with the appropriate community languages.

- 5.20 Concerns about the lack of appropriate external agencies to support emotional and mental health needs were identified in schools, which applied to both children and parents.
- 5.21 A small number of children are particularly vulnerable, having arrived without any parents. These “unaccompanied children” would usually be in the care of the Local Authority.
- 5.22 Schools are interested in being part of a wider network within Birmingham of schools learning from each other.
- 5.23 Community leaders are struggling to find resources to establish supplementary schools as newly arrived communities have very few resources.
- 5.24 Need to support newly arrived community members to access effective training qualifications. An opportunity to develop support for education was identified in the numbers of overseas-qualified teachers who could not at this stage teach in the English education system.
- 5.25 Children are sometimes on waiting lists for schools that had vacancies but experience delays in being admitted to schools because of a lack of uniforms, sports and other equipment, or lack of money to pay for transport costs.
- 5.26 Whilst the Newly Arrived Children’s Service, funded by the Children’s Fund, is a very promising support system there are questions over the longer term funding for this project which has a guaranteed funding for only another year. This needs to be considered by the key agencies.
- 5.27 The LSC is co-ordinating a review of provision for post-16 newly arrived young people.
- 5.28 Provision for adults learning English as a second language has improved but difficulties occur in providing more specialised language development to gain employment.
- 5.29 The Somali Immigrants Resource Development Organisation (SIRDO) wanted Education provision to be local, where possible, rather than for families to have to travel across the City.
- 5.30 There is no service in the Education Service for ensuring newly arrived children access schools. EWS is focused on promoting school attendance. Admissions and Appeals Team provides information about schools to



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approach but does not actively secure places for parents. There are frequent disputes about whether places are available or not. The Education Service is widening the roll of this team to provide a more proactive service, but there are concerns as to whether sufficient resources are available and whether this service can be managed centrally.

- 5.31 Parents with no understanding of the education system and usually little or no English are left to contact schools and negotiate a school place. The evidence from refugee organisations suggests many are having difficulty and are sometimes experiencing long delays in entry. The Education Service is unable to identify from its records whether the majority of newly arrived asylum seekers have school places.
- 5.32 The Education Service has identified funding for a co-ordinator post to ensure newly arrived children access education.



6: DISPLACED CHILDREN

- 6.1 The team heard evidence from pre school workers, Roger Minchin (Adviser), Noran Flynn (LACES Manager BASS), Amy Wallace (Virtual College), Gethin Davies (Second City Second Chance), Mike Innocenti (Pupil Connect EWS), John Smail (Head of EWS), Chrissie Garrett (A/D SEN).
- 6.2 The pre school workers service provides a direct visiting service to hostels and refuges. The service provides book loans, workshops for families, stay and play sessions, sessions on parenthood, welcome packs, visiting service to hostels and refuges, sharing book sessions and links with Women's Aid, St Basils, City Council Housing Department and a number of other housing providers. Their aims are to build trust and break down barriers to learning, promote good practice, signpost parents to relevant services, assist hostel staff in developing skills and practices to promote engagement in education.
- 6.3 Roger Minchin is a Headteacher seconded to BASS to look at issues related to homelessness/high mobility and education. He provided information about key issues identified in his current research as well as his experiences as a Headteacher of a school located opposite a housing hostel.
- 6.4 Noran Flynn is the LEA's lead officer on Looked After Children. She has recently provided a Scrutiny Report on their achievements and gave information about the proposed structure of the service and key projects being undertaken to raise achievements of Children Looked After. These children are likely to be amongst high mobility groups in the City.
- 6.5 The Virtual College is located within the UFA and has worked with 50 children in Key Stage 4 who did not have a school place. Students are allocated a tutor, have a laptop, receive 5 hours 1:1 tuition each week and build up additional learning opportunities over a period to a maximum of 25 hours tuition. Referrals are received from EWS, Pupil Connect, parents, etc., and most students achieve ASDAN bronze or silver awards, with 90% going on to another training provider or gaining employment.
- 6.6 Second City Second Chance provides a mentoring service for young people but has also been commissioned by the Children's Fund to carry out action research on children disconnected from education (the ReachOut Project). Elements of the ReachOut project include a consultative programme engaging in discussion with young people, a focus on "Asian and less visible communities, including refugees," a focus on disconnected youngsters in council estates, a focus on disconnected African-Caribbean young people, particularly girls. The service is using 15-18 year olds to reach to younger people as peer mentors. These pilots will be evaluated



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and extended. The service is currently working with 20-30 children. The numbers of children without any school place is quite small but there are a lot of children who have a school place who, for one reason or another, are not accessing this. The ReachOut Project is not funded to cater for the latter group.

- 6.7 The Education Welfare Service provides a service focussing on improving attendance at school. Pupil Connect is located within the Education Welfare Service and is established to ensure that young people in Key Stage 4 are accessing education. The service will provide a report which will be circulated about the experiences, successes and otherwise of trying to ensure young people in Key Stage 4 are engaged in learning. It was suggested that there had been improved inter-school links.
- 6.8 The team also received written submissions from the Youth Offending Service, BASS (Advice Document For Schools With High Pupil Turnover), the Education Service (pupil mobility rates and teacher turnover).

KEY ISSUES – DISPLACED CHILDREN

- 6.9 Around 1000 children each year are referred to the Housing's Admissions Service as homeless.
- 6.10 Only 29% of homeless children were attending mainstream school, compared to 73% in attendance before they became homeless.
- 6.11 10% of homeless children were on the child protection register.
- 6.12 There are 19 hostels serving Birmingham in the statutory sector, private and voluntary sector.
- 6.13 Families stay on average for 4 months in hostels and some children have virtually lived in hostels since birth.
- 6.14 There are significant discontinuities in education as a result of homelessness and similarly health checks may be disrupted.
- 6.15 Hostels should be resourced with better support for children's learning, particularly computers, software and workers with some knowledge of how to use these.
- 6.16 A closer working relationship between schools and hostels is desirable.
- 6.17 Improved tracking of children, their attendance and registration at the school is still necessary.



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- 6.18 The pre-school worker support to hostels is greatly valued and will be funded through Sure Start for another 12 months. The service aims to enable housing providers to give more support to families and children and will need a longer term funding strategy within the coming year.
- 6.19 Longer term evaluation of the outcomes of the pre-school worker service to hostels has not been possible because of difficulties in tracking children and the resources needed for evaluation. The team felt this should be considered in the future, particularly when the IRT Project and Pupil Database are in a position to support tracking of children.
- 6.20 Issues relating to Children Looked After and their educational achievements have been raised in a different Scrutiny Report. It is not appropriate to duplicate this but a key point to consider for the future would be to maximise efforts to reduce disruption of education through collaboration with Social Services.
- 6.21 There is an issue to consider in relation to the growing numbers of children looked after as to whether improved support for vulnerable children would help to prevent children coming into care. This is an issue to be referred to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.
- 6.22 The Virtual College seems to provide a model that is successful in enabling young people to re-engage with education.
- 6.23 The Virtual College has been asked to consider supporting children with SEN statements who are out of school. The team were concerned that there was evidence of young people with statements who might be out of school for prolonged periods and felt this matter should be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- 6.24 The ReachOut Project report should be considered carefully and responses made when it is published. The application of peer mentors in engaging young people seems to be a particularly valuable aspect.
- 6.25 There is evidence that some schools are taking children off registers inappropriately in Key Stage 4, apparently because other alternatives appear to be available. This gives rise to concern that creating alternatives may simply encourage schools to offload responsibilities. A better solution appears to be that schools are encouraged to work in partnership and take collective and individual responsibility for any alternative and supplementary provision. Evidence was provided that one school had taken 28 pupils off roll in a single instance on the apparently spurious grounds that they were "not suitably placed in mainstream" and therefore should be receiving alternative provision.
- 6.26 There are further concerns that placing Key Stage 4 children in FE colleges has not been evaluated. There are suggestions that colleges may not be



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always well prepared for these children. This is an area for further evaluation.

- 6.27 There is clear evidence that some schools are taking the lion's share of displaced pupils whilst others are sheltered from any need to make provision. This inequity is a major factor of stress and strain on the resources of schools with vacancies. The new Admissions Forum is established by Government to do something to address this issue but how exactly is not clear at this stage.
- 6.28 There are indications that Education Otherwise Than At School decisions by parents have increased because of difficulties securing their school of choice in Year 7 (nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of all Education Otherwise decisions).
- 6.29 Arrivals into the City was said to be numerically a much bigger issue than movements across the City, though the evidence for this was not actually provided.
- 6.30 The Departmental Pupil Database needs much improvement to be reliable – schools need to provide information weekly rather than termly. The Education Service has already started to address this issue by a plan to make the updates weekly rather than termly. This will enable the Unique Pupil Identification number to be more useful in tracking children, both within the Education Service and across agencies.
- 6.31 There was concern expressed about the potential for girls from some communities approaching or in adolescence from some communities to disappear from the school register with little or no explanation.
- 6.32 The Identification, Referral and Tracking Service is being established to facilitate exchange of information particularly about vulnerable children across agencies and a report on its progress should be considered at a later stage. This is being managed by the Education Service with an inter-agency group and reporting to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.
- 6.33 Collegiate and other similar structures for ensuring that schools come together as a partnership in an area seem to have a lot to offer for ensuring displaced children do not fall through the net of provision.



7: BEHAVIOUR AND EXCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The team did not establish a definition for "behaviour" but recognised that for the purposes of this scrutiny it is likely to refer to any behaviour which is perceived as challenging and has a potential for exclusion of any sort. It was recognised that "behaviour" is used to identify undesirable behaviour. It is not an objective word but is highly subjective.
- 7.2 The team heard evidence from a group of secondary headteachers and a group of primary headteachers. The Secondary Headteachers Forum has established a group looking at behaviour and the Primary Headteachers Forum is intending to do the same.
- 7.3 Schools gave information regarding their behaviour policies and how they were tackling exclusions. Information was also provided from a questionnaire to all secondary headteachers about behaviour.
- 7.4 Amanda Daniels gave information about the Framework for Intervention which has been provided cost free to primary schools and will be subject to charging from April 2003. The Framework aims to provide a structure for teachers and schools in managing pupil behaviour positively. Written evidence about the Framework was provided and a case study was demonstrated.
- 7.5 Chris Palmer (BASS) gave detailed information about the Excellence in Cities Partnership, its funding and the 6 strands in this programme: -
- Learning Mentors
 - Learning Support Centres for pupils at risk of exclusion
 - City Learning Centres
 - Beacon and Specialist Schools
 - Gifted and Talented programmes
 - Small Education Action Zones
- 7.6 Funding is just over £15million per year and has been extended until 2006. All secondary schools and 140 high priority primary schools receive direct support. Primary consortia have an allocation of funds to distribute. Learning Support Centres aim to provide in-school alternatives to exclusion and were established to have an outreach support to schools within the network.
- 7.7 Detailed information about learning mentors was provided by Nicola Winwood (Primary Co-ordinator) and Julia Tortise (Secondary Co-ordinator). There are 300 primary and 300 secondary learning mentors across the City. Their role includes working with individual pupils who have barriers to learning and working with parents/carers/community. Learning mentors are working on developing and supporting progress in emotional



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literacy and social skills. Mentors are also participating in after school clubs and other activities, acting as a point of contact for external agencies, providing role models for children and supporting teachers with behaviour management strategies. Questionnaires sent to teachers indicate that learning mentors are having an impact.

- 7.8 Moira Healy gave evidence of the National Research on Learning Centre Extensions and about the Birmingham based Zacchaeous Centre. The Zacchaeous Centre was established in 1995 between the LEA and the Catholic Partnership. It offers social and emotional competency courses for pupils (anger management, assertiveness, separation and loss, classroom and social skills, leadership). The project has been considered to be very successful by the schools involved. As well as working with children work also takes place with staff. Zacchaeous will also be offering parenting courses.
- 7.9 Learning Support Centres are being evaluated and a report on this will appear in due course from DfES. In Birmingham there are 17 of these – 11 large ones and 6 mini.
- 7.10 Nicky Kendall (BASS) gave evidence about the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP), which is a Government funded initiative in 4 secondary schools in high crime areas and their feeder primaries. Each is establishing a multi-agency Behaviour and Education Support Team (BEST), receiving funding of £250,000 per year, and each has a linked police officer. There are targets around behaviour auditing, reducing exclusions, improving attendance. It is trialing multi-agency approaches to make a significant difference. The DfES have indicated that they see BIP as a pathfinder, not a pilot and there are links with the concept of extended schools.
- 7.11 Peter Wild, Head of the Behaviour Support Service, gave information about national requirements and developments, the difficulties about establishing consistent responses to “unacceptable behaviour,” funding which is going directly into schools, the role of the LEA as a facilitator, and information about some services offered by the BSS.
- 7.12 Gilroy Brown (BASS) gave information about RACA (Raising Afro-Caribbean Achievement) Project. The first stage looked at factors in 10 successful primary schools and the second stage is looking particularly at Key Stage 3 issues around motivation for Afro-Caribbean pupils. RACA2 is being supported by DfES and Standards Fund. Gilroy was able to present initial findings which include around 30 recommendations; the full report is yet to be completed.
- 7.13 Chrissie Garrett, Assistant Director for the Education Services Inclusion Support Division, provided a paper on the Educational Needs of Disconnected/Vulnerable and Excluded Young People in Birmingham. She explained that the paper makes recommendations about secondary schools



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forming into groups with feeder primary schools within which a range of provision across agencies can be accessed. The proposed partnerships would ensure that excluded children from one school would be put on the roll of another where necessary. Consultation with Social Services and Health and other groups has taken place in establishing this proposal. A key part of the proposal will be an LEA lead officer for “disconnected/vulnerable young people.” She explained also that plans to improve the Pupil Database were an integral part of her proposals.

- 7.14 Carol Jones and Brian Martin from Connexions provided a copy of the Connexions Business Plan and an evaluation of preVENT Summer 2002 activities. Connexions deliver universal and differentiated services in all secondary schools and provide a service to young people who are out of school. They provide personal advisers and work closely with EWS.

KEY ISSUES – BEHAVIOUR AND EXCLUSIONS

- 7.15 77% of secondary headteachers felt that behaviour had deteriorated over the last 3 years and were experiencing new difficulties.
- 7.16 Secondary heads felt there was a lack of information coming from primary schools during transition. Primary schools felt that secondary schools needed to provide a softer landing strip if possible and that behaviour affected by the change of environment cannot always be predicted, as it is the environment which may be the key causal factor.
- 7.17 Schools were particularly concerned about aggressive visitors to schools – parents, people coming unexpectedly off the street, etc.
- 7.18 Under subscribed schools pick up a disproportionate number of difficult to place children.
- 7.19 Some schools felt that the “fines” for pupil exclusions (£4,500) had not led to a reduction in exclusions. It was suggested that a consequence was the avoidance by schools of formal exclusions and a substantial increase in children or parents being advised to seek other school places as an alternative to exclusion, resulting in many young people becoming detached from education. Another suggested consequence was increased incentives for schools to discourage the admission of pupils who might be at risk of being excluded, leading to extra burdens on more inclusive schools.
- 7.20 Some schools felt that neighbouring schools were resisting the admissions of pupils with difficulties so that they concentrated in schools with vacancies. It was suggested that schools otherwise referred to as “Beacon Schools” would turn down pupils with behaviour problems or on the special needs register.



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It is estimated that between 600 and 700 young people appear to be detached from school.

- 7.21 The Exclusions Unit is very highly regarded by headteachers who expressed concern about the possibility of its resources reducing.
- Permanent exclusion figures have shown a steady decrease year on year for the previous 4 years until the last year for which figures are available (2001-2002). In this year there was a 23.9% increase in permanent exclusions and a 6.1% increase in temporary exclusions.
- 7.22 One secondary school felt that SEN assessments for statementing should have been completed prior to pupils arriving in secondary more frequently.
- 7.23 Schools indicated difficulties in accessing support from Social Services, the Police and BSS (overstretched).
- 7.24 All schools were very appreciative of the Excellence in Cities Programme and Learning Mentors in particular.
- 7.25 A secondary school was very concerned about what was felt to be the lack of support from the Police Service when there were issues of violent crime, including shootings.
- 7.26 Secondary schools spoke of difficulties attracting and retaining staff and teachers concerns about their personal safety. It was suggested that teachers in such schools should receive incentives, such as interest free car loans for staff and increased salaries.
- 7.27 The appointment of senior level staff responsible for behaviour issues, even to the level of deputy headteacher, was seen as a very positive move.
- 7.28 Schools believe that there was a widespread rejection of adult authority amongst young people which is connected with difficulties in managing behaviour.
- 7.29 High turnover of staff in schools has a major impact on the delivery of high quality teaching and the continuity of support for pupils. Concerns were expressed that this affected those pupils who most needed these. An increase in sexualised behaviour had also been identified by schools.
- 7.30 Secondary heads would like to prioritise dealing with aggressive behaviour, linkages with NHS (CAMHS, etc.), and ironing out the unfairness of particular schools carrying the heavier burdens.
- 7.31 The concentration of children with difficulties in particular schools tended to make matters worse and could be a fruitful issue to tackle as a priority.



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- 7.32 Primary schools felt they had demonstrated the effectiveness of a range of strategies, including class council meetings, learning mentors, “traffic lights” to link support to green/amber/red behaviour.
- 7.33 Schools identified particular difficulties in some areas where children from ethnic minorities were targeted for bullying and harassment.
- 7.34 Schools felt that difficulties in engagement can often be identified very early on, even in nurseries.
- 7.35 There has not been a central admissions process, so schools have been managing their own admissions processes with varying consequences.
- 7.36 There are particular issues around the drift away from the centre of Birmingham in parents seeking places. This can exacerbate conflicts between different groups of children as well as affecting the areas from which parents are retreating.
- 7.37 Schools reported having difficulty maintaining levels of support, e.g. to providing courses on parenting skills over the long term.
- 7.38 Conflicts in playgrounds caused by parents feuding was identified as a key issue by schools.
- 7.39 The transition between Year 6 and 7 was identified by all as a key issue to focus on. Examples of good practice were raised but there were also difficulties identified in ensuring a consistent approach.
- 7.40 There was some concern expressed by primary schools about whether the Framework for Intervention would remain as the basic framework. It was suggested that although the Behaviour Support Service is being trained to be able to provide the framework, limitations on staff time may inhibit the delivery of training and support.
- 7.41 It was not clear as to why secondary schools had not adopted the framework approach and it was felt that this might need further exploration.
- 7.42 A concern was identified that Learning Support Centres were not fulfilling their original brief to provide support to schools in their network and this needs to be brought back to the EIC Partnership.
- 7.43 There are a lot of learning mentors, other types of mentors, projects tackling behaviour, etc., but it is not clear how these all fit together to have maximum impact in a locality. Education Services tend to be focussed on schools as institutions rather than the contribution of clusters



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of schools to a locality. The proposals from Chrissie Garrett were welcomed as part of an opportunity to address this more holistically.

- 7.44 There were difficulties in supporting the BIP, in particular from Social Services, because of lack of resources and lack of suitably qualified staff. It is not clear at this stage that the BIP is properly supported as a strategic development by Health and Social Services.
- 7.45 The recent Government circular loosening the setting of targets for exclusion seems to coincide with an increase in exclusions.
- 7.46 There would be opportunities in cluster groups or LIG groups to establish common definitions and approaches to unacceptable behaviour across a number of schools. It was suggested that LIG groups might be of the right size to be able to negotiate common agreements across all schools in the area for a "common tariff system" in response to difficult behaviour.
- 7.47 The Behaviour Support Service (BSS) was concerned that changes in legislation had forced them to divert resources from preventative measures to providing alternatives to school for permanently excluded children. This appears to have weakened the services ability to support reintegration, in part, because young people are reluctant to leave full-time education provided in small groups.
- 7.48 The Raising Achievement of African / Caribbean Project (RACA) made a number of recommendations:-
- Teachers need a range of strategies and need help in learning about strategies that will work with African-Caribbean pupils and other minority groups.
 - Teachers need opportunities to discuss sensitive issues and the sharing of good practice needs to be further encouraged, both within schools and across schools.
 - Schools need to challenge their own perceptions of African-Caribbean pupils and be more aware of the extent to which education is valued by the African-Caribbean community.
 - Teachers need a secure knowledge base regarding culture.
- 7.49 The RACA project will be reporting in full soon and will need detailed consideration.
- 7.50 Connexions is a key service for identification of needs and signposting to appropriate services for young people 14+ and there is potential for exploring how the Birmingham Children's Fund Signposting Service and Connexions may develop in the future.



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- 7.51 Some of the Connexions experience in alternative curriculum provision needs to be given further consideration.
- 7.52 Connexions identified a lack of provision for teenage mothers in relation to childcare. This will need to be referred to the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership.
- 7.53 Connexions is working closely with BIP schools and providing across various parts of the City diversionary activities for young people in summer time to reduce street crime. It was suggested that of the 1500 children coming into this service in summer 2002, 724 were not known to agencies or schools. This needs further investigation.
- 7.54 Of the 269 children who were officially permanently excluded last year only 49 were taken back onto a school roll. This is a key issue which the Assistant Director for Special Educational Needs is trying to address.
- 7.55 Chrissie Garrett provided a potential structure for schools coming together collectively in the Leadership Improvement Groups.
- 7.56 A number of new appointments are proposed by the LEA, including a lead officer for "disconnected young people" and a lead officer for newly arrived children.
- 7.57 The Chief Executive made observations about the need to plan services in a better way, establish closer links between universal and targeted services, and ensure that there are effective partnerships supporting vulnerable children. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership was identified as the overarching place where strategic planning across the City would be located for vulnerable children.
- 7.58 She felt there was a need for universal services to improve but also for gaps in targeted services to be addressed, such as in family support.
- 7.59 The Chief Executive recommended that emphasis was placed on finding "cultural solutions" which would facilitate schools and services co-operating, rather than too many new structural solutions that might be imposed and absorb energy. The target needs to be focussed on the child and wherever possible keeping a child in school.



8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Piloting New Ways of Working Within Neighbourhoods

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|----|--|--|------------------------|
| R1 | A feasibility study should be commissioned into the potential for establishing an "Aspiration and Achievement Zone" as a joined up holistic partnership approach in at least one neighbourhood | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 November 2003 |

New ways of encouraging learning in neighbourhoods need to be considered where there is evidence of established approaches failing to reach young people at risk. It seems likely that there could be an opportunity to establish an "Aspiration and Achievement Zone" in an area of high need as a pathfinder project. This is a concept moving a step further than education action zones, involving a much wider set of partnerships. Such a Zone should establish a radical approach in ensuring that schools have collective responsibility for a neighbourhood and that all the young people in the neighbourhood are guaranteed effective support from the partnership of schools in accessing learning. As well as pulling schools together the Zone will incorporate a raft of initiatives and commitments from all the agencies and community organisations in an area focusing on children and their needs. It is suggested this should incorporate as key elements: -

- The passporting and co-ordination of services to young people from a range of agencies, voluntary and statutory so that particularly vulnerable children are supported through any periods of transition
- Every child should have a series of activities and experiences that are personally negotiated and developed to maximise their interest and potential
- Active learning programmes, backed by high levels of technical support, aimed at motivating and engaging young people, such as film making, etc
- A wider range of alternative curricula within inclusive learning environments and greater flexibility in the application of the National Curriculum
- Widespread access to e-learning supported by any time anywhere learning opportunities online and in physical locations, involving (e.g.) University of the First Age, Virtual College and others
- Collaboration between key agencies such as Connexions, Colleges, Schools, Nurseries, Youth Offending Service, Youth Service, Children's Fund, Social Services, Health Trust, etc., in order to support the transformation of the neighbourhood as a learning environment and



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ensure the holistic support system for children and young people from early years through to adulthood

- Co-ordinated mentoring and tutoring beyond school and other institutional boundaries
- Identification of vulnerable and at risk young people and “handholding” support through key transitions such as between primary and secondary schools and on arrival in the area.
- Common identification and tracking processes to help target support for vulnerable young people
- Co-ordination amongst all schools and services to ensure consistency in approach and a safety net with a tight mesh for all vulnerable young people.
- Linkages between providers in order to minimise duplication and maximise efforts. Resources between agencies and projects to be pooled where this is the best way to meet needs.
- A co-ordinating person to support schools and agencies working together would need to be identified
- Engagement with voluntary and community based organisations as essential partners
- Engagement with parents and neighbourhood through family learning, a range of individualised learning options and family support provision
- Involvement of and dialogue with young people and their parents as active participants in planning and evaluation of services
- After school hours activities, including Easter and summer schools
- Sports and leisure activities, including further development of the capacity of schools to provide sports, leisure and community learning activities
- Linkage to all educational programmes in the community

In order to establish such a zone it is recommended that negotiations take place locally and with Government about the potential to co-ordinate all initiatives within the area (e.g. New Deal, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Single Regeneration Budgets, etc.) and create greater flexibility in meeting the learning needs of young people through agreed variations in certain aspects of learning where barriers may occur, such as in the application of the national curriculum.

Some of the elements of such a framework are likely to be present in some areas, even if in embryonic form, but it is unlikely that all of the above are provided in a coherently accessible way with the flexibility and responsiveness suggested. There are often difficulties in ensuring that different schools, agencies and age-focussed services in an area inter-relate, and that they connect effectively with the community and young people.

There are resource implications for this approach, though there may be savings, which can help the development from reduced duplication.



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8.2 Improving Collective Working Between Schools and With Agencies in Neighbourhoods

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|----|---|--|------------------------|
| R2 | That mechanisms are established with schools to work collectively and to be accountable for supporting all young people within a geographical area as a collective rather than as potentially competing individual institutions | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |
| R3 | That more coherent frameworks are established for connecting schools with local service providers delivering health services, social services, support for young offenders or children at risk, leisure, sports, arts, family support and family learning | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |

Currently schools come together in consortia for maintaining professional and organisational development. However, schools consortia are not necessarily aligned with particular communities or areas served by other key agencies. Although this is an agenda which is being worked on, there is a need to ensure that the outcome is clearer relationships and responsibilities to neighbourhoods. The Education Service's proposals to establish Leadership Improvement Groups of schools focussing on Excellence in Cities areas is a welcome step in this direction but further work is needed to ensure that there is a close fit with the locally devolved structures of other key agencies. The success of such structures will be demonstrated by:

- Collective responsibilities being established
- Young people supported more holistically
- Joint commissioning of local projects
- Improvements in attendance and exclusion
- A variety of choices at the local level to match individual needs whilst ensuring that individuals are not sidelined or only provided with low level opportunities for learning
- Contributions to community cohesion and reductions in crime
- Value added in the achievements of young people
- The ability to harness strengths of particular schools and communities
- An ability to work creatively with a win/win approach
- Use of schools as community resources for learning, leisure and other services
- A closer fit between schools' networks and the local structures for serving particular neighbourhoods
- Improved partnership working between agencies and schools in neighbourhoods

Many schools are already providing or developing extended services, community use of their facilities and inclusion of services from various



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agencies on site. Three schools currently are involved as pathfinder Extended Schools and a number of schools in Behaviour Improvement Programme clusters are developing along similar lines. Government is encouraging the development of the “extended” school concept and has provided changes in legislation allowing schools to become more of a community base for a range of services. Consideration can be given to further development of sports and other activities on school sites out of hours, linking this to work with disengaged young people and young people at risk of offending.

This opportunity needs to be understood by schools, chief officers of relevant departments and agencies and key local providers.

To seize the opportunities requires consideration about potential funding streams as well as changes in the culture of other agencies and schools. The education community at all levels should be thinking beyond its own specific networks. Where possible building on existing structures and avoiding duplication could be guiding principles in this development.



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8.3 Improving Support for Schools in Particularly Stressful Areas

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|----|---|--|------------------------|
| R4 | Improved support for schools in particularly stressful areas is needed to address issues of staff turnover and retention, and to recognise the skills, knowledge and expertise which needs to be retained in these areas. This will require some negotiation with Central Government, as well as actions at the local level | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |

Only the best teachers can deliver what is required to engage young people in challenging environments. The City has invested in schools and is reaping rewards for this investment. However some groups are not benefiting at the same rate as others, with the danger of an increasing equality gap. Those who do not become engaged in learning are most at risk of becoming involved in challenging behaviour, criminal activity and drifting into dangerous lifestyles (including involvement in gangs and drugs' rackets). Increased investment in engaging these young people in learning are likely to be offset by reductions in the social and economic costs of disengagement.

A raft of strategies can be considered including:-

- Incentives to attract newly qualified teachers.
- Incentives for working with a higher percentage of "vulnerable children".
- Guaranteed quality training to prepare new teachers to the area and guaranteed further professional training.
- Sabbaticals and job exchanges.
- Linkages to research institutions and academic validation.
- Support in the classroom.
- Ensuring newly qualified teachers have accelerated support in developing behaviour management skills
- Specific development programmes for all relevant staff

Clearly the above recommendation has resource implications for central and local government.



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8.4 Improving Support to Children in Transition and Children Who Are Particularly Vulnerable

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|----|---|--|------------------------|
| R5 | That improved support is established for children and young people who are in transition between schools, or are out of school, or are particularly vulnerable for any reason | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |

There is evidence of vulnerable young people slipping through the net of support and improvements need to be considered to address this.

Key elements are likely to be:-

- Improving support to transitions of children between primary and secondary phases and mid-term transitions, particularly for those young people subject to multiple transitions
- Systems for ensuring vulnerable young people are identified and supported throughout processes of transition.
- A good practice pack or set of guarantees about transitions.
- More robust systems for ensuring admissions into schools with improved systems for ensuring school places for those out of school.
- Systematic identification of vulnerable children at Y6 with planning for transition from secondary to primary school, and a presumption of the need for support across the transition through to the end of Y7. The support available should include guaranteed mentoring where this is identified as useful.
- Pupil database to be improved and linked to the emerging inter-agency Identification Referral & Tracking Project.
- Children in hostels or children who are homeless to be prioritised in schools' admissions criteria
- In some circumstances consideration might be given to providing fares for parents where a parental journey is essential to maintain a child's education, possibly through an arrangement enabling hostels to make immediate provision and reclaim fares from the education service or a school.
- Input from "alternative education" providers linked to good ICT resources to bridge gaps and enable young people to access mainstream schools quickly



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- Explore the potential for paying bus fares to maintain attendance at an the school in the area where the young person was living, Ensuring hostels have resources to support children's learning (books, computers, staff trained, space for homework). Housing and education to develop this.
- A system for monitoring the success of measures taken
- Ensuring support follows young people
- Partnership with other agencies in reducing mobility and improving access to services for children in transition.



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8.5 Improving Support to Newly Arrived Children

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|----|---|--|------------------------|
| R6 | The Chief Education Officer should establish a co-ordinated education strategy to ensure support to reception and integration of newly arrived children | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |

Support to newly arrived children should be co-ordinated within a clear overarching strategy for schools and the Education Service . The strategy should include: -

- Identification of a one stop service for guaranteeing entry to school within a 3-week period.
- Support to parents seeking places for children
- Linkages with Newly Arrived Children's Service, Midlands Refugee Council and other Refugee support organisations.
- Work with school networks to ensure support to schools and capacity to make provision
- Challenge to delays in admissions.
- Bursaries on admission to school to help with the provision of essential equipment and enable access to school. This could cover bus fares, sports equipment and school uniform as well as language support, books, etc.
- Ensuring there is up to date information about vacancies in schools
- Establishing a co-ordinator post for ensuring access to education for newly arrived children.
- Monitoring of the achievements of particular newly arrived minority ethnic groups, as happens with the larger more established minority ethnic communities with feed back into planning processes so that a strategic overview can be obtained and action taken to address any under-achievement.
- Support to newly arriving communities in establishing supplementary schools.
- A programme for ensuring that services and schools have good information about the cultural needs and history of newly arrived communities is co-ordinated by the education service.



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- Ensuring the Special Educational Needs of newly arrived disabled children are being met.
- Consideration as to the long-term future funding of the (Children's Fund) Newly Arrived Children's Service, following evaluation of the service.
- Provision of guidance and up to date information for schools, listing external as well as internal sources of support for pupils and schools (as in Sheffield and Bradford).
- Implementation of the Corporate Integration Strategy



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8.6 Engaging Parents

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|----|--|--|------------------------|
| R7 | That the Chief Education Officer reports on the effectiveness of current measures in engaging parents and best practices identified elsewhere which might contribute to further developments in the City | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |

Many schools reported difficulties in engaging some parents. Some schools reported that despite efforts to encourage parents into school, the parents who most needed to be engaged were least likely to come to parents evenings, etc. It was suggested, for example, that schools see a direct correlation between involvement in parents' evenings and aspirations of children.

This requires identifying best practice, targeting resources such as learning mentors, promoting family learning and facilitating access for parents to education and learning. Particular priority should be given to families in transition and when the carer is likely to be unsupported or socially excluded. This should link with inter-agency initiatives to improve family support and prevent unnecessary admissions of children into care. There are examples (e.g. in San Diego) where family learning is linked to housing provision.

8.7 Excellence in Cities

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|----|--|--|------------------------|
| R8 | That Excellence in Cities partnerships are asked to review the implementation of learning support centres in order to ensure that the original intention to support a whole area, rather than an individual school, is carried out | Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning | 1 December 2003 |



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8.8 Future Scrutiny Reports

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|----|---|--|------------------------|
| R9 | That the Education and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers commissioning further Scrutiny reports on: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of young people and bullying • The effectiveness of the new Admissions Forum in establishing greater equity for schools, which tend to receive larger concentrations of more challenging pupils | Chair of the Education and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee | 1 December 2003 |

In the process of this enquiry, there was concern expressed by a number of people about the impact of bullying and harassment on the engagement of young people in learning. Following the campaign against bullying which certainly seems to have engaged schools in the last few years, there still appear to be a significant number of difficult issues, particularly around journeys to and from school, and safety during unsupervised periods.

The Admissions Forum is a new body which has been charged with the task of ensuring school places and providing a more equitable situation between schools. It is uncertain as to whether the powers of the Forum will be sufficient for the task. In any case it would be appropriate to monitor the progress of this Forum in due course.



APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND REPORTS

| General Issues | |
|--|---|
| DOCUMENT | AUTHOR |
| Aiming High | Department for Education and Skills Consultation Paper 2003 |
| Issues Relating to Asylum Seekers and Refugees | |
| DOCUMENT | AUTHOR |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Joined up approach for delivery of Education Services to meet the needs of the vulnerable/'at risk' young people in Birmingham: Draft report • Meeting the needs of the 'disconnected/vulnerable' and excluded young people in Birmingham: Consultation | Chrissie Garrett, Acting Assistant Director – SEN |
| Permanent Exclusions Commentary - Academic Year 2001/2002 Fixed Period Exclusions Commentary - Academic Year 2001/2002 | Education Department Exclusions Team |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper outlining issues related to mobility and support structures for pupils • EAL Information | Jan Ferguson and Mrs Meelhu, George Dixon International School |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly Arrived Children from Overseas (Feb 2003) • Birmingham LEA: DfES Claims for Asylum Seeker Children (Oct 2002) • Birmingham LEA: DfES Claims for Asylum Seeker Children (Feb 2003) | Tom Tierney, Head of Strategic Partnerships Team |
| Work in Progress/Issues related to Asylum Seekers and Refugees (Feb 2003) | Jennifer Legare, Project Co-ordinator, Services to Newly Arrived Children and Their Families Sue Hadley, Leisure-Schools/Out of Hours Learning |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAL / SEN Procedure for Identifying the Learning Needs of EAL Pupils Causing Concern • Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit (EMPSU) – Code of practice: December 2001 / EAL Staff Handbook • EMAG Prioritisation Details – Primary Schools | BCC Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit & KS3 Core Skills EAL/SEN Project in collaboration with Sandwell LEA BCC Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit BCC Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit |
| Strategy for the Integration of Newcomers from Abroad in Birmingham | |



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| Issues Relating to High Mobility and Displaced Children | |
|--|--|
| DOCUMENT | AUTHOR |
| a) Virtual College Leavers: June 28 th 2002 | Amy Wallis, Project Officer for CiPC (Virtual College) |
| b) The Virtual College: General Information | |
| Children and Homelessness | Roger Minchin, Adviser – Looked After Children Education Service |
| Letter to All Headteachers & Designated Teachers for Looked After Children (10.02.03): Information regarding Looked After Children | Noran Flynn, Acting Manager, Looked After Children Education Service |
| House of Commons Education and Select Committee: Evidence from the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Chief Education Officer. (Caroline Benn, Brian Simon Memorial Lecture 28/9/02) | Tim Brighouse |
| Birmingham LEA: Action Plan in Response to the 2002 OFSTED/Audit Commission Inspection July 2002 (Appendix 1) | Tim Brighouse |
| Education & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee Report: Review of Arrangements for Children at Risk of Becoming Disconnected From Education | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary Points for Scrutiny Review: Issues Related to High Mobility and Displaced Children (13.02.03) • Key Stage 4 Alternative Provision Directory (2002/2003 Edition) | John Smail, Head of Education Welfare Service Mike Innocenti, High Impact Team Manager, Pupil Connect Team, EWS |
| ReachOut Project | Gethin Davies: Consultant Director, Second City Second Chance (SCSC) |
| The Education Network (Ten) Policy Briefing: (24.01.03) Children and Young People at Risk of Social Exclusion – Local Preventative Strategies | Frances Migniuolo, The Education Network |
| ASDAN Educational (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (18.02.03) | ASDAN Educational Website |



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| Issues Relating to High Mobility and Displaced Children (continued) | |
|---|--|
| DOCUMENT | AUTHOR |
| Education & Arts Overview & Scrutiny Committee Report: 18.12.02 Looked After Children: An Interim Report | Noran Flynn, Acting Manager, LACES Chris Palmer, Lead Adviser, Corporate Strategy |
| Education & Arts Overview & Scrutiny Committee Report: November 2000 Review of Arrangements for Children at Risk of Becoming Disconnected from Education | |
| Birmingham's Identification, Referral and Tracking (IRT) Project: Progress Report for the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership; (January 2003) | Rob Harrison, IRT Project Manager |
| Map showing Pupil Mobility by Ward (2002) | Research and Statistics Section |
| Progress Report: Supporting Schools to Monitor, Evaluate and Demonstrate their Inclusive Practice with Particular Reference to Mobility (February 2003) | Chris Seal, Adviser – BASS |
| Demonstrating Progress and Managing Performance in Schools with High Pupil Turnover (August 2000) | Chris Seal, Jackie Hughes, Maggie Scott, BASS |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 1: Teacher/Pupil Turnover (2002): Primary Schools • Table 2: Teacher/Pupil Turnover (2002): Secondary School • Table 3: Primary Schools Pupil Mobility (200-2002) – by Ward • Table 4: Pupil Turnover (2000-2002): Primary Schools • Table 5: Pupil Turnover (2000-2002): Secondary Schools | Research and Statistics Section |
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| Issues Related to 'Behaviour' (continued) | |
|--|---|
| DOCUMENT | AUTHOR |
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| Copies of OHPs: Raising African Caribbean Achievement | Gilroy Brown, Adviser BASS |



APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PEOPLE WHO GAVE EVIDENCE

Abdi Rahman Ali, Secretary of Somali Immigrant Resource Development Organisation (SIRDO)

Alan Bamber, Headteacher, St Andrews Primary School

Amanda Daniels, Framework for Intervention

Amy Wallis, Project Officer for CiPC (Virtual College)

BANUT – briefing on Extended Schools

BCC Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit & KS3 Core Skills EAL/SEN Project in collaboration with Sandwell LEA

Brian Martin, Birmingham & Solihull Connexions Service

Carol Jones, Birmingham & Solihull Connexions Service

Carol Lyndon, Headteacher, Kings Rise Primary School

Caroline Quilty / Elaine Bane, Education Department Exclusions Team

Chris Palmer, Lead Adviser, Corporate Strategies, BASS

Chris Seal, Adviser, BASS

Chrissie Garrett, Acting Assistant Director, Special Needs Division

David Gould, Headteacher, St Albans CE Secondary School

Gethin Davies, Consultant Director, Second City Second Chance (SCSC)

Gilroy Brown, Adviser, BASS

Jan Ferguson, Head of English, George Dixon International School

Jennifer Legare, Project Co-ordinator, Services to Newly Arrived Children and Their Families

Jim Foley, Headteacher, St Thomas Aquinas School

John Smail, Head of Education Welfare Service



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Julia Tortise, Secondary Learning Mentor

Julie Berrey, Hostel Support Manager

Lin Homer, Chief Executive

Linda Matthews, Pre-School Worker Co-ordinator

Mike Innocenti, High Impact Team Manager, Pupil Connect Team, EWS

Moira Healy, LSU Extension Project Manager, DfES

Mrs Meelhu, Inclusion Mentor, George Dixon School

Nicky Kendall, Education Department lead on Behaviour Improvement Plan

Nicola Winwood, Primary Learning Mentor

Noran Flynn, Acting Manager, Looked After Children Education Service

Pat Smith, British Red Cross

Pat Walters, Headteacher, Holte School

Peter Wild, Head of Behaviour Support Service

Phil Duckworth, Head of EAL, Moseley School

Research and Statistics Section

Rob Harrison, IRT Project Manager

Roger Minchin, Adviser – Looked After Children Education Services (LACES)

Sue Barratt, Headteacher, Bournville Junior School

Sue Hadley, Leisure-Schools/Out of Hours Learning, Leisure and Culture Department

Sylvia McNamara, Head of BASS

Tim Chiverton, Birmingham Youth Offending Service

Tim Evans, Headteacher, Clifton Infant School

Tom Tierney, Head of Strategic Partnerships, Education Department

Trish Exley, Headteacher, Kingsbury Secondary School



APPENDIX 3: GLOSSARY

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| BASS | Birmingham Advisory and Support Services – A division of the city's education service. |
| BIP | Behaviour Improvement Programme – A DfES supported programme recently introduced in 4 cluster areas in Birmingham. A key feature includes establishing multi-agency behaviour support teams in schools. |
| CAMHS | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. |
| CYPSP | Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership – recently formed citywide partnership body involving all agencies working with young people. It is linked to the City Strategic Partnership Main aims are to co-ordinate services, identify gaps and improve support to young people. |
| DfES | Department for Education & Skills. |
| EiC | Excellence in Cities programme. Government supported programme, delivered in Birmingham through EiC networks. Includes provision of learning mentors, Learning Support Centres, programmes for gifted and talented and other measures. |
| Extended School | The concept that a school can have a raft of agencies providing services on site directly to young people – including health, police, youth work etc. |
| FFI | Framework for Intervention – training programme established for Birmingham schools using a systemic approach to improving behaviour. |
| Framework for the assessment of Children in Need | Inter-agency protocol based on the Children Act for identifying and assessing the needs of vulnerable children and children in need of multi-agency assessment. |
| IRT | Identification, Referral and Tracking Project. Government supported project to enable agencies to pool databases and ensure that vulnerable children receive support needed. |