

A G E N D A

Education Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday, 22nd June, 2004**

Time: **2.00 p.m.**

Place: **Council Chamber, Brockington,
Hafod Road, Hereford**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of
the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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**County of Herefordshire
District Council**

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee

To: Councillor B. F. Ashton (Chairman)
Councillor J.P. Thomas (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors H. Bramer, N.J.J. Davies, R.M. Manning, Mrs. J.E. Pemberton, Mrs. S.J. Robertson, D.C. Taylor, Ms. A.M. Toon, W.J. Walling
Church Members: J. G. Griffin, (Roman Catholic) Rev. I. Terry (Church of England).
Parent Governor Members: Ms. K. Fitch, (Primary), Mrs. S. Wright (Secondary).
Co-opted Teacher Representatives: Ms. E. Christopher, (Special) C. Lewandowski (Secondary), J. D. Pritchard (Primary).
Co-opted Headteacher Representatives: A. Marson (Secondary), Miss S. Peate (Primary).

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1. CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN	
To note the reappointment at Council of Councillor B.F. Ashton as Chairman and Councillor J.P. Thomas as Vice-Chairman.	
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
To receive apologies for absence.	
3. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)	
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To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
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PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Education, Environment, Health, Social Care and Housing and Social and Economic Development. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises Policy and Finance matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Education Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Brockington, Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 5th April, 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor B.F. Ashton (Chairman)
Councillor J.P. Thomas (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: N.J.J. Davies, R.M. Manning, Mrs. J.E. Pemberton,
D.C. Taylor, Ms. A.M. Toon and W.J. Walling

Church Members: Mr P. Eyles, Mr J.D. Griffin

Parent Governor Mrs. S.E. Wright

Members:

Co-opted Teacher Ms. E. Christopher, Mr C. Lewandowski, Mr J.D. Pritchard

Representatives:

Co-opted Mr . A. Marson, Miss S. Peate.

Headteacher

Representatives:

In attendance: Councillor D. W. Rule (Cabinet Member – Education)

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor H. Bramer, Councillor Mrs S.J. Robertson, and Rev. I Terry.

61. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Councillor J.G.S. Guthrie substituted for Councillor H. Bramer and Mr P. Eyles substituted for Rev. I. Terry.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr P. Eyles declared a personal interest in agenda item 12 – School Transport Review.

63. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th January, 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

64. HEREFORDSHIRE CHILDCARE INFORMATION SERVICE - NATIONAL AWARD FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

The Committee were invited to note the role of the Herefordshire Childcare Information Service, (CIS) and the national commendation of the high quality of its work.

The Director of Education reported that since January 2002, the CIS had been incorporated into the range of services under the oversight of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), and worked within the early years part of the Council's Education Directorate. The CIS provided a range of services to parents/carers, early years providers and employers within the County. These were

outlined in more detail in the leaflet made available to Members with the agenda. During the autumn of 2003, Herefordshire CIS had been included in a national assessment of all 150 English LEAs. Herefordshire's service had been judged to be among the 30 LEAs whose service had reached the highest level of quality, for which the national quality award was given. The award had been made on the basis of a rigorous independent assessment process.

The Committee congratulated the Herefordshire CIS on receiving the national quality award for service delivery and, after questioning Mr B. Twitty, CIS Information Manager, noted the range of advice, particularly in relation to the Nursery Education Grant, and career opportunities offered by the service.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

65. SCHOOL OPINION OF THE VALUE OF THE QUALITY OF CENTRAL LEA SERVICES PROVIDED BY HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

The Committee received information on the results from the survey of schools carried out in the spring term 2004.

The Director of Education reported that during the early part of the spring term 2004, all schools in the County had been asked to give their assessment of the quality and responsiveness of the centrally managed LEA services provided by the Council. Copies of the letter and survey form were attached to the report at Appendix 1. The detailed responses received from schools had been aggregated and Appendix 2 to the report provided a summary for each of the 43 services included in the survey. There were 26 areas which could broadly be compared across the 2000 Audit Commission and the 2004 Education Directorate surveys, and these were summarised at Appendix 3. Of these 26 areas, 88% (23) showed improvement in satisfaction levels as expressed by schools. Those services that showed the greatest improvement in satisfaction levels were: Educational Psychology (+1.0), Payroll Services (+0.95), Learning Support Services (+0.83) and the Pupil Referral Service (+0.73). The service area to show the largest decrease in satisfaction levels was Support for Pupil Performance Data (-0.45).

On scrutinising the report the following principal points were made:

- While the replies gave a good snapshot of the services at a particular time the number of responses from the Special School sector had been comparatively low and this needed to be taken into account when considering the statistics.
- While 'Support for 14 – 19 Education', 'Support for ICT in the Curriculum', and 'Support for Pupil Data' had recorded 'medium' scores in the secondary sector, it was emphasised that considerable progress had been made in these areas. The services, run jointly between the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the Council, were currently without a co-ordinator and therefore there may have been some confusion over service provision. It was further reported that interviews for a co-ordinator had recently been held and that an appointment would soon be made.
- Improvements could be seen in the overall scores for Children's and Students' Services. The Director of Education reported that, while there were areas of concern, the Service, through the better use of resources, had found more time to talk to schools about children causing concern.
- In response to concerns the Director of Education commented on a number of areas concerning Job Evaluation.
- The Director of Education acknowledged that while there had been improvements in the SIMS software system, further work was needed. He

also reported that a pilot scheme was underway to develop a direct line link to the County Treasurer's CEDAR accountancy system. It was suggested that a seminar be held to inform members of the issues involved in the provision of education software systems.

- In response to questions regarding the cost of IT support to schools, the Director of Education reported that a number of factors were involved e.g. the rural nature of the County and the number of systems covered. It was noted that schools could opt out of the services and obtain their own technical support if they thought it prudent to do so.

RESOLVED:**That**

- (a) The report be noted and a report be presented to a future meeting on the issues raised by the survey concerning the 'Support for 14 – 19 Education' service; and**
- (b) The Director of Education arrange a seminar to inform Members of issues concerning Information Technology in schools, particularly in relation to the SIMS software and the cost of IT support to schools.**

66. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF THE INSPECTION, ADVICE AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SERVICE - STAGE 3 REPORT

The Committee considered the Stage 3 report of the Best Value Review of the Inspection, Advice and School Performance Service (IASPS). The detailed Best Value Report was made available separately.

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance Service reported that having undertaken the Best Value Review, the Team considered three main options and judged that Option C 'that the Service be retained within the Council but restructured and managed through a Local Partnership Board be endorsed' was the preferred option. The Team believed that Option C achieved the most appropriate balance in recognising the quality of the existing Service whilst establishing the imperative, agenda and method of securing the improvements required, if the Service was to continue to meet the needs of the schools, the Council and the County of Herefordshire.

In reply to concerns regarding the establishment of a Partnership Board, the Head of IASPS reported that the Board should be a proactive body with a majority of headteachers. It should be able to offer not only advice, but also the capacity to influence operational activities of the Service. In relation to the secondment of teachers from schools into advisory work, the Head of IASPS reported that the Board should also establish operational protocols and procedures to be shared between schools and IASPS. It was, however, noted that schools were currently finding it difficult to recruit to vacant posts which made secondments more difficult to arrange.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the outcomes and findings of the Best Value Stage 3 report on the Inspection, Advice and School Performance Service be accepted and;

- (b) the recommendation set out on page 36 in section 13.0 of the Best Value Review report namely - 'that the Service be retained within the Council but restructured and managed through a Local Partnership Board' - be**

accepted and recommended to the Strategic Monitoring Committee.

67. OFSTED SCHOOL INSPECTIONS SINCE 1 SEPTEMBER 2003

The Committee received an update on the outcomes of Ofsted School Inspections (both Locally and Nationally) since 1st September 2003.

The Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance (IASPS) reported that, at the end of the last academic year 2002 - 2003, no schools in Herefordshire were judged by Ofsted to require 'special measures' or have 'serious weaknesses' or to be classified as 'underachieving'. Appendix 1 to the report contained summary paragraphs from 5 reports published so far in the current academic year. He highlighted that Gorsley Goffs Primary School had been assessed as underachieving. However, measures had been taken to address this criticism and the school was now moving forward.

The Committee noted that the inspection report for Westfield Special School was due to be published. The Director of Education commented that, as there were high expectations for facilities in special schools, the report may contain reference to the condition of the building. He reported that Westfield had been included for replacement as part of the unsuccessful first round bid under the "Building Schools for the Future" bid.

In answer to concerns regarding underachieving schools and the robustness of self-evaluation, the Director of Education reported that, following training, self-evaluation was monitored by the School Governors.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

68. PUPIL ADMISSIONS - TRANSFER OF YEAR 6 PUPILS TO HIGH SCHOOLS, SEPTEMBER 2004

The Committee considered the outcome of the newly introduced admission arrangements for high schools under which parents were entitled to express three preferences for admission of their children into Year 7.

The Director of Education reported that the new admission arrangements had worked well with a high degree of parent satisfaction and that the number of admission appeals was down on previous years. He also reported that the numbers on school waiting lists had reduced since the report and he updated the Committee with the current numbers.

The Director further reported that lessons learned from the introduction of the new arrangements for secondary school admissions would be kept in mind when implementing equivalent co-ordinated admission arrangements for primary schools due to be implemented for the September 2005 intake.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

69. RACE RELATIONS ACT 2000 - MONITORING OF INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS

The Committee considered the Council's implementation of the requirement to monitor all incidents of racial harassment in the County's maintained schools.

The Manager of Pupil, School and Parent Support reported that, with advice and support from the Council's Race Equality Officer and relevant local groups, the

Education Directorate had given considerable attention to strategies for reducing the possibility that racist attitudes and incidents would occur within schools. A line graph appended to the report indicated the relatively small, though growing, number of pupils in Herefordshire who had minority ethnic origins. It was emphasised that the rise in the number of incidents reported was judged not to be a sign of an increasing number of incidents, but rather a greater recognition of the importance of reporting. Appendix 1 to the report outlined the key features of the Herefordshire Educational Services Strategy for preventing (and dealing with) racial intolerance and harassing behaviour. The report described the monitoring of racist incidents and the range of responses of intervention.

The Committee acknowledged that the County was not rich in cultural diversity. Pupils may therefore have a limited work and social experience of the diversity they would meet in other parts of the Country. The Director of Education reported that the Directorate were assisting schools to expand the cultural knowledge of pupils and he cited a number of examples.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

70. MONITORING OF CAPITAL AND REVENUE EXPENDITURE

The Committee received a report on revenue and capital expenditure up to 31st March, 2004.

The report indicated that a higher than anticipated underspend on the Revenue Budget, in the region of £300,000 was being anticipated and this was further described in the report, and outlined in Appendix 1.

Expenditure on Education capital projects was summarised at Appendix 2 to the report. The report highlighted that overall, the capital programme had been delivered within budget, with neither significant over or under spend; that one of the largest items of expenditure related to the acquisition of the new site for the replacement of Whitecross School and that there were 15 projects in design or at construction. This meant a commitment to future spending of £3.9m had been made. 11 projects over £100,000 had been completed within the financial year. In accordance with this Committee's decision in January 2004 (minute 57 refers), the Chairman had visited 6 of these major projects

Since publication of the report the Chairman had also visited the capital improvement scheme at St Martins Primary School, aspects of which he had commented on to the Director of Education. The new early years provision based on the site of Hunderton infant and junior schools was working well. The benefits for staff and pupils, following improvements to two laboratories at The Minster College, Leominster were evident. However, urgent improvements, of which the Cabinet Member (Education) was aware, were needed to the boy's toilets.

The Director of Education reported that many of the school improvement schemes required major funding. These had been included in Herefordshire's 'rural' bid, which had been unsuccessful, under the government initiative 'Building Schools for the Future'. The Cabinet Member (Education) reported that despite the government's intention to allocate one funding allocation to a 'rural' bid, all the first round bids had been allocated to urban areas, an issue he had taken up through the LGA.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

71. SCHOOL TRANSPORT REVIEW - INTERIM REPORT

The Committee were informed about the work of the School Transport Review Group.

The Chairman of the Review Group (Councillor B.F. Ashton) reported that the Group had considered the Council's discretionary policies that currently applied. Further opinion was being sought on areas relating to: Denominational Transport, post 16 transport, transport provision for under 5s and transport for children with SEN. A further report would be made to a future meeting.

During debate on Denominational Transport the Committee noted a comment that should this be withdrawn from denominational schools then this would be seen as a major change and a significant number of pupils might be prevented from attending their chosen school. It was confirmed that 'Transport for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)' related to investigating the better organisation of transport use.

In the course of further debate the Chairman confirmed that various transport-related schemes such as the yellow bus scheme, would be taken into consideration in the review.

In reply to concerns, the Director of Education reported that any major changes to education transport policy would require extensive prior consultation with schools, parents and the public.

RESOLVED: That the report on the work of the School Transport Review Group be noted

72. SURE START (WHOLE COUNTY) - 2 YEAR PLAN

The Committee were informed about the two-year action plan for early years provision and the development of early years services in the County.

The Director of Education reported that the DfES had relaunched all early years work under the general title of Sure Start. Instead of having to develop Early Years Strategy Plans, LEAs were now expected to have a Sure Start Plan covering the whole of their area for the 2-year period 2004-06. This Plan, a copy of which was available to Members on request, would need to be approved and monitored by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). Within the Plan, 5 major goals had been identified within which actions had been grouped under a number of sub-headings. Delivery of the plan was also likely to be influenced by legislation expected to arise from the Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters'.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

73. EARLY YEARS EDUCATION - "COMMUNICATION MATTERS"

The Committee were informed of the imminent publication of a new Herefordshire training video, *Communication Matters*, on early years education.

The Director of Education reported that the training video had now been completed for use by Early Years Groups, LEA nurseries and school reception classes. The response to previews had been very encouraging. The training video would be launched, with an accompanying training manual, during the summer term and would be shown before the next Early Years and Child Care Partnership meeting,

and members of the Committee were invited to the viewing.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.12 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

POLICY ON 14-19 EDUCATION**Report By: Head of Inspection, Advice and School
Performance Service****Wards Affected**

Countywide

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee about the key issues surrounding 14-19 phase of education both locally and nationally.

Financial Implications

2. Funding for Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) is the responsibility of the Local Education Authority (LEA). Schools use their delegated funding to make provision for their Key Stage 4 pupils under the current LMS arrangements. Funding for all Post 16 pupils (16-19 year olds) is the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This impacts directly on the four High Schools with sixth forms. All known costs for 2004-2005 are covered by the respective LEA and LSC budgets.

Report

3. The national situation regarding 14-19 education is complex and is difficult to summarise briefly. In essence, the government is seeking to increase the numbers of pupils staying in education and training Post -16, provide a wider range of choice of courses to young people, target the skills gaps and broaden the curriculum at Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) with particular emphasis on preparation for the world of work in the future.
4. There are many players and providers in the 14-19 phase of education.

These include:

High Schools
Special Schools
Pupil Referral Units
Sixth Form Colleges
Colleges of further education
Work based learning providers
Private and voluntary organisations
Local Education Authorities
Learning and Skills Councils
The Connexions Service

5. Over the last few years National Government has initiated many changes in the 14-19 phase of education including the setting-up of the Connexions Service and the LSC at a national and regional level. LEA Ofsted Inspections now include a judgement on how 14-19 education is supported. In addition, Ofsted will also be conducting 14-19 Area-Wide Inspections in every LSC region so it is safe to assume that in 2004/2005 14-19 provision in Herefordshire will be keenly scrutinised as part of two different but related inspection processes.
6. The Learning and Skills Council is also charged with undertaking a Strategic Area Review (StAR) of Post 16 arrangements in consultation with Local Education Authorities, schools, colleges, parents, employers and other stakeholders.
7. In the longer term the Government's response to the "Tomlinson Report" (the Government's 14-19 Working Group due to report in Autumn 2004) is likely to have a profound impact on 14-19 education provision, particularly with the proposed introduction of a single diploma framework is suggested for all pupils at Entry, Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced levels, and curriculum provision offered through collaborative arrangements.
8. The situation locally in Herefordshire is both straightforward and complex. At Key Stage 3 (14 year olds), GCSE (16 year olds) and at 'A' Level Herefordshire pupils perform well above the national average. Whilst improvement at these benchmarks is always possible and should be strived for, more progress, for instance needs to be made in:
 - Improving staying on rates in education Post 16
 - Improving the quality and range of vocational education at Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) and Post 16
 - Bridging the skills gaps between what the education system produces and what employers and the growth areas of the local and national economy require
 - Giving pupils' more choice in terms of locally provided education and training
 - Addressing the inclusion, choice and diversity agenda for all pupils.
9. In October 2003 a 14-19 Conference was held at the Leadership Trust in Ross-on-Wye which brought together, under the auspices of the LSC, all the different local institutions and organisations involved in the 14-19 phase of education. This was a successful conference that tended to confirm that 14-19 Education in Herefordshire was characterized by energetic activity, some good quality provision and strong partnership working. What was missing was an overall 14-19 policy that brought these activities together into a coherent strategy to plan future provision.
10. Following the Conference, the various partner organisations including the LEA and LSC have been working closely together on a number of linked activities designed to bring greater coherence to provision within the County. These actions and activities are briefly outlined in the following paragraphs.
11. A Consultant (funded by the LSC) has been engaged to draft a "Strategic Framework for the Implementation of the 14-19 Agenda in Herefordshire". Working directly to a working group of representatives from across the County, the document is currently going through the final drafting stages and should be available by July.

12. The LSC and LEA have jointly funded a post for two years for a 14-19 Strategy Manager. The post has been offered to the successful candidate who should begin work within the next two months.
13. The Herefordshire Learning Partnership has been established, chaired by the Principal of the Herefordshire College of Technology (HCT). This partnership board covers all phases of education (from 0-80 plus) and is charged with taking a strategic overview and rationalising of many different groups and committees operating across the County.
14. Amongst its many roles and responsibilities it will,
 - Build and oversee a strategic framework for the delivery of the Learning Ambition of the Herefordshire Plan.
 - Act as the Strategic Area Review Steering Group for Herefordshire
15. The Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) for 14-16 year olds continues into its second year. Funded by the LSC, managed by the Marches Consortium and involving the secondary schools and the Education Directorate, the IFP is a front-line initiative, **now in its second year of operation**. It is widening the curriculum opportunities available to pupils at Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) through collaboration between schools colleges and WBLP (Work Based Learning Providers). The Herefordshire project was recently inspected by Ofsted as part of a national survey.
16. Local feedback is very encouraging with Ofsted praising many aspects of the programme, including leadership, course provision and the value pupils' place on having a more flexible curriculum. Ofsted also identified a single barrier to further progress namely where schools (only too aware of the league tables based upon 5A*-C grades at GCSE) pay lip-service to the philosophy of vocational education. Other issues, such as a common timetable in a rural authority, remain a continuing challenge to overcome.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT The Committee consider the report and comment on the matters raised.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS DURING EDUCATIONAL VISITS

**Report By: OUTDOOR EDUCATION ADVISER AND
SCHOOLS' HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER**

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

1. To report on the action taken to ensure the safety of pupils and young people engaged in off-site activities and visits.

Financial Implications

2. The costs of the advisory service to schools are met from within the budgets for Education and the Youth Services.

Report

Information available

3. Herefordshire Council provides written guidance, including policy and good practice, for all LEA schools involved in off-site trips and activities. The guidance was previously revised in 2001.
4. In August 2003, a comprehensive review of the guidance took place in discussions involving schools, the Community Youth Service, Duke of Edinburgh Award Leaders and Council officers. The review took into account guidance issued by the Department of Education and Skills in 2002. This updated guidance on "Off-Site Activities and Visits" was published in March 2004 and distributed to all LEA schools, the Youth Service and Duke of Edinburgh Awards groups. The document will be further reviewed in October 2004.
5. An advisory service is available to schools, the Youth Service and Duke of Edinburgh Awards group via the Outdoor Education Adviser and the Schools' Health and Safety Officer.

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
Giles Smith, Outdoor Education Adviser, on 01432 383027 or
Martin Danks, Schools' Health and Safety Officer on (01432) 260860

The Advisory Service

6. In order to comply with new national guidance, an advisory service is provided to schools, the Youth Service and Duke of Edinburgh Award leaders by an Outdoor Education Adviser (jointly appointed and funded by Education and Youth Services) and the Schools' Health and Safety Officer. One of the advisory services duties is to monitor visits, as the national guidance requires, by scrutinising the notifications that schools, youth centres and Duke of Edinburgh award leaders are required to provide before visits take place. The advisory service is also available to teachers and Education Visits Co-ordinators (EVCs) which all schools and youth organisations must appoint, in a variety of ways –
 - in person – the OEA or the SHSO will arrange a meeting or, on occasions, visit as an observer
 - by telephone, email, post or fax
 - electronically - guidance documents and forms are available on a CD-Rom, or can be downloaded from the Education website or the Intranet
 - by courses – advice and support is provided in the form of specialised training courses
7. The advisory service is also looking at ways to reduce the amount of paperwork required for a trip to take place. Improvements already achieved includes –
 - reducing the types of off-site visits that require notification – further details are provided at Appendix 2
 - reducing the notification paperwork required for visits and activities
 - simplifying risk assessment
8. Further planned developments include:
 - generic risk assessments for a range of popular off-site visits, to assist party leaders organising such visits.
 - electronic notification of off-site trips, though the forms requiring a signature still need to be sent on paper until all schools and youth centres have e-pads.

Training

9. In 2003, the DfES and the Outdoor Education Adviser's Panel (OEAP) launched a national programme of training for Educational Visit Coordinators (EVC). This was in response to DfES recommendations, made in 2001, that all schools should have an EVC whose role is *"to be involved in the planning and management of educational visits including adventure activities led by school staff"*.

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
Giles Smith, Outdoor Education Adviser, on 01432 383027 or
Martin Danks, Schools' Health and Safety Officer on (01432) 260860

10. The Outdoor Education Adviser and the Schools' Health and Safety Officer attended a "Training the Trainers" course before delivering seven one-day training courses for organisations running off-site visits, including all LEA schools and the statutory Youth Service. The courses ran from October 2003 to April 2004. Appendix 1 to this report outlines the course content. All training costs were covered by a DfES Standards Fund grant of £15,000 given to each LEA to pay for the cost of the training, including 50% of supply cover costs for teachers who attended.
11. There are currently 100 registered EVCs in LEA schools. All high schools, special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) have a registered EVC. There are 7 primary schools without an EVC and the designation will fall to the headteacher. They will be specifically invited to Group Leader training in the Autumn 2004.
12. More specific training has also been offered to teachers at cost price, including:
 - basic Expedition Leader Award (for staff taking groups out on day walks/overnight expeditions)
 - 6-hour first aid course (for staff running non-adventurous off-site activities)
 - 16-hour Outdoor First Aid course (for staff running adventurous activities)
13. Further training is also being developed to meet the needs of schools and the youth service. The main drive is to provide training for group leaders (existing and new) in organising, running and evaluating off-site visits.
14. Other training options currently being explored include:
 - further risk assessment workshops
 - specialist training for particular types of visits (e.g. ski trips, exchange visits, overseas expeditions)
 - adventure activities: National Governing Body qualifications (the industry standard for that individual activity, e.g. canoeing, sailing, hill walking)

Monitoring Off-Site Activities and Visits

15. Off-site visits are currently monitored through a system of approval and notification outlined in Appendix 2. In summary, off-site visits require the approval of the Head Teacher or Youth Services Manager. Notification is required if the visit is –
 1. 50 miles or more from a school; or
 2. over 8 hours in duration; or
 3. involves an overnight stay or outdoor adventurous activities; or
 4. overseas.

16. Such notification requires details of the trip and any relevant risk assessments. Information is entered onto a database and weekly updates are sent to the Education Management Team, Outdoor Education Adviser, Schools' Health and Safety Officer and the Emergency Planning Unit.
17. The next development for monitoring off-site visits is for the advisory team to observe trips with the following objectives –
 1. provide feedback to the party leader and supervisors
 2. provide feedback to the EVC and Head Teacher
 3. support the development of new teachers, inexperienced party leaders/teachers, NQTs
 4. disseminate good practice across all schools

This form of monitoring has already taken place in both primary and secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee consider this report and identify any areas of concern.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
Giles Smith, Outdoor Education Adviser, on 01432 383027 or
Martin Danks, Schools' Health and Safety Officer on (01432) 260860

EVC AND GROUP LEADER TRAINING CONTENT AND PROGRAMME

1. COURSE FOR EDUCATIONAL VISIT CO-ORDINATORS (EVCs)

Course Objectives

- To explore the purpose and value of educational offsite visits and to ensure safe practice
- To clarify roles and responsibilities with regards to offsite visits
- To discuss the functions of an EVC

Course Outcomes

- Educational off-site visits are run safely
- EVCs know the legal context in which they work
- EVCs know what is expected of them

Course Programme:

- Session 1 Welcome: Setting the Scene
- Session 2 The Purpose and Value of Educational Visits
- Session 3 Roles and Responsibilities
- Session 4 Competence, Leadership and Supervision
- Session 5 Risk Assessment and Risk Management (1)
- Session 5 Risk Assessment and Risk Management (2)
- Session 6 What the EVC Needs to Know / What the EVC Needs to Do

Numbers of EVCs receiving training

School / Organisation	Trained EVC	Designated EVC	No EVC
Primary Schools	74	3	7
Secondary Schools	13	1	0
Special schools/PRUs	7	0	0
Statutory Youth Service	2	0	0
Other organisations – (Connexions, IASPS, 2EXCEL, Voluntary Youth Service, Herefordshire Outdoor Trust)	7	-	-

2. COURSE FOR GROUP LEADERS

Course Objectives

- To provide support and training for existing and new group leaders
- To promote the use of the revised guidance document for off-site activities and visits
- Support the work of newly established Educational Visits Coordinators

Course Outcomes

- Safe, well run off-site visits
- Group leaders know the legal context in which they work
- Trained group leaders in LEA schools and the Youth Service

Proposed Course Programme:

Session 1	Introductions and terminology
Session 2	Value and purpose of trips
Session 3	Planning an off-site activity/visit
Session 4	Risk assessment process
Session 5	Managing and evaluating off-site visits
Session 6	Clarification of approval and notification procedures

CATEGORIES AND NOTIFICATION FOR OFF-SITE VISITS

Cat.	Examples of programmes	Approval/Notification Procedure
A	<p>Local visits, journeys and studies that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 8 hours in duration • Less than 50 miles from base <p>E.g. farm visits, visits to sites of historic, commercial or cultural interest, some fieldwork, sport and leisure centre visits, sports fixtures, journeys to a museum or theatre, local parks and churches,</p>	<p>Approval: Head and/or Governors (Form OV5 or own form plus risk assessments)</p> <p>Notification to LEA: Not required</p>
B	<p>Visits involving higher profile activities or a higher risk due to the duration of the trip or the distance away from base, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor and adventurous activities • Overnight stays • Any off-site visit that is more than 8 hours in duration • Any off-site visit that takes place more than 50 miles from base 	<p>Approval: Head and/or Governors (Form OV5 plus risk assessments)</p> <p>For D of E independent groups: The Awards Officer (Form OV5 plus risk assessments)</p> <p>Notification: LEA 10 days before trip (Form OV5 plus risk assessments)</p>
C	<p>Visits with an increased risk due to distance away from base or where there is significant concern about health, safety or welfare, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All visits abroad 	<p>Approval: Head and/or Governors (Form OV5 plus risk assessments)</p> <p>Notification: LEA at planning stage (No Form required)</p> <p>LEA 10 days before trip (Form OV5 plus risk assessments)</p>

THE STANDARD SCHOOL YEAR PROPOSAL FOR 2005/2006

Report By: **SCHOOL SERVICES MANAGER**

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

1. To seek the Committees views on proposals for the standard school year for 2005/2006.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Report

3. The Local Government Association (LGA) continues to propose standardising the school year across LEA boundaries in England.
4. The LGA's most recent document issued in March 2004 (Appendix One) attaches a letter from the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Charles Clark MP, to The Cabinet Member (Education) Councillor Rule, in his capacity on the LGA, stating that he was attracted to the arguments in favour of standardising the length of school terms. The LGA has continued to have meetings, especially with the NASUWT, and have agreed a number of basic principles. The most recent meeting, held on 24th May 2004, has decided the following –
 - The school year to begin on a September date as near as possible to 1st September;
 - Equalise teaching and learning blocks across half terms (roughly 2 x 7 weeks and 4 x 6 weeks);
 - Establish a 2-week Spring break in early April irrespective of the incidence of the Easter bank holiday;
 - Maintain a summer holiday of at least 6 weeks except for those LEAs that customarily determine a period of less than 6 weeks.
 - Identify annually designated periods, including the summer holiday, during which LEAs and Heads are recommended not to arrange training days.
5. The Committee has been advised previously of the commitment within the West Midlands to produce term dates that will be uniform across the region. On the 16th January 2004, a group of West Midlands Regional Education Officers met in

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
Mark Chamberlain, School Services Manager on (01432) 260923

Worcester to discuss the LGA proposals for 2005/6. The group decided the following—

- The 195-day programme be retained by those LEAs who have previously adopted that model. It was noted that Herefordshire will continue with its 190 day programme because of the savings on 'Home to School Transport'
 - Half-term breaks should be kept to 5 days
 - More-even terms were preferable, where possible
 - The Easter break be 'fixed' along the lines of the LGA model, although it was noted that some union reservations could be anticipated
 - Having a 2 or 3 day week to end or start a term was not a major issue
 - The group should meet again, if required, to report progress on agreeing dates with Headteachers and Unions
 - Each LEA should circulate to all other authorities in the group, the options they are considering
6. On 22nd January 2004, the School Services Manager met with the local teacher unions and submitted the LGA package that had been agreed the previous week in Worcester. The Unions were not satisfied with the proposal, especially the suggestion that schools should return on the Tuesday following the Easter Monday holiday. The School Services Manager agreed to produce 3 further options and seek the views of all schools and the Diocesan Authorities. The 4 options attached as Appendix Two were distributed on 28th January with a closing date of 27th February.
 7. The results of the survey gave a clear signal that Version 'C' was the preferred option, with Version 'B' the next most acceptable timetable.
 8. During the same period, which has continued up to the present date, negotiations have continued across the region with many Councils receiving rejections of the LGA proposal about the return date after the Easter break. The following Council's appear to have agreed a 7th to 24th April holiday break - Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Stoke, Birmingham, Walsall, Dudley, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire and Sandwell. It is believed that Worcestershire will make a decision by mid-June and will clearly be moving towards the 7th to 24th April date because of its neighbours.
 9. On the 28th April, the School Services Manager attended a meeting of the Herefordshire Association of Secondary Headteachers and submitted details of the consultation proposals. The Headteachers decided to support the Version 'C' timetable.
 10. On the 20th May, the teacher unions were again consulted and were given information about the results of the 4 options, together with information on the known position in each of the Council's within the West Midlands. The unions were unanimous in proposing that the Education Scrutiny Committee accept Version 'C' school year dates for 2005/2006.

RECOMMENDATION

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
Mark Chamberlain, School Services Manager on (01432) 260923

THAT the Committee consider the action taken to date and advise on whether or not the term dates for 2005/2006 should be approved, as now proposed under Version 'C' in Appendix 2.

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
Mark Chamberlain, School Services Manager on (01432) 260923



Local Government Association

the standard school year

a national framework introducing the 'six-term year'



The standard school year: a national framework introducing the 'six-term year'

As local education authorities (LEAs) enter the next round of decision-making for setting term and holiday dates for 2005-06, the Local Government Association (LGA) has produced this 'e-package' of information to explain its proposals for standardising the school year across LEA boundaries in England. The LGA has been working with the network of member authorities for some four years now and together we have found very high levels of support for our recommendations among a significant majority of stakeholder groups. We firmly believe that these proposals will assist schools and LEAs in their joint endeavours to raise standards and boost levels of attainment, as well as introducing more consistency and predictability for parents and carers to plan family time.

While recognising that the most effective way of delivering on this important agenda is for LEAs to work together collaboratively, we are also pleased to have received public support for our work from Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, and David Miliband, Minister of State for School Standards.

The 'e-pack' contains:

- a series of frequently asked questions (FAQs) explaining the background and reasoning behind the proposals;
- a calendar proposed for introduction in 2005-06 agreed by the LGA Standing Committee on the School Year;
- draft calendars for 2006-07 and 2007-08; and
- a copy of the Secretary of State's letter to the LGA expressing his support for the proposals alongside other positive and helpful comments from the DfES.

We should be grateful if you and your network neighbours would ensure this work is now given very serious consideration for implementation in 2005-06. We should also be pleased if you could ensure the information reaches your schools and their governing bodies. Many thanks.

If you need any further information please visit our website www.lga.gov.uk or contact info@lga.gov.uk

The standard school year - some frequently asked questions

What are the standard school year proposals?

These proposals state that in each LEA in England, the school year should consistently and predictably be divided into six blocks of roughly even length which are more evenly distributed throughout the year: two, approximately seven-week learning blocks before Christmas followed by four, approximately six-week blocks afterwards. The spring break is fixed and taken around the first two weeks of April irrespective of the timing of Easter. The long summer break remains.

What is wrong with the present arrangements?

The current pattern of the school year was established over a century ago and has long been considered inappropriate to learning in the 21st century. There are no consistent arrangements in England - different summer holidays, Easter holidays, half terms and professional development days are set by different LEAs and schools. The length of the spring and summer terms are determined by the timing of Easter, which can fall anywhere between 22 March and 25 May. Terms of uneven length disrupt curriculum planning and delivery. Pupils deserve a consistent and predictable framework within which the national curriculum can be properly delivered and assessed. Because of varied holiday patterns parents increasingly take their children out of school on holiday in term time.

The City Technology Colleges which started from scratch some twelve years ago, established standardised terms of consistent length and attribute much of their improved achievement to this factor.

Where did the proposals come from?

Aware of the disruption the inconsistencies were causing, a number of LEAs went out to consultation during the 1990s and received the identical response that because so many pupils move across LEA boundaries to go to school, only a national scheme would command assent. The LGA, as the national representative body, decided to establish an Independent Commission to examine all the issues in depth. The Commission reported in September 2000 and recommended a framework which has subsequently been refined into the proposals as they are now, in response to feedback received through intensive national and local consultations.

Are there any *radical* changes?

Yes, two. The period in the run-up to Christmas was identified as showing marked increases in the signs of stress including increased rates of sickness (among teachers and pupils) and exclusions. To relieve this stress, an extended holiday in October is proposed. Also, when Easter occurs particularly early in March or particularly late in April/May, time available for the teaching period between half term and the Easter holidays becomes either very short or unduly long. It is recommended that when this happens Good Friday and Easter Monday (which remain holidays) take place during term time to achieve consistently even term lengths. Our research has shown that the Easter festival will stand outside the spring break two years in every ten-year period.

Why not a more radical five-term year?

Seven City Technology Colleges and two foundation schools in England have adopted a five-term year and will keep it. This framework provides for five, eight-week terms with two-week breaks in between except in the summer where the break is four weeks. Many commentators have confused this with the standard

school year proposals. The Commission decided that a five-term year would be unlikely to command wide-scale support among LEAs, schools and teachers; that it would probably require the government to introduce legislation; that it would not bring benefits to compensate for the disruption it involved; and that a model based on six teaching, learning and assessment blocks would achieve the same benefits with minimal disruption.

What are the advantages to parents?

Parents, unlike teachers and schools, have not been consulted over the setting of school terms and holidays in the past. The LGA and the LEA network have consulted parents in depth over the past three years. The results confirm that standardisation, consistency and openness about school terms and holidays makes the planning of holidays and child care easier, and helps to reduce the incidence of parents removing their children from school during term time.

What are the advantages to teachers?

Curriculum planning will be smoother and easier with consistent term lengths from year to year. Teachers who are also parents will get the same benefits as other parents. Teachers say very young pupils in particular cannot cope with very long terms and behaviour management becomes much more difficult.

What do young people think of the recommendations?

The views of young people have been sought at LEA level through local consultations and at national level with the help of the UK Youth Parliament. The majority have come out in favour of the recommendations. Many respondents highlighted frustrations when teachers, at the end of short spring terms, announce that pupils will have to cover the rest of the syllabus on their own during the holidays in order to go into the public exam season fully prepared.

Are there any other advantages?

Yes. The LGA believes that with only slight modification, the standard school year framework could help facilitate the introduction of post-qualification admission to higher education (PQA). The universities have been asked by DfES to study a number of 'access' issues to higher education, including PQA, under which pupils would apply to higher education with their actual A-level grades. This may involve moving public examinations slightly earlier in the year to make this possible, when hay fever sufferers would also benefit from not having to sit examinations at the height of the hay fever season. If examinations were moved earlier, the LGA would re-examine the **positioning (not the length)** of the summer holiday and could well recommend an earlier end to 'Term 6' and earlier start to 'Term 1' of the following year. This is unlikely to happen in the near future.

Won't the sixth 'term' be wasted?

In 'Term 6' time will be found amongst other things, for facilitating better transition and maintaining motivation and progress between different phases of education, especially in the transition between primary and secondary schools. It could also be used for improved careers advice on vocational options at age 14 and after GCSE for improved transfer to colleges and sixth forms. A number of secondary schools are already successful in using this period after assessment or public examinations, as the beginning of a new school year.

Why isn't the DfES making these proposals?

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 makes it clear that it is the job of LEAs and foundation, voluntary-aided and independent schools to set school term and holiday dates. The LGA has no wish to see that position altered and the DfES has made it clear no change to the legislation is in the offing. However, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, **Charles Clarke** wrote to us in February 2004 expressing his personal support for our work and said that he sees much positive merit in the proposals. He went on to repeat that support in the media.

Do LEAs and schools have to stick to these recommendations?

No. LEAs, together with foundation, voluntary-aided and independent schools remain free to set whatever pattern of terms and holidays they wish. However, consultations show a widespread demand for more standardised terms and a willingness to follow the recommendations. One sticking point to date has been how to inspire confidence in the LEA network so that it can move ahead in a co-ordinated fashion when individual LEA consultation and decision-making timetables are at variance. There are, however, an increasing number of authorities acting together as regional or 'extra'-regional groupings and we are hopeful that this trend will continue.

Why has the LGA recommended calendars based on the 190 pupil days and not the 195 teacher days?

Our research into the use and timing of teacher INSET days has shown a wide variety of practice in different schools and LEAs. Most commonly, it appears that the LEA 'determines' 190 pupil days and either 1 or 2 CPD days (the day before the beginning of the school year and the day after the New Year bank holiday) leaving either school governing bodies or more often heads to determine the other CPD days - which are sometimes described in 'hours' to enable flexible use outside the pupil day. The Secondary Heads Association has told us that 'disaggregation' into hours is found to be beneficial to both whole-school improvement planning and to individual teachers who are able to undertake training tailored to personal development needs.

The LGA believes that while school years need to be determined at least two years in advance, it is not desirable or appropriate that INSET/CPD is determined so far in advance. We also believe it sits better with the requirement placed upon head-teachers to '*specify teachers' duties and where and when these are to take place*' (para 64.3 of the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document).

The DfES is conducting a review of INSET which is scheduled to report in summer 2004. Taking all of these factors into account, we believe it more appropriate to standardise around the pupil learning year.

Does the Independent Commission still meet?

No. The Independent Commission was stood down in the summer of 2003. In its place we established the LGA Standing Committee on the School Year with much wider, more inclusive membership. A full list of the organisations represented on the Standing Committee is available on our website (www.lga.gov.uk/schoolyear). The Standing Committee meets annually in September and October to agree recommended standard school year term dates for two years ahead.

When will the changes to the school year take place?

The LGA Standing Committee on the School Year has made recommendations for term dates in 2005-06 and LEAs are being urged to plan for implementation of these proposals. A small number of authorities, including a group in the south-west of England, are trialling a slightly modified version of the proposals in 2004-05. The LGA has commissioned some research to evaluate the implementation in those areas.

What do religious groups think of the proposals?

The current school year does not cater for non-Christian festivals and few objections have been received from non-Christian religious leaders. The LGA has consulted extensively with Church of England and Roman Catholic representatives and found that most religious leaders involved in education are supportive of the proposals.

What does the tourism industry think?

The LGA has always put pupils and their learning needs at the centre of the proposals, and took particular note of the views of parents and teachers. On that basis, it also consulted the tourism industries. Most of them have been positive about the proposals. Tourism representatives have long argued that a fixed spring holiday will provide a regular and consistent start to the season and are pleased that the LGA is recommending the long summer holiday remains a part of the new structure. The LGA is also recommending an extended October break that will provide opportunities for tourism businesses (especially in rural areas) to capitalise on an extended season.

What about the idea of staggering holidays regionally and nationally?

The LGA believes any initiative of this sort is for the government and/or the English regions to initiate. The Welsh authorities have indicated they may support the English pattern. Scotland has its own arrangements.

Who has the LGA consulted about the recommendations?

We approached over 3,000 organisations and interested parties from the following groups - students, teachers, parents, LEAs, head teachers, tourism representatives, institutions of higher education, religious leaders of all creeds, the Department for Education and Skills, one-parent families, charities, community groups, youth workers, ministers, trade unions, and examining boards. Over 2,700 responses were received. Further consultation took place at LEA-level. Responses have shown very high levels of support for the proposals.

What happens in other countries?

In most European countries, governments or regions fix school terms and holidays.

Proposed calendar for 2005-06

2005-06	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Bank holiday Term time
July	18	19	20	21	22	
	25	26	27	28	29	
August	01	02	03	04	05	
	08	09	10	11	12	
	15	16	17	18	19	
Aug/Sep	22	23	24	25	26	
	29	30	31	01	02	
Sep	05	06	07	08	09	
	12	13	14	15	16	
	19	20	21	22	23	
	26	27	28	29	30	
Oct	03	04	05	06	07	
	10	11	12	13	14	
	17	18	19	20	21	
Oct/Nov	24	25	26	27	28	
	31	01	02	03	04	
Nov/Dec	07	08	09	10	11	
	14	15	16	17	18	
	21	22	23	24	25	
	28	29	30	01	02	
	05	06	07	08	09	
Jan	12	13	14	15	16	
	19	20	21	22	23	
	26	27	28	29	30	
	02	03	04	05	06	
Jan/Feb	9	10	11	12	13	
	16	17	18	19	20	
	23	24	25	26	27	
Feb/Mar	30	31	01	02	03	
	06	07	08	09	10	
	13	14	15	16	17	
	20	21	22	23	24	
April	27	28	29	30	31	
	03	04	05	06	07	
May	10	11	12	13	14	
	17	18	19	20	21	
	24	25	26	27	28	
	01	02	03	04	05	
	08	09	10	11	12	
May/June	15	16	17	18	19	
	22	23	24	25	26	
July	29	30	31	01	02	
	05	06	07	08	09	
	12	13	14	15	16	
	19	20	21	22	23	
Aug/Sept	26	27	28	29	30	
	03	04	05	06	07	
	10	11	12	13	14	
Sept	17	18	19	20	21	
	24	25	26	27	28	
	31	01	02	03	04	
	07	08	09	10	11	
	14	15	16	17	18	
Sept	21	22	23	24	25	
	28	29	30	31	01	
	04	05	06	07	08	

Draft calendar for 2006-07

2006-07	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Bank holiday Term time
July	17	18	19	20	21	
	24	25	26	27	28	
August	31	01	02	03	04	
	07	08	09	10	11	
	14	15	16	17	18	
	21	22	23	24	25	
Aug/Sep	28	29	30	31	01	
Sep	04	05	06	07	08	
	11	12	13	14	15	
	18	19	20	21	22	
	25	26	27	28	29	
	02	03	04	05	06	
Oct	09	10	11	12	13	
	16	17	18	19	20	
	23	24	25	26	27	
Oct/Nov	30	31	01	02	03	
	06	07	08	09	10	
	13	14	15	16	17	
	20	21	22	23	24	
Nov/Dec	27	28	29	30	01	
	04	05	06	07	08	
	11	12	13	14	15	
	18	19	20	21	22	
	25	26	27	28	29	
Jan	01	02	03	04	05	
	08	09	10	11	12	
	15	16	17	18	19	
	22	23	24	25	26	
Jan/Feb	29	30	31	01	02	
	05	06	07	08	09	
	12	13	14	15	16	
Feb/Mar	19	20	21	22	23	
	26	27	28	01	02	
	05	06	07	08	09	
	12	13	14	15	16	
	19	20	21	22	23	
	26	27	28	29	30	
April	02	03	04	05	06	
	09	10	11	12	13	
	16	17	18	19	20	
May	23	24	25	26	27	
	30	01	02	03	04	
	07	08	09	10	11	
	14	15	16	17	18	
May/June	21	22	23	24	25	
	28	29	30	31	01	
	04	05	06	07	08	
	11	12	13	14	15	
	18	19	20	21	22	
July	25	26	27	28	29	
	02	03	04	05	06	
	09	10	11	12	13	
	16	17	18	19	20	
Aug/Sept	23	24	25	26	27	
	30	31	01	02	03	
	06	07	08	09	10	
	13	14	15	16	17	
	20	21	22	23	24	
	27	28	29	30	31	
Sept	03	04	05	06	07	

Draft calendar for 2007-08

2007-08	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Bank holiday Term time
July	16	17	18	19	20	
	23	24	25	26	27	
August	30	31	01	02	03	
	06	07	08	09	10	
	13	14	15	16	17	
	20	21	22	23	24	
Aug/Sep	27	28	29	30	31	
Sep	03	04	05	06	07	
	10	11	12	13	14	
	17	18	19	20	21	
	24	25	26	27	28	
Oct	01	02	03	04	05	
	08	09	10	11	12	
	15	16	17	18	19	
Oct/Nov	22	23	24	25	26	
	29	30	31	01	02	
	05	06	07	08	09	
	12	13	14	15	16	
Nov/Dec	19	20	21	22	23	
	26	27	28	29	30	
	03	04	05	06	07	
	10	11	12	13	14	
	17	18	19	20	21	
Jan	24	25	26	27	28	
	31	01	02	03	04	
	07	08	09	10	11	
Jan/Feb	14	15	16	17	18	
	21	22	23	24	25	
	28	29	30	31	01	
Feb/Mar	04	05	06	07	08	
	11	12	13	14	15	
	18	19	20	21	22	
	25	26	27	28	29	
	03	04	05	06	07	
April	10	11	12	13	14	
	17	18	19	20	21	
	24	25	26	27	28	
	31	01	02	03	04	
	07	08	09	10	11	
May	14	15	16	17	18	
	21	22	23	24	25	
	28	29	30	01	02	
	05	06	07	08	09	
	12	13	14	15	16	
May/June	19	20	21	22	23	
	26	27	28	29	30	
	02	03	04	05	06	
	09	10	11	12	13	
July	16	17	18	19	20	
	23	24	25	26	27	
	30	01	02	03	04	
	07	08	09	10	11	
Aug/Sept	14	15	16	17	18	
	21	22	23	24	25	
	28	29	30	31	01	
	04	05	06	07	08	
	11	12	13	14	15	
Sept	18	19	20	21	22	
	25	26	27	28	29	
	01	02	03	04	05	



Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 0012345 dfes.ministers@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP

Councillor Don Rule
Local Government Association
Local Government House
Great Smith Street
LONDON SW1P 3HZ

Your Ref: E30/17a

February 2004

Thank you for your letter of 23 January about the LGA's proposals for a standard school year based on six terms of roughly equal length.

I am personally attracted to the arguments in favour of standardising the length of school terms, and the proposals that have been developed by LGA, and your Commission on the School Year chaired by Chris Price. I therefore very much welcome the work that the LGA has carried out and the debate you have stimulated on this important issue. I am grateful to you for keeping me in touch with progress.

We are agreed that there is no case for changing the current legal position whereby school term and holiday dates are decided locally, and there are of course practical issues that the LGA and its member authorities will need to address if they are moving in this direction, and to build consensus for change. For our part however we see positive merit in the proposals, and would want to lend our support to the debate. I hope that the continuing discussions among your members will take the debate forward, and I should be grateful if you could keep me in touch with progress.

Perhaps I could comment on two of the specific issues you raised. First, much time is lost to families taking holidays in term time and because of sickness, it would be interesting to learn more of the positive impact on school attendance that a six term year might bring. I was also interested to hear of the research on the seasonality of absence that you have commissioned and wonder whether that will also look at the issue of term time holidays.

Lastly you will be aware of the review of INSET that we are currently undertaking. This will give us a clearer idea of how INSET days are used and what steps need to be taken to ensure they are of maximum benefit. This is still in its early stages but I am asking officials here to continue to keep in touch with LGA officers about the progress of the review.

Charles Clarke



further DfES support

The LGA is pleased to have the backing of DfES in its proposals to implement a six term standard school year. Below are extracts from a letter by DJ Collins. The LGA is pleased to have the backing from the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for the standard school year proposals. This support from DfES has been reiterated in further correspondence, most recently by the head of the DfES press office: (quotes to follow)

'school terms and the six term year... technically this is a matter for LEAs to decide... But Mr Clarke has made it very clear that we support the move...'

'If LEAs see the Secretary of State supporting the six term year then I am sure that influences the decisions they make... It looks like it is already emboldening people.'

'On PQA, (Post Qualification Admission) officials in the DfES are continuing to look at this... We issued a paper on this last year. It's conclusion was on the lines of "good idea, but lots of issues around it...[But] if PQA happened, then the six term year would have a very significant bearing on it.'

LGA's school term database

As part of its work on the Standard School Year, the LGA's Standing Committee on the School Year has produced a complete database of school term dates for 2004-2005. The database provides a detailed easy-to-read guide to the school term dates of each local authority. It is unique in gathering together in one comprehensive document the varying term and holiday dates in secondary schools throughout England, and is available as a convenient PDF document. For further details on the database, contact LGconnect on 020 7664 3131 or email info@lga.gov.uk



For further information, please contact
the Local Government Association at:
Local Government House
Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

**or telephone LGconnect,
for all your LGA queries, on 020 7664 3131**

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email info@lga.gov.uk

Website www.lga.gov.uk

promoting better local government

LGA code F/SR243



Herefordshire LEA

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAY DATES 2005/2006

AUTUMN TERM 2005

Term Starts	Tuesday 6 September 2005	
Half Term	Monday 24 October 2005 – Friday 28 October 2005	
Term Ends	Tuesday 20 December 2005	
		<i>71 days</i>

SPRING TERM 2006

Term Starts	Wednesday 4 January 2006	
Half Term	Monday 13 February 2006 – Friday 17 February 2006	
Term Ends	Friday 31 March 2006	
		<i>58 days</i>

SUMMER TERM 2006

Term Starts	Tuesday 18 April 2006	
Half Term	Monday 29 May 2006 – Friday 2 June 2006	
Term Ends	Wednesday 19 July 2006	
		<i>61 days</i>

Total: 190 days

Good Friday	Friday 14 April 2006
Easter Monday	Monday 17 April 2006
May Day	Monday 1 May 2006

Teacher Education Days

It is suggested that the following two days be allocated as INSET days

Monday, 5th September 2005
Tuesday, 3rd January, 2006

The remaining 3 INSET days or equivalent hours are delegated to Headteachers.

Herefordshire LEA

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAY DATES 2005/2006

AUTUMN TERM 2005

Term Starts	Tuesday 6 September 2005	
Half Term	Monday 24 October 2005 – Friday 28 October 2005	
Term Ends	Tuesday 20 December 2005	<i>71 days</i>

SPRING TERM 2006

Term Starts	Wednesday 4 January 2006	
Half Term	Monday 13 February 2006 – Friday 17 February 2006	
Term Ends	Friday 7 April 2006	<i>63 days</i>

SUMMER TERM 2006

Term Starts	Monday 24 April 2006	
Half Term	Monday 29 May 2006 – Friday 2 June 2006	
Term Ends	Tuesday 18 July 2006	<i>56 days</i>

Total : 190 days

Good Friday	Friday 14 April 2006
Easter Monday	Monday 17 April 2006
May Day	Monday 1 May 2006

Teacher Education Days

It is suggested that the following two days be allocated as INSET days

Monday, 5th September 2005
 Tuesday, 3rd January, 2006

The remaining 3 INSET days or equivalent hours are delegated to Headteachers.

Herefordshire LEA

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAY DATES 2005/2006

AUTUMN TERM 2005

Term Starts	Tuesday 6 September 2005	
Half Term	Monday 24 October 2005 – Wednesday 2 November 2005	
Term Ends	Tuesday 20 December 2005	<i>68 days</i>

SPRING TERM 2006

Term Starts	Wednesday 4 January 2006	
Half Term	Monday 13 February 2006 – Friday 17 February 2006	
Term Ends	Friday 7 April 2006	<i>63 days</i>

SUMMER TERM 2006

Term Starts	Monday 24 April 2006	
Half Term	Monday 29 May 2006 – Friday 2 June 2006	
Term Ends	Friday 21 July 2006	<i>59 days</i>

Total: 190 days

Good Friday	Friday 14 April 2006
Easter Monday	Monday 17 April 2006
May Day	Monday 1 May 2006

Teacher Education Days

It is suggested that the following two days be allocated as INSET days

Monday, 5th September 2005
Tuesday, 3rd January, 2006

The remaining 3 INSET days or equivalent hours are delegated to Headteachers.

Herefordshire LEA

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAY DATES 2005/2006

AUTUMN TERM 2005

Term Starts	Monday 5 September 2005	
Half Term	Monday 24 October 2005 – Wednesday 2 November 2005	
Term Ends	Tuesday 20 December 2005	
		<i>69 days</i>

SPRING TERM 2006

Term Starts	Wednesday 4 January 2006	
Half Term	Monday 13 February 2006 – Friday 17 February 2006	
Term Ends	Friday 31 March 2006	
		<i>58 days</i>

SUMMER TERM 2006

Term Starts	Tuesday 18 April 2006	
Half Term	Monday 29 May 2006 – Friday 2 June 2006	
Term Ends	Friday 21 July 2006	
		<i>63 days</i>

Total: 190 days

Good Friday	Friday 14 April 2006
Easter Monday	Monday 17 April 2006
May Day	Monday 1 May 2006

Teacher Education Days

It is suggested that the following two days be allocated as INSET days

Friday, 2nd September 2005
Tuesday, 3rd January, 2006

The remaining 3 INSET days or equivalent hours are delegated to Headteachers.

MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF CAPITAL SCHEMES

Report By: HEAD OF POLICY AND RESOURCES

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

1. To report on capital expenditure for 2004/05 and to provide information about progress towards replacement of Staunton-on-Wye Primary School, and the prospect for "Building Schools for the Future".

Financial Implications

2. As set out within the report.

Report

Capital Expenditure

3. Projected expenditure on capital projects in Education for 2004/05 is summarised in Appendix 1. Projected spend on completed projects with final payment still to be made is shown in aggregate at the top of the table. Projects are shown individually where building contracts have been let and construction is underway, or where projects are still at the design stage.
4. During 2004/05, major building schemes will be completed at Lea Primary School (June 2004), Green Croft Early Excellence Centre (July 2004) and Cradley Primary School (October 2004). The users of each of these buildings will be asked to comment on the outcome of the project. The results will be reported at the next meeting of this Committee. Design work is currently underway on major schemes at:

Weobley High School	Improvements to staff and administrative accommodation, refurbishment of Science laboratories, provision of Library/ICT area and improved car parking area.
Fairfield High School	Construction of new Design Technology block and Art room.
Ledbury Primary School	New Nursery accommodation.
Kington Primary School	New Nursery accommodation in conjunction with a Sure Start Family Centre.

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
George Salmon, Head of Policy and Resources (01432) 260802

5. Acquisition of the new site for the replacement Whitecross High School was not completed during the last financial year, as anticipated, but the acquisition will need to be completed this summer to allow the PFI scheme to proceed. Allowance also needs to be made for other land acquisition at Staunton-on-Wye, Sutton St. Nicholas and Little Dewchurch.

Staunton-on-Wye Primary School

6. The planning application for outline permission to use a field for primary school purposes caused some opposition in the village to the extent that the need for a new school was questioned.
7. In December 2001, the DfES gave approval for replacement of Staunton-on-Wye Primary School. As a Voluntary Aided School, a grant of £780,000 was allocated to the School Governors who have engaged the Property Services Department to act as their agents for this scheme.
8. The bid by the Governors to the DfES was supported by the Council, on the basis that a 3-class school with a maximum capacity of 70 should be built. This equates to the size of the existing school. It is anticipated that there will be approx. 45 children from the catchment area, with additional places being filled by out of area children, under the general policy for scope to be allowed for parental preference. It is acknowledged that there is sufficient places in surrounding schools to cater for the anticipated number of children. However, the catchment area is large, and the nearest alternative schools are some distance away at Eardisley, Madley and Weobley and Credenhill.
9. As a school constructed in the 1850s, Staunton-on-Wye lacks many of the facilities required for 21st century teaching. It does not have adequately sized classrooms, hall and practical areas, and has no provision for ICT or group rooms. A recent Health and Safety report also noted that the school suffers from a lack of a staff room and medical inspection room, with the Headteacher's office being used for inspections and consultations. Concerns have also been raised about the lack of security lighting around the building and there has been one accident reported on the stone staircase.
10. As a three-storey building, the school cannot comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, and the school currently relocates classes to the ground floor to accommodate a pupil with physical disabilities.
11. A recent condition survey report also confirmed that the building will continue to require significant expenditure to keep it safe and operational.
12. Numerous locations around the village were identified and assessed as possible sites for the replacement school, but, in conjunction with Planning and Highways Officers, a site at Bliss Hall Farm has been proposed, with an Outline Planning Application submitted, which should be determined on 16th June 2004.
13. Given the objections raised locally, the matter was discussed by the School Organisation Committee on 26th May, 2004, where it was resolved that the replacement school at Staunton on Wye should proceed as originally planned.
14. Since approval was given in December 2001, revised estimates, which also reflect inflation in the construction industry, suggest that the cost of the scheme will rise above the level of the grant. The total cost will be off set by a capital receipt from the existing school, leaving a net amount to be funded by the DfES grant 90% and Governors 10%. The liability of the Council, as LEA, is limited to the cost of that area of the site that will

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
George Salmon, Head of Policy and Resources (01432) 260802

be used for playing fields. Such costs to the Council would include both the value of the land and the professional and legal fees in completing that acquisition.

Building Schools for the future.

15. The DfES have provided comments on the Herefordshire bid during a lengthy conference call in May. The conversation covered a number of issues in some detail, including the following main points.

- i. Ministers decided to support no more 'pilot' authorities as they felt that there was not a great deal to be learnt over and above the lessons from the first 4 pilot schemes. It was acknowledged that there were issues linked to rural authorities but not sufficient to allocate monies away from areas of high deprivation and poor performance on which they wanted to concentrate on in the first wave.
- ii. The Herefordshire bid was good. The Education vision covered all areas of particular interest to the DfES. The ICT proposals were interesting, particularly in terms of support for the community and the practical problems of delivery. Provision for Special Educational Needs was very good. The 14-19 agenda requires additional work to translate a strategy into an action plan.

In terms of the ability to deliver, the bid was realistic. More detail on how each school would have been managed within the 5-year programme would have been liked. [This is contrary to the earlier DfES guidance.]

The Herefordshire bid was, however, assessed as being "high risk" in terms of what the DfES have called "corporate capacity". The relative small size of the Authority and our limited experience with the single PFI project led them to this assessment.

- iii. **The Way Forward**

It is anticipated that an announcement will be made later this year on the schemes to be given approval to start in 2006/07 and 2007/08. Other authorities may also be informed of the 'slot' they would be given in the programme to 2020. Given that rural issues have not been addressed, the possibility of a rural project, which, solely on the grounds of school performance and levels of deprivation, would not be given high priority, may be included in an earlier year. There were at least 2 other rural authorities which had expressed an interest in being a rural pilot.

- iv. At the end of the conversation, the DfES indicated that they were not at this stage seeking any further information or clarification/revision of Herefordshire's earlier submission.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT The Committee comment on any issues of concern arising from the capital programme progress report, and through the information reports on Staunton-on-Wye and "Building Schools for the Future".

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- **None identified.**

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
George Salmon, Head of Policy and Resources (01432) 260802

EDUCATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004/05

	2004/5 Estimated Payments to 31.3.05 £
Payments on Schemes Completed within the current and previous financial years.	252,700
Projects in Progress or in Design Stage	
i. Ledbury Primary – Nursery Accommodation	250,000
ii. Site Acquisition (Incl. Whitecross, Cradley & Lea)	600,000
iii. Ross, John Kyrle – Sixth Form Extension	505,000
iv. Temporary Classroom Programme	175,000
v. Haywood High – Dining Room Extension	151,250
vi. Fairfield High – Playing Fields	160,000
vii. Fairfield High – Design Technology Block	297,000
viii. Credenhill, St. Mary's – New School Design	5,000
ix. Weobley High – Staffroom Extension	54,000
x. Weobley High – Science/Admin/Library/Car Park	400,000
xi. Kington Primary – Nursery Accommodation	300,000
xii. Early Excellence Centre – New Building	60,000
xiii. Seed Challenge Schemes – Various	218,000
xiv. Sutton Primary – New School Design	5,000
xv. Holme Lacy Primary – Access Road	45,000
xvi. Condition Improvement Works	1,200,000
xvii. Disabled Access Works	250,000
xviii. Little Dewchurch Primary – Upgrade Playing Field	60,000
xix. Feasibility Work	60,000
xx. Kingstone High – Sports Hall	804,000
 <i>Sub-Total</i>	 5,599,250
TOTAL ANTICIPATED EXPENDITURE	<u>5,851,950</u>
 Total Resources Available	 5,902,951

REVENUE OUTTURN 2003/04 AND BUDGET 2004/05**Report By: DIRECTOR of EDUCATION****Wards Affected**

Countywide

Purpose

1. To report on the revenue budget outturn for 2003/04 and the revenue budget estimate for 2004/05.

Financial Implications

2. As set out within the report.

Revenue Outturn 2003-04.

3. The monitoring report to the April 2004, meeting of the Committee anticipated that the Education Revenue Budget would be underspent by approximately £300,000 (0.4%). The final outturn shows an uncommitted underspend of £403,000 (0.5%), a small increase on that previously reported and as set out in Appendix 1. The total underspend of £1,415,000 includes commitments for Standards Fund (£425,000) which is accounted for on a school year basis, the schools sickness scheme (£166,000) which is an insurance scheme 'owned' by schools, ring-fenced grants for the Whitecross PFI scheme (£166,000) and a number of other smaller commitments (£257,000) thereby producing a net underspend of £403,000.
4. School budget allocations were adjusted at year end because, under the new funding arrangements Education Formula Spending Share (EFSS), unspent contingencies in the schools budget must be allocated to schools at that stage. A summary of the outturn for school budgets is shown at Appendix 2.
5. On Home to School Transport, for which budget provision had anticipated a higher level of inflation, the anticipated savings proved to be greater than projected. The improved efficiencies were the result of improved route planning and changes in the allocation of transport for students with Special Educational Needs.
6. Most other budgets show relatively small variations from the position reported in April.

Budget 2004/05

7. A copy of the Education budget for 2004-05 was included in the budget book issued by the County Treasurer and the summary is attached for information as Appendix 3.
8. The DfES calculate two main performance indicators for determining the Education budget as set out under s52 of the Standards and School Framework Act. It should be noted that Herefordshire has met both indicators for 2004-2005, namely -

- spending delegated to schools meets the target set by the DfES and
- Spending on central items is within the limit set by the DfES.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report on Education Revenue Outturn 2003/04 and the budget for 2004/05 be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

Education Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Outturn June 2004

	2003/2004 BASE BUDGET £'000	2003/2004 OUTTURN £'000	2003/2004 VARIANCE £'000	NOTES
A. Schools Budget (Net Revenue)				
Schools Formula Allocations	58,867	59,890	(1,023)	Banded funding and unspent contingencies
LEA Contribution to delegated Specific Grants	2,000	1,989	11	
Central spending within the Schools Budget				
Provision for LEA Children with Special Needs	1,513	1,284	229	Reserve for banded funding
Fees to Independent Schools for SEN placements	800	843	(43)	
Pupil Referral / Education Other than in Schools	1,386	1,270	116	
Early Years Education	2,380	1,907	473	Take up more slowly than expected.
Other Services for Schools/contingency	838	917	(79)	
Total School Budget (Net Revenue)	67,784	68,100	(316)	
B. LEA Budget				
Strategic Management	1,646	1,508	138	Unfilled posts
Severance, Pension Liabilities and Staff Sickness	518	248	270	
Specific Grants	540	397	143	
Special Education Services	964	738	226	
School Improvement	703	787	(84)	Professional support
Transport, Admissions and Asset Management	6,405	5,536	869	Transport increased efficiencies
Youth Offending Team and Student Awards and Grants	310	141	169	Charges from Worcester lower than expected
Learning and Skills Council	(1,922)	(1,922)	0	
Total LEA Budget	9,164	7,433	1,731	
Central Support	719	719	0	
Education Budget 2003/2004	77,667	76,252	1,415	Gross underspend
Less committed carry forwards				
Standards Fund Summer term			-425	DfES requirement
Schools sickness scheme			-166	Schools' money
PFI - Whitecross School			-164	Ring fenced
Other smaller commitments			-257	
Uncommitted Underspend			403	Net underspend

SCHOOL BUDGET RESERVES 2003-04**Overall Outturn 2003-2004**

1. The aggregate of school balances, including balances from DfES capital grants, at the end of 2003-4 was as follows –

	2002/03 £'000	2003/04 £'000	Increase/ (decrease) £'000
Primary	3,065	4,541	1,476
Secondary	1,165	1,721	556
Special	430	417	(13)
Total	4,660	6,679	2,019

2. The breakdown between capital and revenue was -

	Capital £'000	Revenue £'000	Total £'000
Primary	887	3,653	4,541
Secondary	124	1,597	1,721
Special	130	288	417
Total	1,141	5,540	6,679

3. The average size of balances per school at the end of 2003-2004 were as follows –

	Average	Maximum	Minimum
Primary 2003/04	£53,419	£164,140	£2,681
Secondary 2003/04	£122,929	£354,782	-£104,879 Deficit
Special 2003/04	£104,340	£154,119	£61,646

4. An important feature of school balances in Herefordshire is that they are relatively high in smaller schools, especially in primary schools as the following figures indicate.

No of pupils - Primary	No of schools	Average balance	Average per pupil
1-100	37	£44,412	£619
101-200	29	£53,855	£356
201+	18	£74,200	£218

These balances are for most schools a sensible safeguard against the need for sudden change, bearing in mind that the average cost of a teacher each year is £25,000.

Detailed Explanations of level of Balances

1. Devolved Capital grants +£403,000 (£17 per pupil)

Balances have increased by £403,000 due to schools saving for new capital projects over a period of three years as permitted by the national rules for the devolved capital scheme. Typical projects that schools save up for are new ICT suites and minor building improvements.

2. Unspent contingencies +£528,000 (£22 per pupil)

Under the new funding arrangements (EFSS), unspent contingencies in the schools budget must be allocated to schools before the year-end.

3. Additional pupil numbers and SEN entitlement +£156,000 (£7 per pupil)

Reserves held for in-year increases for pupil numbers and new banded SEN funding were distributed at the year-end.

School improvement funding £485,000 (£20 per pupil)

Schools are required to agree how this money is spent on school improvement projects with their Inspector so most will plan ahead for spending in the new academic year.

4. Interest +£123,000 (£5 per pupil)

Interest can be calculated and added to school budgets only after the end of the financial year as it is calculated on the average balance throughout the year.

5. Remainder +£324,000 (£13 per pupil)

The remainder of £324,000 is due to a growth in school revenues and cautious budget planning and spending by schools, much of it designed to cushion the effects of problems (especially falling rolls) anticipated for future years. This will include a significant amount for Standards Fund budgets which are now allocated on an academic year basis (i.e. there is a carry forward to the end of August 2004).

EDUCATION

	2003/2004 BUDGET	INFLATION	OTHER	2004/2005 BASE BUDGET
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE IN SCHOOLS BUDGET				
1. Delegated to Schools (Net Revenue)				
Primary Schools	28,332	830	418	29,580
Secondary Schools	28,250	827	723	29,800
Special Schools	2,285	67	(106)	2,246
Specific Grants	2,000	67	(67)	2,000
2. Spent on Schools				
Reserve for Schools in Deficit	0	0	256	256
Provision for Children with Special Needs	2,313	65	185	2,563
Pupil Referral and Education Other than in Schools	1,386	41	122	1,549
Early Years Education	2,380	60	560	3,000
Other Services for Schools	838	21	188	1,047
Total Schools Budget (Net Revenue)	67,784	1,978	2,452	72,041
LEA BUDGET				
Strategic Management	1,646	48	(415)	1,279
Severance, Pension Liabilities and Staff Sickness	518	15	(39)	494
Specific Grants	540	15	19	574
Special Education Services	964	29	(112)	881
School Improvement	703	20	59	782
Transport, Admissions and Asset Management	6,405	165	184	6,754
Youth and Community Services	310	8	23	341
Learning Skills Council	(1,922)	(48)	(23)	(1,993)
Total LEA budget	9,164	252	(304)	9,112
Central Support - Accommodation	284	12	0	296
Central Support Charges	435	14	32	481
Education budget 2004/2005	<u>77,667</u>	<u>2,256</u>	<u>2,180</u>	<u>81,930</u>



EDUCATION

Total spending available for Education services is at the level of the Education element of the Formula Spending Share (EFSS), i.e. £84m. In addition, the Learning Skills Council, which has responsibility for post-16 education, provides £1.99m for direct allocation to schools. The combined total available for Education in 2004/2005, therefore, is £86m.

Of the £86m available for Education services, a total of £83.1m is available for allocation through the Education Directorate. Of the balance of £2.9m, £690,000 is required to pay back part of the LGR loan. The remainder is under the control of other Directorates - Policy and Community (youth and adult education services), Secretary and Solicitors (legal, committee services and personnel), the County Treasurer and Environmental Services (property services).

Under Section 52 of the Standards and School Framework Act, LEAs have a duty to publish an annual financial statement, showing total spending on Education services, including services provided by Directorates other than Education. The DfES calculate two main performance indicators from the statement, as follows.

- The extent to which spending on items deemed to be within the "Schools Budget" meets the target set by the DfES. The target for Herefordshire was £70.918m and that level has been achieved
- The Government has set a limit on the amount that can be spent centrally on the items within the Schools Budget. The limit excludes 3 items in the Schools Budget and Herefordshire has planned expenditure in the remaining areas £267,000 below the target level.

In addition to funding through EFSS the Secretary of State notifies LEAs of School Standards Grants, which for Herefordshire are worth £3.06m. The grant must be passed, without variation, to all LEA schools, according to a flat rate formula as follows: -

Schools Standards Grant 2004-05

PRIMARY NOR	£	HIGH NOR	£	SPECIALS NOR	£
1-100	10,000	1-600	80,000	1-100	27,000
100.5-200	20,000	600.5-1200	96,000	100.5+	37,000
200.5-400	30,000	1200.5-1800	112,000		
400.5-600	45,000	1800.5-2400	128,000		
600.5-800	60,000	2400.5+	144,000		
800.5+	75,000				

2004-05 Devolved Formula Capital

Schools also receive grants for capital spending totalling £2.9m.

Early years education and childcare grants (100% grant funding) which amount to £600,000 for Herefordshire.

**REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY POLICIES APPLICABLE
TO HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT****Report By: HEAD OF POLICY AND RESOURCES****Wards Affected**

Countywide.

Purpose

1. To seek comments on the conclusions of the review of the discretionary policies for provision of home to school transport.

Financial Implications

2. As indicated in the report.

Report

3. The cross-service Best Value review of transport recommended that the discretionary policies for provision of school transport should be reviewed. The discretionary policies are listed in Appendix 1.
4. In October 2003, this Committee established a working party, the membership of which is listed as follows: Councillor Ashton, Councillor Manning, Councillor Taylor and Councillor J Thomas, C. Lewandoski from Aylestone High School, Reverend I. Terry, Mrs S.Wright as a parent governor representative. The working party was supported by the following officers Mark Chamberlain, Andrew Blackman, and Richard Ball and George Salmon. The working party has met on 5 occasions and undertaken 2 consultation exercises with those listed in Appendix 2.
5. At the end of the first consultation period, the working party felt that no change should be made to the policies covering:

Boarding points
Year 10/11 whose home address changes
Travelling times
Vacant seats for all age groups
Public Service route subsidy
6. However, further consultation has been undertaken and consideration given to possible changes in the following areas:

(i) Denominational transport
(ii) Post-16 transport
(iii) Transport for under 5s
(iv) Transport for children with SEN
7. The Working Party met on Thursday, 27th May to consider the issues in light of the responses received. In view of the relatively low response from schools there was a

reluctance to draw firm conclusions unless issues appeared clear cut. The Working Party were also aware that transport is a crucial issue in Herefordshire and asked that the Countryside Agency's rural proofing criteria should be applied to each of the options. The results of that exercise are included in Appendix 3.

8. The options for change are now considered:

(i) Denominational transport

Current policy:

The current policy offers free transport for children, over the age of 8 who live more than 3 miles from school and under the age of 8, 2 miles from school, who have been admitted to a school on **denominational grounds**.

At present 686 (65 primary and 621 secondary) pupils benefit from this policy at the total cost to the LEA of £435,000.

By comparison equivalent policies currently in place in other LEAs include the following:

- Free provision for pupils living more than 3 miles from Home to School.
- Free provision for pupils living more than 3 miles but under 6 miles for primary pupils and 3 to 10 miles for secondary pupils.
- All relevant parents make a contribution of between £200 and £300 per school year for denominational transport.

Options:

- a. **Maintain Status Quo:** The current policy reflects the voluntary understanding reached between the Church and State School in the 1944 Education Act and the expressed desire to enable all pupils to have access to denominational education, without the constraint of transport cost. It is anticipated that the current number of beneficiaries would remain approximately the same as at present, with costs increasing in line with inflation within the transport industry.
- b. **Remove any form of subsidy.** Such a change would reflect a significant shift in the current arrangements relating to state/church provision of school places. It would mean that the admission to a church school beyond the boundaries of the catchment area of the provided school would be treated on the same basis as any other admission by parental preference. The parents would then be responsible for transport to the school. In the discussion of this option the question of equality of opportunity has been raised bearing in mind that it could be perceived as making denominational places available only to the pupils whose parents could afford the transport costs.

If such a change were to be made it could be introduced in annual steps as each new cohort joined the school. Full implementation in 5 years for high schools and 7 years for primary schools. On full implementation it has been estimated that savings of the order of £235,000 could be achieved. This is less than the gross cost of the existing policy as some students would be entitled to transport to their provided school.

- c. **Seek Parental Contributions** in line with the charges for vacant seats. This option was considered as a compromise acknowledging the role of the church and state in education provision and ensuring a reasonable level of transport

costs without the full cost falling on the Council Tax payer. It has been estimated that a saving of £110,000 could be produced in the full year of operation.

- d. Offer free transport for pupils living beyond 3 miles but within 6 miles of their chosen primary school and 12 miles of their high school. Pupils living beyond the defined distance would be able to claim free transport if they take full responsibility for transport to a pick up point or along an approved route. Some English LEAs do operate similar policies. It is a compromise, which avoids the high cost to the LEAs of long journeys, but at the cost to parents who happen to live at longer distances from the denominational schools. This would produce a saving, which is difficult to predict accurately but it is thought it could be in the order of £115,000.

Response:

The response from consultees to these options was as follows:

Option	In Favour	
1. Maintain Status Quo	7	16%
2. Remove any form of subsidy	12	28%
3. Seek Parental Contributions	18	42%
4. Free transport with mileage limits	6	14%
5. Other option		
Total	43	100%

The working party has noted that the majority of consultees who responded favoured change. They also considered the form and degree of change against the following factors:

- extent to which any charging would increase the use of cars;
- degree to which pupils would be denied access due to cost;
- parity between schools;
- ease of administration;
- legal issues.

The working party has concluded that the options for the future should be between 1, 2 and 3 but given the limited number of responses and no clear pattern there was a reluctance to make a particular recommendation it was therefore proposed to and invite the broader membership of the Scrutiny Committee to consider options 1, 2 or 3.

(ii) Post-16 transport

Current policy:

At present, Post-16 students living further than 3 miles from college or Sixth Form are offered transport on payment of a termly contribution of £80. Similarly those students under the age of 16 who are not entitled to free transport have the opportunity to buy into the transport provided for entitled riders where there are vacant seats. Currently the cost of a 'vacant seat' is £80 per term.

These policies produce an income of £150,000 (£105,000 Post-16 plus £45,000 Vacant Seats Payment Scheme). However, the total cost of post-16 transport is £480,000, i.e. a shortfall of £375,000.

There are administration costs associated with the collection of both the contributions to post-16 transport and for vacant seats. This is done on a termly basis and it has been estimated that 1/3 of the income is required to cover administration costs.

It is also noted that Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA) will be available to students from poorer families from September 2004, with the student being able to contribute from their allowances.

Options:

- a. **Maintain Status Quo.** Termly charge of £80, with an annual review. Large cohorts and a higher staying on rate are likely to require a larger budget for the coming 4-5 years
- b. **Vary Charging Policy.** Each change of 1% would produce a saving or additional cost of approximately £1,000.

A decision to increase the current charge would mean raising the current charge of £80 per term to £100 per term. A 50% increase on current charge would provide a charge of £120 per term.

To simplify administration costs, it would be advantageous to have a single charge rate, but there could be a different rate between post-16 and vacant seats, and possibly a reduced rate for the second or subsequent child from the same family.

Response:

The response from consultees to these options was as follows:

Option	In favour	
1. Maintain Status Quo	22	51%
2. Vary Charging Policy	21	49%
Total	43	

1. Single rate	31	72%
2. A more complex set of charges	12	28%
Total	43	

The working party noted that a similar number of respondents wished to retain the status quo as the number who favoured change. The working party have, therefore on balance, concluded that the current charges should be maintained and be subject to annual review. No additional support should be offered to students through discounted fees on the basis that EMAs are available to cover such costs. That is the view recommended nationally.

(iii) Transport for under 5s

Current policy:

At present no child under statutory school age is supported on transport to schools unless that child has special educational needs.

A number of parents (fewer than 50) have chosen to buy tickets under the vacant seats policy, and the authority stresses the health and safety issues which parents must accept in choosing to use vacant seats.

A large number of primary schools admit children at a single point during the academic year, and it has been suggested that any child whatever age should be entitled to free transport if they live further than two miles from the school and are on the school register.

Options:

The response to these options was as follows:

- a. Maintain the existing policy or
- b. Grant entitlement to those four year olds registered at school who live further than two miles from the school.

It is thought that a change of policy would produce an additional cost of between £25,000 and £50,000. However, the more serious concerns relate to responsibility and the sense in encouraging very young children to travel independently of their parents in vehicles largely designed for older children and adults. There is also particular concern not to weaken the message to parents that children starting school need to be accompanied to and from school each day by a parent/guardian for an extended period to ensure that their children feel settled and secure.

Response:

Option	In favour	
1. Maintain Status Quo	28	65%
2. Entitlement to all on school	15	35%
Total	43	

The greater number of respondents support the maintenance of the status quo.

There is serious concern over the practical issues in carrying very young children on school buses, and the transfer of responsibility from parents to the Council for journeys to and from school. Although no formal consultation has been undertaken with early years settings that also make provision for 3 and 4 year olds, the Director of Education is aware that private and voluntary settings are already fearful of schools taking a larger percentage of pre-statutory age children attending school. The provision of free transport to schools would be seen as favouring schools, and the Council would be likely to face a call to offer similar arrangements to all 3 and 4 year olds attending private and voluntary settings, eligible to receive Nursery Education Grants.

The working party have concluded that there should be no change in this policy.

(iv) Transport for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Current policy:

At present, children with special educational needs are offered transport to the appropriate designated provision, if it is considered that it is needed to ensure attendance at school. The cost of such transport is currently £1.4m for 460 students up to the age of 25. There is close liaison with Social Services Transport as some

students have provision from both services and similar vehicles may also be required.

Options:

The working party considered that either the status quo should remain or that the essential elements of the status quo should remain but with –

- a. a more rigorous annual review of need to ensure that pupils, as they grow older and more capable, are encouraged to become independent in their travel; or
- b. consideration of contributions for students who benefit from a mobility allowance; or
- c. the possibility of making 21 instead of 25 the upper age limit for free transport.

Response:

	In favour	
1. Maintain Status Quo	7	10%
2. Amended arrangements		
(a)	25	34%
(b)	25	34%
(c)	16	22%
Total	73	

The largest number of responses were received on this discretionary policy, and were broadly in support of some change. The more rigorous annual review of need is an operational matter and will continue to be developed in the interest of the students themselves. The working party have concluded that a formal proposal should be made to reduce the age range to 18, and to remove subsidy to those students entitled to mobility allowances should be further consideration to be given to remaining subsidy.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee considers the recommendation of the Working Party as set out below then considers what recommendations it wishes to submit to the Cabinet Member (Education) for his consideration.

1. Denominational Transport

It was agreed that any further responses should be reported to this committee and this committee should consider the following recommendations –

- i. that any form of subsidy should be removed and transport if required should be provided at cost.**
If this is not accepted –
- ii. that parental contribution be sought in line with charges for vacant seats and with further discounts for these students entitled to free school meals.**
If this is not accepted.
- iii. that the status quo be maintained.**

2. Post 16 Transport

The Current charging levels be maintained (subject to annual review) but no additional subsidy be offered on the basis that EMAs are available to cover costs.

3. Transport for Under 5s

No change to existing policy

4. Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs

The existing policy to be amended to benefit only those students who have not reached their nineteenth birthday, and those students not in receipt of a mobility allowance.

BACKGROUND PABAPERS

- None identified.

Home to School/College Transport Discretionary Areas of Policy

Current Legal Position

The obligation on LEAs to provide free transport, or to pay fares, to facilitate attendance of pupils of statutory school age at school is provided for in s.509 of the **Education Act 1996**. An LEA must make suitable transport arrangements if the school is not within “walking distance” of the child’s home. “Walking distance” is defined as 2 miles for a child under the age of 8 and 3 miles for those over that age. LEAs are required to have regard for the age of the pupil, the nature of the routes he or she could reasonably be expected to take and the religious denomination of the parents, when considering their arrangements.

An LEA may not contend that if a child lives more than 3 miles from school but within 3 miles of a place from where free school transport is available, that they have made suitable arrangements under s.509. Since there is also an obligation to provide transport to and from school where the child lives more than 3 miles away, the LEA must either provide transport or pay for the use of public transport to take the child “from a point reasonably near his or her home to a point reasonably near the school”.

In meeting these legal requirements, LEAs do have some areas of discretion. The following policies apply in Herefordshire.

Current Policies on Discretionary Areas

I. Boarding Points

In general, children, accompanied by their parents where appropriate, may be required to walk up to one mile to or from a designated boarding or alighting point. However, in certain circumstances the cost or redesignating a new boarding point may not be economic or cost effective and therefore parents may be expected to take their child up to the limit of the statutory walking distances as defined above.

II. Year 10/11 Pupils Changing Address

Each year, some Year 10/11 pupils engaged in examination courses move home address into another part of the County (i.e. into the catchment area of a different school). In such situations, which arise from decisions taken by parents, the normal expectation is that parents will take responsibility for getting their son/daughter to the school (including under the vacant seats payment scheme, if available) at which the pupil is enrolled, or make arrangements for the pupil to transfer to another school. Only in exceptional family circumstance, would free transport assistance be offered, on an individual basis. Even in such situations, transport assistance would normally be allowed only where provision could be made within an existing Home to School Transport route, with the parent being responsible for taking the pupil to and from the relevant boarding point.

III. Denominational Policy

Free transport is provided to pupils attending St. Mary’s R.C. High School and Bishop of Hereford’s Bluecoat School if they live over 3 miles from the school and have a denominational place at the school. This requires the child to have gained a denominational place within the specific admission over-subscription policy of the appropriate/designated aided school. Details of the current over-subscription policies can be found in the Council’s Information for Parents booklet. In addition, parents are expected to take their children to the nearest/defined boarding point, which can be up to 3 miles from the home of the child.

IV. Travelling Time

The Council currently aims to limit journey times to 45 minutes each way in the case of primary school pupils, to an hour in the case of secondary, Post-16 students, and of pupils with special educational needs for whom the relevant provision might be at a considerable distance from home.

V. Vacant Seats for all Age Groups

Where there are vacant seats on vehicles carrying pupils entitled to free transport, these are made available to pupils not entitled to free transport on application and on payment of a standard fee. The charges in Herefordshire stand at £75 per term (full price) with a discretionary level of £20 per term in the case of students whose families are on income support.

VI. Post-16 Transport

Post-16 students are not eligible for free transport, but those living over 3 miles from college or sixth form are offered subsidised transport. The current charge is £80 per term (or £25 for those whose families are on income support).

It is envisaged that with the introduction of Education Maintenance Allowances in September 2004, the charging policy will be reviewed.

VII. Transport provision for under 5s

Generally the Council does not provide transport for under 5s, until the term in which children are entitled to start school under the Council's **standard admissions policy**. In other words, transport is not provided for children attending nursery classes, or for children attending reception classes under earlier admission arrangements allowed by schools.

VIII. Public Service Route – subsidy

The Council subsidises certain bus services in the County as part of its commitment to maintaining, and where possible improving, the position of public transport. The Council uses a criteria based policy to determine which services should be subsidised, based broadly upon the cost per passenger. Only services that meet this criteria are eligible for subsidy.

In order not to conflict with the Council's policy for the provision of Education Transport, services solely to provide transport for non-entitled children are not subsidised. However, there are cases where services are provided that do carry non-entitled children. These have arisen as follows:

Where a service to provide for non-entitled children can be done as part of a wider service to meet general public need and at no additional cost to the Council. This may be because the revenue generated from fares covers the marginal cost of the particular journey or if the journey would have to take place in any case to enable the bus to be in the correct location for a later service;

Long standing services that originally carried both entitled and non-entitled children may no longer be needed to carry entitled children. In some instances these have been retained on the basis that when parents have made their original choice of school they would have reasonably assumed that the bus service was available and it would therefore be unreasonable to withdraw it, as long as it continues to meet the Council's overall subsidy criteria.

IX. Transport for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

(a) General Situation with statutory aged pupils

In the case of pupils with statemented special education needs the Council **may** when appropriate:

- I. provide free daily transport to the nearest appropriate school/centre if they live more than the normal working distances defined for primary and secondary pupils, or if walking is too difficult for the child (there may be advantages for a child's development if they are able to make their own way to school, accompanied by a parent if necessary);
- II. provide transport at the beginning and end of terms and at half terms for pupils attending residential establishments;
- III. provide other types of transport assistance where necessary in relation to residential schooling, including transport for parents and children for pre-admission assessments (in-County and one out-County) and for subsequent case conferences/reviews – if necessary reasonable overnight accommodation costs will be met by the Council.

Parents often prefer to make their own arrangements to take their children to special schools and centres, rather than use the transport provided by the Council, to enable daily contact with the school staff to be maintained more easily. Where that is agreed to be more appropriate for the child, a mileage allowance would be available to the parents if walking is too difficult for the pupil.

Parents have full responsibility for transport arrangements when their child attends, by parental preference, a school other than the one provided for their child's home address, or for their child's type of statemented special need. In a few such cases, it may be possible for parents to pay to use spare seats that are occasionally available on school transport.

In most cases where transport is provided:

- ❖ Escorts are employed, if necessary, to supervise the children on their journeys to and from school;
- ❖ Safety equipment, such as harnesses, is made available on all vehicles if needed.

b) Transport assistance for post-16 Students with Special Educational Needs

In the case of students with special education needs, in the age range 16 years to 25 years on 1st September, free transport is provided to the appropriate school or further education institution, irrespective of the normal statutory walking distances defined for primary or secondary pupils, if walking is too difficult for the student. **Students cease to be eligible at 31st August following their 25th birthday.** Some further education institutions consider that use of public transport is part of independence training for a student with special educational needs.

The range and nature of help provided with transport for out-County placements is outlined in the following paragraphs.

Journeys supported for post 16 students (and parents where appropriate)

Transport assistance may be given, in appropriate cases:

- (a) to view a college prior to firm application;
- (b) to and from college each day or (in the case of residential courses) at the beginning and end of terms and at half terms;

(c) to attend a period of assessment required as part of the application and recruitment process;

(d) to attend any necessary case conferences and reviews.

The location of some colleges occasionally requires reasonable overnight accommodation costs to be met. Such costs are limited to the student and his/her parents only.

Types of travel assistance for post 16 students

(a) if the college provides transport, students are expected to use it;

(b) if students are capable of using public transport independently, they are expected to do so – some colleges regard use of public transport as part of their students training;

(c) minibuses or taxis are arranged, with escorts where necessary, by the Education Directorate Admissions and Transport Section;

(d) if it is necessary for private transport to be used, a mileage rate is paid.

LIST OF CONSULTEES

All Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units.

Education Scrutiny Members

School Organisation Committee Members

Copies were placed in the Members Room for the information of all Councillors.

Key Officers in Education, Planning, Property and Policy and Community

Neighbouring LEAs

Worcestershire County Council

Shropshire County Council

Gloucestershire County Council

Powys County Council

Monmouthshire County Council

Copies were placed in the following libraries for information for members of the public:

Belmont, Bromyard, Colwall, Hereford, Kington, Ledbury, Leintwardine, Leominster, Ross, Weobley and Young People Services (11 send to H13 and they will distribute)

The Learning and Skills Council

Colleges

College of Art and Design, College of Technology, Sixth Form, RNCB, College of Agriculture, Ludlow Sixth Form

Diocees – Hereford and Cardiff

Teaching and Support Staff Unions

Rural Proofing Criteria

The Countryside Agency has developed a 'Rural Proofing Checklist' which identifies 15 criteria against which public service policies can be assessed. The criteria are set out below, with assessment on how any change to the denominational transport policy given.

1. Will the policy affect the availability of public and private services?

Although the opportunity of denominational education will remain available, the introduction of charges, especially full charging, could be argued to provide a barrier to children of low income families. However, the proposal to seek a contribution of £80 per term with a further subsidised rate of £25 per term answers this criticism.

2. Is the policy to be delivered through existing service outlets, such as schools, banks and GP surgeries?

Delivery of services through existing outlets remains unaffected.

3. Will the cost of delivery be higher in rural areas where clients are more widely dispersed or economies of scale are harder to achieve?

The imposition of charges based on actual cost would affect to a greater extent those students living further from the provision.

4. Will the policy affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel?

Yes, the policy concerns cost of travel.

5. Does the policy rely on communicating information to clients?

Yes, any policy change would be subject to wider consultation, and through the more formal framework of the Information to Parents Handbook.

6. Is the policy to be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership?

The policy would be put into practice by Herefordshire Council.

7. Does the policy rely on infrastructure (eg. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery?

The services is delivered through the transport system (rail and road). This criterion does not appear relevant.

8. Will the policy impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed?

The policy will not impact on rural businesses.

9. Will the policy have a particular impact on land-based industries and, therefore, on rural economies and environments?

It is not envisaged that the policy will impact on rural economies or environments.

10. Will the policy affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment?

The policy change towards charges would affect those students from low income families, but the offer of a subsidy for those entitled to free schools meals would help.

11. Is the policy to be targeted at the disadvantaged?

The policy involving subsidy to pupils entitled to FSM would meet this criterion.

12. Will the policy rely on local institutions for delivery?

The service is delivered through local contractors.

13. Does the policy depend on new buildings or development sites?

14. Is the policy likely to impact on the quality and character of the natural and built rural landscape?

15. Will the policy impact on people wishing to reach and use the countryside as a place for recreation and enjoyment?

These criteria do not apply to this policy area.

EDUCATION OF EXCLUDED PUPILS

Report By: **MANAGER OF PUPIL, SCHOOL AND PARENT SUPPORT**

Wards Affected

Countywide.

Purpose

1. To provide information about current policy and practice for the placing of pupils in alternative schools following permanent exclusion.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Report

3. The information in this report relates to pupils who have experienced **one** permanent exclusion. Pupils who have had a second permanent exclusion are not placed immediately in secondary schools, but continue – and often finish – the statutory phase of their education in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) for KS3 (ages 11-13) or KS4 (ages 14-16).
4. It is rare for a pupil to be permanently excluded twice. In the case of double exclusion in secondary education, students may be admitted to a high school if, after a period in a PRU, they, their parents and the PRU feel it is in the student's best interests to do so.

Primary

5. Herefordshire is fortunate in having a relatively low number of children permanently excluded from primary schools (Appendix 1). The low numbers enable the Herefordshire Education Service to have the following arrangements for KS1 (ages 4-6) and KS2 pupils (ages 7-11):
 - A minimum of 5 hours individual tuition is provided initially, usually at a location that ensures the health and safety of both staff and pupils. This can be the pupil's home if assessed as appropriate, or a neutral setting, for example a room provided at The Brookfield School.
 - After the initial period of individual tuition and assessment, the pupil is then placed, after a period of discussion with the receiving school, in an alternative primary school with a package of support, individually designed to meet the pupil's needs and to provide the additional resources the school may need.

6. The package of support usually includes advice and guidance from a range of specialists, such as funding for a Learning Support Assistant, specialised teaching support from the Medical and Behavioural Support Service (MBSS) or temporary and part-time placement at the Brookfield Intervention Unit.

Secondary

7. The majority of permanent exclusions are from secondary schools (Appendix 1). Usually, permanently excluded students will be placed, as an interim measure, in the Reintegration Support Base (RSB), which is attached to the Aconbury Centre (a Pupil Referral Unit for KS3 pupils). At the RSB, students receive education until an assessment has been made of their needs. The RSB assesses the educational progress and social maturity of each pupil and is then in a position to give advice about the most appropriate next step.
8. The parents of permanently excluded students are given direct advice and support from a specialist Social Inclusion Assistant, who is the named contact for the family. The Social Inclusion Assistant usually makes home visits to explain the programme of support to the parents and to answer any questions.
9. Most of the students are subsequently placed, via the cluster arrangements (see next paragraph and also Appendix 2), in a high school, if this is felt to be appropriate. Reintegration is usually a gradual process, with staff from the RSB maintaining contact with the students at the new schools to offer support, advice and continuity. Some students may transfer from the RSB to a PRU if a secondary school is judged not to be appropriate at that stage, or in the foreseeable future.
10. The high school cluster system aims to balance the number of excluded students to be placed in any particular school. All secondary aged students (except those excluded after Christmas in their Year 10) are placed in schools around the County through this system. The cluster system takes into account a range of factors about schools in the relevant geographical sector of the County. Such factors include:
 - the size of the school;
 - the length of time since each school had admitted a permanently excluded student;
 - how many students the school itself has permanently excluded;
 - specific details – for example, the adverse effect the student may have in a particular year group at the receiving school.
11. The present system aims to be as fair as possible given the reservations and concern most schools will feel when asked to admit excluded pupils. The system was reviewed and agreed in the Spring of 2003 by a group of Headteachers and Education Directorate staff. For most schools, it has worked well and Headteachers recognise that the most effective long-term answer is for schools to manage the social inclusion and special needs programme in their own school, so as to limit the number of students they themselves exclude permanently.
12. Those students permanently excluded from school after Christmas in Year 10 are usually placed directly into 1 of the 2 Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Units. The Education Service is presently reviewing this particular policy.

13. In the revised Behaviour Support Plan, one of the identified strategies will be to develop and publish a protocol to state clearly the policy and practice for placing permanently excluded pupils in schools. The protocol aims to cast light on the processes and procedures so that all parties are aware and clear of their role. A draft copy of the protocol is included at Appendix 3, but has yet to be subject to wider consultation.

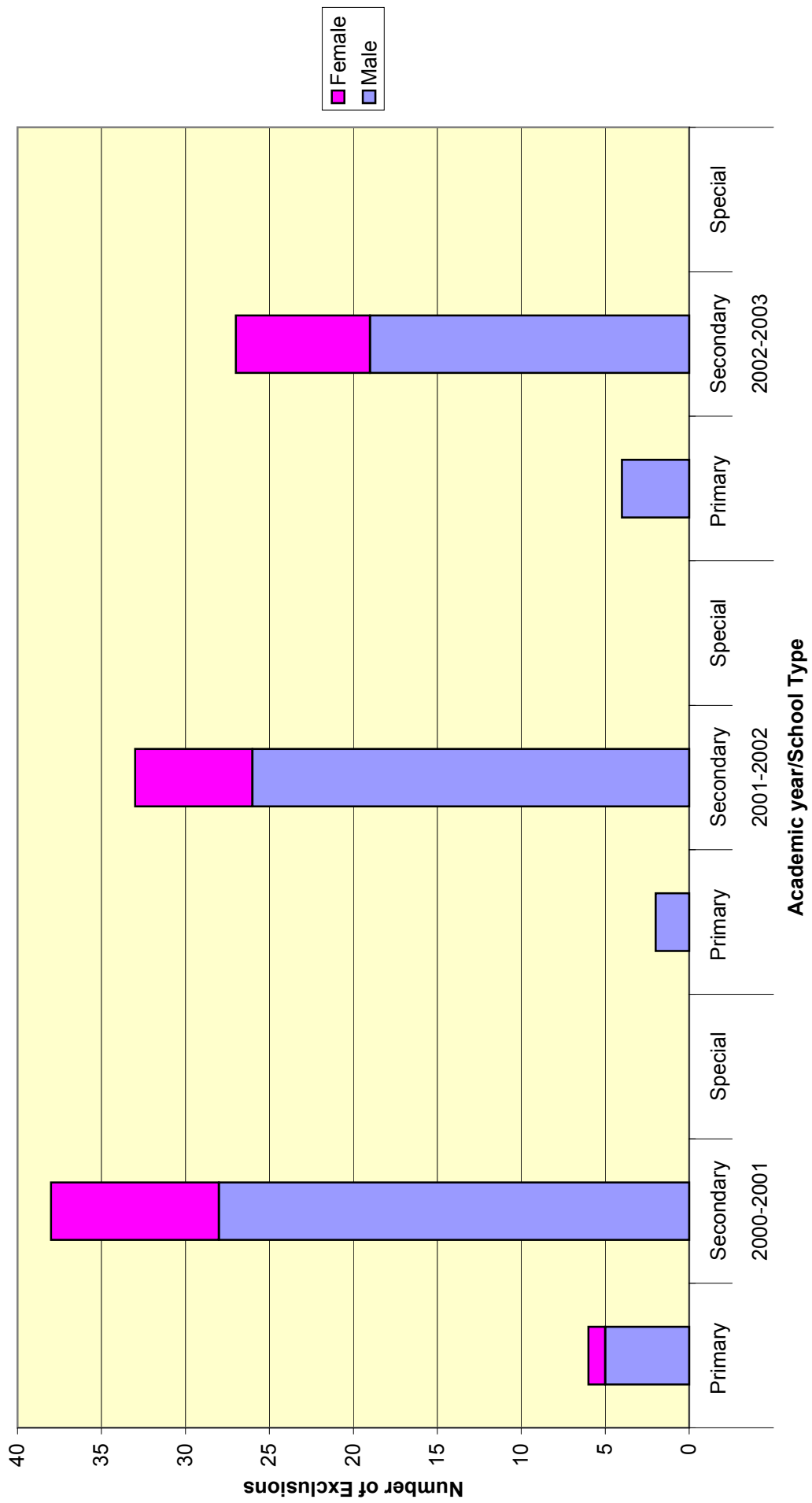
RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the report and identify any aspects of the current arrangements needing further explanation or development.

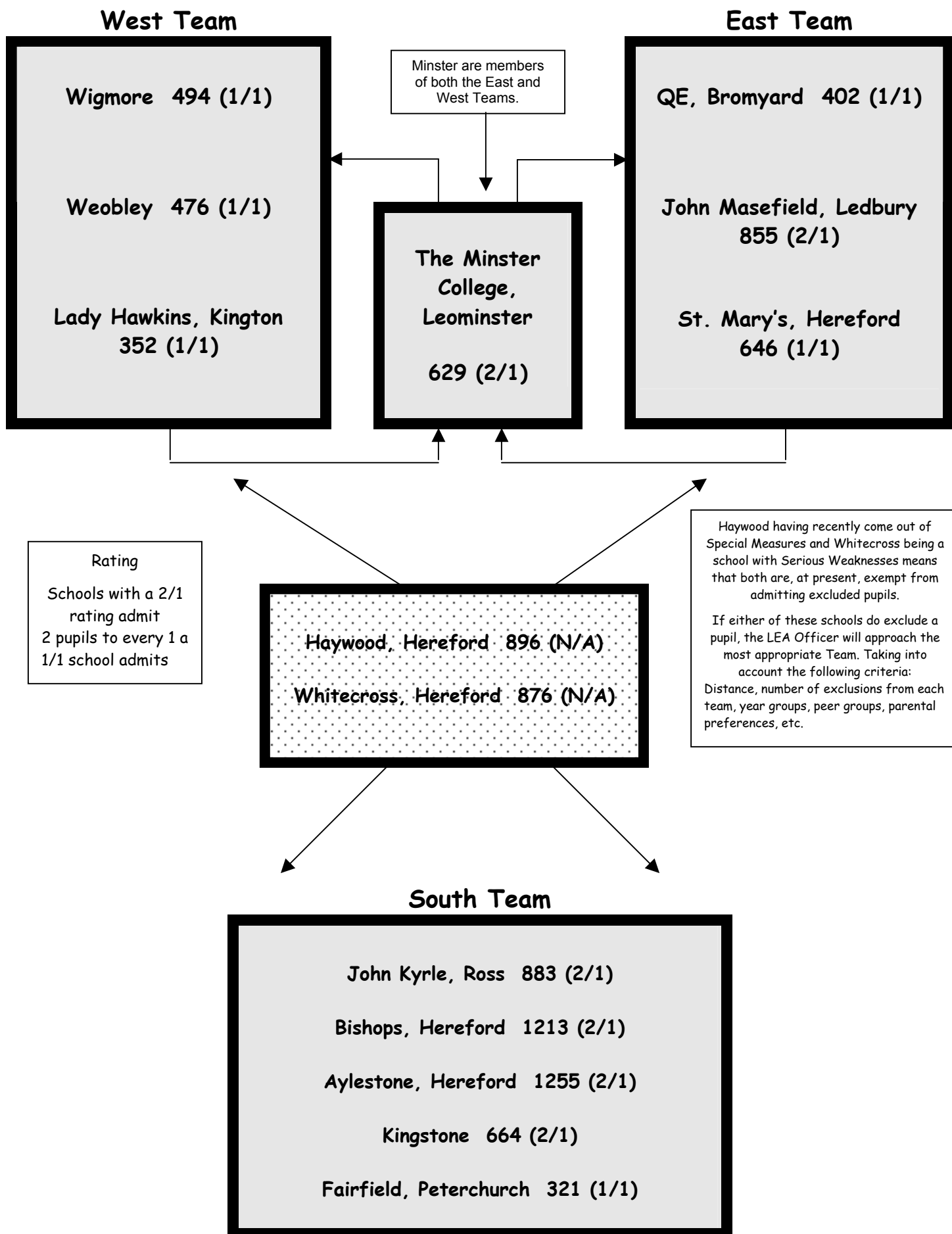
BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Behaviour Support Plan
- SEN Policy

Permanent Exclusions (Appendix 1)



CLUSTER SYSTEM



It is hoped that, through termly meetings, all pupils will be placed within a Team. If this is not possible through negotiation, then the LEA will still have the authority to direct a particular school to admit an excluded pupil.

PROTOCOL FOR PLACING PUPILS FOLLOWING PERMANENT EXCLUSION

This protocol outlines the procedures followed when pupils are permanently excluded from schools in Herefordshire. Although few schools welcome the idea of accommodating pupils excluded from other schools, this protocol aims to clearly set out the process so that it is transparent for all to see.

Primary

Following a first permanent exclusion, primary pupils will receive home tuition or a period in the Brookfield intervention class, if appropriate, until a place in another school is found. In those cases where a placement in another primary school is appropriate the school is identified taking the following criteria into account:

- Places available;
- Geographical location;
- Parental preference;
- Class size;
- Local issues, for example number and nature of pupils with SEN.

When a school is identified, there is a period of negotiation with the Headteacher and the Governors. Normally there will be a planned period of reintegration. Characteristics of such a plan will include:

- a gradual build-up of time in the school with continued home tuition or attendance at the Brookfield intervention class;
- a programme of support, advice and guidance offered to the school;
- regular reviews.

For primary pupils who have been permanently excluded twice, a placement in another primary school is not usually appropriate.

Secondary

Following a first permanent exclusion, students in Years 7, 8, or 9 or in the first term of year 10, will be placed, on a temporary basis, at the Reintegration Support Base (RSB). The RSB is located on the same site as, but is separate from, the Aconbury Centre. The RSB provides education while a longer-term placement is arranged. In addition, it can carry out assessments of students to help plan for the next stage of their education.

Following a stay at the RSB, students are placed either in high schools following the agreed Cluster System, or transfer to a PRU or special school. Students placed in a school using the Cluster System normally follow an agreed reintegration programme (often outlined in a Pastoral Support Programme) involving a gradual build-up of time in school and a programme of continuing support.

The Cluster System is a process that aims to meet the needs of permanently excluded secondary students around the county in a fair and manageable way. The system was reviewed in 2003 by a group of secondary headteachers. Factors taken into account when identifying a school include:

- Geographic location;
- Size of school;
- Numbers of students excluded from school;
- Date when last excluded student placed;
- Local factors, for example, serious family problems.

For students beyond their first term in Year 10 or have had two permanent exclusions, another high school is not usually appropriate. For these students, placement in a PRU or special school, if appropriate, is usually the best option.

PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE (PRUS): PROGRESS REPORT

Report By: HEAD OF CHILDREN'S AND STUDENTS' SERVICES

Wards Affected

Countywide.

Purpose

1. To consider the progress made towards implementing the targets identified during the Best Value Review in 2002 (Appendix 1) and to consider any further action that needs to be taken.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Report

3. Herefordshire has 3 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) – one for Key Stage 3 pupils (ages 11-13) and 2 for Key Stage 4 pupils (ages 14-16).
4. The unit for Key Stage 3 pupils is based at the Aconbury Centre. It occupies the refurbished premises of Blackmarston Special School and provides good quality accommodation. Aconbury has the capacity to cater for 32 full-time equivalent (FTE) pupils. The focus for the KS3 PRU is around intervention and reintegration, which it does successfully, and the work of the Centre is highly valued by high schools. Following a significant reduction in the number of medical referrals, the Centre is able to offer a greater number of placements for intervention and support work, including placements under Personal Support Plans (PSPs). PSPs provide a proactive approach to behaviour management, which is proving successful. Aconbury is also able to work comprehensively with high school colleagues on training and the development of strategies for managing challenging behaviour. Some pupils move on from the KS3 PRU to one of the KS4 PRUs, where appropriate.
5. The 2 PRUs for Key Stage 4 pupils are -
 - St. David's, which provides excellent facilities in refurbished and extended accommodation at the premises of the former John Venn unit. The Centre caters for 35 FTE pupils.
 - The Priory in Leominster provides more limited but pleasant accommodation for 25 FTE pupils. The Centre is well-maintained and, although limited in its capacity, provides very good facilities for its pupils.

6. The focus for both KS4 PRUs is examination preparation, and preparation for the world of work, including work experience and alternative curriculum activities. The overall programme includes access to college placements, vocational training and supervised leisure activities.
7. At KS4, the difficulties of subject and examination access precludes much reintegration work with high schools, although it is still possible to reintegrate a few pupils for whom a very short term placement in a PRU is appropriate.
8. All 3 PRUs provide calm and positive supportive environments for their pupils. Many students placed there experience sustained success for the first time in their school careers.
9. The PRUs provide good value for money, but are expensive compared with high school placements. However, the educational loss to these pupils, and the potentially adverse impact on others in their age group in high schools, of not providing them with the individual attention that a PRU can offer, would be much higher.

Staffing

10. The Headteacher at the Aconbury PRU, who has had 2 excellent years there, has resigned from August this year. A replacement has been appointed who has the qualifications and experience to build on the excellent work the unit has achieved.
11. The Headteacher at St. David's (formerly the Headteacher at The Priory) moved to the newly refurbished Centre in September 2003 and he and the staff continue to develop excellent opportunities for the pupils.
12. The Priory has had an acting and part-time Headteacher since the former Head moved in September. An experienced replacement has now been appointed from Worcestershire, and he joins The Priory after Easter.
13. Within the Service, the pressures on staff are very high and the stress levels are a major factor in staff movement. All staff have access to a counselling service and are encouraged to use it. There is also a high level of involvement from the Head of Children's and Students' Services, the Manager of Special Educational Needs and the Manager of Pupil, School and Parent Support, because of the level of continuing support and advice that needs to be readily available at all times.

Ofsted

14. All 3 PRUs had very successful Ofsteds in 2000 – summaries from these reports are included at Appendix 1. They have all developed considerably since then. It is anticipated that further good reports will be achieved in an area which is frequently criticised by Ofsted teams during the inspections across the Country.

The Arrow Group

15. Following the Best Value Review, an outreach class has been developed and piloted for 6-8 statemented pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD). It makes provision for KS4 pupils and is attached to The Brookfield School. The 2-year pilot study period is reaching its conclusion. After a recent review of its success to date, the Cabinet Member (Education) agreed to a recommendation for the Arrow

Group to be made a permanent feature of The Brookfield School. The Teacher-in-Charge and some of the students took part in the Members' Seminar on 5th December 2003.

16. The success of the Arrow Group has grown out of the flexible provision and caring leadership provided by 2 well-qualified staff. They have very successfully engaged with, and provided opportunities for, a very disaffected and damaged group of young people, who would otherwise have placed other financial and social demands on the local community.

Primary Age Pupils

17. There are no primary PRUs in Herefordshire. The Medical and Behavioural Support Service (MBSS) work with pupils with problems within their primary school setting. The work of the MBSS Primary Intervention Team is highly regarded by schools and there are, as a result of excellent work by schools supported by MBSS, very few permanent exclusions from primary schools (see separate report elsewhere on this agenda).

Further work

18. Appendix 2 lists the targets identified during the Best Value Review of the Service, and reported to the Education Scrutiny Committee on 3rd December 2002. The report has been updated to show current progress.
19. There is a cause for concern currently about the consequences of there being a very small number of girls for whom an EBD statement for The Brookfield School is appropriate. The specific point of concern is that, at any moment in time, Brookfield does not have an appropriate peer group of girls for the school to be regarded, securely, as co-educational provision.
20. The situation, which has attracted comment from Ofsted, needs to be kept under review. If it proves to be a longer term problem, alternative provision may need to be developed for the small number of relevant girls.
21. Further work is also being developed around therapeutic provision at St. David's. It is important that such a development should be progressed as a multi-agency initiative.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the provision made by the Pupil Referral Service and the progress towards achieving the targets of the Best Value Review, and identify any other areas not highlighted in this report that require further action.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Behaviour Support Plan
- SEN Policy
- Education Development Plan

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRE

The centre is a pupil referral unit (PRU) serving up to 30 Key Stage 3 pupils from the city of Hereford and its surrounding area. It was previously known as Eign Road PRU but transferred to new premises at the start of the autumn term this year. Pupils attend for 12.5 hours each week. Pupils admitted to the centre have all struggled to access mainstream education on account of their emotional or behavioural difficulties. At present there are 20 on roll, most of whom have developed a phobia of school but several of whom have been excluded from previous schools on account of their unacceptable behaviour. Pupils can be admitted at any time in the school year, often at short notice. There are 16 boys and 4 girls, all white and English speaking. All pupils have special educational needs, one has a statement of special educational need and several others are undergoing assessment. Most pupils have a below average attainment on entry but there is a very broad range, with a small minority of broadly average ability pupils and a similar minority of well below average ability. It is the aim of the centre to return as many pupils as possible to mainstream schools or to find appropriate full time education in specialist provision when this can better meet their needs.

HOW GOOD THE CENTRE IS

This is a very good centre. It succeeds in returning a large proportion of pupils to full-time education within a year of admission. It does this by teaching them very well, thus helping them to achieve their individual targets. Some of these targets are academic and others relate to personal development. In each instance expectations are very high and they are invariably met. This is achieved because the leadership and management of the centre are very strong and have built up a team that works well together to create a centre that is safe, happy and very professional. The high standards promoted by the centre lead to the centre giving very good value for money.

What the centre does well

- High quality teaching leads to pupils making very good progress
- The headteacher is providing excellent day to day management, is leading by example and is setting very high standards for staff and pupils
- The centre is a safe and happy place, pupils enjoy attending, behave well and work hard
- There is a good focus upon English, mathematics and science. Numeracy and literacy feature strongly throughout the curriculum
- There are very strong links with parents. These are aided by regular communication and the exchange of good quality information.

What could be improved

- Opportunities for pupils to participate in practical activities such as cookery, wood and metalwork.
- The management committee's involvement in the leadership and management of the centre

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the local education authority.

HOW THE CENTRE HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The centre has not previously been inspected

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils are achieving in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the centre.

Progress in:	by age 14	Key	
English	A	Very good	A
Mathematics	A	Good	B
Science	A	Satisfactory	C
Personal, social and health education	A	Unsatisfactory	D
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	Poor	E

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

Achievement is very high across the whole curriculum. Pupils make very good progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening and in mathematics. In science they make excellent progress with regards the study of living things but have few opportunities to study physical and chemical processes. Progress is very good in physical education, art, geography, history and information technology, which is particularly well used in support of other subjects. The systematic attention paid to promoting numeracy and literacy skills in almost every lesson is resulting in very good progress in both areas. A high quality PHSE programme is facilitating high achievement with regards personal development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the centre	Very good. Pupils show interest in their work and make a great effort to do their best. They often become engrossed in their lessons, ask sensible questions and develop enquiring minds.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Several pupils have entered the centre with a past record of poor behaviour but they make great progress in improving it. There is very little bullying. Pupils are helped to relax and this significantly improves progress.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Underlying the whole success of the centre are the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Trust that is built up, which helps pupils to take on more personal responsibility and to face up to their problems with a positive outlook.
Attendance	Towards the end of last year the non attendance of a small number of pupils distorted overall figures but so far this year there has been a significant improvement with nearly all pupils establishing good patterns of attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Seventy per cent of all teaching is very good or better and the standard never fell below good throughout the inspection. The very good progress that pupils are making indicates that this very high standard of teaching is consistently maintained. What impresses is that teaching is strong in all subjects and that all teachers are achieving a very high standard, there are no weak links. Teachers demonstrate excellent skills in the teaching of basic skills in almost every lesson and their marking of pupils' work is exemplary, giving pupils immense help in understanding what they are doing well and where they could improve. In 15% of lessons teachers achieve an excellent standard which inspires pupils to put great effort into their work and promotes a very high standard of learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CENTRE

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is a very good focus upon English, mathematics and science. Literacy, numeracy and the use of information technology feature strongly in all subjects. Very good attention is paid to geography and history and there are strong art and physical education programmes. Weaknesses in the curriculum are the limited opportunities that pupils have to develop practical skills, an imbalance within the science curriculum and the lack of music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers take great care to ensure that work is carefully planned to address pupils' needs so that all can achieve success.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Through the strong personal, social and health education programme pupils are encouraged to develop strong social and moral values. Their work is valued and they are helped to feel better about themselves. They are taught to show concern for others less well off than themselves. A strong programme of visits and visitors helps promote cultural awareness and very good attention is paid to developing an understanding of cultures other than their own. Cultural development is weakened by the lack of music in the centre.
How well the centre cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff understand the pupils' needs very well and are well placed to help them. Child protection procedures are very good and good policies are in place to guide the promotion of high standards of care. Staff and parents work very well together to secure the best outcomes for

	pupils.
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HOW WELL THE CENTRE IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. In an unassuming manner the headteacher leads a very strong team. She has managed the many recent changes in the provision particularly well and has an excellent understanding as to how the centre can continue to grow and improve. Responsibilities have been allocated with consideration, ensuring that the varied skills of all staff are put to best use.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	The local education authority has been slow to establish a management committee. One now exists but it has yet to meet and has had no impact on the leadership and management of the centre. The local education authority has otherwise supported the centre well.
The centre's evaluation of its performance	Very good. In such a small centre much of the monitoring is informal but it is effective in that it is clearly identifying areas of strength and weakness and priorities for development. Information is shared well with the local education authority and this is helping to improve overall provision.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The centre has control of only a small part of the total budget but it spends wisely. Staff are particularly well deployed, efficient use is made of accommodation and resources.

The accommodation is excellent. The building has been restored to a very high standard. There are excellent classrooms with specialist provision for art, science and information technology. Very good use is made of resources outside the centre, such as the pool and leisure centre. Resources are very good and strongly support learning because they are well matched to the needs of the pupils. There are, however, insufficient resources to support the expansion of practical work with wood, metal and plastics.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE CENTRE

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy • The quality of teaching • The information they receive about their children's progress • The friendliness of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small minority of parents would like to see more work sent home

All parents are very positive about the centre and are very grateful for the way in which it is

helping their children. The inspection team feels that these views are well justified. It also feels that the concerns regarding homework are unjustified and that homework is actually of a very high standard.

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

The Priory Centre is a part-time pupil referral unit for secondary aged pupils at Key Stage 4 within the recently formed unitary authority of Herefordshire. Pupils between the ages of 14 to 16 years may be referred to the unit at any time during the year, although this is often by the January of Year 10. There are places for 30 part-time pupils who are taught in up to three groups, during each morning and afternoon session. Most pupils receive 12 ½ hours of teaching per week, although some attend a local college on a Wednesday morning and receive 15 hours tuition per week. Currently there are 8 girls and 14 boys on roll all in Year 10 and 11, of which 14 pupils are dual registered, while the remaining eight are registered only at the unit. The majority of pupils, stay at the unit until the end of their compulsory education, although a few do re-integrate back into mainstream schools. Most pupils at Year 10 are school refusers and few have been excluded from their mainstream schools, although the majority of Year 11 pupils have been excluded. Pupils do not need a statement of special educational needs to attend the unit, although three pupils do have a statement. At present no pupils have English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

The Priory Centre has undergone recent and significant change and is making good progress. The quality of the unit's leadership is very good, while the quality of teaching and the curriculum is good. This creates an atmosphere that is calm, supportive and encouraging to pupils, who make good progress with their learning and very good progress with their behaviour. The unit makes efficient use of its staff and its learning resources and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the unit does well

- The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher is very good.
- The quality of teaching is good and as a result pupils learn with confidence and enjoyment.
- Pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm for their work are very good.
- The quality of careers education and guidance and the variety of work experience placements are very good and offer pupils the opportunity to make an informed choice about their future.
- The quality of relationships between staff and pupils and the pupils themselves are very good.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good which has a significant impact on their learning.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their moral and social skills are very good.

What could be improved

- There is an urgent need for the Local Education Authority to clearly identify the budget available for the unit and provide appropriate training for the headteacher and administrative assistant.
- The quality of the information received from some schools referring pupils is inconsistent and does not provide the unit with a clear indication of pupils' needs.
- The quality and use of assessment to support pupils' learning is inconsistent and does not aid future planning.
- Although the curriculum is appropriate to pupils' needs, there should be more emphasis on developing pupils' numeracy skills.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the local education authority.

HOW THE UNIT HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the unit's first inspection.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors’ judgements about how well pupils are achieving in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the unit.

Progress in:	By age 16	Key	
English	B	Very good	A
Mathematics	C	Good	B
Science	C	Satisfactory	C
Personal, social and health education	C	Unsatisfactory	D
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	Poor	E

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

Pupils are learning effectively in English, information technology and art. Pupils’ learning in mathematics and science is less secure which is in part due to the curriculum offered and the frequency of lessons. Pupils make very good progress with their behavioural targets.

PUPILS’ ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Very good, most pupils enjoy attending the unit and are keen and enthusiastic to learn. Some pupils have chosen to attend the unit at additional times in order to complete their GCSE coursework.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond extremely well to the high expectations of staff to behave well in and around the unit.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils’ personal development is very good, as are their relationships with staff and each other.
Attendance	Although satisfactory overall, many pupils have significantly improved their attendance since starting at the unit. However, there are still a few pupils who refuse to attend on a regular basis despite the best efforts of the unit.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. ‘Satisfactory’ means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good overall and occasionally very good in English and information technology. As a result pupils listen carefully to staff and learn with interest and enthusiasm. Overall, teaching is good or better in 72 per cent of lessons, and in 33 per cent it is very good. Literacy skills are taught well, although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend

their numeracy skills. Many pupils have well developed information technology skills and these are increasingly used across a number of subjects. Although many pupils are provided with appropriate tasks that match their needs and ages, this is not consistent across all subjects. Learning resources are used very well and are readily available. Positive aspects of teaching which contributes particularly well to pupils' learning include: stimulating and challenging lessons; enthusiastic teaching that includes a clear understanding of pupils' needs; high expectations of pupils to produce good quality work and behave well, and lessons that are taught at pace. The careful ongoing assessment of pupils' needs and the use of this information to plan suitably challenging tasks that match their individual needs could further improve the quality of teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall, and the quality of the unit's careers education and guidance is very good. The subjects taught at the unit have been carefully chosen to support pupils' learning, particularly their literacy, information technology and creative skills through art. At present, insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' numeracy skills and there are no opportunities for pupils to participate in any physical education activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, teachers ensure that pupils with additional special educational needs have appropriately planned tasks that match their needs including assistance from support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils' social skills are very well developed through carefully planned activities, including personal, social and health education. The unit has a strong moral code and pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Opportunities for pupils' to develop spirituality are improving, although there are few multi-cultural images within the unit.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	Very good overall. All staff provide high levels of care and support for their pupils. The procedures to monitor and improve pupils' attendance are very good and this is having a significant impact on the attendance rates of most pupils. Although procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory the use of this assessment to inform future planning is less than satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the teacher in charge and other key staff	The headteacher leads and manages the unit very effectively and is acutely aware of what needs further improvement. He is well supported by staff, the Local Education Authority's designated officer and headteachers from the other pupil referral units.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	The management committee, although formed and with appropriate draft terms of reference, have yet to meet. It is important that this group meets to oversee the work of the unit and the development of the Local Education Authority's service, especially during the current period of change.
The unit's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of how the unit is performing and what needs to be improved to make it better.

The strategic use of resources	The unit uses its limited finances very well and learning resources have been carefully purchased to support the curriculum.
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The headteacher and the Local Education Authority’s designated officer have a clear vision for the future of the unit and that of the service, such as, a commitment to provide 30 full time places at the unit by 2002. In an effort to improve standards, the headteacher has started to informally monitor, the quality of teaching and pupils’ learning, and close attention is being given to extending the range of accredited courses available to pupils. Despite having very limited finances available to the unit, spending decisions are carefully considered and learning resources are purchased with the principles of best value in mind.

PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are happy with the provision offered by the unit and say their children enjoy attending. • Pupils’ behaviour is good, as is the quality of teaching. • The unit is well lead and parents believe they are kept well informed about their child’s progress. • Parents believe the unit sets high standards enabling their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents would like to see more homework set. • A few parents feel there is a lack of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors endorse parents’ very positive comments about the unit. Although the headteacher agrees with parents’ concerns regarding homework and is looking at ways of improving this, most teachers do set homework for pupils, which is regularly completed. There is a lack of activities outside of lessons but as pupils only attend the unit part-time and most travel great distances it is very difficult to provide additional activities. However, some pupils are involved in their own Enterprise activities outside of the school day and this is to be commended.

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIT

St. David’s is a pupil referral unit for pupils with a wide range of difficulties. It provides for up to 36 Key Stage 4 pupils, although only 16 can be accommodated on site at any one time. It forms part of the provision of Herefordshire’s Medical and Behavioural Support Service (MBSS) drawing pupils mainly from the south of the County, complementing a similar provision in Leominster. There have been significant changes to its character and population in the last 2-3 years and further changes are planned to enable it to provide for up to 50 full-time pupils by 2002. The pupil group includes those who are permanently excluded in Key Stage 4, pupils with medical, including psychiatric, difficulties and pregnant schoolgirls. There is also provision to support pupils from high schools on a ‘respite’ basis and pupils on fixed-term exclusions over 15 days.

There are currently 37 pupils on roll, evenly distributed between year groups and between boys and girls. At present 22 pupils are ‘dual registered’, although effectively the unit provides their only access to educational facilities. Pupils attend part-time for up to 18 hours a week, with an average offer of 14.5 hours. They arrive with a broad range of prior attainment, but this is generally below average as a result of their previous experiences. An increasing number have statements of special educational needs, of which there are 6 at present. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The unit aims to create an environment that enables the pupils to manage their own behaviour, reach their academic potential, improve their feelings of self-worth and learn to socialise appropriately with their peers and with the staff. In order to improve its ability to do so, it has adopted a relevant range of priorities for development.

HOW GOOD THE UNIT IS

The unit is very effective in enabling a group of pupils with significant adjustment difficulties to achieve success in their academic, social and emotional development. Within the very severe constraints imposed by the inadequate premises and the limited resources, good teaching supports a range of accreditation which pupils would otherwise not have the opportunity to achieve. The clear educational direction, the effective management and the very good ethos promoted by a united staff with a coherent and unified vision all contribute well to the overall effectiveness. In terms of what it is able to offer, the unit provides satisfactory value for money in spite of the severe constraints on its work and the limited attendance of a significant number of pupils.

What the unit does well

- It addresses its core objectives well and enables the pupils to become confident successful learners.
- Good teaching largely compensates for poor facilities and inadequate resources.
- Consistently good relationships with a good balance between empathy and challenge promote learning well.
- Teachers’ detailed knowledge of individual pupils’ needs and circumstances enables them to support pupils through their emotional and social difficulties.
- Very good resources for information and communications technology are very effectively used.
- The unit has made good progress in developing an alternative vocational curriculum for some of its pupils.
- Very good links with other services are well used to enhance the learning opportunities for pupils.
- The unit has established very good links with parents that contribute significantly to pupils’ achievement.

What could be improved

- Accommodation is poor; it is inadequate and inappropriate for the curriculum needs of the pupils.
- Resources in most subjects are inadequate to support the full range of National Curriculum requirements.
- Procedures for identifying and assessing special educational needs are under-developed, especially where needs arise from medical or psychiatric problems.
- Pupils who could make use of full-time education with a broader curriculum do not have this opportunity.
- There is insufficient attention to individual planning linked to individualised learning objectives in lessons.
- Provision for pupils’ physical development is inadequate.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the local education authority.

HOW THE UNIT HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The unit has not previously been inspected

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors’ judgements about how well pupils are achieving in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the unit.

Progress in:	by age 16	Key	
English	B	very good	A
mathematics	C	good	B
science	B	satisfactory	C
personal, social and health education	A	unsatisfactory	D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	poor	E

** IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs*

Although pupils receive part-time education only, they make satisfactory and, in most subjects offered, good progress. They arrive often with attainment depressed by their inability to make use of mainstream school provision and for some this is marked. About a half gained GCSE passes in one or more subjects last year with a total of 50 passes, averaging 3.5 passes each, mainly in the range from grade D to G. In addition to these, a significant number of pupils obtain the Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA), usually with merit or distinction. More general achievement is recorded through the Youth Award (bronze level) and Basic Skills Scheme where, last year, seven pupils obtained nine passes including one distinction and one merit. In general, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make satisfactory progress within the limited curriculum but, for those with statements, progress is unsatisfactory, as they do not receive the provision specified in their statements.

Good progress is made in English and science; many pupils enter with attainments well below expected levels but make sufficient progress to achieve GCSE. There is also good progress in information and communications technology (ICT), which pupils use effectively in other subjects. Striking progress is made in PSHE and the knowledge pupils acquire is applied well in gaining accreditation through the Youth Award Scheme (ASDAN).

PUPILS’ ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the unit	Pupils who attend the unit are keen to do their best and apply themselves well. They value what the unit offers and demonstrate a compliant commitment to their work. They speak positively of what it has helped them to achieve. They show a responsible, independent attitude to their studies.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good at all times, mature and often thoughtful. Pupils show sensitivity and respect towards others. They treat visitors, including each other’s parents, with appropriate respect.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils attending the unit demonstrate confidence and increasing self-belief. They form very good relationships with their peers and the staff, and this makes a significant impact on standards of achievement
Attendance	The attendance rate is very low, consistent with the problems associated with these pupils, and a number of pupils are persistently absent. Nearly all absence is authorised

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. ‘Satisfactory’ means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is good overall; it is at least good in five out of six lessons and very good in one sixth. This quality is achieved in spite of the poor accommodation, which severely limits what teachers can offer and the unsatisfactory resources for most subjects. Teachers know the pupils very well and demonstrate a very good balance between empathy for their personal difficulties and a determination to present challenging targets for achievement. They consistently and successfully pursue good relationships, which provide a secure basis for pupils with a wide range of difficulties to come to terms with and, in many cases, make progress towards overcoming these difficulties. The consistent and sympathetic management of pupils through high expectations of work and behaviour ensures that lessons take place in an orderly and supportive atmosphere. In a number of subjects, the knowledge and understanding teachers bring to bear is secure and sufficient to support pupils to GCSE level. In those subjects where they are less secure, the ethos which is created in lessons enables satisfactory learning to take place, with pupils taking a significant level of responsibility for their own learning. At times, the pace of lessons is reduced and, overall, there is insufficient planning to address individual targets. In spite of this, the high quality of the rest of the lesson ensures that teaching is always at least satisfactory.

For most pupils who attend, teaching supports progress towards GCSE and other accreditation; for those pupils with basic literacy and numeracy needs, additional support is satisfactory. The unit meets the needs of most pupils well, but for those with statements of SEN, there is inadequate provision to meet that specified in statements.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE UNIT

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall and largely meets the requirements for pupil referral units. It is significantly enhanced by very good quality PSHE and effective provision for careers and vocational education. It is least effective in providing regular opportunities for physical development, as arrangements are unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The curriculum for many pupils with SEN arising from medical or psychiatric difficulties is unsatisfactory because their needs are not properly assessed in order that appropriate curricular, including National Curriculum provision, can be made. Pupils with statements of SEN do not receive the provision specified, as the unit is unable to make it.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The cultivation of pupils’ personal development is very effective, especially in the promotion of their spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory and within the curriculum it is good.
How well the unit cares for its pupils	The unit provides very good educational and personal support and guidance for pupils and monitors well pupils’ academic achievement and personal development. Generally pupils are cared for well, but the accommodation hinders adherence to all health and safety regulations.

The unit works very well in partnership with parents. Parents receive very good information about the organisation of the unit and are kept closely informed about their children’s development. These links make a significant contribution to pupils’ achievement.

HOW WELL THE UNIT IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The LEA and the teacher-in-charge have a clear view of the future of the unit and the unit meets well most of its aims.
How well the management committee fulfils its responsibilities	There is no management committee. The LEA meets all the legal responsibilities relating to pupil referral units except with regard to accommodation and facilities.
The unit’s evaluation of its performance	The manager of the service has close and frequent contact with the unit but there are no formal evaluative mechanisms in place. Appraisal does not involve the direct observation of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	The unit uses the accommodation, staff and resources available to it very well. The spending of funds for training and initiatives, for example in information technology, has been planned well.

Teachers and assistant staff are sufficient for the current demands made by low numbers and a restricted curriculum. The accommodation is poor; it lacks sufficient space in every aspect and many facilities, for example a staff room and separate lavatories for pupils and staff, do not exist. Resources for learning are insufficient in many subjects and unsatisfactory overall, although very good in information technology. The leadership and day-to-day management of the teacher-in-charge are good; there is a widespread commitment to high standards and good attention to administrative detail. The unit is careful to obtain the best value it can from its limited spending opportunities.

PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE UNIT

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The knowledge teachers have of their children’s needs. • The supportive environment and level of caring. • The success that pupils have in examinations. • The way pupils are prepared for the next stage of life • The way staff listen to their concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for full-time provision in the unit. • The accommodation and facilities.

The inspection team agreed with parents that the unit makes very good supportive provision for their children. The accommodation and facilities were found to be woefully inadequate. Inspectors shared the view of some parents that their children should have access to a fuller curriculum and more teaching time in this setting, and that it is unsatisfactory that pupils who could make use of full-time education are not receiving it.

BEST VALUE REVIEW TARGETS 2002**4.1.2 Targets**

	Performance measure	Target 2002-2003	Target 2005-2006
A1	Reduce the percentage of school phobics in PRUs (50% in 2001/2003)	40%	10%
B1	Reduce transport costs to PRUs	£200,000	£100,000
C1	No target is set for this action as, currently, additional provision is not currently available but could be made in the future if demand is shown through monitoring	N/A	N/A
D1	Reduce permanent exclusions by 10% from 35 to 32 in the first year	32 permanent exclusions	N/A
E1	Virtual classroom operational	December 2002	<i>The Arrow Group in place as a permanent facility of the Brookfield School</i>
F1	John Venn Unit operational as new location for St David's PRU	September 2003	N/A

4.1.3 Actions

	High priority		
	Action	Officer responsible	Date for completion
A1	Implement measures to place the diagnosis of school phobics on a more professional basis i.e. only by assessment by an Educational Psychologist or Clinical Psychologist to ensure that school refusers don't go into PRUs	Manager of Pupil, School & Parent Support	Completed
B1	Develop and implement a coherent and explicit policy regarding eligibility for access to transport in PRUs	Manager of Pupil, School & Parent Support	Completed
D1	Review and analyse exclusion data with a view to implementing measures which will be targeted at priority areas See also MBSS Improvement Plan Items B1 to B4.	Manager of Pupil, School & Parent Support	Completed
E1	Develop a virtual classroom system for Key Stage 4 statemented students from PRUs and Brookfield School to free up places. Monitor the impact on the availability of PRU and Brookfield School places.	Manager of Pupil, School & Parent Support	December 2002 <i>Completed and reviewed</i>

E2	Monitor the number of children seen within the system and assess the value added to students of the virtual classroom.	Manager of Special Educational Needs	Annually – first review in July 2003 <i>Reviewed Jan. 2004</i>
F1	Refurbish the John Venn Unit and relocate St David's PRU	Head of CASS & Manager of Pupil, School & Parent Support	September 2003 <i>Completed</i>

Medium priority			
	Action	Officer responsible	Date for completion
A1	Monitor the number of phobics in PRUs on an annual basis at the end of each school year	Manager of Pupil, School & Parent Support	Annually – first review July 2003 <i>Review indicated a 50% reduction at KS3 and a 20% reduction at KS4</i>
C1	Conduct an annual review at the end of each academic year of pupils with statements requiring specialist EBD provision that are placed in PRUs to monitor demand levels for potential additional EDB provision.	Manager of Pupil, School & Parent Support	July 2003 <i>A problem has been identified with provision for EBD girls.</i>

5 Monitoring and reporting arrangements

The following monitoring and reporting arrangements will apply to the implementation of this Plan:

- Performance on actions planned and against targets will be monitored quarterly or as appropriate by the Manager of Pupil, School & Parent Support. Appropriate corrective action will be taken as required.
- Performance against targets will be monitored quarterly by the Head of Children's and Students Services and appropriate action taken as required.
- Performance, and any corrective action taken, will be reported [time period to be defined] to the Executive Member who will determine whether any further action, or more detailed monitoring, is required.
- The Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis will undertake monitoring of the Improvement Plan.

BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2003-2004**Report By: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION****Wards Affected**

Countywide

Purpose

1. To consider outcomes on the national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) relating to the Education Directorate for 2003-2004.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Report

3. Annually, the Education Directorate is required to submit 25 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) to the Audit Commission. For 2003-2004 -
 - 12 targets have been achieved or exceeded.
 - 9 targets have been missed by a narrow margin.
 - 4 targets have been missed by over 10%.
4. Of the targets missed by more than 10%, BVPI 40 (Pupils achieving level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 mathematics) has already been reported to Scrutiny Committee (23rd September 2003 and 19th January 2004). Attendance at primary school (BVPI 46) is also below that anticipated. The reasons for this are currently unclear and investigations will begin shortly.
5. The other two of the 4 targets missed by more than 10% relate to the percentage of statements of special educational needs prepared within 18 weeks, both including and excluding those affected by 'exceptions to the rule'. LEAs, the health services and social services have an 18-week time limit in making a statutory assessment that these bodies must normally meet. There are circumstances in which it is not reasonable to expect the bodies concerned to meet those time scales (such as when it is necessary to seek further advice or when a child or parent is absent for more than 4 consecutive weeks) and the normal time limits do not therefore apply. Such circumstances are described as 'exceptions to the rule'.
6. The percentage of statements of special educational needs prepared within 18 weeks excluding those affected by 'exceptions to the rule' under the SEN Code of Practice (BVPI 43a) has shown an increase on the previous year's performance (from 58% to 70%) but not by as much as was hoped for. The Educational Psychology Service has significantly reduced delays. Reviewing procedures, within the process with a view to minimising possible reasons for delays in other areas under direct control, is a priority action.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Stephanie Hood on (01432) 260879

7. The percentage of statements of special educational needs prepared within 18 weeks including those affected by 'exceptions to the rule' under the SEN Code of Practice (BVPI 43b) has made only slight improvement (from 42% to 43%) and mainly reflects delays caused by the need for all the relevant health, education and social worker assessments to be completed. The issue is under discussion with the relevant professionals, and new protocols are to be put in place. Administrative procedures within the LEA will also be examined to ensure that they assist the process.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee consider the performance against national Best Value Performance Indicators for the Education Directorate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Monitoring of Performance Indicators 2003-2004

Monitoring of Performance Indicators 2003/2004

BVPI	Description	Results for 2002/03	Target for 2003/04	Result for 2003/04	Target for 2004/05	Target for 2005/06	Target for 2006/07	Comment
34a	Percentage of primary schools with 25% or more (and at least 30) of their places unfilled	15.5%	10%	9.5%	10%	10%	10%	Target achieved
34b	Percentage of secondary schools with 25% or more (and at least 30) of their places unfilled	7.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	Target achieved
38	Proportion of pupils in LEA schools in the previous summer achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* - C or equivalent	56.1%	61%	58.2%	62%	63%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Herefordshire compares favourably against both the national average (52.9%) and the statistical neighbours average (57%) See Note One
39	Percentage of 15 year old pupils in LEA schools achieving five GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to G including English and Maths	91.4%	95%	91.7%	95.5%	94%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Herefordshire compares favourably against the national average - 88.8%. Statistical neighbour average is 91.9% See Note One
40	Proportion of pupils in LEA schools in the previous summer achieving Level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 Mathematics test	75%	81.5%	74%	82%	82%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Herefordshire compares favourably against the national average (73%) and the statistical neighbour average (74%) See Note One
41	Proportion of pupils in LEA schools in the previous summer achieving Level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 English test	76%	80.5%	76.8%	81%	81%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Herefordshire compares favourably against both the national average (75%) and the statistical neighbour average (76.4%) See Note One

Appendix I

BVPI	Description	Results for 2002/03	Target for 2003/04	Result for 2003/04	Target for 2004/05	Target for 2005/06	Target for 2006/07	Comment
43a	Percentage of statements of special educational needs prepared within 18 weeks excluding those affected by "exceptions to the rule" under the SEN Code of Practice	58%	94%	69.6%	85%	90%	92%	See Note Two
43b	Percentage of statements of special educational needs prepared within 18 weeks including those affected by "exceptions to the rule" under the SEN Code of Practice	42%	94%	42.9%	85%	90%	92%	See Note Two
44	Number of pupils permanently excluded during the year from all schools maintained by the authority per 1000 pupils at all maintained schools	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	Target achieved
45	Percentage of half days missed due to total absence in secondary schools maintained by the authority	7.7%	7.5%	7.4%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	Target exceeded
46	Percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised absence in primary schools maintained by the authority	5.2%	5%	5.5%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	It is unknown why performance is below target. Investigations will shortly begin.
48	Percentage of schools maintained by the authority subject to special measures on 14 December 2000	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	Target achieved
159a	Percentage of permanently excluded pupils attending alternative tuition of 5 hours or less	7.4%	5%	7.4%	5%	5%	5%	Targets achieved – the aim is for pupils to receive 20 hours or more and the percentage of students doing so has increased
159b	Percentage of permanently excluded pupils attending alternative tuition of 6-12 hours	25.9%	20%	22.2%	20%	10%	10%	
159c	Percentage of permanently excluded pupils attending alternative tuition of 13-19 hours	18.5%	20%	7.4%	20%	20%	20%	

Appendix I

BVPI	Description	Results for 2002/03	Target for 2003/04	Result for 2003/04	Target for 2004/05	Target for 2005/06	Target for 2006/07	Comment
159d	Percentage of permanently excluded pupils attending alternative tuition of 20 hours or more	48.1%	55%	63%	55%	65%	65%	
181a	Percentage of 14 year old pupils in schools maintained by the authority achieving Level 5 or above in the Key Stage 3 English test	73.8%	75%	72%	76%	82%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Herefordshire compares favourably against the national average - 69%. The statistical neighbour average is 74.2% See Note One
181b	Percentage of 14 year old pupils in schools maintained by the authority achieving Level 5 or above in the Key Stage 3 Mathematics test	73.9%	76%	76%	78%	83%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Herefordshire compares favourably against both the national average (71%) and the statistical neighbour average (75.8%) See Note One
181c	Percentage of 14 year old pupils in schools maintained by the authority achieving Level 5 or above in the Key Stage 3 Science test	74.2%	76%	74%	77%	84%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Herefordshire compares favourably against the national average - 68%. The statistical neighbour average is 75.7% See Note One
181d	Percentage of 14 year old pupils in schools maintained by the authority achieving Level 5 or above in the Key Stage 3 ICT assessment test	N/A	72%	73%	73%	84%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Target exceeded
192b	Average number of Qualified Teacher Status teachers per non-maintained Early Years setting	N/A	1	9	10	10	10	Definition change – indicator now measures settings per teacher
193a	Schools budget as a percentage of the Schools Funding Assessment	N/A	100%	98%	98%	98%	98%	Progress within 10% of original target
193b	Increase in schools budget on the previous year as a percentage of the increase in Schools Funding Assessment on the previous year	N/A	97%	99%	99%	99%	99%	Target exceeded

Appendix I

BVPI	Description	Results for 2002/03	Target for 2003/04	Result for 2003/04	Target for 2004/05	Target for 2005/06	Target for 2006/07	Comment
194a	Percentage of pupils in schools maintained by the authority achieving Level 5 or above in Key Stage 2 English	N/A	28%	27.4%	30%	31%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Herefordshire compares favourably against the national average - 27%. The statistical neighbour average is 27.5% See Note One
194b	Percentage of pupils in schools maintained by the authority achieving Level 5 or above in Key Stage 2 Maths	N/A	32%	30%	34%	34%	Not yet negotiated with schools	Herefordshire compares favourably against both the national average (29%) and the statistical neighbour average (29.7%) See Note One

Note One:

These results relate to summer 2003 and were reported to Education Scrutiny Committee on 23rd September 2003 and 19th January 2004. Unrealistic targets are set nationally which all LEAs are failing to achieve.

Note Two:

The percentage of statements of special educational needs prepared within 18 weeks excluding those affected by 'exceptions to the rule' under the SEN Code of Practice have shown an increase on last years performance but not as much as was hoped for. The Educational Psychology Service has significantly reduced delays. Reviewing procedures, within the process with a view to minimising possible reasons for delays in other areas under direct control, is a priority action.

The percentage of statements of special educational needs prepared within 18 weeks including those affected by 'exceptions to the rule' under the SEN Code of Practice has made only slight improvement and mainly reflects delays caused by late Health reports. The issue has been taken up with the Designated Medical Officer within the Primary Care Trust. There is a commitment to improving performance within the PCT and a meeting between the Manager of SEN and the Designated Medical Officer has been arranged. New protocols are expected to be put in place. Administrative procedures within the LEA will also be examined to ensure that they assist the PCT in improving its performance.

BEST VALUE REVIEW SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SERVICES

**Report By: HEAD OF CHILDREN'S AND STUDENTS'
SERVICES**

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

1. To consider the progress of the Best Value Review of Special Educational Needs Services.

Financial Implications

2. No direct implications at this stage.

Report

3. The review team, chaired by Dr Sue Ferguson, Community Paediatrician, has met regularly over the past months and will shortly reach the stage of producing the Stage 3 report. The initial review was extended to encompass all SEN services and this extension has necessitated further and more extensive research.
4. During the course of the review there have been a number of relevant service changes. The most relevant of the changes are those associated with the new Banding system which is designed to replace some of the previous Statutory Assessment processes.
5. This widening of the review has meant more information has had to be shared and discussed. In order for the review to be comprehensive it has become evident that more work needs to be done in some key areas. A small sub-group has been formed to look at these areas and to report back to the main group.
6. The Review Team expects to be able to submit the Stage 3 report to the Committee at the next meeting on 5th October 2004.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee are asked to note the progress of the Best Value Review of Special Educational Needs Services.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

OUTCOMES OF PARENTAL APPLICATIONS FOR YEAR 6 PUPIL TRANSFERS TO HIGH SCHOOLS, SEPTEMBER 2004

Report by: SCHOOL SERVICES MANAGER

Wards Affected

Countywide.

Purpose

1. To note the outcomes of parental application for Year 6 pupils into High Schools for September 2004, including details of appeals.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Report

3. Since the report to Education Scrutiny Committee on 5th April 2004, formal appeals have now taken place for applications relating to five high schools. The results of these appeals are now known and are listed below.

	HELD	SUCCESSFUL
Wigmore	9	5
Fairfield	3	1
Weobley	2	1
Bishops	5	3
St Mary's	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	<u>28</u>	<u>12</u> (43%)

4. Following these appeals, and other changes that have been possible as some parents have decided not to take up places, the overall outcome of the transfer applications has improved further, as follows –

Parents receiving their first preference – (87% in April)

Parents receiving one of their declared preferences – (96% in May)

5. The position remains that the new system of 3-preference applications has produced a considerable improvement in the number of parents satisfied with the outcome.
6. The number of parental complaints about how applications have been dealt with administratively have also been at an unusually low level – only 2 recorded complaints at this stage, including one still under discussion.

NUMBERS SET AGAINST PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBER

7. Places allocated for September 2004, compared with the number of places available currently stand as follows –

	Places allocated	Published Admission Number	Waiting list
Queen Elizabeth	65	100	
Aylestone	231	250	
Bishops	235	235	26
Haywood	153	180	
Whitecross	180	180	
St Mary's	135	135	65
Kingstone	136	136	1
Lady Hawkins	67	90	
John Masefield	173	174	
John Kyrle	182	180	
Fairfield	67	66	13
Minster	126	140	
Weobley	101	100	4
Wigmore	96	90	21

WAITING LIST NUMBERS

8. The waiting list, which includes pupils whose parents decided not to appeal, will remain open until September. The waiting list will end following registration of pupils at the start of the Autumn term, as soon as allocated places have been fully accounted for, i.e. once pupils are attending or their temporary absence has been explained.

NUMBER OF UNPLACED HEREFORDSHIRE CHILDREN

9. Currently, no Year 6 pupil is unplaced for September 2004. The position is subject to change as families move into Herefordshire over the coming 3 months.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the up-to-date information on transfer of pupils for September 2005.

Background information

- None identified.