

RECENT OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS

Report By: Head of Inspection, Advice and School Performance Service

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

1. To summarise for SACRE some key points that emerge from the Ofsted inspection of individual schools undertaken during the 2002 – 03 academic year.

Report

2. Over the last few years SACRE has traditionally received a brief report on individual school Ofsted inspections at each meeting. Whilst this has proved useful, it remains difficult to obtain an overview of the key issues that are emerging over-time which will help direct the work of the committee.
3. Joyce Mackley (RE Consultant) recently analysed all the individual school reports from the last academic year. A full copy of her report, eleven pages in length, can be made available to committee members on request. However, her main findings, based on the reports on twenty one primary and two secondary schools reveal the 'good news' that:
 - Most school reports indicate improvement in key aspects, particularly in teaching and learning, since the last inspection.
 - RE has improved significantly in the two secondary schools inspected due mainly to the quality of subject leadership.
 - The revised Agreed Syllabus has been a spur to improvement, helping schools revise their schemes of work, focus on learning outcomes, and, when these are shared with pupils, raise achievement and increase the value in which the pupils hold the subject.
4. The aspects that require further support include.
 - Assessment at both the primary and secondary phases, particularly marking and showing ways of improving work with pupils.
 - Learning strategies in primary schools with teachers needing to use a wider range of teaching and learning strategies, including the more imaginative use of ICT.
 - Improved planning to avoid repetition of work and lack of progress by pupils.
 - Inadequate time allowed for the teaching of RE in some schools.
 - Ensuring a better balance between 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion.
 - Improving the support given to the most able pupils.

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
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5. In addition, Joyce Mackley was critical of the judgements made by inspectors in some of the reports. She felt that on occasions there seemed to be a confusion in the minds of inspectors between spiritual and cultural development, and between RE and Collective Worship. In one instance, this led to a report where bad practice was commended as good.

RECOMENDATION

That SACRE considers the developmental points raised and identifies the action to be taken.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Report on the analysis of individual Ofsted reports.