

THE EFFECTIVE PROVISION OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION PROJECT

REPORT BY HEAD OF POLICY AND RESOURCES

HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

9TH JUNE, 2005

Schools Affected

All schools

Purpose

1. To inform the Forum of the conclusions of this national research project and consider the implications for early years provision in Herefordshire.

Financial Implications

2. There are significant resource implications for implementing the proposals suggested in the attached report in full, and the aim at present is to seek opinions on the proposals with a view that they could be adopted in principle. Subsequent work would then concentrate on their implementation and identifying resources to put the proposals into practice.

Report

3. A paper is attached setting out the conclusions of this national research project. Although evidence was not collected in this county, the research findings are relevant for Herefordshire. It is to be noted that the Government is both amending existing and creating new policies/initiatives to reflect the outcome of this research. The study should be given serious consideration if the outcomes for children in Hereford are to continue improving. It is intended to use this paper for discussions within the Council and with the Children's Board to shape the early years services in Herefordshire over the next 5 years. The implications for Herefordshire are identified in more detail in the attached report, in light of the main conclusions which are:
 - All three and four year olds were found to benefit from attendance at an early years setting both in intellectual and social development, and pre-school experience has a critical role to play in combating disadvantage and giving children a better start to school.
 - Children, who benefited most, attended settings that were able to demonstrate good quality and good practice.
 - There is a close correlation between the beneficial impact of settings and the level of qualification of staff.
 - Beneficial outcomes for children depend on:
 - The quality of child/adult interactions
 - Staff knowledge and their understanding of the curriculum
 - Knowledge of how young children learn
 - Adults' skills in supporting children in resolving conflicts
 - Helping parents to support children's learning at home.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Dr Eddie Oram, Director of Education on 01432 260801

4. The value in investing in early years is demonstrated, and it is as a major part in an overall strategy to improve performance in the foundation stage and KS1, to improve behaviour, and to identify and support children with special educational need at an early stage.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT: the Forum's view of the conclusions of the study and the resultant proposed strategy in Herefordshire be sought.

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