

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....26th November 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

School Performance 2008-09 / Developments in Statutory Processes Underpinning School Improvement

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a detailed report advising members of both school performance in the academic year 2008/9; as well as two recent developments in statutory processes underpinning school improvement; namely:-

- The new Ofsted School Inspection Framework-September 2009;
- The Education White Paper "Your Child, your schools, our future-building a 21st Century Schools System";

Data was provided that illustrated how this authority's performance compared to the previous academic year, and in comparison to the national average, with regard to Key Stages 1-4.

From September 2008 to July 2009, 31 schools were inspected. These included 19 primary, 6 secondary and 2 special schools. Of these inspections 4 were monitoring visits undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) to judge progress of schools in categories e.g. Special Measures or schools who had previously had grade 3 "satisfactory" inspections. In all but one, strengths continue to outweigh any weaknesses. Thornaby Community School had been placed in Special Measures in January 2009 and has now already received its first monitoring visit where it was judged to be making satisfactory progress on all recommendations. Billingham Campus was placed in Special Measures by Ofsted in November 2007. At the school's final HMI monitoring visit in July 2009 it was judged to be making good progress with good capacity to improve. Three schools received Ofsted monitoring visits because they were graded 3 or "satisfactory" at their previous inspection. St Patrick's RC Primary (Stockton) and The Norton School were both judged to be making good progress against recommendations from their previous inspection with Westlands School making satisfactory progress.

Overall, 96% of schools inspected were judged to be satisfactory or better overall with 81% being good or better, including 37% being judged to be outstanding.

The Ofsted School Inspection Framework for September 2009 onwards had again risen the bar for school's achievement. Key changes to the Ofsted School Inspection Framework for September 2009 included:

- The introduction of a robust annual risk assessment of every school by Ofsted; taking into account published results, parental views and local intelligence. This risk assessment determined which schools were inspected and with what priority. The previous assumption of three years between inspections no longer pertained. Good and stable schools were likely to be inspected once every 5 years; up to 40% of schools with satisfactory inspections would be re-inspected within the year; schools in Ofsted Categories would be given a 4 week window within which they would receive "no notice" monitoring visits.
- All schools would be inspected to the same standard tariff, the best schools inspected less frequently but reduced tariff or light touch inspections would cease.
- Limiting judgements in relation to attainment, equalities and safeguarding had been introduced. The Attainment judgement comprised three elements;
  - the standard of academic attainment
  - levels of progress in classrooms and
  - the progress of vulnerable groups (for example, minority ethnic groups, children in care, the gifted and talented, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils who claim free school meals) to assess the extent to which schools ensure that all pupils, including those most at risk, succeed.
- Inspectors would make more detailed recommendations based on diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses to support further improvements at the school.
- Inspections would now focus much more on classroom practice.
- Headteachers and staff were now expected to participate in the inspection, working with the inspection team.
- Gathering and analysing the views of parents and pupils assumed an increased importance.
- New judgements had been introduced:
  - how effectively schools work in partnership with other providers;
  - the effectiveness of the leadership and management of teaching and learning;
  - leaders' and managers' success at all levels in embedding ambition and driving improvements;
  - More explicit expectations for governors and an enhanced

judgement about governance and value for money.

- More explicit expectations concerning Safeguarding and an enhanced judgement around safeguarding.

It was noted that the nature of the limiting judgement on attainment may leave some Stockton schools vulnerable to receiving a lower inspection judgement than might have previously been expected, meaning that any possible dip in the future performance of Stockton schools, would require increased support to be provided from the Education Improvement Service.

The new White Paper also sought to introduce to redefine the nature of school improvement and how it was delivered; signaling the end of the national strategies and loss of local authority funding previously provided. Cabinet was asked to note the likely budget pressure faced by the Education Improvement Service.

RESOLVED that:-

1. Cabinet note the standards and achievement in School Performance across the borough.
2. Cabinet note the details regarding the new Ofsted framework for inspecting schools, and the Education White Paper 'your child, your schools, our future'.
3. The impact on the Education Improvement Service represented by the Education White Paper and the revised Ofsted framework, be noted.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The annual report on school standards across the borough enables Cabinet to monitor standards and achievement and to evaluate the impact of local authority monitoring, challenge, intervention and support.

The loss of National Strategies funding to the Education Improvement Service will create a significant budget pressure whilst a possible dip in the future performance of Stockton schools at inspection will require increased support from the Education Improvement Service.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not later than Midnight on Friday 4 December 2009

Proper Officer  
30 November 2009