

Education and Leisure Services



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REPORT TO SCHOOL GOVERNORS FOR THE SPRING TERM 2004

CONTENTS

- 1) Schools Budget 2004-2005**
- 2) Changes to Capital Funding**
- 3) SEN Strategy**
- 4) Extended Schools**
- 5) OFSTED Framework Developments**
- 6) Workforce Reform Update**
- 7) School Admission Arrangements 2005**
- 8) CPD and Governor Training**
- 9) School Term and Holiday Dates 2005-2006**
- 10) Freedom of Information Act 2000 Publication Scheme for Schools**
- 11) A Guide to the Law for School Governors – 2004 Edition**



SCHOOLS BUDGET 2004-05

The last Director's Report included a summary of the changes to the national education funding arrangements for 2004-05 and 2005-06. Details of how these will impact in Kingston have now been received and are incorporated into the revenue budget process currently taking place. A summary of the main changes and the effect for Kingston schools is as follows:

Education Settlement

The overall settlement received by Kingston for education services is a good one. Kingston received the maximum increase possible in Schools Formula Spending Share (SFSS) 6.9%. The cost of passporting this fully to the Schools Budget accounts for 80% of the total increase in Revenue Support Grant allocation for the Council. The initial budget proposals published by the Executive on 12th January indicate a Council tax increase of 7.8%.

The government have made clear their expectation that as much funding as possible should reach schools in 2004-05. The Council's initial budget proposals provide for this with total funding for Schools' Budget services exceeding the passporting level expected by the DfES.

Continuing budget pressures on expenditure for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) result in the need to increase spending in centrally retained school services by 30.8% compared with a required increase in the delegated schools budget of 6.8%. The new education funding arrangements for 2004-05 prevent LEAs from automatically increasing centrally retained budgets by a greater percentage than delegated budgets.

The majority of the increase in SEN expenditure will be funded by overpassporting a sum of £576,000, which will be funded through increase in Council Tax. This means the Council is funding education by 114% of the total available resource. A case has been submitted to the DfES to be allowed to fund the balance of £499,000 required for SEN from within the overall Schools Budget passporting figure. The Schools Forum supported the case in order to provide sufficient flexibility in the overall budget process for the Council.

The initial budget proposals result in an overall increase for schools' delegated budgets of 5.8%. This is in excess of the estimated local inflationary pressures facing schools of 4.8%. It is recognised that the increase will not, however, fully re-instate the shortfall in delegated funding or Standards Fund grants for schools in the current financial year, as a result of the 2003-2004 settlement.

Formula Funding

The Secretary of State has introduced a new requirement for a minimum increase per pupil for 2004/05, called the "funding guarantee." This forms a mandatory addition to each LEA's Financing Scheme. The minimum increase is to be calculated for all schools and overrides the amount schools would receive through

the local funding formula if that is lower. The minimum level set for 2004/05 is 4% per pupil. In Kingston it is very likely that schools will be funded above the minimum level.

Targeted Support to Schools in Financial Difficulty

The new arrangements provide for the LEA to hold back some of the Schools Budget to provide targeted short-term financial support for schools facing exceptional financial difficulties. The amount held back for this purpose directly reduces the amount available to allocate via the local funding formula. It is considered locally that the priority should be to increase formula funding by more than the national minimum guarantee of 4%. There is a decision to be taken regarding the amount allocated via the funding formula and the amount made available for targeted support. The amount allocated through the formula is likely to be 5%.

Any such targeted financial assistance is intended to be short-term transitional support to enable a school to take action to reduce overall expenditure to the level of income by the end of 2005/06. Any school applying for support would be required to prepare a Recovery Plan demonstrating how this would be achieved in the given time frame.

Schools are currently being consulted on both the funding to be retained for targeted support and the criteria to be used to determine eligibility for consideration to receive such additional funding.

Sixth Form Funding (Learning & Skills Council)

Increases in funding for Sixth Forms are aligned with the per pupil guarantee for schools i.e. a 4% increase in qualification rates etc. In addition the area cost uplift for schools in outer London is increased from 9% to 12% for 2004-05.

Standards Fund Grants and School Standards Grant

The DfES has reversed earlier decisions to further delete Standards Fund grants in 2004-05 and in general have provided for each school to receive a 4% increase compared to 2003-04 in both Standards Fund and School Standards Grant. The Schools Forum will be consulted on the arrangements for the allocations of remaining grants to schools.

Illustrative Individual Schools Budget Projections

The receipt of detailed information from the DfES earlier than in previous years enabled all schools to be provided with illustrative individual school budget projections in early December. These provide an indication of the level of funding that will be received from the following funding sources:

- (i) delegated budget share
- (ii) school standards grant
- (iii) standards fund (school development grant)
- (iv) LSC sixth form funding

All schools will shortly receive a revised illustrative budget based on estimated January pupil numbers and an assumed increase in formula funding of 5.5%.

Further Consultation

A number of consultation meetings have taken place with Headteachers in addition to the Annual Budget Consultation meeting held on 18th November. A further consultation paper was e-mailed to all schools on 9th January with a response deadline of 23rd January. The Schools Forum will consider the above issues at its next meeting on 27th January 2004.

CHANGES TO CAPITAL FUNDING

Governors should be aware that 1st April 2004 sees the introduction of a new capital funding regime for community and foundation schools.

Perhaps the most significant of the changes introduced is the separation of funding for primary and secondary schools. The DfES announced in 2003 the Building Schools for the Future programme, which they say will bring all secondary schools in the country up to a modern standard within 10 to 15 years. The DfES has indicated that in future, significant capital work in secondary schools will be funded via this programme.

In previous years the LEA was allocated an amount of grant, worked out on a formulaic basis, to deal with the most serious condition items in schools such as windows and roofs. This was known as the condition fund and has been discontinued from 1st April 2004.

In its place the DfES has introduced grant for work to primary schools.

In previous years the Council was allocated a figure it is allowed to borrow in order to deal with suitability issues known as the modernisation funding stream. This funding stream continues for all schools and an element of this is now grant. The Council's borrowing is regulated by the new Prudential Borrowing regime, to be introduced by the government on 1st April 2004.

Prudential Borrowing allows the Council more flexibility in deciding which services to invest in. The amount the Council can borrow is determined in the main by how much it can afford to pay back.

Basic Need funding is now allocated on a formulaic basis rather than via a bidding system. RBK's allocations for Basic Need and Schools Access Initiative work are permission to borrow under the Prudential Borrowing regime rather than grant.

The DfES has decided to continue making Devolved Formula Capital available to schools as grant and Seed Challenge funding is available in the 2004/5 financial year for the last time. We will write to schools this term to let them know their individual allocation of Devolved Formula Capital (DFC).

The trend in recent years to allocate more capital grant directly to schools than to LEAs continues in 2004. The amount of capital grant allocated directly to schools under DFC and Seed Challenge is almost £1.5 million. The amount of capital grant allocated to the LEA is £1 million. This is one reason why the DfES expects the LEA to work closely with schools, to pool resources and ensure the most urgent and important priorities are addressed.

As we did last year, the capital programme for 2004/5 will be discussed with the School's Premises Consultative Group, so that schools' representatives can check that schemes have been selected in accordance with the AMP Statement of Priorities document. Members will make final decisions on the programme in March as part of the budget setting process.

Capital funding for VA schools is separate from the above arrangements and unfortunately the DfES has found it necessary to cut back on the amount of grant originally indicated for 2004/5. It is likely therefore that the Locally Co-ordinated Voluntary Aided Schools Programme (LCVAP) for 2004/5 will be very limited. Schools will be notified of the programme by the LCVAP group in March.

SEN STRATEGY 2004 - 2007

The recent trends in the incidence and nature of SEN (special educational needs) in RBK has resulted in continuing difficulties in meeting growing needs within the current budget. These trends, which are mirrored nationally, have serious implications for future provision and funding, and it is necessary to take further action to reduce the cost pressures and achieve more effective use of the available resources. There has been consultation with schools and headteachers on these proposals and more discussions are planned. There has yet to be consultation with parents of children with SEN but their views will be taken fully into account before any changes are made to current provision.

The key aim of SEN provision in RBK is to promote greater inclusion for pupils and education as close to the mainstream as possible, consistent with the needs of individual pupils and the choice of their parents. The quality of the provision for pupils with SEN in RBK is high. In the recent LEA OFSTED inspection it was found that the LEA's strategy for SEN, its SEN support for schools, and the value for money of this support were judged to be strengths of the LEA. In the SEN survey of schools' views of the quality of LEA management and support, RBK was placed in the top quartile nationally. Overall pupils with SEN make good progress and are well supported in schools.

In the past two years, however, there have been significant pressures on the SEN budget, which have become increasingly acute. This is a national problem: most other LEAs are experiencing similar or worse budget pressures. The key pressures are: increasing complexity of needs, as advances in medicine improve children's life chances; a significant increase in children with behaviour and emotional needs (BESN) and autism; an increase in the number of pupils wanting to stay into post-16

education; and a significant increase in the costs of independent sector SEN provision.

Costs

These service pressures led to an overspend against last year's SEN provision and transport budget of £525,500. In recognition of the pressures on SEN services £499,000 growth was added to the 2003-2004 budget. Despite this support there has continued to be significant budgetary pressure throughout 2003-2004 and the current projected overspend at the current year-end is £765,600. The full-year effect of this overspend in 2004-05 will be £1,026,000.

The key reason for this is the rising cost of out-borough independent special schools and the increasing numbers of pupils being placed in them. The average cost per pupil of this provision is about £26,000 annually and often this has to be supplemented by very high transport costs as children travel long distances to out-borough schools. This leads to provision which often does not provide value for money and takes children away from their families and communities.

This strategy extends the existing plans for SEN. It provides some more radical solutions to the national imperative to be more inclusive and also to the steadily increasing costs of out-borough SEN provision. Some of the proposals will require some initial "invest to save" funding and the major impact of them will be achieved in two to three years' time.

Overall Strategy

To increase the capacity within Kingston to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and reduce the need for out-borough provision

There are two key strands to this strategy:

- Enhancing RBK mainstream school SEN Provision; and
- Increasing the capacity of RBK Special Schools

Both of these strands will lead to reductions in costs, which can be re-invested to improve provision in-borough. This includes the very high costs of transporting pupils out-borough, which are sometimes even higher than the cost of educational provision in the schools they attend.

Enhancing RBK Mainstream School SEN Provision

Establish additional specialist SEN resourced provision in identified mainstream primary and secondary schools. These would meet the needs of some pupils who might be placed out-borough, or be placed in RBK special schools. This will free up places in LEA special schools to meet the needs of pupils with more complex needs, again who might have been placed out-borough. This provision would meet the needs of some pupils with BESN – for whom there is insufficient in-borough provision at the moment. It would also meet the needs of some pupils with ASD and general and complex learning difficulties.

Establish 4 pilot clusters of schools which are provided with funds to support pupils likely to receive statements. This would enable schools to provide additional support to pupils at School Action Plus, to intervene earlier and to avoid the need for statutory assessment and a statement. Evidence points to pupils with statements making good progress once support is provided. By allocating funds earlier and avoiding the delays caused by the statementing process it is anticipated that about half the pupils supported at “Action Plus”, the stage before a statement, will not require a statement later. Even those who still require a statement might have lower needs as a result of providing support earlier.

Increase the level of support for mainstream schools. Special Schools and mainstream schools with specialist provision will be encouraged and supported to become centres of expertise with more effective outreach work to help other schools. This could be linked to the advanced skills teacher and leading teacher programmes. The additional skills generated by this increased support and the improved progress of pupils would lead to fewer pupils moving to “Action Plus” and a statement.

Increasing the Capacity of RBK Special Schools

Develop RBK Special Schools to provide more post 16 education for SEN pupils and an enhanced 14-19 curriculum. The LEA recognises the need for more in-borough post 16 provision for pupils with special educational needs. Current discussions with the Learning and Skills Council are focused on improving the local funding for this provision. There is scope to develop the post 16 provision in RBK special schools.

Expand the provision in special schools for Key Stage 4 pupils whose needs are not currently being met in-borough. There are currently Key Stage 3 pupils with ASD in RBK Special Schools who would usually need to be placed out-borough when they reach Year 10, as there is currently no in-borough provision. Key Stage 4 provision in an RBK special school would provide continuity for the pupils and also would be at least half the cost of out-borough provision, not taking into account savings on transport costs.

A number of mainstream schools have already expressed an interest in expanding their SEN provision to include some specialist facilities. These proposals will be the subject of further consultation with schools during the spring term.

EXTENDED SCHOOLS

During the autumn term the LEA consulted on a draft policy for extended schools. This policy will now be updated in the light of the responses and presented to the Council’s Executive for approval in March.

Extended schools will be the main vehicle for the Council to deliver more joined up support to vulnerable children and families. An extended school provides a range of activities and services to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community. Extended schools, working with other agencies, offer a range of

community services including adult learning, childcare, parenting support, housing and benefits advice, sports and cultural activities, ICT access and on site health and social care.

Kingston's Vision

We want RBK to be more joined up in its ways of working, with well integrated services to support children, young people, adults and families, where we achieve better outcomes for children and where the Local Authority, schools and other agencies work in a seamless way to promote children's well-being and achievement.

The long term vision is for some schools to develop as extended schools offering a wide range of community services and work in partnership with other schools in clusters. In this way we aim to support all schools in Kingston to increase the range of services they offer to support children and families in the local community, working in an integrated way with other agencies.

The Benefits for Children and Families

Where universal services are highly effective and schools can intervene early, with the support of other agencies, barriers are removed that prevent children from succeeding and flourishing.

When the needs of vulnerable children and families are identified and support is provided in an integrated and timely way from a range of services, family breakdown and damage to children can be avoided or minimised.

Extended schools have the potential to transform lives and play a key part in community cohesion. Extended schools can help break down the barriers that some children and parents face. The more parents and carers can access a range of services easily on school sites, the more likely they are to find the support they need to manage work and family life, and the responsibilities they have for their children's health, well-being and learning. By providing sporting, cultural and learning activities, which meet the needs of children and adults, an extended school can become the heart of a local community and its aspirations.

In support of extended schools, there is great benefit in locating multi-disciplinary teams in or close to school sites that bring together professionals from social services, health, youth work, education welfare and childcare. By making a range of services available on site, parents' and children's needs can be addressed more quickly and effectively.

All schools are encouraged to engage with the local community and facilitate greater use of school buildings and staff expertise. Extended schools will provide opportunities for schools to develop their specialist functions and to host community services for the arts, sport, adult learning, leisure and children's play.

The key benefits are for children in raising their achievement, promoting their social and personal development, safeguarding their well-being and health, and ensuring all children can flourish and succeed. We aim to have fewer exclusions from school; improved attendance and a reduction in youth crime and anti-social behaviour.

Extended schools will also benefit adult literacy and skill development, and support for parents and carers.

The national strategy to integrate the key services for children and organise these services around their needs is set out in the recent Green Paper: *Every Child Matters*. Local Authorities are expected to integrate their education and children's social services. This signals a commitment by the government to ensure a more joined up approach to supporting children and highlights the centrality of schools in this process.

Most schools in Kingston already offer some extended school activities and some are already providing a wide range of services and activities similar to the government model of an extended school. For example, the Early Excellence Centre in Surbiton which received "Excellence" status in 2001 has become a model of good practice for the delivery of integrated multi-agency services for health, education and social care, which meet the needs of local children and their families.

Key Principles

Schools were asked the consultation to agree the following principles, to guide the Authority's strategy for the development of extended schools:

- Extended schools should develop from a clear assessment of community need and address clear educational, social and health priorities
- Extended schools will be supported when there clear plans to impact on under-achievement, children's health, childcare, truancy and attendance, the inclusion of pupils with SEN and disabilities, family learning and parenting, teenage pregnancy, youth crime and anti-social behaviour, children's play and leisure activities for teenagers
- Extended schools will require the commitment by the Local Authority and its partners to support the development of extended school activities through its strategic planning, capital investment and additional funding
- There should be a clear commitment by the Headteacher, staff and governors and effective school leadership and management
- Extended schools will offer at least one key activity: additional schooling, early years provision, family and parenting support, adult and family learning, community facilities for leisure, sports, arts and ICT, social services, or health services
- Schools will have clear evidence of active engagement with the community and of partnership working with other schools and a range of external agencies
- Funding and other resources will need to ensure that extended school activities are sustainable
- Governors have a responsibility to ensure that extended school activities are not subsidised by the delegated school budget
- Extended school services should not be set up in direct competition with existing public and voluntary sector provision
- Schools will have a commitment to workforce reform and to working with colleagues across professional boundaries

- Schools will only use existing 'surplus' accommodation if future requirements for school places indicate it will not be required

Funding Arrangements

Funding sources for activities will vary from school to school, depending on the local area and types of service being offered. There will be funding by the DfES for at least one full extended school and the LEA will aim to coordinate funds and grants from the government and different Local Authority budgets to support extended school provision. In most cases, funding will be linked to a specific service or provision, for example Adult Education or the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, which supports the development of childcare for children up to age 14.

Existing and potential sources of funding include:

- The Early Years Development and Childcare grant
- Sure Start
- The Children's Fund
- New Opportunities Funding
- The Vulnerable Children's grant
- Funding for capital programmes
- Primary Care Trust
- Learning and Skills Council
- Local Authority direct funding for specific activities and services

The Local Authority and schools will need to be innovative in looking for funding sources. Community use of school facilities will need to be self-financing, either through government and council funding streams or charges to users and be sustainable in the longer term.

Early in 2004 a process will be agreed whereby schools can express an interest to the LEA to develop as an extended school, and be supported as part of the overall strategy. It would be helpful if Governors considered this issue this term if the school wishes to develop as an extended school.

OFSTED FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENTS

Most governors will be aware now that a new framework for OFSTED inspections was introduced in September 2003. This framework places more emphasis on the role of governors and it requires inspectors to separate judgements on leadership, management and governance more explicitly. The Handbook for inspecting schools, for the first time, gives clear grade descriptions for the effectiveness of governance. We will send these to Chairs of Governors at the beginning of the spring term. The LEA self-evaluation booklet already sent to Chairs of Governors – *Governors' Role in School Review 2002* – is currently being updated in the light of these changes .

The key judgements about governors in the new framework are on a) the strategic direction they provide b) how well they support, monitor and evaluate the

effectiveness of the school and c) how far statutory duties are met. Where there is non-compliance with statutory requirements OFSTED has recently stated that the main factors to take into account when deciding if this makes governance unsatisfactory are:

- Whether non-compliance has an impact on pupils' achievement or their safety and welfare
- Whether the Governing Body has done all it reasonably could do to ensure that the school meets its statutory duties
- Where the balance of judgement lies, taking into account other evidence of a governing body's effectiveness.

A common breach of statutory requirements is the provision of a daily act of Collective Worship. The latest OFSTED guidance makes it clear that where this is not happening, the Governing Body must have done all it reasonably could to provide it; if not, governance will not be judged satisfactory overall.

If you have any queries about the OFSTED process, please contact David Gosling (tel: 0208 547 5250 or e-mail david.gosling@rbkkingston.gov.uk)

Extract from the Handbook for Inspecting Schools

How well is the school led and managed?

Inspectors must evaluate and report on:

□ **the governance of the school**

assessing the extent to which the governing body:

- *helps shape the vision and direction of the school;*
- *ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duties, including promoting inclusive policies in relation to special educational needs, race equality, disability and sex;*
- *has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school;*
- *challenges and supports the senior management team;*

□ **the quality of leadership of the school, particularly by the headteacher, senior team and other staff with responsibilities**

assessing the extent to which:

- *leadership shows clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school, with a relentless focus on pupils' achievement;*
- *strategic planning reflects and promotes the school's ambitions and goals;*
- *leaders inspire, motivate and influence staff and pupils;*
- *leaders create effective teams;*
- *there is knowledgeable and innovative leadership of teaching and the curriculum;*
- *leaders are committed to running an equitable and inclusive school, in which each individual matters;*
- *leaders provide good role models for other staff and pupils;*

□ **the effectiveness of management,**

assessing the extent to which:

- *the school undertakes rigorous self-evaluation and uses the findings effectively;*
- *the school monitors performance data, reviews patterns and takes appropriate action;*
- *performance management of staff, including support staff, is thorough and effective in bringing about improvement;*
- *a commitment to staff development is reflected in effective induction and professional development strategies and, where possible, the school's contribution to initial teacher training;*
- *the recruitment, retention, deployment and workload of staff are well managed, and support staff are well deployed to make teachers' work more effective;*
- *approaches to financial and resource management help the school to achieve its educational priorities;*
- *the principles of best value are central to the school's management and use of resources.*

□ **the effect of any particular aids or barriers to raising achievement, either within the school or externally.**

□ **Evaluating governance**

The governing body has statutory responsibilities for the school. Its main roles are to:

- provide a strategic direction for the work and improvement of the school;
- support, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school;
- hold the school to account for the standards achieved and the quality of education.

The characteristics in the table below illustrate where to pitch judgements on the effectiveness of governance.

Judgements on governance	
Very good (2) Creativity and dynamism in reflecting upon performance, promoting change, and capitalising on links with the local community suggest excellent (1) governance.	The governing body makes a major contribution to the leadership of the school, including its sixth form, and its successes. It is fully involved in strategic planning and formulating policies, and supports staff in implementing them. Governors keep in close touch with the school's work across all stages, and this cements the partnership between the governing body and the school. The pattern of the governing body's work meshes well with the school's development cycle, so that both are very influential. Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and deal with them openly and frankly, contributing fully to development planning. Performance management procedures are very effective and are monitored closely by the governing body.
Good (3)	The governing body influences the work of the school and its policies through challenge and support. It has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has a significant, strategic influence in leading the school's development, with a clear focus on raising standards and improving the quality of provision. The governing body is prepared to take difficult decisions where necessary. It is well organised and it improves its own performance through appropriate development activities or training.

Satisfactory (4)	The governing body ensures that the school meets its statutory responsibilities, and has clear aims and policies. Its performance management policy operates effectively. Corporately, it sets an overall direction for the school and formulates policies that reflect the individual character of the school. It reviews performance data to monitor the whole school's work and its recommendations for action are followed up. All governors understand their role and any specific responsibilities. There is a businesslike relationship between governors and senior staff in leading the school
Unsatisfactory (5)	The school fails to meet one or more statutory responsibilities and lacks some of the policies that are required. The governing body relies too heavily on the headteacher. Although they are supportive, governors play a slight part in leading the school and do little to hold the school to account. Their work lacks focus and influence. They have insufficient knowledge of one or more of the stages. There is little corporate agreement about the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body has a limited grasp of the performance of the school and only modest effect on its development.
Poor (6) High vacancies, poor attendance, hostile relationships and almost total reliance on the headteacher are indications of very poor (7) governance.	Important statutory responsibilities are not met. The governing body is remote from the school. Relationships between members of the governing body or between it and the senior staff are at best indifferent and may be hostile or acrimonious. Governors' business is badly organised and their conduct presents a barrier to school improvement. Governors are largely unaware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and, in particular, of the effectiveness or otherwise of its senior managers. They have a limited influence on the work of the school. The governing body presents no challenge. Standards and quality are not assured and it fails to set a clear direction or priorities for the school's work.

WORKFORCE REFORM UPDATE

Kingston and Merton are working together on a joint project designed to reduce teachers' and head teachers' workload in line with government requirements and also to establish a range of innovative workforce reform projects in schools in both boroughs. A summary of this initiative was provided in the Autumn term Director's Report for Governors and a presentation was made at the last Governors' Partnership meeting.

The project has started well. About 15 schools have now submitted projects, many of them very creative, and these are currently being considered by Dr. Calvin Pike who is coordinating the Kingston/Merton initiative. A steering group has also been set up comprising head teachers, officers and union representatives from the two boroughs. In the last Report, governors were invited to express an interest in joining this group. So far we have had no responses but there is still time. If you are interested, or wish to find out more, please contact Calvin Pike on calvin@pkr.gov.uk.

Governors need to be alert to the key national contractual changes. Given the new OFSTED emphasis on statutory compliance, it is important that governors know the state of play in their schools re these requirements. The key changes are: 24 out of 25 named administrative tasks are not to be conducted routinely by teachers from

September 2003; there will be a limit on cover for absent teachers from September 2004; and all teachers should have 10% guaranteed time for planning, preparation and assessment from September 2005.

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2005

A consultation paper was sent to all Chairs of Governors, Headteachers and Governing Body Clerks at the beginning of January, describing the changes being proposed in the admission arrangements for community secondary and primary schools for September 2005 admissions.

Some of the proposed changes result from new Government regulations and will apply across all LEAs. These changes affect voluntary aided and foundation schools as well as community schools. They concern admissions to secondary schools in particular. LEAs have a new duty to co-ordinate all the applications made by parents living in their borough or county for any maintained schools, those within their LEA and any outside it.

LEAs will also be required to co-ordinate the offers of secondary school places to be made to all parents living in their area. The aim is to ensure that every parent receives one offer of a school place and not more than one on the same day across the country (1 March 2005). In London the single offer for each child will take into account any applications the parent has made for schools outside their home borough.

Further details of these statutory changes for 2005-06 admissions are given in the consultation paper and Governors who wish to see this and have not yet done so should ask their Clerk or Chair for a copy.

Primary Schools

For primary school admissions no major changes are required for 2005-06, since the statutory introduction for co-ordinated arrangements has been deferred by the Secretary of State for one year to September 2006. As explained in the consultation paper, very few changes in Kingston's existing primary school admission arrangements will be needed even for 2006. This is because Kingston LEA already has a single borough form for all parents to use in applying for any primary school (up to a maximum of three) in the borough, including voluntary aided and foundation schools. Furthermore, the co-ordinated requirements for primary school admissions are less far-reaching than those for secondary schools. They will only cover schools within the parent's home LEA, not any applications for schools in other LEAs. The consultation paper also includes local (non-statutory) proposals for: -

- (a) A small change in the definition of a sibling as used in the sibling criteria for community primary and secondary schools, to assist parents whose elder child leaves a school immediately before a younger one may start there.
- (b) A small change in the arrangements for over-age admissions to community primary and secondary schools to allow a place to be reserved for a child who

is looked after by a local authority at a school near to his/her new address, while the final arrangements for his/her adoption of other new care provision are being made. This would only apply in cases where the distance from the child's new home address would prevent him/her from staying at the same school and where a school near his/her new address had a vacant place.

- (c) Keeping the admission numbers of all community primary and secondary schools for 2005-06 the same as 2004-05, except in the case of Buckland Infant and Nursery School and Moor Lane Junior School, for which reductions are being proposed.
- (d) A possible non-statutory change to primary school admission arrangements for September 2006 rather than September 2005 admissions. This would involve changing from the LEA's existing policy of giving priority to parents' first preferences over other parents' second and third preferences for the same school. Instead, an 'equal preference policy' could be introduced in which all preferences (i.e. all applications) for Kingston primary schools would be treated as being of equal status and so would each be considered solely in relation to the published admissions criteria for the school.

Governing Bodies' views on all these proposed changes, as explained more fully in the consultation paper, would be welcome by Friday 13 February 2004, please, addressed to Chris Shires. These proposals and responses received will be reported to the Council's Executive on 16 March 2004.

CPD AND GOVERNOR TRAINING

Central training on induction for new Governors has taken place each term and the final sessions for this academic year start next week. Also this term are sessions for Governors on monitoring provision in schools for literacy and numeracy and special educational needs. The courses for personnel issues and budget management are currently under-subscribed and may not run as advertised. However it was possible last term to provide some school based training for schools that had expressed an interest in the courses. This is always an option for schools where there is insufficient uptake to make a central course viable or where schools have specific training or development needs which are best met through delivery to the whole Governing Body. The Link Inspector for the school should be approached to co-ordinate the training.

The new programme for professional development is currently being compiled and will contain an increased number of joint courses and network meetings with Merton as part of our collaboration work with our neighbouring LEA. We have established a working party with three teachers from both Boroughs and are working towards a joint approach to a Code of Practice and entitlement framework to continuous professional development. The joint programme will be available later this term.

The national programme for leadership and management development is now entirely through the National College for School Leadership and there are a number of new courses available, such as Leading From the Middle which will provide excellent career development opportunities for teachers. There is also a new

development programme for very experienced Headteachers available from the autumn term 2004.

SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES FOR 2005-06

The term and holiday dates for 2004-05 were based on the established three-term year and followed a similar pattern to the dates for previous years. It is now time to consult you about possible term and holiday dates for the following school year, 2005-06.

An important consideration in fixing term dates has always been the need to co-ordinate these with neighbouring LEAs as far as possible. This co-ordination is being greatly assisted for 2005-06 by the Association of London Government (ALG), which brings together and represents all London Boroughs. The ALG's Education Steering Group has decided to make annual recommendations for term dates to all London Boroughs, in order to improve inter-borough co-ordination in this area.

The term dates being recommended by the ALG for 2005-06 result from a survey of all London Boroughs' present practice with regard to term dates. The aim is to achieve widespread agreement between London LEAs, and with VA and foundation schools across London, on the dates for 2005-06.

Kingston will be consulting with all headteachers and governing bodies on its term dates for 2005-06 on the basis of the ALG recommended dates. Responses to this consultation should be sent to Jenny Haynes, Guildhall 2, or by email jenny.haynes@rbk.kingston.gov.uk by 5 March with a view to a decision being made by the Council's Executive on 6 April."

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Publication schemes for schools

Last term all schools received a letter from the Information Commissioner outlining the requirement to adopt a publication scheme for your school in order to comply with the Freedom of Information Act. Every Governing Body must adopt a scheme by **29th February 2004** and the chosen scheme will become operational from that date.

'A Guide to the Law for School Governors' – 2004 Edition

The above edition of 'A Guide to the Law for School Governors' will be available from 1 March 2004.

After consultation with the Advisory Group On Governance (AGOG), it was agreed that an initial distribution of 15 copies of the guide will be sent to all schools, addressed to the Chair of Governing Body.

Additional orders can be made from 1 February 2004, by phone on 0845 602 2260, or by email to dfes@prolog.uk.com. from the Department's distribution centre – Prolog. When ordering, please quote the appropriate version title, reference number (see below) and the address to where the guides should be delivered.

Community Schools (Including Community Special Schools) ref: GTTLC2004

Foundation Schools (Including Community Special Schools) ref: GTTLF2004

Voluntary Aided Schools ref: GTTLVA2004

Voluntary Controlled Schools ref: GTTLVC2004

Orders will be despatched during week commencing 1 March.