

Learning and Children's Services

**Patrick Leeson
Director of Learning and Children's Services**



**REPORT TO SCHOOL GOVERNORS
FOR THE SUMMER TERM 2005**

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THE CHILDREN ACT, SCHOOL CLUSTERS AND EXTENDED SCHOOLS

Following the Royal Assent to the Children Act 2004, last November, the Local Authority has re-organised its services into a new Directorate of Learning and Children's Services. This took effect on 1 April 2005. The new Directorate comprises all the services for education, leisure and children's social services, and Patrick Leeson's post is now designated as Director of Learning and Children's Services. At the same time the LEA has been replaced by the Children's Services Authority (CSA).

In addition, the Act requires local authorities to integrate services for children, young people and families; establish local safeguarding boards to protect children from harm and neglect; ensure cooperation with partner agencies such as Health and the Police; and pool resources to support the provision of new services. In future there will be one over-arching plan covering all the services for children and young people. The services will also be inspected every three years as part of Joint Area Reviews.

The key to the Children Act is the requirement to join up and integrate services for children, young people and families; to make services more accessible and easier to use; to focus them on the needs of children and to ensure that our energy is directed more towards early intervention and prevention. Five key outcomes have been identified by which the Children's Services Authority, schools, and our partner agencies will be assessed in future. These are children's and young people's :

- Health and emotional well being
- Safety and protection from harm
- Achievement and recreation
- Contribution to society
- Social and economic well being

The Role of Schools and School Clusters

Schools have a central role in integrating services for children and young people. They are the largest universal service, know a great deal about the needs of children and families, and can target additional support where it is needed most. For this reason it is important to join up services at the front line in schools.

The aim is to ensure that local authority services, plus resources from Health, the Police, Connexions, and the voluntary sector will work closely together in multi-disciplinary teams to support groups of schools. Schools have been arranged into clusters to facilitate this way of working.

In the 6 clusters of schools there are also some schools that have expressed an interest as extended schools. These schools will deliver a wider range of services and will work to support other schools in their cluster, especially in meeting the needs of more vulnerable children and families. In future the

clusters of schools will be supported by multi-disciplinary teams consisting of the following services:

- Cluster Integrated Service Managers
- Family support services
- Social workers
- Education Welfare Officers
- Educational Psychologists
- Youth Workers
- School nurses
- Community policy officers
- School Finance Officers
- Childcare Coordinators
- Adult Learning Coordinators
- School Improvement Officers

Our challenge is to ensure that no child falls through the net, that parents and families receive the support they need; and that the barriers that prevent children learning and flourishing are minimised.

Extended Schools

Some schools in each cluster wish to develop as more extended schools. The Local Authority's strategy is to support a borough wide system of extended school provision with many schools contributing different services. Some schools already provide a wide range of support services and we wish to build on this good practice.

Extended schools usually provide some of the following services:

- Wrap around childcare
- Before and after school clubs and holiday provision
- After school study support and homework clubs
- Family support and parents groups
- Adult and family learning
- Community use of the school facilities
- Health services and clinics
- Housing advice and support
- Out of school sport and recreation for children and adults
- Support for childminding networks
- Additional SEN provision
- Learning mentors and alternative educational provision
- Youth work

The focus of the Extended School Initiative is to explore ways to create integrated services to support children and their families. The aim is to deliver social care, childcare and education for children and adults together with support for parents in a way that ensures the support is available when and where it is needed.

The schools within RBK are now all grouped together in six geographical clusters. It is anticipated that all the extended school activities developed will therefore address the local needs identified within each cluster group. Whilst these activities may be based in the lead extended school, they could also, where appropriate, be based in any school in the cluster.

The Local Authority will support this initiative through targeting additional Government grant to designated extended schools, through co-located staff in some schools and by pooling resources with our partner agencies. Schools also need to find their own ways to develop extended provision by bidding for grants and by working successfully with voluntary sector organisations.

The Extended Schools Group

The schools involved in developing extended school provision are part of the Extended Schools Group. This meets regularly to coordinate developments and comprises Headteachers, Officers from the Local Authority's services, and representatives from Health, Connexions and other partners.

The Group is used to share learning and experiences on extended schools; to research practice in other local authorities; to develop the local strategy; to liaise with Elected Members and Representatives of Neighbourhood Committees; and to coordinate extended school activities across the borough and within each cluster. The Group has also set up small research groups to look at consultation processes with the local community, models of extended school delivery and models of integrated services to support extended schools.

Next steps

During the Summer Term 2005 the Extended Schools Group will:

- Use the feedback from the working groups to inform the decisions about the development of extended school activities in 2005/6 within their cluster
- Use the local data and knowledge available from a wide range of resources to ensure that each cluster has a clear view of the local community's needs
- Use this data to agree the priorities in each cluster for the development of extended school activities
- Identifying all available resources/funding to support the activities and agree a process for their allocation.

The Role of Governors

Governors have a key role to play in the development of integrated services and extended schools. First, the educational mission and priorities for the school need to be re-considered in the light of the 5 Outcomes for Children and Young People:

- Health and emotional well being
- Safety and protection from harm
- Achievement and recreation
- Contribution to society
- Social and economic well being

These outcomes should, in future, be reflected in the School improvement Plan, school policies and in the range of curricular and other provision made by the school. A more detailed breakdown of the 5 Outcomes is available in schools, and can be used to help the process of assessing the school's contribution.

From September 2005 Ofsted will inspect schools with the 5 Outcomes in mind. Clearly any preparation for inspection, including the school's self evaluation, would include reference to the outcomes and how they relate to the school's performance. In future Ofsted will look carefully at the support for and progress of more vulnerable pupils and those that are under-achieving, and what the school does to provide additional support to these pupils.

The support for, and involvement of, parents is a key part of the school working in a more joined up way with the local community and with external partners. It may be helpful for Governors to look again at the school's policy and practices for engaging and supporting parents.

The Children Act specifically requires children and young people to have a voice, and to participate in decisions about services that affect their lives. Governors may also wish to review the way the school involves young people in decision making, consults them on the way things happen in the school, and ensures that their feelings and viewpoints are known, as part of the process for deciding school priorities and evaluating the school's improvement.

In all schools, Governors will continue to discuss strategic direction and the needs of the school in the future. The Children Act gives schools a bigger role in the local community; it requires greater partnership and collaboration with other schools and external partners; and it invites schools to continue to support pupils' learning and development by supporting their parents. In some schools these drivers for change will involve development as an extended school. Our aim is to ensure that all Kingston schools are active participants in this new agenda by contributing to their school cluster.

For more information please contact Patrick Leeson, or Jill Roucroft, Directorate Head of Social Inclusion on 020 8547 6681, or email jill.roucroft@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

NEW OFSTED INSPECTION ARRANGEMENTS

As part of the new relationship with schools announced in the Government's Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners published last summer, OFSTED have announced changes to school inspections from September 2005. The purpose of these changes is to:

- Simplify the inspection arrangements
- Reduce the burden on schools that inspection can cause
- Make the reports simpler and shorter
- Ensure that schools' self-evaluation is rigorous and thorough

Schools will receive only a few days' notice of an inspection and the school's self evaluation will play a bigger part in the process. In practical terms this means that from September the number of inspector days in a school inspection will be reduced, ranging from two inspectors for two days in a small primary school to five inspectors for two days in a large secondary school. Despite inspection being shorter and sharper it will also now be more regular with inspections occurring every three years instead of the current six-year cycle.

There will also be a reduction in the number of lessons that will be observed during an inspection as inspectors focus on the processes for ensuring school improvement. To replace these subject inspections there will be visits by HMI between inspections to look at the quality of subject delivery. We would expect there to be no more than one HMI subject visit in each three-year cycle.

The period of notice is substantially reduced, with schools being informed anything between two and five working days before an inspection. This means that normally schools will be told by phone of an inspection on a Thursday, with the inspection starting on Monday or Tuesday of the following week. When schools are informed that they are to be inspected they will release an electronic version of the new self-evaluation form that schools must have ready.

The Governing Body has a key role in this self-evaluation process and will need to sign off the form. Governors are advised to ensure that the school self evaluation form is kept up to date at all times and provides a very robust and accurate assessment of the school's performance and improvement over time. The Local Authority will support schools to achieve this.

Although details of the new process are limited at the moment we are arranging training for schools to take place later in the summer term, and will also do some further training for governors and governing bodies.

For more information please contact Nick Whitfield, Directorate Head of School Improvement on 020 8547 5283, or email nick.whitfield@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

DFES CONSULTATION ON NEW SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FROM 2006-07

The DfES issued a consultation paper on 17 February covering proposals to change the national funding arrangements for the Schools Budget with effect from 2006-07. The consultation period ends on 13 May 2005.

The consultation paper provides details of how the DfES propose to implement the funding elements of the commitment made in the Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners published last summer. The key features comprise:

- (i) a new ring-fenced grant for school funding from the DfES to local
- (ii) authorities, replacing the current system of funding schools through general local government funding and Council Tax,
- (iii) introduction of three year budgets geared to pupil numbers, continuing with a guaranteed minimum increase per pupil each year for every school,
- (iv) funding to individual schools to continue to be determined using the local funding formula, although the underlying data may be updated less frequently than the current annual process
- (v) budget shares to be provided to schools on both a financial and an academic year basis
- (vi) a new Single Standards Grant, simplifying and streamlining current standards-related funding streams.

The proposals contain a number of potential changes which would increase certainty for schools regarding their future funding levels, subject to pupil number changes. The consultation however recognises that this approach is at a cost of removing flexibility at the local level to redirect funding between schools as their relative needs change over time. Views as to the relative merit of either approach are sought through the consultation questions.

A number of the proposals suggest a strengthened role for the Schools Forum, changing it from an advisory body to a decision making one regarding some aspects of Schools' Budgets.

The proposals potentially affect both local authority and schools' funding. Whilst the full consultation document covers all aspects of the proposed changes, a separate summary was also published by the DfES focusing on those aspects which are likely to be of particular interest to those involved in financial planning and management in schools.

A summary of the proposals and a copy of the DfES summary consultation paper were contained in a report to the Schools Forum on 7 April 2005 :

[http://moderngov.kingston.gov.uk/Data/Schools%20Forum/20050406/Agenda \\$BxSchools%20Funding%20Consultation.doc.pdf](http://moderngov.kingston.gov.uk/Data/Schools%20Forum/20050406/Agenda%20$BxSchools%20Funding%20Consultation.doc.pdf)

For more information please contact Anne Redparth, Directorate Head of Resources on 020 8547 5276, or email anne.redparth@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

DINTON FIELD SCHOOL SPORT FACILITIES

Dinton Field is owned by Kingston Council and is the designated playing field for local primary schools. While it is not open for casual public use local groups can book the field and use it for organising sports activity for children. The Kingston Little League has used it for this purpose for a number of years on Saturday mornings.

A working party was formed in 1999 consisting of Councillors, RBK Sports and Recreation staff, local schools, Kingston Primary Schools Sports Association, Wyndham Road Environmental Group, Kingston Sports Council and Kingston Little League. The Working Party was given the task of coming up with plans for the best use of the field.

There was a consensus on the Working Party that the field should continue to be used for sports and recreation for young people. Bids were made for funding to improve the field to ensure that this could happen.

Total funding of over £600,000 has been secured towards improving the field and building a modest pavilion to support sports activity by young people. This has been obtained from the Football Foundation - £444,444, London Marathon Charitable Trust - £150,000 and RBK - £50,000.

The pavilion will provide changing rooms for children, toilets and a small area for refreshments to be served. The improved drainage works to the field will ensure that it remains playable throughout the winter and is a safer surface for the children to play sports.

Dinton Field will be used for organised sports activity for children and young people. It will be managed by a Charitable Trust that will be established and comprise of Members of the previous Working Party.

Local schools will use the field and pavilion during the week for PE and sports lessons, sports days and after school competition. Local sports groups for children and young people such as the Kingston Little League will use the field at weekends and after school for organised sports activity.

Schools have not been able to use the field as frequently as they would like due to the drainage problems on the field and lack of ancillary facilities such as toilets, changing rooms and shelter when it rains. They will benefit hugely from the improvements to the field as all of these problems should be resolved and therefore they will be able to use it far more often. This will help to achieve the expectation that all children and young people should have at least 2 hours physical activity per week, to improve their social skills, long term health and reduce obesity.

For more information please contact Scott Herbertson, Directorate Head of Leisure and Lifelong Learning on 020 8547 5267, or email scott.herbertson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

SCHOOLS BUDGET 2005-06: FINAL SETTLEMENT

Schools received their final budget allocations in mid-March. The following provides an update of the final overall budget settlement in Kingston.

The Executive recommended a final budget to Budget Council requiring a Council tax increase of 4.9% which was approved on 2 March 2004. The budget proposals for Education & Leisure Services were unaltered from those previously considered by the Schools Forum.

In view of the concerns expressed by individual schools and the Schools Forum regarding the need to maximise general schools funding the final budget increased the overall allocated to schools via the local funding formula. This was achieved by removing the inflationary element applied to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) matrix unit of resource and reducing the contingency for future estimated growth in SEN support in mainstream schools. The approved budget therefore provides an overall comparable increase of 5.9% to be allocated to mainstream schools (excluding SEN statements, early intervention formula and LSC post-16 funding), and 7.9% allocated to special schools. A sum of £178,000 is set aside for targeted support to schools in exceptional financial difficulty. This is a good settlement for schools.

Local Schools' Funding Formula

The Executive approved the changes to the local Scheme for Financing Schools in line with the proposals considered at the last meeting of the Schools Forum.

The main changes are:

- (i) Funding of the SEN Strategy 2005-06:
 - Differential increase for special schools (higher than mainstream schools)
 - Additional mainstream resourced provision to be funded when new provision operational at Malden Manor Primary and Knollmead Primary
 - Redirecting Key Stage 2 Speech & Language Advisory Teacher support
 - Transfer of funding for Statements from Bands 1&2 into the early intervention sub-formula
 - Adjustment of minimum funding per pupil guarantee calculation
 - Re-designation of the SEN matrix contingency to within the Individual Schools Budget (previously a centrally retained item)
 - Restate the value allocated via the Bi-lingual Learners (EAL) sub-formula

- (ii) use the Special School version of the Minimum Funding Guarantee calculation for Surbiton Children's Centre nursery, reflecting the place-led nature of the funding

(iii) differential funding arrangements for free school meals for those schools buying-back from the LEA contract

(iv) amendment of the Premises formula to replace the Tolworth Recreation Centre element with a Dual Use Sports Facilities element.

Individual School Funding

Details of the final funding received by each school are shown in a report to the Schools Forum meeting of 7 April 2005. This details the amount received by each school, both as a total sum and as an amount per pupil. Two versions of the tables are provided:

(i) total allocated via the local funding formula plus School Standards Grant and School Development Grant

(ii) total allocated via the local funding formula excluding SEN statements and SEN Resourced Provision plus School Standards Grant and School Development Grant. This version provides a better comparison of the underlying differential funding per pupil in each school.

A copy of the Schools Forum Report can be obtained from the Kingston Council Website on the following link:

[http://moderngov.kingston.gov.uk/Data/Schools%20Forum/20050406/Agenda/\\$CxSchools%20Budget%202005-06%20Final%20SettlementAnnex1.xls.htm](http://moderngov.kingston.gov.uk/Data/Schools%20Forum/20050406/Agenda/$CxSchools%20Budget%202005-06%20Final%20SettlementAnnex1.xls.htm)

Schools Budget Survey

In view of the budget concerns raised by a number of individual schools and following the discussion at the last Schools Forum meeting, a Budget Survey has been undertaken amongst schools to determine the impact of the 2005-2006 settlement. Responses from schools will be used to inform a joint letter from the Director of Learning & Children's Services and the Chair of the Schools Forum to be sent shortly to the Secretary of State, raising concerns about the level of funding for Workforce Reforms in general, and the cost of implementing Planning, Preparation and Assessment time for teachers in particular.

Targeted Support to Schools in Financial Difficulty

The final budget confirmed the proposal to withhold £178,000 from within the Schools Budget to be used for targeted support to schools facing exceptional financial difficulty. The process to be used to allocate this funding will be similar to that used for the first time in 2004-05. All schools received a copy of a guidance note outlining this process on 28 February 2005. Four applications for support were received and these are currently being evaluated by the Local Authority.

The Local Authority will continue to support all schools in their financial planning where required. The opportunity to target additional funding is, however, very limited. Any such targeted financial assistance will only 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 is required to prepare a Recovery Plan demonstrating how this would be achieved in the given time frame.

For more information please contact Anne Redparth, Directorate Head of Resources on 020 8547 5276, or email anne.redparth@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

SCHOOL MEALS

In view of the increased media attention about the standard of school meals and recent announcements by the Government the following provides a brief update regarding the responsibilities of individual governing bodies and outlines local developments to support schools.

National changes

The duty to provide free meals to eligible pupils, paid lunches where parents request them, and to comply with national nutritional standards, rests with the governing body of a school that has delegated funding for school meals. This applies to all Kingston mainstream schools and Bedelsford special school. This responsibility exists even if the school 'buy back' meals provision from the central Local Authority contract.

Schools should be aware that Ofsted will review the quality of school meals as part of regular school inspections from September 2005, as well as undertaking detailed inspections with nutritionists of the nutritional content of school food in a sample of schools in every local authority area.

The Government has announced DfES nutritional standards are being revised including strong consideration of nutrient-based standards. New improved standards will be rolled out in September 2005 and will be compulsory by September 2006. These will be extended to cover all school food including vending machines and tuck shops.

Further support from the DfES will be available in sourcing healthy school meals and the Department of Health will be helping more schools become 'healthy schools'. An independent 'School Food Trust' will be set up to support schools in healthy eating.

Local Provision in Kingston

Children whose parents are on low income and who meet certain financial criteria are entitled for free school meals. The Local Authority provides a delivered-in packed lunch service at cost so schools without catering facilities are able to offer the packed lunch for eligible children (or offer it to paying pupils). There are currently 22 schools buying back packed lunches from the central contract. The menu meets current nutritional standards and is

regularly monitored by the Local Authority, although schools still retain responsibility to check compliance.

Recent reduced demand for the Local Authority contract has resulted in concerns about the longer-term viability of the current arrangements. Alternative options are being considered when the current contract expires in April 2006. Schools have recently been consulted about the options available (including the possibility of a delivered hot meals service) and a report has been submitted to the Schools Forum on 7 April 2005.

In order to make this solution viable the total meals served would need to be in the region of 600-700 meals per day (between all schools). Schools would need to promote this option to increase the numbers to meet this target. If these figures are achieved, the cost of the hot meal provision will be less than that currently paid for the cold packed lunch. If schools are unable to support these numbers, then it will be necessary to continue with the packed lunch option, with the possibility of increased costs in 2006.

Kingston is continuing to work with the Public Health Dietician in response to recent changes, and a school meals newsletter is being developed which will be sent to schools on a regular basis. In addition, the Local Authority is compiling a central web page to be available on the RBK website, which gives schools some indications of nutritional standards, and links to other important websites. This is currently under development and further information will be passed to schools in the near future.

Finally, Kingston and Richmond Dieticians have sent out a letter to representatives on a cross-borough nutrition forum (which includes parents and local teachers) regarding the setting up of a school food trust. The aim of the trust will be to support Local Authorities, parents and schools in improving school food.

For more information please contact Chris Morgan, Contracts Manager on 020 8547 5300, or email chris.morgan@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

GOVERNOR CONFERENCE AND TRAINING UPDATE

Kingston's first Governors' Conference has been arranged to take place on Saturday 18th June from 9am to 2pm. The keynote speaker is Ann Holt who has a very impressive knowledge and experience of education and school governance. Details of the conference and booking information have been sent to all Chairs of Governors and Clerks on 12th April. Bookings will be accepted on a first come first served basis and there are 100 places, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

GOVERNORS TRAINING

Summer Term 2005

Outlined below are details of the central training courses available for this term. Booking information can be found on Kingsnet.

Governor Training Courses Summer Term 2005

Personnel Briefing for Governors	20 th April 05
Understanding Workforce Remodelling	26 th April 05
New Clerks Induction	28 th April 05
New Governor Induction (Session 1)	8 th June 05
New Governor Induction (Session 2)	15 th June 05
DDA Reasonable Adjustments (Primary)	20 th June 05
New Governor Induction (Session 3)	22 nd June 05
DDA Reasonable Adjustments (Secondary)	27 th June 05

TRAINING COURSES FOR 2005/06

Central Training for 2005/06

During June 2005, schools will receive information about the new training programme for 2005/06, and we will ensure that Governing Body Clerks are also contacted with information and access details.

Leading Together

Leading Together is a new national development programme, commissioned by the DfES and is designed to develop and improve teamwork between the headteacher, the senior leadership team and the school's governing body as partners in the leadership of the school.

The programme is led by a facilitator and focuses on improving teamwork objectives while working together on a school improvement priority. The programme consists of three facilitated school –based sessions spread over a period of approximately nine months. It is proposed to pilot the programme with 2 or 3 schools during the next academic year of 2005/06. Any schools interested in finding out more should contact Hatija Bhatia, Principal Admissions and Governance Officer.

School Based Training for 2005/06

All requests for school based training should be made via the Governor Support Unit rather than approaching the Link Inspectors or other LEA staff directly.

For further information please contact Hatija Bhatia Principal Admissions & Governance Officer on 020 8547 5284 or email

hatija.bhatia@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

COMMITTEE VACANCIES FOR GOVERNORS

We currently have three vacancies for school governor representatives on Kingston Education-related Committees. We would be delighted to hear from Governors who might be interested in these.

Committee meetings are usually held at the Guildhall, Kingston, in the evenings, conclude about 9.00 – 9.30pm and meet 3 -5 times a year depending on items of business.

The period of membership will be up to 30 April 2006, which coincides with the Local Elections and it is possible that members will be reappointed for a further term of 3 – 4 years depending on the committee and whether the representative is still eligible for membership.

Past minutes and agendas of committees can be viewed by logging on to our website at

www.kingston.gov.uk/Council/CommitteeMinutes

CURRENT VACANCIES

School Organisation Committee

- 1 Secondary Community School representative

Nominees need to be a governor (including parent, staff and LEA appointed governors, but not an elected member governor.)

School Admissions Forum

- 1 Voluntary-aided Primary School representative

Nominees need to be a head teacher or a governor (other than an LEA appointed governor who is also a Councillor in this Authority).

School Admissions Forum and Children Youth & Culture Overview Panel

- 1 Primary School Parent Governor

This representative is required to sit on both the Forum and the Panel.

WHAT THE COMMITTEES DO:

School Organisation Committee

- considers and approves a 3–year School Organisation Plan for the Borough
- takes decisions on proposals for changes to schools e.g. the enlargement, opening or closure of schools.

- refers to the Schools Adjudicator for final decision any such proposal on which the SOC is not unanimous.

Changes to the SOC's role are likely in the near future arising from the Children's Act 2004.

For more information contact Jenny Haynes, Principal Education Officer on 020 8547 5260.

School Admissions Forum

- considers existing and proposed admission arrangements
- promotes agreement on admission issues, including guidance for parents and the arrangements to include potentially vulnerable children.

For more information contact Hatija Bhatia, Principal Admissions & Governance Officer on 020 8547 5284.

Children Youth & Culture Overview Panel

- This is a very interesting Panel, particularly with the changes taking place linking Education and Children's Services. Its remit covers Schools & LEA functions, Children's Social Services, Youth Services, Leisure, Sport and Recreation, the Arts, Museum & Heritage and Libraries.
- Its role is primarily in scrutiny and developing policy.
- It may also review decisions made the Executive or a Neighbourhood Committee which relate to the Panel's remit.

For more information please contact Patrick Leeson, Director of Learning & Children's Services on 020 8547 5220

Marian Morrison, Democratic Support Officer, is responsible for co-ordinating committee appointments and is the contact for a nomination form: marian.morrison@rbk.kingston.gov.uk or ring on 020 8547 5062