

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION -
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 20th May, 2010

9.00 am

Darent Room,
Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone



AGENDA



CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20 May 2010 at 9.00 am
Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone

Ask for: Christine Singh
Telephone: 01622 694334

Tea/coffee will be available before the meeting

Membership

- Conservative (11): Mr K Smith (Chairman), Mr R B Burgess, Mr N J Collor, Mr J Cubitt, Mr P J Homewood, Mr M J Jarvis, Mr J Ozog, Mr R A Pascoe, Mr W Richardson, Mr J Wedgbury and Mr A Wickham
- Liberal Democrat (1): Mr M J Vye (Vice-Chairman)
- Church Representatives (3): The Reverend N Genders, The Reverend Canon J L Smith and Dr D Wadman
- Parent Governor (2): Mr P Myers and Mr B Critchley
- Teacher Advisers (6): Mr T Desmoyers-Davies, Mrs J Huckstep, Miss S Kemsley, Mr R Straker, Mr S Thompson and Mr J Walder

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

Item No		Timings*
A. COMMITTEE BUSINESS		
A1	Substitutes	9.00 am
A2	Declaration of interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting	
A3	Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2010 (Pages 1 - 24)	
B. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION		
B1	Director of Learning and the Deputy Cabinet Member's update	9.10-9.20 am
B2	Absence in Kent Schools (Pages 25 - 32)	9.25-9.45 am
B3	Educational Reporting Cycles - Key Stage 2 (Pages 33 - 36)	9.45-10.15 am
B4	Presentation by Ms S Dunn, Head of 14-24 Innovation Unit	10.15-10.35 am

- B5 Interviews with Further Education Providers on 16-19 Years Old Strategy 10.45-12.30 pm
10.45 - 11.20 am Alison Clarke, Canterbury College
11.20 –11.55 am Bill Fearon, West Kent College
11.55 – 12.30 pm Paul Hannon, Hadlow College

BREAK 12.30 - 1.00 pm

- B6 Recall Ms S Dunn on Evidence Heard 1.00 - 1.20 pm
B7 Members Conclusions and Chairman's Summary 1.20-1.40 pm

C. SELECT COMMITTEE UPDATE

- C1 Select Committee - Update (Pages 37 - 38) 1.40-1.50 pm

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

**All timings are approximate*

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
(01622) 694002

Wednesday, 12 May 2010

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children, Families & Education - Learning and Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 23rd February, 2010.

PRESENT: Mr K Smith (Chairman), Mr R B Burgess, Mr N J Collor, Mr J Cubitt, Mr P J Homewood, Mr M J Jarvis, Mr J Ozog, Mr R A Pascoe, Mr W Richardson, Mr J Wedgbury, Mr M J Vye (Vice-Chairman) and Mrs A D Allen

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES: Mrs M Todd (Substitute for Dr Wadman)

PARENT GOVERNORS: Mr P Myers

TEACHER ADVISERS: Mr T Desmoyers-Davies and Mr J Walder

PRESENT: Mrs J Whittle, Deputy Lead Member

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer), Mr A Foster (Lead Curriculum Adviser, Subject Adviser for PSHE, Citizenship And RE), Ms P Harris (Head of Service) and Mrs G Bromley (Strategic Manager, Libraries and Archives)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

18. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2009
(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2009 were agreed subject to the wording in Minute15 paragraph (4) being altered to reflect that Mr Burgess was suggesting “that there was very little incentive when a person had a job to acquire qualifications for that job and suggested that money should be used from ‘Train to Gain’ for bespoke training to enhance or compliment the work that they were doing” and that they be signed by the Chairman.

19. Director of Learning and Deputy Cabinet Member's Verbal Update
(Item B1)

(Mrs J Whittle, Deputy Lead Member, learning, Mrs P Harris Interim Head of Standards Improvement were present for this item)

(1) The Chairman explained that Ms M Haeusler, Director of Learning and Mr M Baker, Interim Director of Learning were not able to attend the meeting due to the launch of the formal consultation for the Children, Families and Education Directorate Restructuring Review that day. He invited Mrs Whittle to give a verbal update.

(2) Mrs Whittle outlined the work that she had undertaken since the Committee last met, this included; visiting a mixture of secondary, special, Grammar and primary

Kent schools where she was pleased to see the enormous work being undertaken to improve both Key Stage 2 results, which had been a primary focus of attention and what hoped to be a significant increase in the 5 A* to C in mathematics and English examination results achieved which meant reaching the 2011 target a year early.

(3) Mrs Whittle advised that various campaigns had been launched which included; improving teachers pay in Kent with an aim to narrow the gap between their colleagues in outer London and the wider issue of teacher recruitment and retention, which linked with the pay and expanding the 'Teacher First Programme' which encourages bright young graduates to the teaching profession. The launch of restructuring CFE Directorate started today with a 3 month consultation, one aspect of this was looking at the role of the School Improvement Partner (SIP), Ms Haeusler would give an update on this at the next meeting. There was also a lot of work being undertaken to improve the links with Primary and Secondary schools she gave the example of a secondary school mathematics teacher in Swale teaching mathematics in primary schools to help improve those schools that were struggling to reach the floor targets with Key Stage 2.

(4) Mrs Whittle went on to advise that she and Mrs Allen met with the Children in Care Council to discuss how to improve educational outcomes for children in care. She advised that 6% of children in care reached 5A* to C at GCSE in English and mathematics which was too low. The focus would also include Gypsy/Traveller children whose attainment was also too low.

(5) Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments which included:

(6) In response to a question by Mr Richardson, Mrs Whittle advised that the increase in teachers pay if achieved would be for every grade.

(7) Mr Demoyers-Davis suggested that Mrs Whittle should be mindful of the areas in the County where the 'Fringe Area Allowance' applied; Dartford Gravesend and Sevenoaks and Westerham, which aimed to cover the differences in housing costs, when looking at teachers pay. He was fully in support of Fringe Area Allowances being substantial and not spread too thinly. Mrs Whittle agreed that the Fringe Area Allowance should not be spread thinly and aligned to housing costs. She agreed to report back to an appropriate POSC meeting.

(8) Mr Demoyers-Davis suggested that Local Government needed to speak with the Government regarding the National Conditions of Service. He advised that the Academies were not bound by the National conditions of Service and were able to set their own levels of pay which meant that there were some that matched the National conditions of Service and others that had introduced a pay scale where junior and senior levels received more but those on the middle scales received less.

(9) In response to a comment by Mr Burgess, Mrs Whittle explained that the Schools Improvement Partners (SIPs) did know their schools but there were cases where SIPs covered up to 17 schools, her aim was to reduce the amount of schools they covered so that they were able to visit schools that were not reaching their floor targets more often. Mr Collor stated that the issue needed to be looked at over a period of time with all the changes for the whole of Kent.

(10) In response to a question by Ms Todd, Mrs Harris advised that the report before Members was a summary. There was extensive detailed data available in

the public domain on all schools and Academies which could be made available. At Key Stage 4 in secondary schools, Kent was above national and our statistical neighbours, such as East and West Sussex, on 5A* to C in English and mathematics. There were 33 high schools in National Challenge Programmes that were making substantial improvements on that level. Since 2008 they had moved on the 5A* to C significantly and now all the attention was on English and mathematics. Our Grammar schools, wide ability schools and high achieving high schools and those in the more vulnerable communities were moving in the right direction.

(11) Mr Demoyers-Davis suggested that the input of money on the nationally challenged schools was making an impact on standards, if this was the case then the standard pupil cost could be the root of the issue, in the amount of money received for students by the school to get them through the 5A* to C including mathematics and English as some pupils cost more to get to that standard.

(12) RESOLVED that the responses to questions and comments made by Members and the verbal update be noted.

20. Educational Performance for Children and Young People 2009

(Item B2)

(Report by Mrs R Turner Managing Director and Mrs S Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children Education and Families)

(Mrs P Harris, Head of Service – Advisory Service Kent, and Mrs J Whittle were present for this item)

(1) The Chairman advised the Committee that he felt that the content of the report was the basis of the Committee's function. There were 2000 teachers in Kent and it was the Committee's responsibility to measure the outcomes of their teaching. This meant having confidence to rely on Mrs Harris and her Team for data and for them to submit items for Members to celebrate achievements when appropriate and to scrutinise when necessary.

(2) Mrs Harris explained that her role was to oversee that work had been undertaken to look at how best to share the headlines, vast validated data and national data on primary and secondary schools. It was suggested that for the new cycle the new area would be the priorities of the Department. Other suggested options were; identifying primary schools that were not achieving, Secondary schools in the National Challenge Programme and children receiving free school meals. It was possible to look at the impact during the summer months, as well as sending the Committee regular summaries of OFSTED outcomes, this information could be sent to Members between meetings.

(3) Mrs Whittle reminded the Committee that any request for confidential information would need to be held in closed session or instigate a Member Monitoring Group.

(4) Mr Vye referred to a document sent to a Cabinet meeting that detailed trends and suggested that there needed to be data of at least 5 years to view trends, although he did find the information in the report valuable and asked that Members receive the data/information in the same format as in the Cabinet papers and requested that the number of schools on special measures be included in the

report. Mrs Harris explained that there were 3 Primary Schools that were on special measures, Bellwood Primary, Maidstone, Milton Court Primary, Sittingbourne and St Georges Primary, Wilmington Enterprise College.

(5) Mr Vye referred the Directorate staff restructuring with the loss of 65 back office staff in the Learning Group. He felt that in order for the front line staff to operate there was a need for back room staff. He sought assurance that the same level of staff would remain in the schools.

(6) Mr Vye declared an interest advising that he was the Chair of Governors at a Canterbury School that was not reaching the floor target even with very good leadership and teaching and asked what more could be done. Mrs Harris advised that there would be an increase in targeting schools with one to one teaching.

(7) Mrs Allen congratulated Mrs Harris and her team on the work already carried out in raising the attainment of looked after children (LAC) and Gypsy and Romany children. She suggested that there was a common thread that some of the those children moved by choice and some not, and as a key target, discussions should be had with other local authorities on the effect of placing a child without making any provision for the child's education, which meant that the child could be out of school for a long time and then possibly move on. Mrs Allen suggested that there should be an education package made up for those children, where they can work from home if necessary but would more importantly would travel with them if they had to move on. Mrs Allen also highlighted that it was the case that often many LAC entered a school in a particular area which had the effect of bring down the attainment and achievement of the school, which needed to be borne in mind.

(8) In response to a question by Mrs Todd, Mrs Harris advised that the inspectors looked at the quality of the teaching and learning and look at trends of data. She explained that the validated data for 2009 was not published until January 2010, which was very late, as it was normally published in October but for schools, particularly secondary, they were at a disadvantage. We could lobby OFSTED and nationally but unless they published the validated data earlier there would always be vulnerable schools.

(9) Mr Burgess suggested that there was so much information it may be better, as local Members received local education briefings on the local schools in their electoral areas, for those schools to be left to the local Member to deal with and for the Committee to deal with a summary of the statistics. He suggested that data for East Kent needed to be considered as there was a lot of movement within the schools with the large intake of children from; Service personnel, Eastern European families and LAC. Mr Burgess felt that money should be spent to allow each individual pupil to reach their full potential/ability and suggested that Members should be pushing for all Kent schools to be signed up to the Gifted and Talented Programme.

(10) In response to concerns raised by Mr Wedgbury, the Chairman advised that there would be a progress report on 'Gifted and Talented' later in the year.

(11) Mrs Harris explained that in schools where there was strong leadership and the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding, all abilities of children do well, although there was funding to develop those who were under achieving with that context the challenge at every level and the differentiation being made was exceptional. Mrs Harris gave the example of King Ethelbert's, Thanet where the

school's ethos had changed because of the new Leadership and the focus on the National Challenge, which had raised the performance across all ability age groups. There was a need for underachieving, vulnerable groups and borderline children to achieve but the aim was to have those expectations across the board. Our School Improvement Partners were tracking with the Leaders and the Governors the target setting and the targets for 2011 had been set.

(12) In response to a question by Mr Homewood, Mrs Harris explained that from September 2009, there were 3 Primary schools and 1 Secondary school that were judged inadequate. Those schools had been already identified for significant improvement. More schools were now judged satisfactory as the goal post had changed. This meant that as a lot of the Kent schools had been moved from being good to being judged as satisfactory. The good schools now needed to be consistently good and the schools at the far end of the continuum that were inadequate were very few but the key area was that there were now too many in the band of satisfactory.

(13) RESOLVED that the responses to Members question and their comments and the report be noted.

21. SACRE Annual Report *(Item B3)*

(Report by Merril Hauesler, Director – Learning Group, Mrs R Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families & Education Directorate and Mrs S Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education Directorate)

(Mr A Foster, Lead Curriculum Adviser and support to SACRE was present for this item)

(1) The Committee considered a report that presented the Annual Report (2008-2009) on the work of Kent's Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education that highlighted particular developments and the need to commence the review of the locally agreed syllabus for RE in September 2010.

(2) Mr Foster introduce the report and in response to a question by Mr Ozog advised that religious education was a statutory subject but within the legislation parents had the legal right to withdraw their child from religious education. In Kent, schools are required to comply with the legislation. It was the role of OFSTED to inspect that the schools are providing religious education and report back on the schools compliance or lack of compliance with the legislation. The School Improvement Partners were also encouraged to ensure that the schools comply. School governors are also expected to ensure that schools meet the requirements of the Kent Agreed Syllabus for RE..

(3) In reply to a question by Mr Jarvis, Mr Foster advised that at present the Government was taking forward the Children Schools and Families Bill, one clause of which was about the statutory provision of sex and relationship education. Last week the Secretary of State for Education introduced an amendment which had been causing disputes as to whether it was going to water down the requirements for sex and relationship education and enable faith schools to interpret sex education to reflect their ethos and their belief. Mr Foster said that he did not feel that this had any implication on religious education as there was new guidance this

month which had been circulated to schools and there were no comments in that guidance on sex and relationship education. Schools were expected to reflect a broad and balanced view on matters relating to sex and relationships education.

(4) In response to a question by Mr Desmoyer-Davis, Mr Foster advised that every year all efforts were made to fill vacancies, in the interim members were co opted to fill the vacancies on SACRE. He advised that it was a national issue to find members for SACRE.

(5) RESOLVED that:

(a) the responses to questions from Members be noted;

(b) the Kent SACRE's annual report 2008-09 be noted; and

(c) the work of the Kent SACRE be noted.

22. The Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading: a strategy to engage the whole community

(Item B4)

(Report by Ms M White, Head of Extended Services and Mrs G Bromley, Strategic Manager/ Project Manager Libraries and Archives)

(Mrs G Bromley, Strategic Manager/ Project Manager Libraries and Archives was present for this item)

(1) The Committee considered a progress report on the development of a Community Strategy for Reading and Literacy in Kent, known as the "Kent Approach", endorsed by Cabinet on the 30 March 2009, Chief Officers and the Kent Partnership.

(2) The Chairman advised that the report had cross cutting issues for the Children, Families and Education Directorate and the Communities Directorates and had already been considered by the Communities Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(3) Mrs Bromley said that she viewed this as a corporate piece of work and as a long term strategy. The strategy recognised that there was enormous good practice in schools and other educational establishments but recognised that there was a need to raise standards in literacy and English and achievement within the communities in Kent. There were a wide range of agencies that would be working in partnership with KCC to test and try new approaches including those outlined within the report. The priorities included; Key Stage 2, Looked After Children, Gypsies and Travellers needs, people with dyslexia and others with special needs.

(4) RESOLVED that:

(a) the activity that had taken place and the continuing momentum of this work be noted; and

(b) the advice on ways in which KCC elected Members might act as ambassadors for literacy and reading in their local communities be noted.

23. Short film of the Young People interviewed on the visits to the Skills Centre Thamesview, Gravesend and Leigh Academy, Dartford
(Item B5)

(1) The Chairman advised the Committee that those Members who attended the visits to the schools on 2 February 2010 would be gathering around the webcam to thank the pupils of schools for sharing their views. Following this the Committee would view a short film from the Leigh Academy, which could not be broadcast as permission was withheld. The film from the visit to the Skills Centre, Thamesview, was not available in time for the meeting.

(2) Mr Pascoe introduced the 4 minute film from Leigh Academy explaining that the Academy was a group of 4 schools under one roof. Members had visited one of the schools and received a tour of the school and met with 6 year 11 pupils for a discussion. Mr Pascoe felt that the pupils were smart and articulate and shared a great bond with, and respected, their teachers. The Chairman added that what seemed to work well at the school was the one to one sessions for pupils with their teachers as the students were fortunate to have a high teacher to pupil ratio. The pupils also had a clear view of what they wished to do in the future, although this did not seem to feature apprenticeships.

(3) Mr Burgess referred back to Minute 15(5) 2009 and suggested that pupils should all receive independent advice and guidance in year 10 on career paths, the earlier the better, to enable the pupils to match their life skills to what they wish to do.

(4) Mr Richardson suggested that as some of the pupils on the visits did not know what they wished to do in the future it may be that more work experience opportunities could be offered in the curriculum. Mrs Todd advised that in practice it was logistically difficult for pupils to attend work experience as there were many areas that had to be secured such as health and safety and safeguarding before they were allowed to accept the placement. She felt that the culture of the work place accepting work experience pupils was difficult and needed to be made easier through legislation.

(5) RESOLVED that the Committee noted the content of the short film.

24. Interviews with Kent Employers
(Item B6)

RESOLVED that the evidence received from four Kent Employers; Mr P Carter, Carter Construction, Dr Liz Hoult, Canterbury Christchurch University, Mr John Casey, Mainstream Training and Mr Martin Atkinson HR Manager, Aylesford Newsprint (attached as appendix 1) be noted.

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Mr P Carter, Carter Construction

(1) The Committee received a verbal presentation from Mr Carter on his business career and experience of employing young people. He explained that he had been in business for 30 years, registered in Kent and trading in London. All his business interests were based around the construction industry. He said that in the early days of establishing his business in London at the age of 24, he was dependent on the energies, of the young people around him and dependent at the time on the London Comprehensive system. Those young people that applied to work for him had had a dismal experience of the average London Comprehensive. He felt that they had poor motivation, poor time keeping and other challenges that had to be overcome when they started work. He was pleased to say that many of those who started working for him 20 years ago were still working for his companies today.

(2) Mr Carter said that backing young people in his businesses had led to both success and a lot of tears as a lot of young people let him down and were disappointing, their lack of literacy and numeracy skills he found appalling, many could not read a tape measure. He found the lack of ambition or ideas of what the young people wanted to do in life very disappointing too. They had not been given the right independent advice or guidance in their secondary schools. He would invest time and money in supporting them in acquiring skills in bricklaying and carpentry etc and after a few months they would say that "it wasn't for them" and it was back to the drawing board. He then had to start retraining new people.

(3) Mr Carter advised that in recent times, through the Government's Apprenticeship Training Programme he had taken on a lot of apprentices through Carillion, a work base training provider, he had initially seen the work they were doing in Sittingbourne, training young people in construction skills, as a Kent County Councillor. He had a success rate of 65% to 70% with those young people. He enjoyed the fact that Carillion took all of the bureaucracy out of the process including the health and safety checks and PAYE, they paid the apprentices and he sent Carillion a monthly cheque.

(4) Mr Carter became a County Councillor in 1997 and in a short time was elected Chairman of Education and Libraries when he set about, with his experience of what he felt was a failed Inner London education system to improve the education choices in Kent schools. He was initially appalled by what he saw in Kent schools 12 years ago; poor quality teaching and very little learning in the classroom.

(5) Mr Carter felt that there was now an enormous transformation. He declared that he was a Governor of Leigh College for 12 years. He was keen to give young people diversity and choice in the curriculum they pursued. He felt that Kent was fortunate that the Government had given Kent the flexibility

to run different courses one day a week through dropping the compulsory modern languages to give space in the curriculum to achieve this. This was on route with the Dutch model of vocational education in developing vocational choice for 14-16 year olds. There were now 5½ -6k pupils choosing bespoke vocational pathways in what they want to pursue in life, supported by the ambitions of the 'Towards 2010' document, to give the best careers guidance to young people. This was a huge journey, which included convincing Headteachers who had been previously sceptical.

(6) Mr Carter advised that there needed to be between 7000–8000 apprenticeships in both the public and private sectors although there was a struggle with 1700 places at present.

(7) Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments which included the following:

(8) In response to a question by Mr Wedgbury, Mr Carter said privatisation of the rail industry and the closure of the docks had left a massive void in apprenticeships that had not been filled. The goal of government for 20% of young people to be in work base apprenticeships was in tune with what he believed to be fit and appropriate. He felt that it was for all public agencies to set an example to do what they use to do particularly well. He gave the example of the Health economy, which he felt had a great opportunity to do this, questioning why there was a need to fill most of the social care homes and domiciliary carers positions from outside this country, when there was rising unemployment especially the rising youth unemployment. He advised that the number of overseas migrants to work in this country had gone up dramatically. In 2002 there were 4500 people from abroad registering for National Insurance Numbers. In 2009 there were 11250 people registering. He felt that they were filling jobs that were there in our indigenous economy that young people were not equipped for or did not want to engage in, which we had to do something about.

(9) In response to a question by Mr Collor, Mr Carter advised that it was the times of being told by young people "It's not for me Mr Carter" that inspired him to make sure that we gave young people the opportunity to explore their skill sets through having choice and diversity in their vocational curriculum programme at medium and lower level of vocational training skills. He added that he was keen that if pupils felt that after being on a course that the course was not for them that they could chop and change within reason. This allowed young people to learn what they might like to do post 16 years in the world of work. He said that careers advice should probably start in the latter year of Primary school, looking at what they like and enjoy doing.

(10) Mr Carter commented on the Skills Force Programme and the motivation of the young people broadening their horizons and making their aspirations fundamentally different. He felt that the good schools should be doing this at all levels of ability finding out the strengths of young people and sign posting them to succeed outside the world of education.

(11) In reply to a comment by Mr Desmoyer-Davis, Mr Carter said that he stood by his view that in a number of secondary schools in Kent the education was dire 12 years ago. There was no choice available, there was no diversity and there were a significant number of high schools, he gave the example of Ramsgate that had 1-1½ % of the cohort achieving 5 A* to C grades, which he deemed was not good enough. He felt that high schools now had structured lessons, offering diversity and choice. The Building Schools for the Future and the Academy Programme were bringing in an extra element, competition. He felt very proud of the achievements of the Headteachers and teachers now delivering a radically different option.

(12) In reply to a question by Mr Desmoyer-Davis, Mr Carter said that with pure vocational applied skills, a good school that was offering that range of vocational skills would mix the literacy and numeracy in the course, so that it was relevant. They should be able to write up reports on visits they had to a construction site.

Dr Hoult, Christchurch University, Canterbury

(13) Dr Hoult welcomed the opportunity to be involved at the start of KCC developing a new strategy. She then gave a presentation using PowerPoint and explained that Canterbury Christchurch University was mainly based in Canterbury, but also had a large campus network with sites in Medway, Tunbridge Wells, Broadstairs and Folkestone. There were 14k students, a large proportion of which were part-time. The University had strength in public services education, educating a lot of; teachers, FE Lecturers, Careers and Guidance professionals, the Health and Social Care Sector as well as the Business Faculty in Arts and Humanities.

(14) Dr Hoult suggested that there was a need to look at the bigger picture by looking at the sort of Kent there would be in 10-15 years time and the sort of environment the students who were 16-19 years old now would be growing up in to, and developing themselves. The central thing about that new society was that it could not be predicted. The nature of social change at present was so rapid that it was impossible to predict what sort of working environment and what sort of regional economy would be around in the next few decades. Technological changes, economic changes and society changes were so rapid. She said that the question was “How can we sensibly make any sort of planning or strategy based on what we do not know?” She said that she would argue that the best that could be done for the 16 year olds that we were working with was to develop a core knowledge base, transferable skills that could be useful in any professional context as well as strong shared values.

(15) Dr Hoult suggested to Members that there was a need to think about what kind of young people we wanted to produce given the rapid rate of change, she felt that there was a need for resilient and adaptable young people, who had a core confidence in how they interacted with the world that would allow them to adapt to different situations. It was also important to have young people that had the capacity to break out of cycles of the deprivation and low aspiration. There was a need to have high expectations of young

people, of young people that have high expectations of themselves and their peers and for young people to have a strong moral sense of community and leadership.

(16) Dr Hoult continued to say that as the economy made steps into recovery education needed to be a part of that. She stated that the regeneration in the South East could not happen without the education providers at all phases of the sector. There was a need to be thinking with the policy makers, business and young people looking at how they could build a strong base for the future. She explained that there had been a trend historically in the United Kingdom, particularly strong in Kent, for educational investment for young people not to be repaid because there was a migration out of Kent once young people had skills and a confidence to get into different types of employment. She advised that there was a need to look at, with the providers and employers about how to retain talented young people in Kent and how they were developed to have a shared responsibility in the geographical area.

(17) Dr Hoult suggested that with regards to the 16-19 year Strategy, it was not helpful to think of 16-19 year olds in isolation; but needed to be thought about in the wider 14 to 19 year olds context as well as the changes that were affecting Higher Education. Within Higher Education there were certain concerns on the 16 to 19 year old Strategy. The concerns were that the end result would be a bifurcation of qualifications of purely academic and purely vocational qualifications and the loss of the holistic, deep education that had taken a lot of time being built up in the country. She also felt that there was not an inspiring model from central government about a way to work in a rich way with employers at present. Dr Hoult felt that there was a real risk that could lead to the sidelining of; community and work experience in pursuit of; very narrow, very impoverished understanding outcome based attainment model of education. There was a need to think clearly as the strategy was worked on about the whole young person and the young person at the centre based in his or her community. She felt that simply asking employers and higher education "what do we want?" as if they were consumers, without thinking about that holistic education could be quite dangerous. She then referred to a letter from Lord Mandelson to all Vice Chancellors via the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) that announced a £1b budget cut over the next 3 years in Higher Education that would have a very severe impact on the teaching grant in higher education that would mean fewer places than there had been in the last 5 years. This meant that every institution was raising its entry requirements. Dr Hoult said that there had been a nice environment in higher education over the past 5 years with the impact of wider participation with lots of families that would not have thought about going onto higher education in the past were arriving in higher education. She felt that there was a real danger that some of them would be lost if we think about the twin emphasises on high achievers of gifted and talented and those at the other end of the spectrum not in employment, education and training, there was a middle group that could get lost somewhere in between.

(18) Dr Hoult explained that there were models in the sector that may apply to this advising that she was a co leader of the South East Coastal Communities Project. The Project was a £3m funded project by Higher Education Funding Council to develop a model of universities supporting their local communities directly. The Project spanned 9 Universities across the South East coastal towns and the Kent project was based in Swale. The core shared initiative was to develop the health and well being opportunities and aspirations of the people of Swale, so the 3 universities in Kent had been working on that for the last 18 months. This model was trying to develop an idea of higher education taking direct responsibility working with local authorities and policy makers for its local community, with health and well being its theme. Dr Hoult suggested that this model could be applied in an imaginative way, with the infrastructure, to apply to some of the challenges that the Committee were looking at.

(19) Canterbury Christ Church was a centre of excellence for careers guidance and Dr Hoult said that any policy that KCC developed the university could help embed in schools, further education and University sector through those student teachers who from next year would be the teachers in the system to buy in the approach and deliver it.

(20) Dr Hoult advised that she had led a Team on the 'Gateways Project'. They had won £91k from the Department of Innovation Universities and Skills (DIUS) to develop roots into the professions for young people from high schools in Kent. The 3 professional areas were health, social care and crime and policing. It was deliberate not to select pupils from Selective schools. The young people were given outrageously high expectations and were offered the chance to study at higher education level 1, which was equivalent to the first year undergraduate, alongside their post 16 education, which may have been 'A' Levels or vocational studies in one of those areas. They attended the University to study alongside their work in school. This project was done by working with Headteachers, representatives from the professions as well as higher education and was now embedded in the University. Dr Hoult felt that there was no reason why this could not be done on a bigger scale and in different types of industry beyond the public sector.

(21) Dr Hoult advised that work had just started work with Kent on the Community Action Pilot, which was developing opportunities for students in years 10 and 11 to work on community work and for it to be accredited with the university, this would be continuing for the next year. This bid was gain by Kent from the DCFS which was one of the only bids immediately rewarded.

(22) Dr Hoult made the following suggestions for the Committee to consider:

(23) For Kent to establish a 16-19 year old Strategy Group, to include; policy makers, Schools, Higher Education, Connexions and the Youth Support Services.

(24) One area of growth was the Business Development Fund and there was an opportunity to bid for Knowledge Transfer Partnership Funding, which was money from central government to allow Universities to work with

companies, which might be private sector or public sector institutions. Christ Church University had 2 with KCC already. This was where a company had a particular interest in developing a strategic development where university expertise would be welcome we would have a joint graduate to work on that strategy.

(25) There could be an opportunity to offer all 16 year olds in Kent the opportunity of experiencing Higher Education in a particular form beyond a wider participation type day visit.

(26) Dr Hoult felt that there was an opportunity to seize the objective; she felt that there was a need to urgently develop a model which would prepare students for the world of work and develop their understanding of our cultural heritage and a sense of community responsibility, as there was no model of this that she was aware of.

(27) The Chairman thanked Dr Hoult for attending the meeting.

John Casey – Mainstream Training

(28) Mr Casey gave a brief of his company advising that it specialised in drivers and warehouse people, employing about 300 people. He started the company in 1997. He said that he believe in employing young people. In the past six years, since my company started getting larger, he had employed about 16 young people. Only two of those 16 young people had stayed with his company. Mr Casey was pleased to say that one of the young people had completed the full modern apprenticeship which his company had supported straight from school. He felt that one of the biggest problems was young people's attitude; they needed the right attitude. He felt that young people that he had contact with came to him from school with the wrong attitude. In his experience their first taste of work was work experience, which he felt in its current format did not work.

(29) He explained that when a young person was given work experience in his company they were given specific duties. Mr Casey's company ran training courses for young people, Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) 16-19 years old groups, and worked quite closely with Mid Kent College, on a pre-employment course, a short sharp 10 day course with accredited certificates for adults of 19 year olds plus and one for younger people. The adult course had been extremely successful as many had gone on and found work. He explained that he set up a pre-employment course in forklift, truck training, constructing skills etc for younger people, which was due to start in January 2010, there were no takers. The course eventually started on Monday, 22 March, 22 young people applied for the course, 16 people confirmed, 12 people were ready for Monday morning and nine people attended. He expressed some exasperation on the final number on the course saying that it was a fully funded course, which included all the necessary safety equipment, as he believed that when they turned up for

employment they needed to have all the necessary equipment to convince the employer that “Yes I am here and I am ready for the world of work”.

(30) He then gave an example of the success of a young man who was 16 years old whose Mum wanted him to go onto sit his A levels. He worked for Mr Casey for the Summer period said that he was not sure what he wanted to do, as he was attracted to; the job security, the progression, the training and qualifications that Mr Casey’s company could offer him. He did not want just to be a tea boy, and the money. He knew that it was not going to be a top paid job. He was paid him £10,000 per year. After 18 months he was now on £15,500 per year and was a mid range administration assistant in the NVQ department. Mr Casey said that he had invested in him mostly because he had the right attitude, not because he had the right skills, although skills were important learning to read and write, if he did not the company had a Learn Direct department and that meant we could help him and we could train him.

(31) Mr Casey explained that he had asked this young employee why he thought that people of 16-19 were currently unemployed. He said that people of his age were influenced by what other people think they would turn down a job at McDonald’s in the hope that a more superior job would come up. A lot of school leavers went onto proper jobs from school which was a shock to the system. They do not understand what the real world was all about. They enter into the real world they have to start work at 8.00 am and finish at 5.00pm, which they do not do at school. Even during the work experience they were not used to the real world of work. “Money”, in his words, “a lot of 16 year olds would not get out of bed for less than £200.00 a week”, which was quite narrow minded considering the current climate and it would be their first proper job. They looked at the money aspect because they; want to learn to drive, wanted to go out with their partner, get a flat, pressures from their parents, and things like that. The young man had said that he felt people of his age could be lazy expecting the perfect job to be put on a plate, they just expected it to be out there and many did not know what to do with their lives. They were in this balance of do I go into the world of work or do I go onto higher education?

(32) Mr Casey felt that as an employer that their indecision swayed his judgement. He wanted to invest in young people but questions whether he wanted to spend his time and my money and his staff’s time on someone who was undecided. It took a long time to employ someone.

(33) The Chairman thanked Mr Casey and gave Members the opportunity to ask questions and make comments which included the following:

(34) In response to a question by Mr Burgess, Mr felt that his company was fortunate in that it was hooked into training for young people, with contracts for the Ministry of Defence both nationally and internationally, for the prisons on the Isle of Sheppey down to the Rochester Offenders Prison. He said that he received a letter from someone looking to place young people on apprenticeship programmes. He felt that as an employer he was not being told about apprenticeships or training, he was fortunate to know as he

delivered training, apprenticeships etc. He felt that employers did not know how long the training was for or if there was any support. He suggested to the Committee that its first task was to take on board what a young person wanted and secondly that someone could explain to him and to employers what an apprenticeship programme was.

(35) In response to a question by Mr Smith, Mr Casey advised that all schools could be visited by a roadshow to capture the interest of school leavers. He was aware of the big one at Detling Hill for employers, which was good as his company was represented there. He was convinced that there was a need to get local employers the opportunity to be involved so that they can receive the support and have questions answered such as "if I take a young person on, it is not just about the young person and the time that I lose him while he was doing his apprenticeship and his training, it was also taking another senior member of staff out of their job to coach and mentor that person, it was not just one cost" Mr Casey felt that this was why small employers were opposed to apprenticeships or not opposed so much as not attracted to it, because not just that they could not afford to lose the time, not just the young person who was not skilled and ready and able to earn them some money because that was what employers want and that they will lose a senior, in the mechanics industry, if you lose a senior mechanic, getting paid £22.00 an hour to stick him in there saying he has got to mentor him and double check his work and this has to be taken into account. Mr Casey saw those as the obstacles.

(36) In reply to a question by Mr Pascoe, Mr Casey advised that the first thing was to inform the young people on what it was like in the real world of employment, explaining to them that training/courses were not just to give them qualifications but was about where they were going to be working, what types of jobs, types of hours they would be working, the people they will be working with to give them an understanding of what to expect in the real world. He felt that they also needed interview techniques as it was difficult enough to get an interview and they needed to come prepared. He suggested that young people were not being prepared to go out there and make the most of their first chance and make a first impression. They did not know they should have to turn up in a shirt and tie, they also did not know they should be prompt and on time for an interview, bringing with them their certificates with them and to take pride in what they do and that will shine through, an employer would take that on board.

(37) In response to a question by Mr Ozog Mr Casey said that he would be prepared to look at the YTS Scheme as a businessman. He felt that it was about wanting and to get on the YTS Scheme and needing to progress. That would be the best thing to instil in the young person, the programme did not matter, whether it was YTS or apprenticeships, Mr Casey said that he believed it was about being motivated.

(38) In reply to a question by Mr Homewood, Mr Casey advised that many of the young people received NVQs when they finished their apprenticeships. His company was a large facilitator of NVQ's for the transport sector, working

with the company Dairycrest delivering 300 NVQ's for them nationally. He added that qualifications were important. He said that there was going to be less investment in adults courses next year although, there was more and more pressure on adults than young people at present as they had to pay their mortgages, look after their families etc. So they could come with an NVQ but as an employer, for him it was not about their qualifications, but more about what they had done, that they were hungry, had drive and passion and wanted and needed to succeed. He felt that an NVQ was good and it could be invested in but it was not the be all and end all.

(39) In answer to a question by Mr Walder, Mr Casey explained that he had some experience with work experience as he was also a qualified Health and Safety Inspector and in the early days, of his company he also doubled up as a Health and Safety Placement Officer for Schools through KCC carrying out health and safety visits for work experience placements to ensure that those students were not being abused. It was not because he did not believe that the placements were not good places to work, he was keen to know what they would be doing whilst they were there. He was aware that there was a lot of pressure on a very short time scale to get young people in placements so I know it was extremely difficult. More work was needed to get employers to buy into meaningful work experience.

(40) In answer to a comment by Mr Collor, Mr Casey interjected saying he valued the young people and that it was not just about paying them a sensible wage, they regularly transferred their roles within the company to other areas, all of his staff were multi-skilled, so they could feel that they could fit it in any one part of the company giving them job security within the company.

(41) The Chairman thanked Mr Casey for attending the meeting and for bringing to the Committee an active view of how it was for his company and how it was in the workplace.

Mr Martin Atkinson- HR Aylesford Newsprint

(42) The Chairman welcomed Mr Atkinson to the meeting and asked him to give a brief introduction. Mr Atkinson advised that he was the Human Resources Manager for Aylesford Newsprint, from the Reed Organisation. Reeds started making paper in 1922 and Aylesford Newsprint was still making paper on the site, with fewer paper machines and employed a lot less people than we once had although they produced a lot more paper than before. Aylesford Newsprint was formed in December 1993, a joint venture company between two forestry companies, STA which was a Swedish Company and Mondy, which was essentially a South African Company. Aylesford Newsprint employed 340 people and had a turn over around £140m a year. Of the 340 people employees, 22 were apprentices. In the UK there were currently 3 newsprint manufacturers, a company called Shotton who were the same size as Aylesford Newsprint, in North Wales, a new company called Parm, which was in Kings Lynn, a new investment in the UK by a German company. He added that unfortunately another newsprint company just went out of business last week, Bridgewater in Ellesmere Port. The paper industry was much

larger in Kent in years gone by but now there were 4 or 5 large paper mills in Kent but it was one of the main industries in Kent going back in the past. In the last 15 years we have taken on 75 apprentices. Two of those were taken on from other companies that unfortunately went bust, those trainees were mid way through their apprenticeships so they could complete. Of those 75, of the ones that have completed and not still in training 82% of those who had reached their completion time did successfully complete so we had an 18% drop out for various reasons during the training. Of the 82% who successfully completed their training, 62% of those were still employed by the company, which gave us an overall retention rate of 55%. The people who start with us on an apprenticeship were still with us 15 years later which he considered to be very successful. We take on apprentices in mainly engineering. The Company had taken on some business trainees over the years but they were mainly electrical and mechanical process engineers. They were scarce skills in the UK especially scarce skills in the world. The Company had taken on more than we needed, particularly for the drop out rate and was aware that after training people, they would leave and they may return to us when they have got some experience. So it was part of what the Company had to do in the community as well.

(43) Mr Atkinson said that 'attitude' was the Companies watch word for recruitment and it recruited for skill. As long as people have got the right attitude, the right skill, they were welcomed and would be trained for the skill that was required. He added that in terms of attitude, he was looking for people who were work ready because the jobs were practical jobs. He was looking for evidence of people with a practical aptitude. People who had done something in their school life, in their childhood, they may have made radios, fixed bikes, motorbikes or cars or whatever. He was also looking for self motivation, drive, enthusiasm, someone who may have done a paper round have put themselves out to gain some experience, and did not have everything done by their parents. He was looking for people who can get away from the Playstation's and televisions, to show some evidence that they could do something for themselves and that they could see things through to the end. An apprenticeship was not an easy option it was a tough route to take; it was four years of intensive work, intensive study learning from others, who had got to be motivated to be teachers. You had to have the right attitude as a young person or as an adult to learn from others. Commitment and team work was something that he looked for in school leavers He felt that there were problems with young people communication skills. Young people had to be able to ask questions and had to be able to listen, communication skills were key. He felt that in 10 or 20 minutes in an interview you know about their communication skills and so many school leavers unfortunately do not have any communications skills, they do not have any questions to ask.

(44) Mr Atkinson advised that all the apprentices end their apprenticeships with one of the following; NVQ2, NVQ3, a National Certificate, a Higher National Certificate, a Foundation Degree and all of their essential skills New trainees would have five GCSE's at C or above, particularly the Maths doing the higher paper. This was not set by the company but was inline with the colleges requirements for a National Certificate Course.

(45) The Company recruits 5 apprentices a year, This years recruitment was due to take place. An open evening for apprentice candidates and their parents would be held. Parents were important to this. In his experience, he found that schools were more interested in getting young people into higher education; parents were more interested in creating life chances, so the Company was trying to get to the parents, to get parents interested in apprenticeships to see if it was the right thing for their child. There would be about 120 people touring the mill. All of the existing apprentices would be present so that they can meet people who were going through the programme and to talk about what it was really like for them. There may be 80-100 applicants this year; they would go through all the usual tests etc, teamwork exercises, communication exercises to try to get to the person who was underneath. We would start those young people in September and they would be on a four year programme.

(46) The Company was also involvement, with local schools. He explained that when local schools were going for specialist status, it was linked with five schools in the area, helping with funding towards their specialist status. He said that he did not want to criticise any of those schools particularly as every one was busy but it felt like the Company paid some money to help achieve the specialist status and did not get a return out of it. Having said that he highlighted that some really good work with some other schools had been achieved such as Maplesden Noakes in Maidstone, in terms of work experience programmes, student exchange with foreign students and preparing students with careers advice, practice interviews etc. As a relatively large employer in the region it did try to engage but it too struggled with the resource to do those things.

(47) As a large industrial site, there were often requests for mill tours which helped people understand what the world of work was like. On average, within a week we would take two school parties around the mill, it took time but it allowed people to see inside a factory, it broadens their experience and it may be a possibility that they may come back for an apprenticeship or a job or even recycle their newspapers or magazines. He felt that funding was a minefield for any employer. The Company had dedicated training staff that were aware of the funding. Things change all the time, regimes change all the time. He did not know how smaller employers coped with understanding what was available. The training staff worked with Connexions, Business Partnerships, with schools, with colleges, with sector skills councils and with the new Academies.

(48) (43) Mr Atkinson felt that there was a need to network and establishing clarity on who to speak to. He felt that it was difficult to know who to go to for information and for accessing funding. He said that for the future he would like to see improvement in; the stability of qualifications as most people dealing with recruitment still understand O'Levels and A Levels but this was changing and there were different kinds of qualifications available. The questioned whether diplomas were here to stay. He advised that he was working with a consortium of employers in the Medway area and with some schools in

developing an Engineering Diploma. But questioned how much effort do they put into that? and would a change of Government mean the end of the diploma's?

(49) Mr Atkinson felt that there needed to be clarity about the support network that employers should be engaging with. He advised that he sat on the Board of the Sector Skills Council for Industry and the Academy for the Industry, which took up a lot of his time; there was also the Education Business Partnership, the Learning and Skills Council and Kent Tech before that. There was the Education Business Partnerships, and the local FE provision. He would welcome some co-ordination of these organisations. He concluded that the outcome of this was to have well rounded young people. Mr Atkinson said that it occurred to him that it could be difficult to understand the generations of young people that follow. The children born in the 2000's had different expectations; they understood things differently from when he was growing up. They were growing up with the internet as part of their lives; they receive their news not by a newspaper, but via mobile phone. He explained that Aylesford Newsprint had sent up an Apprentice Forum where their apprentices as a group gathered every month to talk about their issues so that they can help each other through the programme and inform the trainers about what they do on their programme because they look at things totally differently to those who were trying to manage them. He felt that the Forum was a very powerful thing for the future for the Company and for the young people to take responsibility for their own learning and development running their own programme and development for the future.

(50) The Chairman thanked Mr Atkinson for attending the meeting and gave Members the opportunity to ask questions and make comments which included the following:

(51) In reply to Mr Homewood, Mr Atkinson advised him that out of the 75 apprentices there had been 3 girls. There were girls employed in other positions coming into the lab, they did not come as apprentices, they came as graduates or as 18 year old school leavers, who then study a degree course. Mr Atkinson said that it was difficult to get girls to apply. He said that this year he had challenge his team to find some female apprentices but had yet to see if they had been successful. Within the industry there was a problem with the perception that it was a male dominated industry which he felt was true. The Company was owned by a Swedish Company. He said that the Swedish Managing Director and his experience in Sweden was that there was a balance of male and females and women do all of these jobs. He explained that at one of the SMA paper mills in Sweden, most of the managers were women, which you did not see in the UK. He said that the Company would like to see more females but unfortunately the three girls who had been on their apprenticeship programme, did not make it to the end and so the managers doing the recruitment and line managers were shy of recruiting females, but that was something that he very much want to do. He reminisced that the days of manual labour having a big strong man as a fitter in the industry were largely gone. There were no barriers in employing women.

(52) In response to a question by Mr Collor, Mr Atkinson advised that there were opportunities for candidates who do not have 5 GCSE at C or above they can be put them on programmes in advance of the course but sometimes they need an extra year to attain the first level so it was a whole further year of education. Then the Higher National Certificate was a further five years and the apprenticeship programme was a four year programme so there were practical difficulties. There was one student who went through all the tests and of the right standard, Mid Kent College said he was not, after appealing the decision he was put on the programme and he did complete in four years. It was possible.

(53) In response to a question, Mr Atkinson advised that he was not aware of the fee for apprenticeships as he should be but the way his company trained their apprentices was that they spent one whole year off the job in a college and that was quite expensive. The training alone cost £9,000; most of this was funded and recoverable. Then they do a national certificate and a higher national certificate on day release through the rest of their apprenticeship. This was £1,000 a course and there was some funding for that. There was a lot of other training along the way which was not funded but the apprenticeships as far as he was concerned were not badly funded. He did not have a problem with the way apprenticeships were funded currently. The Apprentices wages were paid by the company and that was not funded, suggested that this would be the most prohibitive aspect for small employers, although there were good examples of where employers have got together as a consortium and recruited apprentices. There were case studies of clusters of employers who had recruited apprentices and shared the costs. He felt this was something for the future.

(54) In response to a few questions, Mr Atkinson explained that with regard to life chances he recalled that he had qualified that by making a sweeping generalisation on what schools tended to focus on. In his opinion if someone had 5 GCSE's at C or above, the schools would want them to go on to higher education and university and he was looking to pull them away from that when they attended the evening to talk apprenticeships with Newsprint because this would set them up for life whereas after university they would get a job as a graduate. Schools did not seem to encourage people to go into apprenticeships in his experience. His Company had sent schools advertisements for their apprenticeships and found they were never posted on the notice boards, there was no encouragement, there was no literature given out. Getting to the parents was critical.

(55) In answer to the second question, Mr Atkinson concurred that when you see a young person for a job you wanted to know that they had got some idea of where they might go it was noticeable which schools were encouraging students to look further and to plan things out. When he interviewed he would be looking for people who had got some interest in what they were being offered and could say yes I am ambitious and I do want to get on. Although you do want people to settle on different levels, you do not want every

apprentice going through and thinking they could be sponsored to do a degree.

(56) In reply to the final question, Mr Atkinson said that he would encourage peer mentoring and position such as prefects in schools as people who have entered a peer mentoring programme had a different outlook, a different approach and may be more mature. Those were excellent things to be encouraged.

(57) In reply to a question, Mr Atkinson said that he did not in any way penalise apprentices for failing the courses.

(58) .

(59) In answer to a question, Mr Atkinson explained that there was an incentive for apprentices to do well. Apprentices would progress in salary terms as they achieved qualifications and as they progressed in their training. He advised that the apprentices were not asked to pay the course fees back. He said that his company did however ask for payment back on adult programmes. If an apprentice wanted to complete another course, and they were in a permanent job by that time, the company would ask them to sign up to an agreement if they do not complete then would have to pay a percentage back. This meant that if an apprentice left the company 3½ years into the programme that would have cost the company £100,000 or more and that was just a loss to the business.

(60) Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments, which included the following:

(61) In answer to a question by the Chairman, Mr Atkinson advised that the company's retention rate was quite good and every year when it sought an approval to take on as many apprentices as they wanted they had to prove that they were still getting the retention rate and the return from this. Seeing people coming through into engineering, supervisory jobs etc was really important.

(62) The Chairman thanked Mr Atkinson for taking the time to attend the meeting.

(63) The Chairman commented that the Committee has now received four separate types of presentation each one had added its own value and in many ways they mesh together. He agreed to produce a summary of the key points of information that the Committee had heard to date from a sample of; pupils and employers. At the next meeting of the POSC the Committee would have the opportunity to speak with 16-19 year old providers, and KCC Officers and Cabinet Member to gain an understanding of the work to be carried out to fulfil KCC's new role taking over the role of the Learning Skills Council.

(64) The Chairman advised that Members that at the next meeting the aim was to have a similar second half of the meeting to be held on 20 May when they would have the opportunity with the information that they had learnt from the students and the employers to hear from lead people to provide 16-19

year and to put these issues to the Mrs R Turner, Managing Director, Mrs S Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Mrs J Whittle, Deputy Lead Member for Children and Families and Mrs S Dunn, Head Of 14-24 Innovation Unit.

(65) RESOLVED that the questions and comments made by Members be noted.

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By: Merrill Haeusler, Director of Learning Group
 Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families & Education Directorate
 Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education Directorate

To: Learning and Development Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Committee

Date: 20 May 2010

Subject: Absence in Kent Schools

Classification: *Unrestricted*

1. Introduction

(1) Safeguarding children, raising standards and narrowing attainment gaps remain key priorities for the government and for Kent. A focus on reducing absence from school, especially persistent absence, supports these aims. The priority in Kent remains for all schools, working with Local Authority (LA) support, to continue to address high overall absence, and within this, persistent absence (PA). This supports the delivery goal set by DCSF, that by 2010/11 no local authority will have more than 5% of its secondary school pupils identified as being persistently absent. This target is described as National Indicator 87 (NI87).

(2) The DCSF agreed Kent's targets for 2008/09 of 6% persistent absence in secondary schools and for 2009/10 of 5.5% persistent absence in secondary schools. Kent achieved the target of 5.5% in 2008/09, a year early. Kent has shown a year on year reduction in persistent absence in secondary schools:

2006/07	6.8%
2007/08	6.0%
2008/09	5.5%

(3) Persistent absence refers to absence of 20% or more over a school year, whether authorised or unauthorised. This includes absence for medical reasons and holidays in term time as well as for absence which is not authorised by a school.

(4) 'Truancy' is not identified specifically in DCSF or LA data. It is the Headteacher's decision to register a pupil's absence as authorised or unauthorised, taking into account each pupil's individual circumstances. A higher level of unauthorised absence in a school can be a sign that the Headteacher is robustly challenging reasons for non-attendance. The DCSF has recognised that all absence has an impact on outcomes for children and

young people. Therefore the priorities are overall absence, with a particular focus on persistent absence.

2. Local Children and Young People's Plans (CYPP)

(1) The commitment to reducing persistent absence is a high priority for the LA. It was highlighted in the first Kent CYPP and remains in the CYPP 2008-2011. Increasing attendance and reducing persistent absence is also a priority in CYPPs of each of the Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSP). It is either identified as a specific indicator in plans or is included in the broader aims of Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution and Achieve Economic Well Being.

3. LCSP figures

(1) The rate of overall absence in Kent's secondary schools has shown a year on year decrease from 8.19% (2006-07), 7.69% (2007-08) to 7.63% (2008-09). The national average for the rate of overall absence in secondary schools in 2008-09 was 7.21%. Kent's secondary schools ranked 10th out of the 11 statistical neighbours for overall absence in secondary schools in 2008/09. However between 2007/08 and 2008/09 Kent secondary schools' overall absence improved by a greater amount than 5 of the 10 statistical neighbours with whom a comparison can be made (Bedford is a new LA). This greater rate of improvement than all but 4 statistical neighbours can also be seen when tracked over the 4 year period from 2005/06 to 2008/09.

(2) In primary schools, overall absence has shown an increase from 5.22% (2006-07), 5.32% (2007-08) to 5.34% % in 2008-09. The national average for the rate of overall absence in primary schools in 2008-09 was 5.30%. Kent's primary schools ranked 10th out of the 11 statistical neighbours for overall absence in primary schools. Although the trend of absence in primary schools has been rising in Kent and nationally the rise from 2007/08 to 2008/09 in Kent was less than that measured in 6 of the 10 statistical neighbours with whom a comparison can be made, and less than the national rise.

(3) The three year trends reflect the national picture in both phases. In line with the DCSF persistent absence target described in NI87 (see above) Kent's secondary schools across 17 LCSPs have reduced persistent absenteeism since 2007.

(4) The recording of persistent absence within primary schools shows a very slight increase from 1.7% in 2006-07 to 1.8% in 2008-09 which is also in line with the national trend. Primary persistent absence does not yet have a National Indicator set by DCSF, although the benchmark for 2009/10 is 2.5%. All but 3 LCSPs were achieving better than this benchmark as of 2008/09.

4. Analysis of factors which give rise to truancy

(1) In September 2006, the DCSF introduced national absence codes, which enable consistent analysis of specific categories of absence. In Kent schools in 2008-09, illness accounted for 54% of secondary, and 62.7% of primary authorised absence. Holidays taken during term time, whether agreed (authorised) by the school or not (unauthorised), accounted for 5.56% of secondary and 13.44% of primary absence.

(2) The LA and LCSPs are working with schools to take a robust approach to all absence categories, but particularly the two reasons identified above. There is increased agreement of common attendance policies and practice within and across partnerships, increased engagement by schools with the penalty notice process, and early intervention and challenge where parents/carers condone their children's absence. It is of particular note that in successive Attendance and Exclusion Sweeps (formerly known as 'truancy sweeps'), 60% of the children stopped by police and Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) were found to be in the company of a parent/carer or other adult.

5. Attendance and local Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

(1) According to the most recent DCSF Statistical First Release (April 2010), national figures indicate that absence, both overall and persistent, is generally higher in the most deprived areas, but that this is improving. "The % of resident pupils who are PA in the most deprived areas has continued to fall from 6.1% in 2007/08 to 5.7% in 2008/09. The gap between the % of resident pupils who are PA in the most and least deprived of areas has fallen from 4.9 to 4.4% since 2007/08."

(2) There is a correlation in Kent between the schools with the highest levels of persistent absence and their IMD measure and rank. This is most marked in primary schools with high PA, where six of the worst performing PA schools are ranked in the top 65 for IMD across the county, including 2 in the top 10. In both primary and secondary phases however there are some exceptions.

6. Attendance and Ofsted

(1) Based on each Kent school's most recent Ofsted judgement for attendance the current situation is that 4 secondary schools (4.5%) and 16 primary schools (3.6%) were 'inadequate'. 38 secondary schools (43.2%) and 193 primary schools (43.4%) have a current judgement of 'satisfactory'. No special schools are judged inadequate and 5 are judged satisfactory (20.8%).

(2) There is a direct correlation at secondary level between an 'inadequate' Ofsted judgement for attendance and high levels of persistent absence. Of the 4 secondary schools with an inadequate judgement 3 are among the 10 worst performing secondary schools for persistent absence in Kent.

7. Attendance and age

(1) According to the April 2010 Statistical Release “the % of persistent absentees increases as pupils progress through school. For national curriculum year groups up to year 11, the highest % of persistent absentees is in year 11”. This trend is reflected in the Kent secondary schools where the rate of persistent absence by and large increases as pupils get older.

8. Schools’ attendance policies

(1) The DCSF recognises that there are generally higher rates of attendance in those schools which have a robust whole school approach to attendance with clear policies and procedures understood by all, including parents/carers, children and young people. There are a number of outstanding examples in Kent where a whole school approach to absence in general and persistent absence in particular has made a significant difference. Aylesford School for example has reduced PA from 17.3% in 2005/06 to 4.9% in 2008/09.

(2) Grammar schools in Kent have the lowest rates of persistent absence among secondary schools. This does not necessarily reflect good policies in all instances however, but may be a function of high aspirations, academic expectations and drive.

9. Role of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

(1) Education Welfare Officers act on behalf of the LA to fulfil the statutory responsibility of ensuring regular attendance of pupils. They work closely with pupils, families, schools, services and agencies. This includes direct involvement with families as well as support to schools with their policies and procedures. It is worth noting that in this work in Kent, as the largest LA in both the South East and amongst comparator ‘statistical neighbour’ authorities, size does matter.

(2) In order to improve persistent absence in secondary schools by 0.01% Kent EWOs must influence the often entrenched behaviour of 78 pupils and their families. In Hampshire the number is 70, and in all other LAs significantly lower – Surrey (53), W Sussex (40), Oxfordshire (30), E Sussex (27).

(3) Among Kent’s 11 statistical neighbours only Essex, Northamptonshire and Swindon have improved their PA figures by a greater amount than Kent over the period 2005/06 to 2008/09.

(4) Attendance and Behaviour Service Attendance Leaders support schools and LCSPs with specific attendance recording issues that may cause concern to school leaders. A recent example has been the recording of absence when schools are closed due to snow or bad weather, or when schools stay open (Kent’s preferred option) but some children are unable to

get to school. The DCSF 'Absence and Attendance Codes Guidance for Schools and LAs' makes recommendations for various situations, and ABS staff guide schools through the implications. This refers specifically to schools' reporting to the DCSF, and the judgements and explanations that schools make of their own attendance performance for the purposes of Ofsted. At face value there would appear to be a perverse incentive, where the code used for absence recording does not count against the school or LA, whereas a school that remains open may be required to explain the absence of pupils who could have attended but didn't.

10. Measures taken at county and at LCSP level to reduce persistent absence

- The DCSF prioritised persistent absence over the past 3 years, and has identified secondary schools in each LA with a specific proportion of pupils identified as persistently absent. The DCSF benchmark for identification in 2009/10 is 6.1%. 41 schools in Kent were identified by the DCSF (based on Autumn 08/Spring 09 census figures) with over 6.1% persistent absence. These schools are required to provide half-termly data to the LA for submission to the DCSF to enable the schools, the LA and the DCSF to monitor progress. The Attendance & Behaviour Service (ABS) is targeting support, intervention and challenge to these schools on behalf of the LA, and engaging with School Improvement Partners (SIPs) so that they are informed and focused in their role of support and challenge to all schools.
- National Strategies Regional Advisers are working in support of Kent to reduce persistent absence. The recent evaluation by Kent's Regional Adviser (RA) on Attendance rated Kent as 'on trajectory' to meet the 2010/11 goal of 5%. The RA stated that 'reducing persistent absence is high profile in Kent with clear high level strategic engagement, and that targeted intervention from the LA had resulted in significant reductions in levels of persistent absence.'
- ABS and National Strategies Regional Advisers held a County Conference in Nov 2009 for the school attendance leaders in the 41 priority schools. The objective was to support schools with the new Ofsted framework, and to disseminate proven strategies for reducing persistent absence. The event was opened by CFE Managing Director, which highlighted the level of importance with which this issue is regarded in the LA. The event was highly evaluated by participant schools, with the attendance leaders (members of schools' Senior Leadership Teams) of 39 of the 41 PA priority schools present.
- ABS Attendance Leaders have an ongoing programme of visits to Headteachers and school attendance leaders in the priority schools. They work in partnership with schools on policies and procedures in order to ensure a whole school approach to attendance, data analysis to inform

actions, a focus on vulnerable pupils, early intervention and parental engagement.

- ABS works closely with SIPs to ensure the shared priority of linking attendance and learning outcomes. Attendance is a standing item for discussion on the agenda of each of the SIPs requisite visits to schools.
- Schools have clear processes for the referral of individual pupils whose attendance is causing concern to the LA via Education Welfare Officers. There is a range of strategies for support, including family group conferencing, multi-agency intervention through CAF/Team around the Child arrangements, and parenting contracts.
- Use of parental responsibility measures include:
 - the issuing of penalty notices by the ABS at the request of Headteachers for unauthorised absence. Approx 1300 were issued in each of the past two years (2007/08 and 2008/09). There were 200-300 prosecutions in each of the past two years in Magistrates' Courts following non payment of penalty notices.
 - Prosecution of parents for failure to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. Approximately 400 parents prosecuted by the ABS in each of the past two years.
 - Most LCSPs have, or are developing, Partnership or District attendance policies to ensure consistency of practice for schools and parents in a locality.
 - Colleagues in LCSPs are working to provide local support for families and vulnerable young people, where needs and circumstances may undermine attendance (e.g. children with health needs, Looked After Children, young carers, families whose first language is not English, teenage parents).

11. Partnership between EWOs, police and schools

(1) There is a very effective partnership between the Attendance & Behaviour Service (ABS) and the police:

- ABS District and Court Co-ordinators attend Community Safety Partnership meetings re issues affecting local areas and individual young people
- EWOs and Kent police carry out Attendance & Exclusion Sweeps (previously called Truancy Sweeps). The purpose of these is to identify children and young people out of education, to target anti-social behaviour and to raise awareness in the community.
- ABS contribute to the induction programme for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to raise awareness of attendance issues

- EWOs and schools link locally with community police, PCSOs and Community Wardens
- Targeted support is given to pupils known to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) to ensure that pupils are in education or training, in order to improve outcomes and reduce opportunities to engage in anti-social behaviour.

12. Reports from general public

(1) Reports to the LA from the general public are always acted on. This may involve, for example, visiting a home to ascertain if a child is missing from education or liaising with community police if there are reports of anti social behaviour.

13. Next steps

- Complete review of Kent Attendance Strategy to ensure sustained improvement in attendance for Kent's pupils. This will need involvement and consultation with all stakeholders, including young people and parents, to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities. This will need 'sign up' from partner services and agencies, including schools, Children's Services, Learning, Health, Police, and community organisations.
- Improve use and analysis of data to inform support and actions for schools and LA.
- Develop links and protocols at the new District level to ensure attendance remains a priority and vulnerable children are supported.
- ABS to continue to support schools with strategies for improving attendance and reducing persistent absence, including prioritising those schools with identified need.

14. Recommendations

Recommendations:

Members of the Learning and Development Children, Families and Education Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note this report for information.

Chris Berry

Head of Attendance and Behaviour Service (Acting)

01622 696367

Chris.berry@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents: None

Other Useful Information: None

By: Peggy Harris, Interim Head of School Standards and Improvement
Merril Haeusler, Director of Learning

To: Learning & Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
20 May 2010

Subject: Educational Reporting Cycle – Primary Key Stage 2 – Schools below the
floor target

Introduction

(1) In 2009 74 Kent primary schools were below the floor target of 55% of children who achieve Level 4 in both English and mathematics.

(2) The DCSF has asked all local authorities to identify schools below the 55% floor target in 2009, as well as primary schools in Ofsted category, as part of the 'World Class Primary Programme' and to submit an action plan to address improvements.

In order that schools achieve the floor target in 2010 we have:

- undertaken a Year 6 audit of classroom practice to improve planning, progression, pedagogy and preparation
- written to all headteachers and Chairs of Governors outlining expectations and offering additional support.
- undertaken visits to those schools **forecasting below floor targets in 2010** by the School Improvement Partner, accompanied by Senior Primary Officers, to focus on the progress of individual children in Year 6 and to audit their provision.
- Considered the particular needs of all Looked After Children, Special Educational Needs, Free School Meals and English as an Additional Language children and agreed plans to maximise outcomes for them.
- Provided additional funding for more one to one tuition, small group work, year group teaching, Easter clubs
- Checked that 'special arrangements' are in place for children that meet the national criteria for support during the tests, such as extra time, scribes etc

(3) Plans are in place to undertake the above process for the current Year 5 children in these schools starting in June 2010, to ensure that appropriate challenge and interventions are in place early for the 2011 cohort

The following arrangements are in place for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the children in these schools:

- closely scrutinise all Raising Attainment Plans, Round Table Meeting minutes, latest school data, notes of visit, reports and other evidence to monitor progress
- ensure the progress of all WCPP schools is reviewed at least three times per year and decisions
- meet with individual SIPs and quality assure their work to ensure SIPs provide a balance of support, monitoring and challenge

- formally evaluate the WCPP Action Plan is undertaken at a termly meeting of Senior Primary Advisers chaired by the Principal Primary Adviser (Schools placed in an Ofsted category are subject to additional monitoring and evaluation arrangements as set out in the LA Statement of Action)

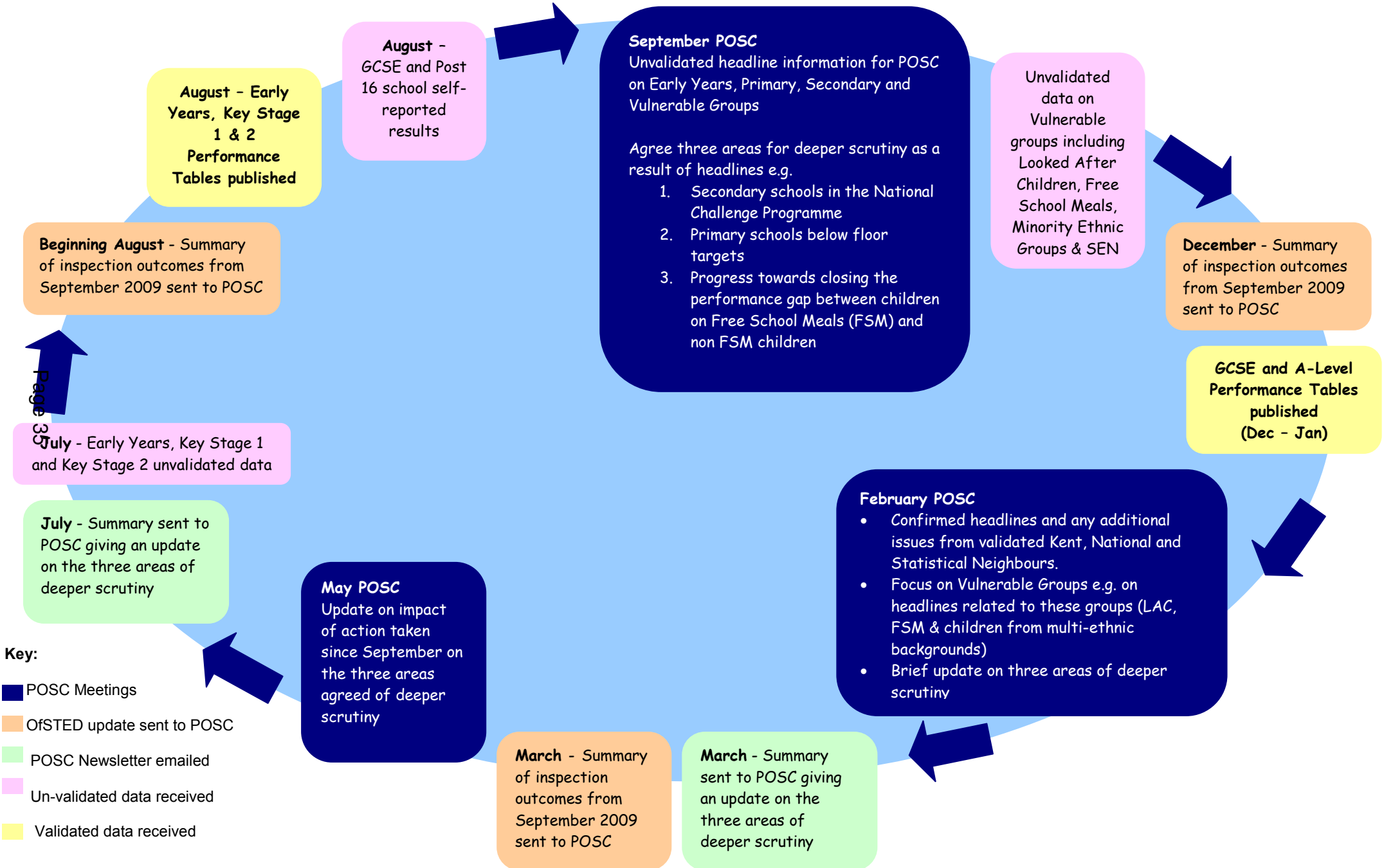
Overarching success criteria:

- more than half of the schools in the LA currently below the floor target will be above in 2010 and all by 2011
- schools identified as *Needing to Maximise Progress* increase the percentage of children making at least two levels of progress to above 80% in both English and mathematics in 2010
- in schools needing to become more consistent, ensure the quality of teaching is consistently 65% good or better by July 2010 and 80% consistently good or better by July 2011
- increase the percentage of schools judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted to above the national average
- increase the proportion of Kent schools where the overall CVA is identified as in line or significantly above average to 75% (68% in 2009)
- increase the proportion of vulnerable children, children in care and children in receipt of free school meals achieving Level 4+ in both English and mathematics.

Merril Haeusler
Director of Learning
merril.haeusler@kent.gov.uk
01622 694171

Request to all to bring to Learning and Development POSC meetings

Annual reporting cycle to CFE Learning and Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (POSC)



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By: Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager

To: Learning and Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee
20 May 2010

Subject: **SELECT COMMITTEE - UPDATE**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report updates Members on the progress to establish the Select Committee on Extended Services.

Select Committee: Extended Services (previously titled Extended Schools)

1. (1) The Select Committee on Extended Services held its inaugural meeting on 19 March 2010 when it agree its terms of reference (copy attached). The membership of the Committee is Mr Robert Burgess (Chairman), Mrs Ann Allen, Mr Alan Chell, Mrs Jean Law, Mr Richard Parry, Mr Ken Pugh, Mr Kit Smith and Mr Martin Vye.

(2) At the meeting of the Scrutiny Board on 24 February 2010 it was agreed that the timeframe for this review would be extended and that it would present its report to County Council in December 2010.

(3) Regular update reports will be submitted to the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees (POSCs) to keep Members informed of the progress of the Select Committee.

Suggestions for Select Committee Topic Reviews

2. At the meeting of the Scrutiny Board on 24 February 2010 Members received an update on the current Select Committee topic review programme. Although resources to support reviews are all currently allocated, there would be the potential to start new reviews in November 2010 and January 2011. It was agreed that Members would be asked to consider whether there are any topics that they would like to put forward for consideration for inclusion in the future topic review programme. If Members do have any suggestions could they contact the Democratic Services Officer for this POSC.

Recommendations

3. Members are asked to note the report and to advise the Democratic Services Officer of any items that they would like to suggest for inclusion in the Select Committee topic review programme

Denise Fitch
Tel No: 01622 694269
e-mail: denise.fitch@kent.gov.uk

Background Information: *Nil*

Select Committee on Extended Services

Terms of Reference

1. To identify aspects of the Extended Services programme in Kent that are proving to have the greatest impact and benefit for the community, and that are most likely to be sustainable in the future.
2. To explore ways - if any – in which collaboration and partnership working between all organisations involved in providing Extended Services in Kent can be improved.
3. To investigate any obstacles and challenges to the progress of Extended Services and the development of the concept of the “school that never sleeps”, particularly those that may prevent closer partnership working and could threaten sustainability. To identify possible solutions to overcome these challenges.
4. To analyse whether resources for Extended Services within Kent County Council, and across schools and other partner organisations, are deployed in the most efficient and effective manner.
5. For the Extended Services Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.