

By: Gary Cooke, Deputy Cabinet Member for Education,  
Learning and Skills  
Merril Haeusler, Director for the Learning Group

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

Date: 1st March 2011

Subject: Verbal Update by the Deputy Cabinet Member and Director

Classification: Unrestricted

---

### **New division of Member responsibilities**

The Leader reshuffled his Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011 appointing Mrs Sarah Hohler as Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills. Jenny Whittle was appointed Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services, which includes children's social services.

The Deputy Cabinet Members for the Education, Learning and Skills Directorate, which will officially be established on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, are Gary Cooke and Mike Whiting.

### **The future vision**

Mrs Hohler is working on a draft vision document entitled 'Education in the Big Society' based on her top ten priorities for the new Education, Learning and Skills directorate. The list is shown below in order to seek Members' views. Please note that this is by no means a final version and the detailed plans to implement such a vision have yet to be drafted.

1. Develop vocational course and skills centres so all young people have the opportunity to obtain skills qualifications, possibly as part of a technical baccalaureate, and facilitate pathways to apprenticeships
2. Develop an Association of Kent Schools (Society of Kent Schools) to deliver high quality education and wide choice for all Kent's young people
3. Support schools to work in collaborative groups, or as virtual academies, within their communities under the umbrella of the Association of Kent Schools
4. Set up a KCC branded company to market a menu of competitive, high quality services for schools in Kent and across to country to buy in, such as leadership training, financial advice and governor support
5. Focus on improving primary pupil attainment, especially in literacy and numeracy
6. Encourage secondary and primary schools to work together in their communities to improve standards and ease transition
7. Empower special schools to work together to deliver a comprehensive package of support for children with special needs and devolve to them the means to do this

8. Give children from disadvantaged backgrounds every opportunity, and appropriate support, to achieve better educational and social outcomes
9. Work with our partners to influence a new national framework for statements of educational need which will be less bureaucratic, quicker to administer, and which will be less stressful for parents children, thus reducing the number of tribunal hearings
10. Consult on and implement fairer and simpler arrangements for home to school transport.

### **New floor standards**

The coalition government has raised the floor standard below which schools are considered underperforming. Schools which miss the standard will face intervention and possible take-over, closure or being converted into an academy, although the government will look at the unique circumstances of schools.

Primary schools are now expected to have at least 60% of their pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) in both maths and English - up from 55% last year.

Secondary schools will be considered as 'failing' (using central Government terminology) if less than 35% of their pupils achieve five good (A\*-C) GCSEs, including English and maths.

### **Special Educational Needs inclusion in school results**

Kent County Council has been lobbying Rt Hon Michael Gove MP in that we view the current system of combining the results of pupils in specially resourced provision (sometimes referred to as a 'SEN unit') in the results of mainstream schools militates against the mainstream schools because it lowers their position in the league tables.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills did receive a response from the DfE at the beginning of February, which explained the issues of accountability of schools and reporting on the performance of our more vulnerable learners are likely to be referenced in the forthcoming Green Paper.

### **The Schools White Paper**

The Importance of Teaching: Schools White Paper was published on 24<sup>th</sup> November and outlined the Government's plans to raise school attainment. The Schools White Paper proposes reforms to:

- Teaching and leadership
- Behaviour
- Curriculum, Assessment & Qualifications
- New School System
- Accountability
- School Funding

The Schools White Paper also introduced the English Baccalaureate so that students pursue a broad and rounded range of academic subjects until the age of

16. The Baccalaureate is to be awarded to any pupil who secures good GCSE or iGCSE passes in all of the following:

- English
- Maths
- The sciences
- A modern or ancient foreign language
- A humanity: history or geography

Since the publication of the Schools White paper, the Government has asked local authorities and the wider school community to respond to their 'National Curriculum Review' consultation and KCC's response is currently being drafted by Sue Rogers. The deadline for the submission is April and we expect to hear future announcements on curriculum changes after that date. It is the Government's intention that the new National Curriculum will begin to be taught in maintained schools from September 2013

Finally, a briefing was given to members on the Schools White Paper in January and had a high turn-out. We thank Members for dedicating their time to learning about this important subject matter.

### **Improving Schools**

I would like to publicly congratulate Hartsdown Technology College, the North School and St George's Church of England Foundation School for being amongst the 100 top performing secondary schools in England and Wales based on sustained improvement in each year from 2007 to 2010. I recognise this significant achievement and the hard-work and dedication of the headteachers, staff, governors, parents and pupils in driving up their results.

The primary schools within Dover Federation for the Arts were in the top 100 of primary schools for sustained improvement over four years in Key Stage 2 tests and as a result of that achievement, received a visit from Schools Minister Nick Gibb. I pass on my congratulations to Chris Russell and his staff.

More detail on individual school results are in the monitoring report on today's agenda.

### **Kent Music**

The Secretary of State for Education has responded to Darren Henley's review into music in schools with a pledge to end the 'musical divide' between wealthier children with access to great musical education and children in disadvantaged areas. To ensure young people from every background have access to quality music education, Michael Gove has announced that £82.5m will continue to be given to music services across England next year.

The money will be used to make opportunity more equal in music education and enhance the prestige and esteem of music teaching as a career route for professional musicians.

## **Select Committee on Education Attainment**

As most Members will be aware, the first meeting of the select committee on educational attainment took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, chaired by Chris Wells. The Committee agreed their terms of reference: -

- a) To examine levels of attainment at KS2 by reviewing the performance of all schools at a district level. This will include the identification of schools in areas of deprivation in each district. These schools will have the highest levels of FSM and IMD. It will also include a review of those schools with 2 or more years below the national floor standard of 55% for combined English and Maths and those schools with a 3 year declining or improving trend.
- b) To gain an understanding of the nationally agreed factors that contribute to differential achievement in deprived areas and how those factors impact on children's individual attainment and on overall school performance.
- c) To explore what measures have been put in place in schools and their surrounding communities to mitigate the effects of disadvantage or low attainment and consider their effectiveness. To explore the factors that have enabled some schools within individual districts to have broken the link between deprivation and poor attainment.
- d) To propose any additional action the Select Committee believes would be helpful in raising attainment.

### **And finally...**

As we are all aware, at the County Council meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April, there will be a vote on moving to a single Education, Learning and Skills POSC Committee and disbanding the CFE Learning and Development Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In light of this, I would like to thank the Chairman and Committee Members for their proactive monitoring, intelligent questioning and detailed scrutiny at past meetings in case this is our final meeting.