

By: Ian Craig, Interim Managing Director, Children, Families & Education Directorate

Amy Morrish, Policy Development Officer, Policy & Performance Unit

Leyland Ridings, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Educational Achievement

To: Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee

16 January 2009

Subject: The Kent Secondary Strategy

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper sets out progress to date on the Kent Secondary Strategy, reports on the production of the Secondary Strategy DVDs, and outlines plans to facilitate further debate around secondary reform in Kent.

Introduction

1. (1) The Secondary Strategy was first published in 2005 as part of an on-going review of secondary provision by the local authority in partnership with schools. A series of priorities were outlined in the document, aiming to establish schools at the heart of their communities, enhance capacity and structures, and transform delivery of the curriculum so as to raise achievement across a broader majority of pupils.

Unlike the Primary Strategy, the Secondary Strategy is not focussed on the implications of falling school rolls. Instead it explores how secondary education can best be designed and delivered to release the full potential of every pupil, and equip them with the skills for autonomous learning either in the workplace or through further study.

(2) A subgroup of the Secondary Forum, chaired by Graham Badman and consisting of key officers and head teachers, revisited the strategy to assess progress against the implementation plan and consider the need to update the strategy. This exercise re-affirmed the relevance of the central vision and priorities in the existing strategy. Activities outlined in the action plan are ongoing. However, a need was identified to improve dissemination of best practice findings from the schools and settings which adopted the strategy's principles early on. For this reason, a DVD has been developed to showcase the innovative practice that has been developed in secondary settings across Kent.

(3) A series of three discussion papers have been prepared to accompany the DVD, to gather feedback around specific areas of the strategy and provoke discussion about what the next phase of development should look like. These 'strategic thinking' papers focus on co-production, ICT, and Extended Services. Individuals are invited to respond using an online blog set up to facilitate the debate by visiting:

<http://apps.clusterweb.org.uk/forum/messages/17112/17112.html?1182417481>

Progress to date:

2. (1) The priorities of the Secondary Strategy have been delivered in two phases to date (see 2.2 and 2.3), against an action plan which is monitored by the Secondary Transformation Team within the Advisory Service. The launch of the Secondary Strategy DVD aims to initiate discussion around our aspirations for the third phase.

(2) The main elements of the first developmental phase included:

- Development of local collaborative structures for schools (cluster arrangements)
- Development of extended services to position schools at the heart of their communities. Services have included on-site childcare, family education, access to wider children's services etc.
- Introduction of Kent's 'specialist school' badging scheme
- Widening the curriculum choice, in collaboration with the 14-19 Learner Strategy which is currently being updated
- Initiatives to improve teacher recruitment and retention
- Initiatives to improve attendance and reduce exclusions

(3) Phase 2 of development has built on early progress by focussing on the following key elements:

- **Transforming the organisation of learning** to create independent, autonomous learners: delivering a curriculum that is relevant to young people and the challenges they will face in modern society, and that is personalised to their aptitudes, abilities, and needs.
- **Developing Capacity and Structures:** extending collaborative partnerships between schools through federations and School Improvement Partners.
- **Placing schools at the heart of their community:** Supporting economic and community regeneration, ensuring extended services reach out to families, and providing for the educational, social, emotional and health needs of young people.
- **Designing and developing the learning infrastructure:** through programmes of modernisation to update both the physical and virtual learning environment in schools and settings; supporting the development of an innovative workforce; and nurturing talent to secure dynamic leadership.

3. Next Steps

(1) There is still progress to be made in terms of developing a curriculum which is relevant to modern society, and delivers a personalised programme that releases the

skills and potential of young people. The 'strategic thinking' papers produced alongside the Secondary Strategy DVD aim to continue the debate on future reform, and initiate discussion about the next phase of innovation.

(2) It is envisaged that future development of the Secondary Strategy will occur in line with both the strategic thinking papers and the progress made to date in developing practical learning initiatives (such as the Active Learning programme). One potential opportunity to build on this work may be through the Studio Schools learning model, a concept of curriculum delivery which has been designed by the Young Foundation to enable 14-19 year olds to acquire business-orientated and entrepreneurial skills that will prepare them for the world of work. These and other opportunities will be explored throughout 2009.

4. Recommendations

Members of the Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee are asked to note this progress report.

Diane Trollope
Policy Manager, Policy & Performance Unit
01622 694944
Diane.Trollope@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents:
'Nurturing Autonomous and Creative Learners: The Kent Secondary Strategy' (2005)

Other Useful Information:
None