



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

11 NOVEMBER 2013

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE'S SERVICE**

**ENSURING EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN LEICESTERSHIRE:
LEICESTERSHIRE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE PARTNERSHIP –
MONITORING REPORT**

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a monitoring report outlining the progress in implementing the Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership (LEEP) and the performance of schools and inspection outcomes.

Policy framework and previous decisions

2. At its meeting on 9th April 2013 the Cabinet agreed to the development of a new policy through a partnership approach with maintained schools and academies (LEEP).
3. At its meeting on 9th July 2013 the Cabinet approved the continued development and implementation of LEEP including that the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee would provide assurance.
4. At its meeting on 9th September 2013 the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report that provided further detail about the progress of LEEP. It was noted and agreed that:
 - a. The County Council has strong links with schools and well established practices for collaborative working which will be the focus for developing a new system for school improvement;
 - b. The partnership continues to evolve through ensuring that head teachers of both maintained schools and academies are taking a leading role in shaping a distributed school improvement system;

- c. The County Council has a distinct role as champion for children and will need to work with all schools to enable it to satisfy its statutory obligations.
- d. It will be necessary over the long term to provide evidence of positive outcomes resulting from the new partnership arrangement.
- e. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee plays a key role in providing assurance that LEEP will enable the local authority to discharge its statutory duties. The Committee will receive a performance report three times each year.
- f. The outcome of future Ofsted reports of schools are directed to Committee members in a timely way.

Development of the LEEP Strategy

- 5. In the last report to the Committee, several key areas for development were identified with short, medium and long term actions. The short term actions were to:
 - a. Ensure that the right support is commissioned to support identified schools;
 - b. Analyse 2013 performance data to identify schools that may require support;
 - c. Complete initial LEEP documentation with further detail about processes and systems for support;
 - d. Implement a communication plan including briefing sessions in localities, attendance at headteacher briefings and development of a web presence;
 - e. Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Support for schools

- 6. Following analysis of provisional data by schools, the local authority is providing support and monitoring the quality of school to school support to 40 schools. This support includes: regular visits from an Education Quality Adviser representing the Local Authority; partnership work with a Teaching School Alliance or local network; support from a National or Local Leader in Education or a National Leader of Governance. If the school is a Church of England school, the local authority works closely with the Diocese to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach and good communication.
- 7. As part of LEEP, Governor Development Services offer additional support to these schools to ensure that governors are aware of how to analyse and ask questions about school performance data. Governor Development Services

also commission external reviews of the governing body where this is required as an outcome of inspection.

LEEP documentation and communication plan

8. The initial documentation for LEEP has been agreed by the LEEP Strategic Group. This provides an overview of the strategic intent of LEEP and how it is intended to secure education excellence in Leicestershire. The terms of reference for the Strategic Group have been agreed and a data sharing agreement has been finalised. These documents will be sent out to schools by the end of the autumn term and shared with governors at the next Chairs of Governors' briefings in January 2014. The LEEP Working Group has agreed the final version of the LEEP Strategy for 2013-2015. This document sets out the strategic approach for LEEP and can be strongly traced back to the original LEEP proposal which was presented to the Local Authority by schools in January 2013. It is the intention to circulate this document widely with schools and other partners. Appendix 1 contains this initial documentation.
9. Head teachers and governors in all sectors will have the opportunity to hear more about LEEP and how to get involved as part of briefings that are taking place during the autumn term. These sessions have provided a good forum for school leaders to make suggestions about how LEEP can work and for them to understand how this approach is aligned to other developments such as Behaviour Partnerships and Supporting Leicestershire Families. Once this series of briefings has been completed and evaluated the LEEP Strategic Group will consider what actions need to be taken in the medium and long term, including further implementation of the communication strategy.

Report to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10. Appendix 2 provides a LEEP evaluation report about the performance of schools compared to national benchmarks and statistical neighbours, inspection outcomes up to July 2013, information about schools that have been supported and the use of financial resources.

Internal Audit of LEEP

11. In addition to the original short term objectives, the Education and Learning team have commenced a project with the Internal Audit Service to review the local authority's approach for securing school improvement arrangements for Leicestershire. This will ensure that the approach is sufficiently robust. This audit will also provide independent analysis about the quality of the LEEP strategy and provide the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with added assurance and recommendations. The final report will be shared with the Committee in the spring of 2014.

Conclusion

12. School Performance in Leicestershire is broadly in line with national expectations with both pockets of excellence and areas where performance could be improved. LEEP is identifying sustainable approaches for sharing and enhancing good and outstanding practice in schools. The focus for the next stage of development is to broaden the range and access to expertise across the system through developing the local networking arrangements, whilst maintaining support for schools that most need it. Further activity will be targeted towards the medium and long term actions which were outlined in the report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9th September 2013. The partnership will continue focusing on developing and strengthening local arrangements to ensure that school improvement arrangements are fit for purpose for all Leicestershire schools.

Resource implications

13. The County Council approved its budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy at its meeting on 20th February 2013. The budget included a growth item of £350,000 to support the new approach to securing educational excellence in Leicestershire. The budget will support the release of school staff to provide support to each other through a self-supporting schools system and provide for administrative support.

Equal Opportunities Implications

14. The Education Act 1996 identifies the local authority role in ensuring that *all* children achieve the fulfilment of their educational potential, including the most vulnerable.

Risk Assessment

15. The risks to the County Council arising from the development and implementation of LEEP are kept under regular review by lead officers with the Children and Young People's (CYPS) Department and are recorded in the CYPS Departmental Risk Plan. Analysis of the indicators which the Department for Education use to select local authorities for inspection of the arrangements for school improvement indicate that Leicestershire is unlikely to be inspected at the current time.

Environmental Implications

16. None

Circulation under the Local Alert Issues Procedure

17. The report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be circulated to all Members of the County Council for information.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 26 July 2010 – ‘Development of Academy status for Leicestershire schools’

Report to the Cabinet on 9 July 2012 – ‘Ensuring Education Excellence’

Report to the Cabinet on 13 November 2012 – ‘Proposed Policy for Ensuring Education Excellence’

Report to the Cabinet on 9 April 2013 – ‘Ensuring Education Excellence’

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 September 2013 – ‘Ensuring Education Excellence: Development of Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership (LEEP)’

Academies Act 2010 and Education Act 2011

Academy guidance on department for Education website
www.education.gov.uk/academies

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – LEEP Documentation

1A- LEEP: An inclusive strategic vision for outstanding education in Leicestershire

1B Terms of reference for the Strategic Group

1C Data sharing agreement

Appendix 2 – Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitoring report

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