

Education Improvement Programme Update March 2012

Following approval of the projects that make up the Education Improvement Programme, project leads, supported by the programme team, have been progressing work in each area.

A key part of this is ensuring that outcomes tie in to the Council's broad priorities established in the Education Improvement Strategy and Raising Achievement Strategy.

Working in partnership with stakeholders is a key principle of the programme and consultation on proposals has already been arranged for school governors and head teachers. Input on Education Improvement plans were also an area of discussion at the Headteacher Conference on 16 March. In February, an event was organised for headteachers that focused on Outdoor Learning.

A review of Governor Services

The review is being undertaken through consultation with governors across the district. It will consider how governor support services can strengthen the effectiveness of governance and accountability in schools.

Extensive consultation with governors during the Autumn Term 2011 resulted in a number of recommendations to enhance the support services currently delivered by the Governor Service to governors in the Bradford District. These include:

- Greater use of electronic communications and information sharing
- Rationalising governor meetings to achieve more efficient use of governor time
- Introduction of e-learning and delivery of training to clusters of schools
- Establishment of a governor focus group

Pat Elcock is leading this project and can be contacted on 01274 385629 or school.governor@bradford.gov.uk

A review of Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) Service

A new EMA structure was agreed with the Trade Unions on 24 February. Assimilations to the new service structure have taken place and this exercise is now complete. The project is now at the recruitment and selection stage and interviews will be held on 18 and 19 April.

Mark Chambers is leading this project and can be contacted on 07961213646 or by email mark.chambers@bradford.gov.uk

A review of Education Organisation Planning

This project seeks to develop an Education Organisation Plan which gives a longer term view (5 – 10 years) across the whole 0-19 age range, and which aligns to the outcomes of the Local Development Framework proposals and non LA schools.

The plan would strengthen the Council's ability to engage with organisations such as the DfE and Free Schools on the allocation of capital resources, and would inform the Capital Investment Plan.

A project team has been established and a scope for the project agreed.

Work has now begun on identifying and developing underlying principles for the future development of education premises across the District.

Tony Sinkinson is leading this project and can be contacted on 01274 385515 or by email tony.sinkinson@bradford.gov.uk

A review of Learning and Curriculum Services

Sufficient savings required to meet the funding gap have been secured by not filling vacant posts. The structure of the service has not significantly changed, however it now forms an essential part of the Learning & Curriculum Delivery Team which, as a whole, is in regular communication with schools, actively developing models of practice by supporting School 2 School capacity and bespoke partnering services. As a consequence schools will not see any noticeable reduction in capacity or quality of service.

Mark Chambers is leading on this project and can be contacted on 07961213646 or by email mark.chambers@bradford.gov.uk

A review of Outdoor Learning Strategy

The project team has worked closely with schools to look at how the Council can optimize the use of outdoor provision and opportunities for children, young people and adults in Bradford.

A survey of headteachers was undertaken during the Autumn Term 2011. Feedback from the survey indicated strong commitment from schools to retain our outdoor education centre facilities at Buckden, Ingleborough and Nell Bank and demonstrated that schools regard outdoor provision as a valuable learning tool when linked closely to the curriculum. Respondents wanted to see outdoor education centres playing a stronger role in training school staff to develop school and locally-based programmes of activity.

Following on from the survey an Outdoor Learning conference was held at Future House in February 2012 which provided a useful networking opportunity for schools and officers.

A report was presented to the Council's Scrutiny Committee in January 2012 and there is a commitment from members to remodelling and refurbishing the three existing outdoor education centres in partnership with schools.

Jim Hughes is leading on this project and can be contacted on 01274 385585 or by email jim.hughes@bradford.gov.uk

A review of the Bradford Learning Network (BLN)

This project will seek to establish the agreement of School Forum to provide the funds the BLN requires to continue the services to schools up to September 2012. It will also look to develop an agreement to start a procurement project for a learning network, leading to uninterrupted provision of services to schools from September 2012 and beyond.

The BLN School Representation Group (SRG) is made up of headteachers and school leaders who are also predominantly Locality Achievement Partnership chairs. This group has been representing schools' views on what the new BLN services should deliver. A technical representation group (TRG) made up of Secondary Network Managers and Primary technical support representatives has also been established to support the SRG. Both groups have been helping to develop tender documentation for the new BLN which was published in March and Members will be involved in the subsequent selection of the supplier.

The BLN Team sends update emails to all schools fortnightly, the last one detailed indicative pricing for school budgets. Drop-in sessions were held on 6 March at The Innovation Centre Bradford.

The preferred supplier will be selected by the evaluation panel (which includes SRG & TRG members) in May. Details on how to subscribe to the new BLN services will be sent to all schools towards the end of May where they will be asked to select what level of BLN service they wish to purchase from the beginning of September. A website will be set up specifically for the subscription process to be managed online.

Mark Chambers is leading on this project and can be contacted on 07961213646 or by email mark.chambers@bradford.gov.uk

A review of the Reading Strategy

The project will agree a strategy for ensuring that all those capable of reading at age six have achieved that outcome.

Since the start of the project in January, the terms of reference and an initial action plan has been developed and agreed by the Education Improvement Programme Group and Bradford Primary Improvement Partnership. Headteachers have been briefed on key messages from the pilot as preparation for the phonics screening check which will take place for pupils in Year 1 in June 2012. The development of the strategy is currently being piloted in schools and key resources used to date were

made available at the Headteacher Conference in March. Council officers; in partnership with Bankfoot, Farfield and Woodside primaries ran a very well attended workshop at the conference, sharing good practice around reviewing and enhancing provision for phonics and reading. A volunteer reading programme and summer reading challenge have been proposed and have been positively endorsed by Headteachers.

Jane Arundale and Chris Clark are leading this project and can be contacted direct on jane.arundale@bradford.gov.uk and chris.clark@bradford.gov.uk

A review of the Early Learning Strategy

The project will develop a 0 -7 years Early Learning Strategy to set a shared vision where all providers can meet a set of quality standards. The project team will deliver and implement a new Early Learning Strategy with the aim of rapidly changing outcomes for children at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage that are sustained so there is an increasing proportion of children achieving higher levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.

An Early Learning Strategy Group, with representatives from Special Educational Needs, schools, Early Childhood, the voluntary sector and private childcare providers, was set up to identify the specific tasks required for drafting the new strategy.

The draft strategy was presented to the Education Improvement Programme Group on 29 March.

Anne Manns and Dulcie Leach are leading on this project. Anne can be contacted on 01274 431812 or by email anne.manns@bradford.gov.uk and Dulcie can be contacted on 01274 385728 or by email dulcie.leach@bradford.gov.uk

A review of the School Prioritisation Process

This project will deliver an agreed approach to prioritising schools in need of additional support and challenge.

Consultation with schools on the draft prioritisation process ended on 16 March and responses from schools, written and verbal were gratefully received. The project is on schedule for the prioritisation process to be approved by the beginning of April. A final version of the revised process will be sent to schools in the week commencing 16 April with a request for all of Bradford Local Authority's educational establishments to return a 'proposed priority level' by 21 May.

Phil Weston is leading on this project and can be contacted on 01274 385871 or by email phil.weston2@bradford.gov.uk

A review of the Closing the Gap

This project will agree the priorities for closing the attainment level gap of specific groups of children. This will be through the identification and sharing of good practice and through developing new practice. A toolkit of what works in individual schools will be produced and made available to all schools. It is linked to and will build on the Early Learning Strategy and the Reading Strategy.

Three strands of work have been identified: closing the gap for free school meals pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 through dissemination of existing good practice and development of further successful practice; producing curriculum guidance for New Arrivals in Key Stage 4; and reducing health inequalities through working with a group of schools to implement a behaviour change programme which will be shared with all schools.

Case studies into existing good practice will be carried out in the first half of the summer term 2012. An initial planning day to develop curriculum guidance for Key Stage 4 New Arrivals was held in March.

Ros Garside is leading on this project and can be contacted on 01274 385796 or by email ros.garside@bradford.gov.uk

Future Updates

The Education Improvement Strategic Board meets on a bi-monthly basis. Regular updates will be issued to staff following these meetings. Information will also be provided to staff through team briefings and staff one-to-ones.

Programme Team Information

The Programme Team is based in City Hall. Call on 01274 431020/434010 or email EducationServicesReviewPMO@bradford.gov.uk. if you require further information about the programme.