

Agenda Item No: 7b

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Education**

Date: **23 July 2001**

Title of Report: [Progress report on the implementation of the Education Department's action plan from the review of provision for highly able children - September 2000.](#)

By: **Director of Education**

Purpose of Report: **To report on progress on the action plan**

Recommendation:

To receive the report and note progress

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 1999 a scrutiny review panel was set up to review the LEA provision for highly able children. This panel's final report was presented in September 2000 and made recommendations in 8 main areas. The purpose of this paper is to review progress against these recommendations and also to present an overview of the provision for highly able children in the LEA.
- 1.2 The scrutiny review panel used the term "highly able children" in its terms of reference. This paper refers to "talented and gifted" pupils since this term is now widely used at all levels.

2. Commentary on the action plan

2.1 The LEA will clarify the County's position on accelerated transfer for the most able pupils.

- 2.1.1 This has been done via the statement in the booklet "The Local Education Authority and Highly Able Children" which was distributed to every school earlier this year. A copy is available in the Members' room, Pelham House.
- 2.1.2 This calls for the individual needs of gifted pupils to be met wherever possible within their own class, or "by arranging for some teaching and learning experiences to take place with older children while remaining on the role of their normal class." However the LEA recognises that there will be some exceptional children whose needs will be best met by a transfer to a higher year group. The policy statement clarifies both the conditions under which this may happen and the procedures and safeguards to be observed.

2.2 The LEA will build upon its existing collaborative work with voluntary, private and independent sectors to extend the range of enrichment activities for highly able children

2.2.1 Within East Sussex there is a wide range of opportunities available for gifted and talented pupils, some of which are directly organised by the LEA and others in partnership with the independent sector. Outlined below are the main elements of this provision. Appendix 1 provides further details of each of the elements.

- Saturday Art Masterclasses for Year 6 pupils
- Summer Art School for talented Year 5 pupils
- East Sussex Music Service
- Annual Sports Development Awards and Presentations (Secondary)
- P.E. and Sport Showcase Afternoon (Primary, Secondary, Special)
- Children's University
- Summer School for Gifted and Talented pupils
- Building Bridges (Science links with Lewes Old Grammar School)
- Ringmer Community College / Eastbourne College Modern Languages Project
- Specialist Sports Colleges support for gifted and talented pupils
- Hastings Education Action Zone – Excellence Challenge

2.3 The SEN management team will consider what should be done in looking at the needs of highly able children who also have SEN.

2.3.1 This work is under way. The timescale for this report is the end of August 2001.

2.4 The ESCC guidance on “Pupils with Marked Aptitudes” to be revised and slimmed down.

2.4.1 This document was published in 1996 and runs to 132 pages. Rather than a re-write of this document a short booklet “Schools and Highly Able Children” has been circulated to all schools containing a set of 27 self-evaluation criteria which can be used to evaluate the quality of their provision in this area. This is a very good starting point for further work that will include the publication of a bibliography, the disseminating of good practice via the web-site and additional guidance. This also fits well with the increasing emphasis on self-evaluation.

2.5 Identify appropriate teaching resources and networking opportunities for highly able pupils using ICT

2.5.1 The current EDP Priority 5, Developing the Use of ICT to Support School Improvement, makes no specific mention of developing the use of ICT for gifted and talented pupils. However, it is intended that the actions called for in the above heading will be met through the identification of specific time and resources in the next EDP.

2.6 The LEA will continue to identify provision for highly able pupils within priority 4 (Breadth and Balance) of the Education Development Plan

2.7.2 Contact advisers will discuss these indicative targets in the Autumn term at the same time as discussions are held about the statutory school performance targets. By the end of 2003 it will be possible to assess and analyse the progress of individual schools and the LEA as a whole towards these targets.

2.8 The LEA will consult with schools about the appointment of a teacher-adviser for highly able children.

2.8.1 In view of the moves to increase the percentage of funding delegated directly to schools any potential appointment in this area would be dependent on the willingness of schools to buy back services from the LEA.

2.8.2 The booklet “The LEA and Highly Able Children” included a reply slip asking whether schools were prepared to purchase consultancy time from a teacher adviser. (A copy of the booklet is available in the Members' room.) Four schools replied positively to this, which seems to suggest that the level of interest from schools is low.

2.8.3 However, this may not necessarily be the case. This particular consultation was relatively low –key and was not repeated in the services to schools folder and reply forms which all schools will have engaged with. Future needs analysis work with schools will therefore make specific mention of gifted and talented pupils in order to re-assess the level of demand.

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2 August 2001