

TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE 25 FEBRUARY 2010

AUDIT COMMISSION SCHOOL SURVEY 2009
SERVICES TO SCHOOLS SURVEY 2009
(Acting Director of Children, Young People & Learning)

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Schools Forum of the results of firstly, the 2009 Audit Commission School Survey and secondly, the Services to Schools Survey 2009 and to seek any comments.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Schools Forum **NOTES** the summary results from both the 2009 Audit Commission School Survey (Annexes A, B and paragraph 5.3 below and the 'Services to Schools 2009 Survey' (Annex C and paragraph 5.4 below) and makes appropriate comments.
- 2.2 That the Schools Forum **NOTES** that, as indicated last year, the 2009 Audit Commission School Survey has changed considerably. Most notably the rating scale has been reversed and now reflects Ofsted ratings as follows:

Excellent (4)
Good (3)
Adequate (2)
Poor (1)

The 2009 survey is shorter and now reflects 'local services' in addition to specific council services. In 2009 we included no questions about our buyback services in the Audit Commission Survey but conducted a separate online survey of all 'Services to Schools' in-house.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is appropriate for the Forum to consider results from both surveys on schools' views on the services provided by the Council and other local services and to make its own comments.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Audit Commission undertakes a survey of schools' views of the quality of services provided by Bracknell Forest Council and other local services. The survey is significant

as the results inform both the Council's overall external assessment of performance, as determined through the Comprehensive Area Assessment, and the OFSTED local authority inspection. As such the survey provides vital feedback to Council and other local services on their performance.

5.2 This year's core survey contained 63 questions arranged in 6 sections as follows:

Be healthy (6)
Stay safe (10)
Enjoy and achieve (17)
Make a positive contribution (4)
Achieve economic wellbeing (4)
Strategic management (22)

Because of the change in the rating scale, direct comparisons with the 2008 survey are not possible.

5.3 Schools were asked to rate performance against each question on a scale of

Excellent (4) Good (3) Adequate (2) Poor (1)

therefore the higher the average score the better. The Audit Commission provides analysis of the results of which a summary indicates the following:

Of the 63 questions in the survey, Bracknell Forest was rated:

- between Good and Excellent on 12
- Good on 3
- between Adequate and Good on 47
- Adequate on 1

Annex A provides more detailed analysis of the main survey results, and the Summary Report at Annex B lists the individual questions and responses.

5.4 In summer 2009 as part of our performance monitoring we conducted an in-house survey online of all the services schools are able to buy back in Bracknell Forest. Formerly these questions were incorporated in the Audit Commission Survey as 'local questions'. Eighteen schools participated in this survey. In future this survey will be conducted every 3 years, prior to the renewal process for schools. The survey revealed no major causes for concern (all services achieved an average rating above 3) but any individual low ratings have been investigated by Service Heads. The results of this survey are set out in Annex C.

5.5 In 2009, 24 out of 38 (63%) Bracknell Forest schools responded to the Audit Commission Survey, (21 primary and 3 secondary schools), a slight improvement on 2008. However, we were still well above the national average response rate, which was only 29%.

Conclusion

5.6 Bracknell Forest typically achieves excellent results in the Audit Commission School Survey and 2009 appears to be equally positive. The next survey in 2011 will allow comparisons to be made and any changes in performance to be monitored.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this survey.

Borough Treasurer

6.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from this report.

Impact Assessment

6.3 There are no specific impact assessments arising from this report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 There are no specific strategic risk management issues arising from this report

Other Officers

6.5 There are no issues arising from this report that are relevant to other officers.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 Schools.

Method of Consultation

7.2 Online survey.

Representations Received

7.3 Response to the Audit Commission.

Background Papers

Audit Commission Schools Survey 2009
Services to Schools Survey 2009

Contact for further information

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SCHOOL SURVEY 2009 - SUMMARY

AUDIT COMMISSION SCHOOL SURVEY

Introduction

This major national survey was conducted online during the summer term. The survey investigates schools' perceptions of their local authority and other local services provided to schools. Schools were asked to rate performance against each question on a scale of

Excellent (4) Good (3) Adequate (2) Poor (1)

therefore the higher the average score the better. (NB This is a reversal of the 1-5 scale in previous years where lower was better)

Survey Questionnaire

This year's core survey contained 63 questions arranged in 6 sections as follows:

Be healthy (6)
Stay safe (10)
Enjoy and achieve (17)
Make a positive contribution (4)
Achieve economic wellbeing (4)
Strategic management (22)

Because of the change in the rating scale, direct comparisons with the 2008 survey are not possible.

Response rate

This year 24 out of 38 (63%) Bracknell Forest schools responded to the survey, slightly more than the previous year. The national response rate this year was 29%.

Summary Results

Of the 63 questions in the survey, Bracknell Forest was:

- between Good and Excellent on 12
- Good on 3
- between Adequate and Good on 47
- Adequate on 1 (*q5.4 see below*)
- Bracknell Forest was rated with an average of 2.5 or lower on only four questions in the survey
 - *1.4 Local services in meeting the mental health needs of children and young people* (although still higher than all councils' average and in top quartile)
 - *2.10 Multi-agency early intervention for children in need* (although still higher than all councils' average and in top quartile)
 - *5.1 provision for 14-19 education in meeting local needs*

- *5.4 provision of post-16 opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities*)

National Comparison

- Bracknell Forest achieved the highest rating in England for question 2.6 in the Stay Safe section - *Your council's support for combating bullying* – with an average of 3.38 (compared with an all councils average of 2.69)
- in highest (4th) quartile nationally for 47 out of 63 questions
- in 3rd quartile nationally for 11 out of 63 questions
- in 2nd quartile for 3 questions as follows:
 - *1.3 school meals service encouragement for children and young people to eat healthily* (BF average 2.77 all councils average 2.81)
 - *2.4 guidance on when to make a child protection referral to the relevant service* (BF average 2.67 all councils average 2.73)
 - *5.1 provision for 14-19 education in meeting local needs* (BF average 2.50 all councils average 2.60)
- (1st) quartile nationally for 2 questions as follows:
 - *2.2 training, advice and support on child protection provided by the LSCB for designated members of staff and governors* (BF average 2.63 all councils average 3.01)
 - *5.4 provision of post-16 opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities* (BF average 2.00 all councils average 2.36)