

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
15 JUNE 2011**

**WORKING GROUP UPDATE REPORT
Working Group Lead Members**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report introduces the notes of a review follow-up meeting of the Working Group of the Panel which has undertaken a review of English as an additional language (EAL) in Bracknell Forest schools. The report also invites Councillor Mrs Birch to give an oral update in respect of the group which has been reviewing schools meals and will have an involvement in the procurement specification for the new school meals contract.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the Panel notes the development of English as an additional language in Bracknell Forest schools since the Working Group's previous review and the progress achieved to date by the group reviewing school meals.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 A Working Group of the Panel undertook a review of EAL in Bracknell Forest schools in 2008 as, although the demography of the Borough had been stable in the ethnicity of its population for several years previously, at that time there had been a noticeable and rapid increase in the local ethnic community resulting in a diversity of teaching requirements and challenges arising from English not necessarily being a pupil's first language. Whilst the Working Group identified a number of areas which required attention, its overriding impressions were that the schools within the Borough were managing the impact of the growing numbers of EAL students very well and that the EAL students in Bracknell Forest schools made an excellent contribution. A follow up meeting between the Working Group and the Council's EAL & Diversity Team was held in November 2009 and, to conclude the Working Group's review, a final progress monitoring meeting with the Team took place in March 2011, the notes of which are attached to this report at Appendix 1. The Working Group found that, although much had been achieved to date, EAL was work in progress and issues remained. However, the Team was increasingly confident to tackle issues and promoted the positive aspects of EAL during its meetings with schools which were considered to be successful and constructive. Wider acceptance of, and respect for, EAL was apparent. Linked provision was identified as the main area to strengthen in order to achieve fuller integration and maximise efforts in the absence of future funding for EAL work. The Working Group do not see the need for any new recommendations to the Executive.
- 3.2 An independent group of Members has been reviewing the quality of meals in the Borough's schools. The group has visited and eaten at several secondary and primary schools to date and visits to further schools are proposed. Feedback has already been given on a number of areas and schools are already implementing a

number of suggestions. As stated in the Panel's work programme, the review will enable Members to contribute views to inform the procurement specification for the new school meals contract.

Background Papers

- Report of the review of English as an Additional Language in Bracknell Forest schools – October 2008
- The notes of the meeting of the Working Group reviewing English as an Additional Language, 30 November 2009.

Contact for further information

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