

**EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE SUB COMMITTEE  
13 MAY 1998**

Present: Councillors Barnard, Mrs Doyle, Harrison, Mrs Hirst, Mrs Shillcock,  
Mrs Sutcliffe, Ward and Wheaton

Also Present: Councillor Mrs Hayes, Anne Snowdon and Angela Smith, The Pines  
Infant and Nursery School, Catherine Croft and Alan Foster,  
Brakenhale

Apologies: Councillor Fawcett

**1 Election of Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Ward be elected Chairman of the Sub Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

**COUNCILLOR WARD IN THE CHAIR**

**2 Appointment of Vice Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Barnard be appointed Vice Chairman of the Sub Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

**3 Minutes**

The minutes of the Sub Committee held on 17 March 1998 were approved as a correct record.

**4 Summaries of OFSTED Inspection Reports (Item 1)**

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Education enclosing summary OFSTED inspection reports in respect of Brakenhale and The Pines Infant and Nursery Schools. The Sub Committee received copies of summary report and the LEA action plan for Brakenhale, together with the OFSTED report for the Pines Infant and Nursery School. A copy of the Brakenhale School's action plan was circulated separately to the main agenda and the school's action plan for The Pines was circulated at the meeting.

The Headteachers had been invited to the meeting to help present the responses to the issues raised by the reports. It was hoped that this procedure could be adopted for future meetings as agreed at the meeting of the Sub Committee on 22 September 1997. Copies of the full inspection report would be available to all Councillors of OFSTED reports issued in the future.

The Pines Infant and Nursery School

The Assistant Director of Education gave a summary of the report's main findings. In general there was good teaching in the nursery class and in the infant school. There was an issue of balance in the curriculum although it was felt this was due to the approach to teaching some subjects in blocks and the four day duration of the inspection team's visits to the school.

The school was treating the findings of the report as part of its on-going School Improvement Plan and the Headteacher gave details of the action points the school would be pursuing.

### Brakenhale

The Assistant Director of Education informed the Sub Committee of the report's principal findings; in the Inspectors' judgement the school was providing an acceptable standard of education but nevertheless had Serious Weaknesses. It was noted Serious Weaknesses was a new category which meant that OFSTED and HMI would keep the school under review (within six to eighteen months from the date of the report) and would be carrying out follow up visits to assess progress with the action points contained in the report. If the follow up visits found that insufficient progress was being made the school could be re-designated as a Failing School.

Brakenhale had been one of the first schools to be inspected early in 1994 under the OFSTED regime, however the criteria for inspections at that time were different to those being applied now. Nevertheless, it remained very important that the action points from the previous report, of which some were on the senior management and financial management of the school had been progressed. There were serious weaknesses in the standards of literacy and attainment levels were below average particularly in older year groups. Boys' attainment at the school remained a problem. Sound progress was being made with the pupils attending the sixth form. The current Headteacher had inherited a sizeable budget deficit which had been difficult to manage in combination with a falling roll situation which had in turn lead to redundancies at the school. There was also concern about the governors' attendance at the OFSTED de-brief and the meeting held to consider the schools' action plan. The Chairman of governors felt that on the whole governors were supportive and many of them assisted the school with its daytime activities, case conferences and working with pupils. The governors had decided not to issue a parental questionnaire as this was not a compulsory activity under the OFSTED criteria. This decision was based in part around very poor turnout to parents' meetings.

The school was taking a number of actions to promote enrichment and the greater use of books at home for pupils. Outreach work with year six primary pupils was being carried out together with a summer literacy school. Brakenhale's primary feeder schools were meeting their targets although there was concern that more able pupils were transferring to other secondary schools.

The Assistant Director of Education introduced the LEA action plan, which indicated support and resources to tackle the issues raised by the OFSTED report. The Headteacher gave the Sub Committee a presentation on the issues the school would

be pursuing. It was emphasised that the LEA would be monitoring closely the progress made by the school.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the findings of the inspection reports for The Pines Infant and Nursery School and Brakenhale School be noted;
- (ii) that the governors' action plan for Brakenhale School be noted; and
- (iii) that the actions proposed by the LEA to address the inspection reports key issues at the Brakenhale School be endorsed.

**5 Bracknell Forest: School Improvement Outline Strategy (Item 2)**

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Education informing it of the support arrangements in place to help schools continue to raise standards. The report gave details of training courses that the LEA was providing for schools to access. The Quality Assurance Sub Committee would continue to receive updates and action plans and a Focus Group had been established to oversee work in this area. The Director of Education particularly emphasised the standard raising role of the Local Education Authority.

**RESOLVED** that the arrangements to support school improvement be endorsed and the training provision outlined in Appendices A and B to the report be noted.

**6 The National Year of Reading: Proposals for Implementation in Bracknell Forest (Item 3)**

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Education informing it about the Year of Reading which began in September 1998 and setting out how Bracknell Forest would respond to this. The National Year of Reading would complement the literacy hour and all groups in the community would have reading promoted to them in a variety of ways.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the information about the National Year of Reading and LEA's plans for supporting schools and the development of a range of reading activities be noted; and
- (ii) that the Director of Education's proposals for the implementation of the National Year of Reading within the authority be approved.

**7 Post-16 Collaboration Project (Item 4)**

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Education outlining a partnership bid to the Further Education Funding Council with Bracknell and

**Appendix D as  
referred to in Minute 93**

Wokingham College. The intention was to identify opportunities for improving and co-ordinating full time post-16 provision in various settings in the Borough and promoting improved collaboration between Bracknell and Wokingham College, Secondary schools and the Education Department. The initiative was in accordance with the green paper "the learning age" which sought to achieve a more cogent tertiary education sector. The Sub Committee received details of the bid tabled at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the proposed bid as set out in the document collaboration fund category C project bid be approved.

The meeting commenced at 5.30pm and concluded at 8.00pm.

**CHAIRMAN**