



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
Epsom & Ewell**

Epsom and Ewell High School – improvements initiatives

14 September 2009

KEY ISSUE

The stabilisation of the school, following the adverse Ofsted report of December 2008; the removal of the governing body and resignation of the head teacher.

SUMMARY

The school has made good progress and under the new head teacher is expected to continue to improve and be out of special measures in the near future.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee is asked to :

- (i) note the significant progress being made by Epsom and Ewell High School, following its Ofsted judgement that Special Measures were required
- (ii) note that currently the school will not be an early contender for BSF funding but that modest sums are being deployed to improve the school environment.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Ofsted has placed the school in special measures. The Ofsted report, published in January 2009, stated that “the school requires special measures because it is failing to give pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school”.
- 1.2 The County Council took prompt action to remove the governing body of the school and an interim education board (IEB) was set up to run the school.
- 1.3 The headteacher resigned and a very experienced head teacher from St John the Baptist School, Woking, was appointed as interim head. The County Council has supported the interim head by providing additional senior teaching staff support and personnel advice and funding was also allocated to allow the school to make some improvements to the environment.
- 1.4 Ofsted undertook a monitoring visit at the end of April and progress since special measures were introduced was described as ‘good’ in the report issued by Ofsted on 19 May
- 1.5 A new head teacher has been appointed who took up post in June and the County Council is confident that he can continue the progress made and rapidly recover the local community’s support for the school.
- 1.6 The IEB is currently drawing up nominations for a shadow governing body which it is expected will be in place by the end of the Autumn term. The shadow governing body will work alongside the IEB for a period of around 12 months before a permanent governing body is appointed.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 The position of the school is already significantly improved since the school went into special measures and the appointment of a substantive headteacher is expected to continue this rapid progress so that Ofsted take the school out of special measures in the near future. SCC is very grateful for the support and expertise from St John the Baptist School and for support from other local schools.
- 2.2 Applications for the school had been falling in the past couple of years and have reduced significantly for 2009. This clearly has an impact on funding and morale. However, the projected need for secondary places in Epsom and Ewell is significantly higher in 2010 than 2009 and it is expected that the rapid improvement in the school will prompt renewed interest from applicants. In addition to its significant improvement, the long-term demand for places means that the school has a secure future.
- 2.3 The school has some capital funding, which, whilst relatively modest, is expected significantly to enhance the school environment in the next academic year.

3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 Members have enquired about the potential for substantial capital funding for Epsom and Ewell High School through the Government's Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF), run by Partnerships for Schools (PfS). Surrey is not yet in this programme, though it is hoped that SCC will be included from around February next year, if we demonstrate by documentation and action that we are 'Ready to Deliver'.
- 3.2 We have been encouraged to date to prioritise provision on a geographical basis and on overall deprivation and standards. We have based our groupings of schools on the 14-19 networks and have agreed that, based on deprivation and standards, the Spelthorne network is the first group of schools that will benefit from the programme in Surrey. Following through this prioritisation, Spelthorne would be followed by Woking and Runnymede networks. Epsom and Ewell network would be the 7th network to be addressed. (This position arises because the scoring was based on a combination of tax credit deprivation factors and attainment standards (GCSE scores including English and Maths) *as aggregated over all schools in each network.*)
- 3.3 The case made to PfS for this set of priorities has already been accepted in principle. There may be an option to reconsider the order at a later date and we are aware that some authorities have successfully made changes to their priorities, however, our current imperative must be to persuade PfS that Surrey should enter the programme next year. (In terms of the relative priority for substantial rebuilding/refurbishment of Epsom and Ewell *as an individual school*, officers would suggest that it would not be the highest in SCC, though it would quite probably rank amongst them)
- 3.4 In the meantime, the modest sums at the school's disposal are expected to help the school make an appreciable difference to the physical environment and help raise morale and self-esteem for both pupils and staff.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 When the school went into special measures, the interim headteacher led a series of consultations with parents, staff and pupils to explain the actions she was taking to improve the position and seeking their support. There is good evidence that the school now has full support of all these stakeholders.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The January Ofsted report did not comment on the value for money that the school offered but clearly this was questionable at the time. The school has recently improved its financial information reporting and systems and an audit, requested by the IEB, has confirmed that the school is currently on a sound footing and is in a position to make further modest improvements to the environment. The smaller Year 7 cohort will impact on finances and the school will need to focus on improving the perception of parents before the next admissions round. The additional cohort coming through should help in that respect.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The school is rapidly improving on a number of fronts; behaviour and attendance, teaching and learning and this will improve the outcomes for all pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties have made satisfactory or better progress in the school, even during the recent difficulties.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Improved standards of behaviour, attendance, teaching and learning may be expected over time to reduce crime and public disorder

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The school has made significant progress and is expected to continue to do so and rapidly get out of special measures and regain the confidence of the local community.
- 8.2 Members are asked to note the progress being made by Epsom and Ewell High School

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To keep members informed of the progress at the school.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 Members will be updated as and when requested.

LEAD OFFICER: Liz Hanrahan, Schools Planning Manager,
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 03456 009 009
E-MAIL: Liz.hanrahan@surreycc.gov.uk
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