EXCELLENCE IN WIRRAL: THE THIRD YEAR (2002-03)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 This report sets out the successes in the third year of Excellence in Wirral, which has developed in complexity as the government’s policy for the Excellence in Cities initiative, and the rest of its diversity agenda, evolves. Two major strands have been added during this year, the Leadership Incentive Grant and the Behaviour Improvement Programme. Wirral will be part of the ‘primary roll-out’, which will bring 2 main strands (Gifted and Talented and Behaviour and Attendance) into a small number of the most disadvantaged primary schools; unfortunately the level of funding is lower than had been hoped.

1.1 The considerable resources allocated to Excellence in Cities are attached to highly structured programmes and challenging targets. In 2003, 56% of Wirral pupils (excluding those in special schools) achieved 5 or more grades A* - C at GCSE; this means we achieved our EDP target.

1.2 The DfES monitors the progress towards targets closely, as well as the progress and activity within the strands (see their Annual Review of Excellence in Wirral, October 2003, attached). From the beginning of the financial year 2003 – 04, EiC funds may be used more flexibly by the Partnership, as long as the stringent Conditions for the Grant are complied with. This annual report outlines the progress made in each of the strands, and has been organised to reflect the new groupings of individual stands under the broad headings of Teaching and Learning, Leadership and Management, Behaviour and Attendance. There is a clear indication of both internal and external evaluation where relevant. The report will be sent to the DfES, as well as forming part of local evaluation. The full report, with appendices, will be placed on the Council intranet, and this summary will be considered by the Education and Cultural Services Select Committee.

THE THIRD YEAR

Developments within EiC policy, 2002 - 3

2.1 There have been 2 major additions to the strands of Excellence in Cities over the past year. The first is the announcement that the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) would be extended to all secondary schools within EiC areas, and not given only to those schools which are facing challenging circumstances, or failing to meet the floor targets (20% in 2004 rising to 25% in 2006 of pupils gain 5 good GCSE grades by 2006). The Leadership Incentive Grant is intended to accelerate improvement in standards; to strengthen leadership at all levels, thus building the school's capacity for sustained improvement; and to stimulate collaboration between schools. The Leadership Incentive Grant has brought a considerable sum of money into Wirral mainstream secondary schools, and will continue to do so over the next 3 years: an additional £125k for all schools each year to improve leadership at all levels, in order to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Headteachers were given considerable freedom as to the ways in which they could spend this grant, providing it was tied into the needs of each school’s development plan; the idea was to enable planned change to happen more speedily. There is however a requirement for schools to form ‘collaboratives’ and put some of their grant into a central pot to fund joint working (see details later in report).

2.2 The second addition was the introduction of the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP), following the first pilot phase, where it was focused on 34 areas in the country judged to be ‘crime hotspots’. This is a complex programme, which channels funding into a small number of schools, primary and secondary, which serve the most deprived communities. There is a
menu of proposed activities under the BIP from which LEAs could choose, but all areas were required to nominate one school as a 'full service extended school' and fund it from the grant. There are a range of demanding targets around attendance and exclusion to be met as a condition of the grant. In this second phase, the coordination and management of the Behaviour Improvement Programme was placed under the umbrella of EiC.

2.3 We have received indications of funding up to March 2006:
- 2003-04: £1.4m
- 2004-05: £1.25m
- 2005-06: £1.09m (See details later in report).

2.4 The DfES is also looking at what it terms the 're-engineering' of EiC. This involves the refocusing of the strands into 3 main themes:
1) Teaching and Learning: Gifted and Talented, Excellence Challenge, City Learning Centres, specialist colleges
2) Leadership and Management: Leadership Incentive Grant and Education Action Zones.
3) Behaviour and Attendance: Learning Mentors, Learning Support Units and the Behaviour Improvement Programme
The bulk of this report is organised to reflect these three themes.

2.5 During the past year, the DfES has also issued new guidance on the management of City Learning Centres (CLCs), which clarifies their nature as a shared resource, making the host school an equal partner with other schools, and requires much clearer lines of accountability to the EiC Partnership. Partly in response to this, the Wirral CLC steering group’s membership has been broadened, to include all 3 host school headteachers, the 3 managers, the chairs of the 3 CLC Management Boards, a representative from WASH, the General Inspector for ICT, the EiC Manager, and the Assistant Director, when he/she is appointed, as head of the School Effectiveness Branch.

2.6 ‘The future of EiC Action Zones’ was published in March 2003. It outlined the changed regulations about funding for Education Action Zones, increasing flexibility, with the nature and constitution of the Zone itself open to change at much shorter notice. The key emphasis is on value for money, and targeting need within the Partnership. As the three year period for both our EAZs runs out in 2004, there will be a small group, headed by the SI Primary and Early Years Education, to examine the best practice within the two zones, and see what can be disseminated more widely. It will be important to look at these outcomes in a strategic way, and ensure that they are integrated within the primary roll-out of EiC, which is expected to start in September 2004.

Leadership and Management
2.7 The Partnership has been extended, and now includes the Chair of the Primary Heads Consultation Group, and five primary representatives, one from each primary cluster group. This is to reflect the needs of the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP), and the primary roll-out. The monthly Partnership meetings continue to be well attended. The meetings were chaired in the academic year 02-03 by the headteacher of Oldershaw School. The Partnership makes important, and sometimes difficult, decisions about allocation of resources. The chairs of the steering groups gave a presentation to the Beacon Council assessors for the Transforming Secondary Education award, which highlighted the way in which EiC has helped to develop a strong sense of partnership, of being collaborative, which characterizes our working practices, rather than cut-throat competition.

2.8 Each of the steering groups has a monitoring role, and this year the new evaluation tools provided by the DfES for the Learning Mentor and the Learning Support Unit strands have been used well, as part of the school self-evaluation strategy. We have continued to use an external consultant (who is working across all the Greater Merseyside EiC Partnerships) to look closely at the two EiC Action zones. He has also written up 3 Case Studies of good
practice in developing a range of partnerships, based on Wirral specialist schools, which we used as part of our Beacon Council Open Day workshop, Making Powerful Partnerships, on 17.10.03. His evaluation of the working practices of the 11 – 16 Widening Participation cluster group, and his recommendations, have been very helpful in clarifying the way forward.

PROGRESS TO TARGETS

3.2 GCSE targets: this has been another successful year for Wirral. The overall target of 56% Year 11 pupils (excluding those pupils in special schools) achieving 5 or more A* - C grades has been met. The overall target for Y11 pupils achieving 5 A* - G including English and Maths (92.5%), was not met. We were only 0.4 below our target of 42.1 for the average point score across Wirral schools.

3.3 Permanent exclusions in those schools with a Learning Support Unit was 24, which is 2 fewer than last year.

3.4 80 fixed term exclusions of 6 days or more were given across Wirral, which is a considerable decrease on last year’s figure of 93.

3.5 Wirral’s attendance overall improved by +1%, a considerable achievement.

Additional targets related to the Gifted and Talented strand

3.6 KS3: 76.3% of pupils achieved L5+ in English at KS3, 74.1% in Maths and 71.6 L5+ in Science; a rise of between 5-6% overall.

3.7 GCSE: The targets apply to the whole Y11 cohort, not just those pupils identified as G&T. Of 4052 pupils in Y11 in mainstream schools, 19.2% gained A* or A grades in 3 or more subjects in 2003. This is a considerable achievement.

Excellence Challenge

3.9 The average point score for summer 2003 was 19.6 (258.8 points under the new UCAS tariff), the same as the 2002 average score. The percentage of students achieving top UCAS points (AAB) was 14.7% in 2003, a marked improvement on the 2002 value of 13.9%.

PROGRESS REPORTS ON THE THREE THEMES

TEACHING AND LEARNING

GIFTED AND TALENTED

4.0 Aim of the Gifted and Talented strand.
To provide a special programme that raises the education standards amongst the most able and talented and to extend significantly the range of educational opportunities available to them, and all pupils. In establishing the programme, particular attention is given to providing “inclusive” activities for other students not named in the gifted and talented cohort. This element of inclusion is seen as an integral part of each school’s philosophy.

Priorities from last year

4.1 This year’s emphasis has been on appropriate teaching and learning programmes in the classroom and collaborative work between subject specialist teachers, advisory teachers and inspectors to produce case studies and exemplar materials to support this aim. Good progress has been made.
Progress

- All schools have modified or are in the process of modifying their schemes of work to address the needs of the more able student in the classroom.
- All schools have been asked to submit one case study of good practice. Resource packs were sent out in the Autumn Term 2003 to include best practice exemplar material across the curriculum, and school case studies.
- All schools have submitted school self-evaluations.
- No schools have had any funds withdrawn as a consequence of failing to deliver the agreed elements of the programme.
- All secondary schools now have a member of staff who has undergone the 4 day residential National Training at Oxford Brookes University. 6 Wirral staff have been awarded the Diploma in G&T Education, which requires the submission of a significant research topic.
- G&T co-ordinators, with the exception of those who are members of the school’s leadership team, receive appropriate time to undertake the G&T activities.
- 2002/03 Cluster activities have been focused specifically on extending the teaching and learning programmes in the classroom. 12 G&T co-ordinators have already completed a longitudinal study across the four clusters, of four students from each school. When the studies are submitted from all the schools, and analysed, it will provide a progress report on this sample of 84 pupils, from years 7, 8, 9 and 10.
- There have been a number of highly successful cross-strand projects with Higher Education Institutions, the National Theatre, Galleries and Museums, with some examples of grade improvement, and very positive evaluations from both teachers and pupils.
- The G&T strand co-ordinator and the EiC manager have successfully collaborated with schools in the independent sector, and Cheshire LEA, advising on G&T provision.
- 46 pupils from a cross section of seven Wirral schools have now become members of the Warwick Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. Summer school students (2002) were interviewed in September and their progress tracked.
- This academic year a great deal has been achieved in primary schools, including activities for pupils, parents’ workshops, and INSET for teachers.
- Three G&T Summer schools were held at Ridgeway High School and Pensby High School for Girls. Wirral Able Children’s Centre ran a summer school at the Oldershaw School.

6th Form Masterclass: ‘Forms in a Landscape’

4.2 The project ‘Forms in a Landscape’ was based around a visit to Ambleside in the Lake District on Tuesday 1st July 2003.

Ninety-two year 12 students from across Wirral’s schools and twenty-four staff took part; eight subjects were represented (Drama, Maths, English, Science, History, Geography, French and Art). Two Advanced Level media students, supported by a member of staff from the Learning Lighthouse CLC, filmed the day’s activities. The 11-16 secondary schools were represented by an NQT or less experienced member of staff attached to a subject group to gain some sixth form experience (INSET).

After a day’s workshop in the Lakes, the staff and students were expected to make a response to the title ‘Forms in a Landscape’, exploring their subject accordingly. A celebration took place at the Laird Foundation on July 11th, when each group presented their findings to an invited audience, and each other. This was not a polished performance, but ‘work in progress’, and was the most successful of our annual G&T celebrations so far.

EXCELLENCE CHALLENGE

Aim of the Strand

5.0 The strand aims to increase the proportion of young people entering higher education from disadvantaged backgrounds if they have the ability to do so. It does this by raising aspirations and self-esteem and by reducing underachievement. The strand also extends the gifted and talented programme to 16 –19 year olds in schools and colleges.
Priorities from last year

5.1 Excellence Challenge has now completed its second year. Progress has been good on the priorities identified in last year’s report. A better working relationship with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has now been established, with an LSC representative on the Excellence Challenge steering group. There has been a reappraisal of the priorities and organisation for the 11-16 Birkenhead schools cluster, and we are optimistic that there will be better outcomes by July 2004.

Progress

- Excellence Challenge was re-branded nationally as Aimhigher in April 2003. The January 2003 White Paper “The Future of Higher Education” clearly outlined the Government’s commitment to a strategy to integrate the two Widening Participation strands, Excellence Challenge and Partnerships for Progression, and to plan for them to become one programme identified under the one brand Aimhigher, by 1 April 2004.

- A total of 452 students attended the 19 Advanced Extension Award (AEA) Masterclasses were arranged between October and December 2002 and during July 2003). The Masterclasses have been well received by the students.

- The DfES Aimhigher Roadshow visited 14 schools, Birkenhead Sixth Form College (BSFC) and Wirral Metropolitan College. Feedback from institutions was again very positive.

- 238 pupils from all 22 schools attended the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Summer Schools during July and August. A range of exciting opportunities were provided including Science Olympics, University of Liverpool; Year 10 Visit to Magdalene College, Cambridge; Aim Higher Greater Merseyside Achievers’ Awards; Ealing Exchange and Year 9 Residential at Liverpool Hope; and Stepping Stones, Special Schools Residential, Liverpool Hope.

Attitudes to HE Survey

This survey was sent to all Year 13 students in schools and colleges. Analysis of replies showed that:

- 83% claimed that not having to worry about debt would encourage them to go to HE
- 78% had not heard of Opportunity Bursaries – this is a major concern as all institutions were sent information about the bursaries and details of how to apply.

Wirral Bursaries

7 Year 12 students were awarded ICT and Business Studies Bursaries; They were paid £65 per week for the 6-week placement with a local firm, where they are given a ‘real-life’ research problem to solve.

Vocational Links

Wirral and St Helen’s Strand Co-ordinators, working with Liverpool Hope Leisure and Tourism staff, devised a programme of support/enrichment / enhancement opportunities for GCSE and AVCE Leisure and Tourism students.

INSET

A wide range of INSET on related topics has been provided.

Primary Excellence Challenge

5.2 The Wirral Excellence Challenge Action Plan required that in Year 2 of Excellence Challenge funding would be used on projects with primary schools. 24 primary schools were identified as Excellence Challenge schools. Each school was allocated £1000 on production of an Action Plan outlining how the funding would be used to raise aspirations and self-esteem of those pupils with potential to go on to higher education. Some schools actually worked with local higher education institutions. An external evaluation will be carried out in the Autumn term.
12 Excellence Challenge primary schools sent teachers and pupils to two Saturday morning sessions of Thinking Corner at WEC in October and March.

CITY LEARNING CENTRES

THE DISCOVERY CITY LEARNING CENTRE

Management

6.0 Unlike the other 2 CLCs, the Discovery is funded from several different funding streams, as well as the DfES. It is a much more complex operation. The building houses the re-sited public library, rooms for community ICT training, a crèche, and a conference centre. There have been a considerable number of difficulties surrounding the completion of the building, its kitting out, in particular the development of the science lab (for KS2/3 use), and personnel difficulties. This led to slippage in the timetable for the opening of the Centre. The Discovery CLC Manager was absent from work due to stress at this crucial time and consequently help with management issues and day to day operational issues came from a variety of sources, including Ridgeway High School, the Learning Lighthouse and WestWirralWorks. The role played by the managers of the other 2 CLCs at this time was considerable, and without their support, the Centre could not have opened.

6.1 The Discovery CLC was available for use by its partner primary and secondary schools from April 2003 onwards. The deputy head of the host school took over the management of the CLC for the second half of the summer term, until the appointment of a temporary manager, in August 2003. The management of the Centre has been through a difficult period, but the signs are there now of the stability needed to take things forward.

THE LEARNING LIGHTHOUSE

Monitoring and Evaluation

7.0 The Learning Lighthouse continues to offer an exciting and supportive learning environment to its users. A cross section of users were asked to complete evaluation sheets after Easter, and of the 100 or so received, 97% found the courses, facilities and support provided to be excellent.

Progress

7.1 Excellent progress has been made on all the priorities for 2002-3.

Teaching and Learning Video Editing (all curriculum areas); Audio capture for video and multimedia applications (all curriculum areas); Music Technology support of GCSE music, AS/A2 music and music technology; Soundbeam in performance (Dance and Drama); Virtual Reality (all curriculum areas); Sports Analysis software and hardware (PE); GIS software (accessing demographic data across all curriculum areas); Links to weather satellites and integrated GPS systems (mainly geography and mathematics); Video conferencing link via broadband to Acre Lane; Establishing a Virtual Learning Environment and Addition of 5 remote cameras and multicore audio to Mediastar system.

Other notable projects last year included:
Macbeth; Literacy and Numeracy Booster Classes; Post SATs; VC with Veterans; Advances in Animation; Technogames; Seashore Searches; and support for the Beacon Council bid.

WESTWIRRALWORKS@HILBRE.COM

8.0 This year has been a milestone year for WestWirralWorks which has seen the completion of the basic construction of the building, and the establishment of the facility as a functional City Learning Centre.
8.1 The opening of WestWirralWorks was held over a two day period on the 21st and 22nd of May 2003. The first day saw the Regional final of the K'nex Challenge held at the centre. This event was attended by eighteen teams of year 5 and 6 pupils drawn from local primary schools, who were given the task of the construction of a bridge spanning a gap of 500mm using the K'nex model construction kits.

The official opening of the centre took place on the 22nd May in the presence of invited guests and Councillor Bill Nock, Mayor of Wirral.

8.2 In the short time since opening westwirralworks has made significant progress towards the establishment of a centre of excellence for Design Technology education in Wirral, including the installation of a host of Computer Aided Design software for use across all the key stages and the procurement and use of a range of control based equipment, primarily intended for use at Key Stage 3 and 4.

8.3 Additionally, the centre has the distinction of being awarded reference site status by Hewlett Packard, the world’s largest manufacturer of desktop IT equipment, the only CLC in the country to achieve this distinction. This will help to ensure the continued provision of cutting edge ICT equipment at the centre.

8.4 Community use has been encouraged over the summer break with a one week long family robot building week.

SPECIALIST COLLEGES –


Please see main report for full details of work undertaken by all specialist colleges.

BEACON SCHOOLS:-

Please see main report.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP INCENTIVE GRANT (LIG)

10.0 After considerable debate, it was decided to cluster schools in the 4 distinct geographical districts on Wirral: Birkenhead, Wallasey, Bebington and Deeside. This will enable the post-16 action plan which followed the Area-Wide Inspection to be implemented more easily. It will also take account of the complex admissions arrangements, and at the time of writing the plan, there were one or two schools in each area which were operating below 30% of pupils achieving at least 5 good GCSE grades – or had been in that position in the last 2 years.

10.1 Headteachers in Wirral’s Partnership took the process of self and peer review seriously, using the self-assessment tools provided, and reported that they had found it an extremely valuable experience for the leadership team. LIG consultants were employed as prescribed, to facilitate the peer review process. They came from both within Wirral, and from external sources. One of their key tasks was to write a collaborative plan, based on an assessment of the strengths and areas of need identified within each school in the cluster. The draft plans were considered carefully before being submitted to the DfES for approval. A Wirral-wide LIG action plan was drawn up by the EiC manager to address common issues arising from the 4 plans.
10.2 Plans were also made for future work with our statistical neighbour, Sefton LEA, to look at opportunities for joint training for senior and middle managers, for sharing of expertise, and the development of peer review between headteachers.

10.3 Wirral's LIG plans were assessed as ‘good’. Since then (May 2003), the collaboratives have met regularly, are supporting each other, and taking appropriate steps to implement their plans. For example, joint INSET days have been planned; a jointly funded attendance officer has been appointed; management training across one collaborative has been planned jointly with the NCSL, with others to follow; research into local data; sharing of expertise in subject areas to support known weaknesses; and job descriptions and training for support staff have been shared.

10.4 A great deal of work will be done via the LIG collaboratives to deliver the Post 16 Action Plan, following the recent area-wide inspection.

EDUCATION ACTION ZONES

Aim of the Strand

11.0 The aim of this strand is to lay sound foundations between secondary schools and their partner primary schools, by focusing resources on a small number of clear and agreed priorities. Close analysis of strengths and weaknesses within the zone schools leads to agreement about key difficulties, which are often around standards in literacy and numeracy, attendance and attitudes towards education and achievement. The areas zones serve are often characterized by serious problems arising from long-term unemployment, low aspirations and a high degree of family stress. The zone’s main purpose is to change the culture of the area, and their targets must be viewed with this long-term perspective. A key feature is the requirement to make genuine partnerships, for joint working and not mere financial or in-kind sponsorship, with a range of partners from the community and local business.

11.1 There are two EAZs in Wirral. Both zone directors now line managed on a day-to-day basis by the EiC Manager, but work to their management boards. The DfES monitors their progress in the first year only. The EiC Partnership has the responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and deciding the future direction of both EAZs from that point.

Partnership evaluation review Summer 2003

11.2 In July 2003, the EiC Partnership asked each zone for a review of 3 areas: whole zone training; transition issues; and case studies of good practice which could be disseminated across the wider Partnership. These reviews reflect a range of focussed and challenging training, improved opportunities for cross-phase working; and the development of some innovative work, particularly in the area of support for pupils with poor attendance, and a range of other difficulties which are getting in the way of learning.

Evaluation of Impact on attainment

11.3 The Partnership is required to make decisions about the future use of EiC Action Zone funding as each of the zones comes towards the end of their three year funding, in line with the revised DfES guidance of Spring 2003. Three headteachers from the Partnership (2 primary and one secondary) will join the Senior Inspector Primary, the two zone directors and the EiC manager, in order to establish best practice within the zones, and see what can be disseminated more widely. The group will be informed by the external evaluation of the zones and the current examination and attendance data.
Each zone has undertaken an analysis of the 2003 examination results and attendance figures for their zone schools, in order to come to an assessment of their impact on achievement.

Please see main report for full details of progress in the three main strands of each EiC Action Zone: ASPIRE EAZ and STAR EAZ.

BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE

LEARNING MENTORS

Aim of the strand
12.0 The aim of this strand is to remove the barriers to learning which prevent many young people from fulfilling their potential at school and within society. Mentors work within the school, on a one to one basis with an identified cohort, or in a small group situation. Sometimes Mentors work with families or carers, teachers, or appropriate outside agencies in order to remove barriers and raise expectations, aspirations, attendance and attainment of pupils.

Progress
This strand is very successful and well embedded in Wirral Secondary Schools, including 4 special schools.

Monitoring and Evaluation

• The DfES have developed an audit tool for use in schools which should be completed as a collaborative process by senior management, Learning Mentors and their line managers to engender debate, establish priorities and make plans for future development.

• Learning Mentors from each school are required to submit two anonymous case studies from different year groups and types of problem on an annual basis. They make powerful reading.

• Training has remained the top priority for the Senior Learning Mentor during this year. A central training database enables the Senior Learning Mentor to manage completed training and the future training needs for individual Learning Mentors, whichever cohort they are in. (The fourth cohort came in post in December 02).

• There continues to be a full local training programme that runs alongside the five-day national training.

LEARNING SUPPORT UNITS

Aim of the strand
13.0 The function of a Learning Support Unit (LSU) is to create space within a school to provide short term, positive help for students whose disruptive behaviour is creating problems in mainstream classes, both for themselves and their peers. Placing such pupils in an LSU enables their peers to concentrate on their own work, thus raising attainment. Work within the LSU aims to engage the pupil, to work with families, carers and other outside agencies to address any issues which may be causing barriers to learning. The aim is to keep disaffected young people in school, to increase their self-esteem, to develop skills which enable them to manage their emotions, to raise their educational attainment, to improve attendance and to reduce exclusions. LSUs should be seen as short-term intervention with the end result being reintegration back into the classroom or into an alternative appropriate educational placement. Learning mentors and Learning Support Assistants are often used to support reintegration.
Progress

13.1 There has been good progress on all the priorities identified in last year’s report. 15 Wirral Schools have Learning Support Units, with named teachers in charge who are responsible for the day to day management of the unit. It is appropriate that the practice varies widely from school to school as the development of LSUs and the choice of model depends on the ethos, management and strategic planning of each school.

Training

13.2 Training needs have been identified from evaluations completed by staff of LSUs and support has been offered through regular, half termly network meetings. Training sessions have included:

- Local Support Services
- DfES Audit analysis
- Nurture Groups
- Examples of good practice in LSU management
- Solutions Focused Brief therapy
- Counselling and Substance Misuse support.

Moyra Healey from the DfES came to Wirral to give a half day conference on good practice and the national perspective on LSUs.

Greater Merseyside Network

13.4 A Greater Merseyside regional network group has been meeting termly (coordinated by Wirral colleagues) to discuss ways of disseminating good practice across the region. This has been important in the light of the introduction of the Behaviour Improvement Programme and the introduction of the KS3 Behaviour and Attendance Strategy. This has resulted in the planning of a successful Conference held in the Wirral on 20th October 2003.

Monitoring and Evaluation.

13.5 All Schools completed the DfES Audit tool during 2003. The results were collated by the Inclusion/Reintegration Officer. All the self evaluations showed a commitment to the work achieved within the LSUs; they are seen as making a positive contribution to behaviour management across the school.

BEHAVIOUR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

14.0 The Behaviour Improvement Programme is a national strategy for improving behaviour and attendance in schools.

The initial plans had to be written within extremely tight deadlines, and were approved in June 03.

14.1 Advice from the DfES is that spreading the funding across too many schools, or limiting the length of interventions, is unlikely to be effective with behaviour and attendance issues. Maintaining intensive effort over a number of years will be important to embedding change.

14.2 One school (Wallasey School) was nominated as the ‘full service extended school’ and receives additional funding in order to provide a range of prescribed services, including health, social services and childcare.

14.3 The Excellence in Wirral Partnership agreed to target the additional funding available for BIP activity on 4 secondary and a group of 18 primary schools, and to sustain support for those schools over the three year period.

14.4 The most contentious and problematic area of the BIP is the requirement to provide access to quality education from day 1 of any exclusion. This has enormous logistical difficulties at both primary and secondary levels. At secondary level, it requires orchestrating a range or provision for various types of exclusion, and category of pupil, which will both meet the BIP
requirements, be manageable and flexible, and lead to the best outcomes, eg the increased use of quality vocational opportunities across the area.

14.5 Revised guidance has built on the emerging good practice from the phase 1 BIP areas, and options to be adopted in Wirral include:
- multi-agency Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs)
- Safer Schools Partnerships (Police in Schools)
- Lead Behaviour Professionals, leading change within both primary and secondary schools
- New measures for tackling truancy and increasing attendance.

14.6 The most innovative work has been done in the phase 1 LEAs through the multi-agency teams, the BESTs, who work together to provide the kind of immediate and in-depth support for the most vulnerable children and their families which schools cannot provide. They also act to both challenge and support schools in finding new ways to develop positive behaviour and attendance, and to promote emotional well-being. Funding is available in Wirral for two multi-agency teams, each working with 2 secondary schools and 9 primaries. We also plan to support individual pupils in Gilbrook, Kilgarth and the Link Centre.

14.7 Each BEST team will hope to include:
- Clinical or Educational Psychologist
- School Nurse
- Community Development – Youth Worker
- ESW Social Worker
- additional social worker if possible to recruit
- Police officer (whose ‘beat’ will be all the BIP schools connected to that BEST)
- Secretarial support
- Restorative Justice (via the services of the Youth Offending Service as required)

Bases for the BEST teams

14.8 Working closely with the SI Resources, we have identified two suitable primary schools (Christchurch CE Primary School, Birkenhead and The Dell) where there is enough space to accommodate a team of 5-6 people, secretarial support, a small meeting room for work with parents, and a room for either primary or secondary excluded pupils who need to have access to counselling/guidance/support from the BEST team members.

Financial and Staffing Implications

15.0 Excellence in Wirral is funded entirely by Standards Fund Grant, with the exception of the costs of co-ordination. The salary of the Manager, the seconded General Inspector (Secondary Education), is funded by the Council; as is office accommodation for the EiC team. The staff salaries for the Strand Coordinators, the Senior Learning Mentor and administration and office costs, are met from EiC funds held centrally.

15.1 The grant is paid directly into schools’ budgets, under Cost Centres attached to each Strand. (See Appendix 35 for those strands affecting the majority of Wirral schools.)

15.2 The funding is guaranteed until March 2006. The Strand Coordinators and Senior Learning Mentor are on fixed term contracts until that time. Learning Mentors in schools are on similar fixed term contracts.

Equal Opportunities Implications

16.0 Wirral is an Excellence in Cities area because of its level of poverty and disadvantage. One of the fundamental purposes of Excellence in Cities is to address the educational underachievement of those who come from socio-economically disadvantaged areas, through the targeted use of resources.
Human Rights Implications

17.0 None have been specifically identified from this report.

Wirral Agenda 21 Implications

18.0 The Excellence in Cities initiative aims to raise standards and aspirations; include all young people in the education process; and ensure those who have the ability aspire to further and higher education. It also aims to increase staying on rates in education and training. It is an initiative which in the long term aims to change attitudes towards education in inner city areas and thus improve the quality of life for Wirral’s young people as they grow into adults.

Community Safe Implications

19.0 Through the work of Learning Mentors and Learning Support Units the initiative intends to reduce exclusions from school and improve the behaviour of disruptive pupils, teaching them how to manage their own behaviour more appropriately. It will, therefore, have an indirect impact on community safety, in the long term.

Planning Implications

Specialist Colleges

20.0 Changes to buildings may occur in the need for more specialist accommodation, eg. provision of Drama areas or sports halls.

City Learning Centres

20.1 These are new buildings which are being built on land at present owned by the Council.

Local Member Support Implications

21.0 None.

Background Papers

22.1 Annual Report of Excellence in Cities (2001-02), including appendices 1-35, posted on the Virtual Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:
That the Report be noted

Howard Cooper
Director of Education and Cultural Services