

**REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL - BEST VALUE SUB COMMITTEE
11th SEPTEMBER 2000**

REPORT ON: BEST VALUE REVIEW OF KINGSPARK SCHOOL

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO.: 599-2000

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report is the result of a Best Value Review into Kingspark School provided by the Education Department as part of the Council's Best Value review process.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Sub-Committee :

I) agrees the outcome of the review as contained in this report, that Kingspark currently provides Best Value educational provision for pupils with severe, complex and profound special educational needs

II) notes the key areas identified for continuous improvement as:

- review the balance between teaching and support staff through an audit of pupil needs with a view to improving the overall adult:pupil ratio
- continue to provide opportunities for pro-active policy development, extending team building between teaching and support staff and extending systematic monitoring and observation visits to classes by all members of SMT
- improve the involvement of parents in the creation and development of Individualised Education Programmes and in the Target Setting Process and seek to encourage parents to take a more active part in the life of the school
- extend proactive relationships with other educational establishments to facilitate outreach arrangements, sharing resources and skills swap.
- introduce choice into the curriculum for senior pupils
- extend the involvement of Health Board staff in meeting pupil needs

(detailed actions are contained within Paragraph 14 of this report)

iii) remits the Director of Education to communicate and disseminate the findings of this review to all relevant stakeholders

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 This review accounts for 3.5% (£2,538,000) of the Department's Revenue Budget and is 15.7% of the total expenditure (£16,170,000) reviewed in this department in 1999/2000

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4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Continuous improvement within Kingspark School will improve access to the skills, knowledge and information needed to enable everyone to play a full part in society

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Continuous improvement within Kingspark School will increase equality of access to educational opportunity for pupils.

6.0 DEFINITION OF SERVICE REVIEWED

6.1 Kingspark School is a special school making provision for approximately 180 pupils with significant, severe, complex and/or profound special educational needs. Pupils are aged between 5 and 18 years.

7.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR REVIEWING THIS SERVICE

7.1 There are a number of developments currently ongoing within the area of special educational needs which are impacting upon the role and remit of special schools. These are:

- Increasing levels of integration within mainstream schools for pupils with significant special educational needs
- Development of resourced locations within mainstream schools in Dundee for pupils with significant special educational needs
- Curriculum developments in primary and secondary education
- Target setting for pupils with special educational needs
- Increasing levels of inter-agency and inter-school working within the area of special educational needs
- the Senior management structure within Kingspark School was revised in 1998. The new management staff are now in place and are developing revised management processes.

7.2 It is now appropriate to review the whole operation of Kingspark School to ensure that it continues to improve the quality and range of services provided to children and parents.

8.0 REVIEW METHODOLOGY

8.1 The review team comprised a Review Team Leader (Corporate Planning Manager), Lead Officer (Education Service Manager), Education Officer, Principal Educational Psychologist, Headteacher, Adviser Support for Learning, Support for Learning Officer

8.2 The review undertook a series of consultation exercises with parents, teachers, support staff and other agency professionals to ascertain current levels of performance and determine key success criteria. Details of the consultation outcomes are contained in paragraph 10.3

8.3 The independent sector market for provision for pupils with special educational needs was tested. Following consultation with Social Work Department a report on this was prepared and a copy is available within the audit file.

8.4/

8.4 Because of the nature of the service involved benchmarking was chosen as the main means of comparison and the exercise was undertaken involving four other Education Authorities in Scotland. Following the Benchmarking exercise a number of options were appraised. This led to

the recommendations for continuous improvement as detailed at paragraph 14.

9.0 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- 9.1 The main stakeholders of the service are children, parents and the Council.
- 9.2 The Review Group established the main Critical Success Factors through consultation with school and other agency staff, advisory and support staff, parents and children.
- 9.3 The Key Critical Success Factors are:

- 1. **Staffing levels**
- 2. **Communication with parents**
- 3. **Partnership with parents**
- 4. **Links with schools, agencies, employers and the community**
- 5. **Effectiveness of leadership**
- 6. **Structure of the curriculum**
- 7. **Meeting individual pupil needs**

10.0 PERFORMANCE REVIEW

- 10.1 Staffing was evaluated against the maximum class sizes set within the SJNC conditions of service for teaching staff.
- 10.2 Performance in the remaining critical success factors was matched against the descriptive statements used in the Scottish Office self evaluation document "How Good Is Our School". Here performance is described as meeting one of four measures on a scale 4 - 1 as follows:

4 = very good

3 = good

2 = fair

1 = poor

This grading is subject to external validation via the HMI national School Inspection process.

- 10.3 The school was assessed on the above indicators using information and evidence provided by the Kingspark SMT and staff members and adviser. The performance measures overleaf were established.

Critical Success Factor	Staffing
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Maximum Class Sizes and Pupil: Adult Ratio	The maximum class size in Special schools, as laid down in the Scheme of Salaries & Conditions of Service, ranges from 10 where pupils have moderate or profound learning difficulties, to 6 where there are communication, or social and emotional, difficulties. The range in Kingspark, where pupils are grouped in primary, secondary, profound, post-16 and enhanced support classes, is from 9 to 5. The national recommended pupil:adult ratio is 2.5:1. The corresponding figure in Kingspark is 2.24:1.	
Critical Success Factor	HGIOS descriptor for 4 (very good)	Kingspark score
Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school uses a wide range of methods for communicating with parents. The school policy on reporting to parents reflects national and local advice. Opportunities for parents to communicate with the school, for example, to consult with teachers, are readily available. Formal occasions are well organised and all arrangements are communicated clearly. There are regular written reports to parents and these are in a clear and helpful format. Written reports to parents give a clear evaluation of how each pupil is progressing across all aspects of the curriculum and indicate the next stages in each pupil's learning. Parents are encouraged to respond to these reports. Clear information about a wide range of the work of the school, such as the curriculum, assessment, organisation and development is readily available to parents. Parents readily engage with the school concerning its work within a framework of good quality, two-way communication. 	3 / 4
Partnership with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are involved in supporting their child's learning, for example, in homework. They support the life of the school in a planned and purposeful way. Steps are taken to involve them in, for example, classroom activities, homework, participation in out-of-school visits and other extra-curricular activities. Positive steps are taken to ascertain parental views of aspects of the school's work and appropriate action is taken in response to these and to enquiries from parents. The headteacher has well developed links with the School Board. The school actively encourages Board members to be knowledgeable about and involved in the life of the school. The partnership generates substantial benefits and is valued by all concerned. 	3

Links with schools, agencies, employers and the wider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has well developed and effective links with other schools, units, further education colleges and other educational establishments as appropriate. They include effective transfer of assessment information as well as curricular and pastoral aspects. 	3
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community	<p>The exchange of information about pupils' learning needs is very good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school contributes to the life of the community and works with it by, for example, participating in events, undertaking local ventures and contributing to the local media. There are well established and productive links with employers. The school mounts a range of events which the community can attend. Where appropriate, it enables members of the community to engage in educational experiences. • The school maintains effective links with statutory organisations, including educational psychologists, medical services, social work and other such agencies. The advice and help of other professionals are highly valued. 	
Effectiveness of leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He or she demonstrates a high level of professional competence and commitment based on wide-ranging up-to-date knowledge and skills, including the ability to initiate, direct, communicate, manage staff and their development and delegate effectively. Where applicable, his or her teaching is a model of good practice. • He or she has a wide range of relevant personal qualities, including the ability to create confidence and inspire others; he or she is a positive influence on his or her area of responsibility. He or she has the ability to evaluate objectively the qualities of staff and their contributions to teamwork. He or she demonstrates breadth of vision and can take difficult decisions effectively when necessary. • He or she has very good relationships with pupils, parents and staff. There is a planned development of teamwork, staff are involved in policy development and his or her dissemination of information is clear and prompt. 	2 / 3
Structure of the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum has breadth and balance across its various elements. It is fully in keeping with the school's aims and with national and local guidance. • There is full integration of knowledge, skills, understanding, and personal and social qualities and key aspects permeate the curriculum. • Timetables are designed successfully to enable the curriculum to be offered efficiently, giving appropriate times and emphasis to each curriculum area, subject or mode. There are appropriate opportunities for pupil choice. 	3

Meeting individual pupil needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets, tasks and activities are very well matched to the needs and aptitudes of individual pupils, a very good choice of resources is made, and learning and teaching approaches are such that pupils are likely to be helped to achieve the targets set. • The pace of learning enables pupils to achieve appropriate targets. • Purposes of activities and contexts for teaching are 	3 / 4
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	<p>relevant and meaningful to pupils' experiences, interests and future development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning support staff contribute effectively towards meeting pupils' needs. 	
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10.4 The results of the consultation exercise are summarised below:

Key :

SA = strongly agree, A= Agree, DK= don't know, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree

Scores are expressed as percentages of total respondents

Question	SA	A	DK	D	SD
staffing levels are appropriate	21	31	12	20	16
Good communication exists	16	52	6	14	12
Varied and flexible curriculum offered and effectively delivered	31	46	11	9	3
Effective in meeting individual needs	26	36	8	23	7
Staff have a caring and supportive attitude	53	43	0	3	1
Staff training meets the needs of the pupils	16	27	46	3	8
Pupils enjoy attending Kingspark	36	43	16	5	0
Staff respond appropriately to changing needs	22	42	18	15	3
wide contact and co-operation with a range of support agencies	17	49	28	5	1
School provides a safe and secure environment	26	49	8	14	3

10.5 Survey Results

The findings of the survey show strongly positive results in relation to the care the pupils receive and their enjoyment in attending Kingspark. General satisfaction is clear in opinion expressed about communication and the learning and teaching experience that the pupils receive. It is of interest however that the largest area of dissatisfaction is in relation to staffing levels. This is perhaps an unrealistic expectation on the part of parents and others, given that the Council is already providing staff within recognised maximum class sizes for Special schools.

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11.0 RESULTS OF COMPARISONS

11.1 Schools used as benchmarking partners were identified as appropriate by their local authorities. One school was identified by the Scottish Office HMI Audit Unit as a direct partner to Kingspark with regard to the range of needs catered for in the school though in practice the populations of the schools were found to contain significant differences.

11.2 No benchmarking partner had as large a population as Kingspark, nor did any cater for as wide a range of pupil needs as Kingspark. There was therefore no exact comparison of "like with like". However, together the schools represented the full range of pupil need within Kingspark.

Success Criteria	Kingspark	A	B	C	D
Staffing (Pupil / Teacher) Pupil / Adult	1:3.8 1:2.2	1:7 1:2.8	1:5.3 1:1.5	1:3.7 1:1.3	1:4.3 1:2.5
Communication With Parents	3 / 4	2/3	3 / 4	3	3
Links With Schools Etc.	3	2 / 3	3 / 4	2	2 / 3
Effectiveness Of Leadership	2 / 3	2	3	2 / 3	3
Structure Of The Curriculum	3	1	3 / 4	3	3
Meeting Individual Needs	3 / 4	2	3	3 / 4	3
Partnership With Parents	3	2 / 3	3 / 4	3	3

12.0 CONCLUSIONS

12.1 The following key issues emerged from the benchmarking and consultation exercises:

Class sizes in Kingspark compare favourably with national maxima set. The pupil:adult ratio clearly meets national guidelines

Kingspark performs in line with the other schools benchmarked with and overall the single and comprehensive site appears to contribute to good levels of efficient and effective performance.

There is scope to improve performance to achieve level 4 to all HGIOS criteria over the next four years using a combination of practices learned from the benchmarking exercise.

13.0/

13.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

13.1 Following the performance review and the comparisons made improvements can be made in all areas.

13.2 The following options were considered:

- a) continue Kingspark as a central comprehensive facility with continuous improvement
- b) redefine and relocate service provided by Kingspark on number of mainstream sites
- c) outsource the service to private sector provider

13.3 The following criteria were used to evaluate each option:

- cost
- feasibility
- educational value

13.4

CRITERIA	OPTION		
	A	B	C
COST	✓	X ¹	Unknown ³
FEASIBILITY	✓	X ²	Unknown ³
EDUCATIONAL VALUE	✓	✓	unknown ³

(Notes:

¹ = The net additional cost of this option is estimated at approximately £3.5m (note contained within the audit file)

² = There are currently insufficient mainstream sites with sufficient space to accommodate a 50 place pupil unit for the range of needs currently met in Kingspark School. It would be more expensive and less educationally beneficial to have units of less than 50 pupil places

³ = There are a number of separate independent / private sector providers who make provision for specific pupil and age groups contained within Kingspark but there are currently none who make provision for the full range of pupil age and need within Kingspark School.

13.5 It is recommended that Option A - continue Kingspark with continuous improvement is adopted. Continuous improvement proposals are listed in paragraph 14 below.

14.0/

14.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

14.1 The following continuous improvement proposals have been recommended and are being included in the School Development Plan.

Proposal	Success Criteria	Lead Officer	Timescale
Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to improve adult:pupil ratio by reviewing the balance between teaching staff and support staff through an audit of pupil need. • Make use of DSM funding, as appropriate, to introduce enhanced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve overall adult:pupil ratio • Improved feedback on staffing levels and 	Headteacher	August 2000

curriculum support.	effectiveness from staff and parents		
<p>Effectiveness of leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to address proactive policy development eg. Autistic response - planning and provision. Establish regular meetings with support staff - Focus Group. In consultation with staff extend systematic monitoring and observation visits to classes by all members of SMT. Extend opportunities for team building between teaching staff and all other support staff, which are enhanced due to increased availability of support staff at the end of the school day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved scores on staff survey Improved performance on How Good Is Our School audit Good feedback from Headteacher Review 	Headteacher	August 2000
<p>Partnership with parents/Communication with parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve parents in creation of Individualised Education Programmes and in the Target Setting Process. Seek to facilitate a focus for meetings beyond concerns or annual reviews and actively encourage/invite parents to take lead in school related activities e.g. establishment of School Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved score in parental and staff surveys Increase in parental participation at school events / activities 	Headteacher/ Assistant Headteacher (EM)	April 2000 onwards

<p>Links with other schools, agencies, employers and the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop input to in-service sessions and Parents Evenings by Health Board staff. Extend proactive relationships with other educational establishments and council departments to facilitate skills swap, outreach arrangements and sharing resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved score in staff / other agency surveys Improved performance on How Good Is Our School audit 	Depute Headteacher	April 2000 onwards
<p>Structure of the curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce choice into the curriculum for senior pupils. Continue to identify and implement appropriate staff development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective SEN target setting, measuring and monitoring Improved pupil 	Headteacher Depute Headteacher	August 2000 onwards

appropriate staff development priorities and opportunities.	achievements		
<p>Meeting pupils' needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend involvement of Health Board staff in early planning on the individual education programme. • Review system with regard to involvement with Health Board staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved performance on How Good Is Our School audit • Effective SEN target setting, measuring and monitoring. • Improved pupil achievements 	Assistant Headteachers (EM / LM)	April 2000 onwards

15.0 CONSULTATION

15.1 All school staff members were consulted throughout the whole process. This report has also been the subject of consultation with the Director of Support Services, the Director of Finance, Headteacher and parents.

16.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 Best Value Submission to the Secretary of State for Scotland December 1997. Policy and Resources Committee - 11 December 1999.

Chief Executive Date