

# COUNTY TEACHERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2007

**Present:** Ian Froggett (Chair), Sam Kincaid, Christopher Watts, Christine McLean, Tony Souter, Nigel Hutchinson, Linda Le Long, Max Hyde, Maureen Boneham, Stella Saje, John Lockwood, Paddy Vickers, Nicki Kelsall, Teresa Whatson, Hazel Towle, Karen Howell, Peggy Doubleday, Stephen Levy.

**Also Present:** Marion Davis (items 1-3), Mark Gore, Craig Pratt (item 4), Ross Caws (clerk).

**Apologies:** John Dunkerton, Stephen Baldwin.

## Action

### 1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 Apologies are noted above.

### 2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising (*references to previous minutes in italics*)

2.1 IF informed the group that John Hopkins (vice-Chair) had resigned from the group for family reasons. The group requested that their thanks to John for his contributions were recorded in the minutes.

2.2 The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2006 were agreed as an accurate record.

2.3 **Action:** (2.7) John Betts is yet to discuss planning for an influenza pandemic with TS.

**MG**

2.4 TS commented that the experience of recent snowfalls and its effect on schools demonstrated current indecisiveness in Warwickshire about when to close. MD explained that due to varied geography of the county, it was right that headteachers together with chair of governors should take the decision on whether or not to temporarily close a school, in accordance with County guidelines. SK commented that it would be sensible for clusters of schools to make collective decisions on this matter.

2.5 (2.9) The group was informed that the Cabinet decided on 9 February to propose closure of Bishop Wulstan Catholic School in September 2007 following the DfES decision to turn down the proposal of a 'Fresh Start' for the school. The County Council are making contingency planning for alternative educational provision and talking to staff about redeployment and redundancy options. Trade unions and professional associations are being kept informed of developments.

2.6 (2.13) JL commented that he had been assured by Geoff King that appendices are still part of the behaviour strategy. These are available to view at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ctac](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ctac)

2.7 **Action:** (4.2) SK voiced concern on the practice of performance

**For ATP**

- management and teachers resulting pay. ATP will look into this matter.
- 2.8 It was reported that Elizabeth Furness was using the comments made by CTAC in the previous meeting in ongoing guidance and advice.
- 2.9 (4&5) TS commented that many headteachers were losing their dedicated headship time to cover PPA time.
- 2.10 SS added that the Raising Standards Policy Group (Primary Headteachers) had conducted a survey of headteachers' views on the effect of PPA time. It was argued that PPA time was good initiative but it needed to be backed with appropriate funding from the DfES. 98% of headteachers say it has not resulted in a better worklife balance for headteachers. It can also lead to children being taught by three different teachers a term on a regular basis.
- 2.11 **Action:** The full results of the survey will be circulated to the group.
- 2.12 **Action:** IF suggested that CTAC discussed this further at their next meeting. **RC**
- 2.13 **Action:** (7.3) The PPA subgroup has not yet convened. It will aim to do so before the next meeting of CTAC. **RC for agenda**
- 2.14 (8) MH has written to Cllr Richard Grant (Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Children, Young People and Families) recommending that Joan Hare makes her presentation to the committee. **JL**
- 2.15 (9) The group was informed that *Care Matters* is now to become a White Paper.
- 2.16 **Action:** (10.1) The ATP Steering Group has not yet convened. MH will arrange before the next meeting of CTAC. **MH**
- 2.17 **Action:** (13.1) MD encouraged the group to provide feedback on the TLC magazine sent to all schools. **All**

### 3. Strategic Review

- 3.1 MD reported that the Directorate for Children, Young People and Families was now approaching its first birthday. There have been many achievements at a strategic level across the Directorate and partner agencies, however the task is now to follow through these changes in services at the frontline – including schools. There is a need to focus on how services are linked up and delivered in localities. Once the consultation on clustering schools is complete, the Directorate will be able to build the foundations of localised delivery of services. The Enhanced Support Services Network pilot in Rugby has demonstrated the benefits of multi-agency work and is soon to be rolled out to Nuneaton and Bedworth.
- 3.2 This year's Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of the Directorate will focus on the effectiveness of the Warwickshire Children and Young

- People's Plan (CYPP). The CYPP is to be revised and relaunched in April 2007. The Directorate will undergo a wholesale inspection in June 2008 (Joint Area Review).
- 3.3 The Dedicated Schools Grant (the main budget for schools) has gone up by 5.1% for 2007/2008. The budget for the Directorate has gone up by 1.6% (after efficiency savings). Consequently, the Directorate are looking very hard at their services they provide and may have to make some difficult decisions in the near future.
- 3.4 **Action:** It was suggested that official papers on the budget settlement should be circulated to the group. **RC**
- 3.5 **Action:** MD commented that she hoped that schools understood that they were at the centre of children's services. She suggested inviting a member of the Enhanced Support Service Network team to the next meeting as an example of how agencies can work well together in partnership with schools to improve services for children. **RC for agenda**
- 3.6 **Action:** TS commented that falling rolls due to the birth rate will soon have a significant effect on school budgets. MD suggested that CTAC discuss at its next meeting issues of school organisation and the new role for the LA as commissioner for children. **RC for agenda**
- 3.7 MD added that she was happy to be emailed or contacted between meetings on matters of strategic direction.
- 4. School Term and Holiday Dates**
- 4.1 IF welcomed Craig Pratt from Pupil and Student Services. Craig presented the paper on school term and holiday dates. It was noted that the proposed dates were very similar to the dates proposed by the Local Government Association and other local authorities in the West Midlands region.
- 4.2 The group discussed the teacher day allocated on 29 August 2008 and the general use of teacher days in Warwickshire. It was confirmed that the guidance on teacher days allowed for three options on the use of this day – for teachers to work in school, to disaggregate this day over other days, or for teachers to work in another appropriate environment. It is for the headteacher and chair of governors to agree which option the school uses.
- 4.3 TS raised concern that chairs of governors are not always aware of the third option, which can include working from home.
- 4.4 **Action:** The guidance will be put on the CTAC webpage and Mark Gore will write to all headteachers *and* chairs of governors explaining the three options when the school term and holiday dates are circulated. **MG, RC**
- 4.5 TS also highlighted that the term includes 'teacher days' rather than 'teacher training days'. Members of the group stressed that these days should not be headteacher led, but are allocated time for teacher preparation. Concern was expressed that these days were increasingly being used for training because time and budget for training elsewhere in

the year was being squeezed.

4.6 MH commented that there are particular issues for part-time staff where teacher days fall on days that they are not scheduled to work.

4.7 **Action:** The group agreed the proposed school term and holiday dates for 2008/2009. These will be circulated in due course.

**CP**

## **5. Update on Schools Reserves**

5.1 MG presented the paper on school reserves that was put before Cabinet.

5.2 Schools are delegated budgets to be spent in the financial year in which the money is provided to ensure that it benefits the schools current students. If a school keeps more than 5% of that budget in reserve it is considered bad practice unless there are legitimate reasons for doing so. The County Council is aware of some special circumstances.

5.3 Currently, there is approximately £10m in school reserves in Warwickshire. The situation is worse in other counties, however this does not make it more acceptable. It is difficult to request more money from the government when there are significant resources in reserve currently within the county.

5.4 The Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is looking further into this matter.

5.5 TS commented that it was unacceptable, that some headteachers and teachers are concerned to prevent redundancies when other schools hold large reserves.

## **6. Team Teach / Behaviour Management**

6.1 JL presented this item.

### *Team Teach*

6.2 He explained that Team Teach aims to de-escalate situations and avoid physical constraint of children, and, if physical restraint of children is required, to avoid pain, harm to joints, and restriction of breathing. It provides a range of responses and strategies for teachers of all sizes to potentially violent situations. Team Teach is constantly re-evaluated to keep both staff and children safe.

6.3 Within the law there is duty of care and neglect of duty of care by omission. Teachers should not leave the scene of an incident if harm could be caused to children. However, the law does not say that you should put yourself at risk. All Warwickshire teachers should know the law.

6.4 Currently the training has been carried out in all special schools, some primary schools, and one secondary school (Coleshill School). Training is delivered for 6 hours (normally) or 12 hours (special schools).

6.5 JL encouraged members of the group to communicate to their colleagues

that Team Teach training is an entitlement. Teachers should raise this with their headteacher. Without the training, serious harm/injury could be caused to children, young people and staff. The County Council have responded positively to this and made money available.

#### *Behaviour Management*

- 6.6 The County Council have published a behaviour strategy (previously circulated). Within the strategy there is an assertive discipline strand. The County Council have agreed that each school should have an agreed strategy for assertive discipline – agreed with staff. There needs to be an early addressing of low-level continuous misbehaviour and a critical incident policy with a definition of an immediate response.
- 6.7 The trade unions are intending to produce a pamphlet suggesting to schools a checklist on behaviour management.
- 6.8 IF commented that there was a need to show headteachers with good practice in behaviour management as fine examples, in order to send consistent message to students in Warwickshire.
- 6.9 SK expressed concern that classroom management and behaviour management are often confused.
- 6.10 NK asked what could be done if school management refused to undertake the training in spite of teachers' requests. JL advised her to contact her union representative.
- 6.11 TS commented that he had been on the training and it improves staff confidence and morale. There is a need to spread knowledge of the law and destroy urban myths in this area.
- 6.12 Anyone who requires further information should contact [johnlockwood@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:johnlockwood@warwickshire.gov.uk)

### **7. Report from Area Committees**

- 7.1 Minutes from Area Committees were circulated. It was reported that the Northern and Eastern Area Committees were both cancelled due to the snowfall. The Central Area Committee was cancelled as it was inquorate.
- 7.2 One of the items discussed at the Southern Area Committee was the 11+ selection system. MG reported that there have been allegations of private tutors coaching for 11+ in the Southern area using previous test papers. The County Council are investigating these allegations and will introduce new centrally administered tests next year.
- 7.3 The group was informed that Lindsey Wright (Southern Area Education Officer) was leaving. Members of the group commented that Lindsey will be missed and asked that their appreciation for her work was passed on.
- 7.4 **Action:** MH suggested that changes in 14-19 curriculum may be an agenda item for the next meeting of CTAC.

**RC for  
agenda**

### **8. Consultative Arrangements**

- 8.1 Papers on consultative arrangements with teachers and suggestions on how CTAC should work in the future were circulated to the group.
- 8.2 IF and LLL both advocated using involvement in representative groups of teachers as part of a teacher's professional development.
- 8.3 TW commented that it should be publicised that representatives on Area Committees and CTAC do not necessarily have to come from union background.
- 8.4 Members of the group commented that many teachers were unclear of the role of CTAC.
- 8.5 MH reminded the group that one of the functions of CTAC was to raise issues concerning teachers that needed to be raised with elected members.
- 8.6 The group agreed to have a co-ordinated campaign to raise the profile of CTAC. It was suggested that this campaign would include posters and leaflets showing the structure of county groups and area committees with their core purpose; updated webpages; letters to headteachers and chairs of governors; and an article in TLC.
- 8.7 Suggested improvement to area committees included the attendance of Area School and Communities Officers, clerical support and the invitation of elected members.
- 8.8 It was also suggested that CTAC should change its name.
- 8.9 A financial basis for the consultative arrangements would need to be agreed.
- 8.10 **Action:** IF and RC to look further into this. **IF, RC**

## **9. National Reports and Legislation**

- 9.1 MG presented these reports. He added that the reports are useful and important and teachers should be aware of them.
- 9.2 *Education and Inspections Act 2006.* This legislation gives the LA a new role as a commissioner rather than provider of schools. As the advocate for children, young people and their families the LA should challenge schools where they feel it is appropriate. MG added that the LA will continue to seek to work in partnership with schools, however as schools were gaining autonomy the relationship between the LA and schools would change.
- 9.3 *Making Good Progress.* This document has been produced by the DfES on progress in standards and the next stage on the standards agenda.
- 9.4 *More than the Sum.* This report looks at how other council services can contribute to raising standards in schools, eg. housing provision. All public services and the community need to work to support schools.

## **10. SEN sub-group**

10.1 The group was informed that the sub-group has not met since the last meeting.

## **11. Information Sharing**

11.1 TS shared with the group the risk assessment written for Keith Thompson's leaving party. He added that under Keith's guidance Warwickshire schools have moved from reactive to proactive health and safety arrangements. This has also had a positive impact in relationships between union representatives and headteachers.

11.2 MH informed the group that all trade unions and professional associations had discussed stress and mental health issues at their conferences. Nottingham City Council has produced a useful 'Crazy at work' document.

11.3 MH recommended the publication 'Education Review' to the group.

## **12. Any other business**

12.1 MH and NK nominated Hazel Towle for the position of vice-Chair. Hazel was elected unanimously.

12.2 **Action:** School Improvement Partners and provision for asylum seekers and bilingual students were both raised as possible future agenda items.

**RC for agenda**

12.3 MG reported that no courses would be held at Manor Hall from September 2007. The County Council plan to go ahead with the rebuild of North Leamington School as soon as possible. The Council are investigating alternative arrangements for courses. Many of the staff currently based at Manor Hall will be relocated to the third building at Saltisford Office Park, Warwick.

## **13. Future Meeting Dates**

- 13.1
- Friday 15 June 2007, Woodland Grange, Leamington Spa
  - Friday 16 November 2007, Coventry TechnoCentre
  - Friday 7 March 2008, Coventry TechnoCentre