



LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURAL SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

REPORT ON THE PANEL'S SCRUTINY OF TAMESIDE'S POLICIES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS

23rd April 2002

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1. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL

Councillor Ricci (Chair), Councillor Baines (Deputy Chair), Councillors Dennis, Highton, Hilditch, Meredith, Middleton, Warrington, Walsh, Wild and P Wright.

Co-opted Members:

Mrs S Marsh (Church of England)

Father M Walsh (Roman Catholic Church)

Valuable Assistance was also provided by the Advisory Group:

Mrs D Bates, Mrs D Buckle, Mr P Flindall, Mrs G McNally and Mrs A Wilson.

2. INTRODUCTION

On the 8th April 2002, the Education and Cultural Services Scrutiny Panel, approved their draft Scrutiny Report on Tameside's Education Examination Results in 2001, and on the 23 April 2002 the final report was presented to the Council meeting.

Within the report, concerns had been expressed about the problems associated with the recruitment and retention of quality teaching staff in the Borough, and the Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services Scrutiny Panel therefore agreed to look at the Council's policies regarding this matter.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following Terms of Reference were approved by the Panel at its meeting held on 11th June 2002 (Minute 5 refers):-

“To Review the Council's Policies on the Recruitment and Retention of Teachers.”

4. METHOD OF REVIEW

4.1 The Panel interviewed Mr Ian Smith the Chief Education Officer.

4.2 The Panel interviewed Councillor Joe Kitchen the Cabinet Deputy for Lifelong Learning Services.

4.3 The Panel invited comments on this subject from all head teachers of Tameside primary and high schools and had previously received written information from the Teachers' Consultative Committee and individual teachers' associations.

5. OBSERVATIONS RELATING TO THE INTERVIEW WITH THE CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

Mr. Smith, Chief Education Officer, informed the Panel that:

- 5.1 Nationally, Tameside is rated as “average” regarding problems associated with the recruitment and retention of teachers. This information is based on the number of schools in the borough and the size of the teaching force.
- 5.2 Those schools suffering most due to teacher shortages receive extra funding from the government, which is to be used on strategies to improve these facilities.
- 5.3 In Tameside, there were previously two schools, which had very serious problems associated with teaching facilities and required considerable additional support from the LEA. As soon as this was recognised, additional resources were devoted to the school, the problematic issues were dealt with and major improvements occurred.
- 5.4 Unfortunately, poor performing schools obtain bad reputations, which result in a low pupil intake. Consequently, this affects funding. The Council therefore looks to improve the schools reputation by offering a high level of support.
- 5.5 Within the secondary schools in the Borough, the LEA offers support to improve the quality of teaching staff by the employment of Advanced Skills Teachers and Advisory Teachers and Consultants who support the existing teachers.
- 5.6 As part of their high level of support the LEA embarks upon a strong marketing and publicity campaign, which highlights the good points of a school, and makes it more attractive to new staff.
- 5.7 Within the Primary Sector, the LEA offers support to struggling schools by requesting other schools in the borough to “loan” their good teachers. This enables them to have good practice skills and experience either through internal secondments or model lessons. Donor schools ensure that appropriate cover is arranged.
- 5.8 Other methods of support offered by the LEA include teacher training for new strategies to manage difficult pupils. The Behaviour Support Unit assist in this.
- 5.9 Tameside has an excellent Schools Welfare Service, which is extremely successful in reducing levels of truancy.

- 5.10 Considerable data analysis has been undertaken by the LEA regarding the teaching population in Tameside schools. This information is used to indicate the future strategies required to retain the teaching staff.
- 5.11 The turnover data for 2000 and 2001 confirms that there are a higher percentage of males leaving the Authority compared to their female counterparts. This reflects the diminishing male workforce in the teaching profession, which is currently 27% compared to the female workforce of 73%.
- 5.12 The age profile of the teaching workforce is heavily weighted between the ages of 44-55. The next peak is the 25-30 year olds and these teachers account for 15% of the teaching workforce in Tameside.
- 5.13 The majority of teaching staff have less than 5 years service, this service accounts for 40% of the teaching workforce.
- 5.14 During 2000/2001 the most common reasons for teachers leaving the service were voluntary resignation, and expiry of fixed term contracts. Common patterns also occurred in terms of age, the highest proportion in 2000 being in the 25-29 age range, followed by the 50-54 age range. In 2001 this pattern reversed.
- 5.15 Vacancy data is now collected in view of the recent OFSTED recommendations. Recruitment and Analysis Forms are to be piloted in order to collect data relating to applicants, eg. ethnic background, age, etc.
- 5.16 Exit questionnaires have been introduced from December 2001 and are forwarded to all teachers leaving Tameside schools at each resignation date. Analysis is subsequently undertaken following receipt of the completed questionnaires. Analysis of reasons for leaving varied considerably, but apart from personal reasons, travelling and distance were the most quoted causes for resignation.
- 5.17 Process Improvement is now in place for September 2002 which includes formulating an Information Pack, for distribution to Higher Education Institutions and prospective teachers. On appointment the HR Advisor responsible for Recruitment Strategy developed a short term action plan. This action plan focused on ensuring that relevant data was collated and analysed to enable future strategies to be developed. In addition, some immediate improvements have been introduced to ensure that information is readily available on Teaching in Tameside. It is recognised that we appear to attract Newly Qualified Teachers, but lose them to promotion posts outside of the Borough. Greater emphasis on training and

promotion opportunities within Tameside Schools needs to be developed and publicised.

- 5.18 Administration has been improved and a Supply Teacher Information Pack has been distributed to prospective supply teachers.
- 5.19 Strategic Directorate have twice this year discussed issues relating to teacher recruitment and receive regular updates on progress. Recruitment and retention of teachers is a Strategic Directorate priority. Discussions are taking place to identify resources to fund a post for recruitment strategy.
- 5.20 The LEA is regularly informed by a Teacher Training Agency of retired teachers who have vested an interest in working with Tameside LEA. A process is in place to inform teachers of vacancies and supply work.
- 5.21 An audit has been undertaken of the teacher application packs, surveying a sample of applicants across the range, and has concluded that the majority of applicants receive their details the day after their enquiry, however in some cases the applicants receive limited information.
- 5.22 Although the LEA is not involved in the Graduate Teacher Programme, it has asked the Teacher Training Agency to deliver a briefing session to schools that require additional information.
- 5.23 Tameside MBC has formulated Teacher Recruitment pages on the website. Current information relates to childcare, the graduate teacher programme, teaching vacancies and life in Tameside. Further links will be developed which will include housing, newly qualified teachers, overseas-trained teachers etc.
- 5.24 A recruitment portfolio has been designed for schools relating to "Advertising and Promoting your schools for Recruitment Purposes." This is to be distributed at the beginning of the academic year. This information gives guidance and tips for adverts and successful application packs.
- 5.25 A 24 hour Job Information line is now available and details are published on ADSHEL electronic noticeboard on Ashton and Hyde Market grounds. The vacancy details are updated every Friday during term time.
- 5.26 A recruitment poster, designed in conjunction with GWT (Advertising Agency) will be launched next term.
- 5.27 It has proved difficult to recruit teachers to subjects such as modern language and P.E.

- 5.28 There are no direct additional cost implications to the Council for Support Teachers, because the schools governing bodies have their own delegated budgets from which they fund their teaching staff. However, there are costs relating to the time and salary of officers of the LEA.
- 5.29 The ways in which the Council could ensure that Best Value was obtained would be the provision of its own agency of Support Teachers. Tameside LEA tries to supply the borough's schools with teachers when necessary but currently this service is limited. The LEA however, does have an agreement with its agencies that they will not overcharge the schools, and therefore, their services are used more regularly. The use of agencies is nationally accepted, but schools are expected to comply with financial regulations to ensure there are no unnecessary payments. These are specific agreements with teacher unions and employers, which govern when supply teachers and agency staff are used.
- 5.30 The main consequence of the schools not recruiting permanent teaching staff is the detrimental effect on the schools and pupils. The LEA considers that newly qualified teachers should be given permanent contracts, because temporary contracts do not encourage commitment.
- 5.31 Longterm sickness is an issue, which is currently being addressed. Sickness is being monitored continually and dismissals will take place for continued absences, however, genuine illness will be supported.
- 5.32 Benchmarking figures are not as yet available for recruitment and retention, detailing how Tameside LEA compares with other authorities.

6. OBSERVATIONS RELATING TO THE INTERVIEW WITH THE CABINET DEPUTY OF LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICES

Councillor Kitchen informed the Panel that:

- 6.1 Tameside's situation regarding the problems of recruiting and retaining teachers is no worse than other LEAs.
- 6.2 The recruitment and retention patterns of teaching staff within the borough are thoroughly monitored and although occasional patterns have occurred previously in particular schools, there are no problems anticipated for September 2002.

- 6.3 The LEA is actively assisting primary and secondary schools to recruit and reduce their staffing levels in accordance with requirements.
- 6.4 Some schools do pay retention points to good experienced teachers, to encourage them to remain with the school.
- 6.5 The LEA utilises a number of policies and strategies to attract and encourage new teachers to Tameside. These include:-
- Fast track careers
 - Advertising campaigns
 - Information packs for supply teachers and teachers
 - Information packs which are disseminated to teacher training schools
 - Website information
- 6.6 The Panel expressed concern regarding permanent teachers resigning to become supply teachers, and being taken on at the school from which they have left. However, they accept that the judgement of the Head Teacher is paramount, and although this practice should not be encouraged, ultimately it is the Head's responsibility to decide who is employed within the school.
- 6.7 Concern was expressed regarding the use of a number of supply teachers within one particular class and the detrimental effect on these pupils. In order to minimise these effects, every effort is made by the schools to try to employ the same supply teacher for a full term. It is however, very difficult for a school to plan its staff requirements, when permanent teachers submit sick notes for short periods at a time (for example on a two weekly basis).
- 6.8 The use of high numbers of supply teachers in one classroom is particularly detrimental for the pupils as all teachers use different strategies and teaching methods. Councillor Kitchen indicated that the majority of supply teachers were extremely good and added to school values.
- 6.9 The costs of supply teachers were borne by schools. They were generally more expensive than permanent teachers, and whether they represented value for money depended on their quality.
- 6.10 Schools had particular problems in recruiting teachers for specialist subjects such as science. The LEA was therefore establishing links with universities, and discussing initiatives to attract students to its schools.
- 6.11 In order to be able to employ Supply Teachers, schools must allocate funding from within their budgets. Schools were still responsible for paying the salaries of their permanent teachers

when they were absent, therefore the LEA advised schools only to employ supply teachers when absolutely necessary.

- 6.12 Presently, training was only provided by the LEA for its permanent teaching staff, therefore supply teachers were expected to acquire their own training when required.
- 6.13 Many supply teachers did not wish to work full time, and therefore do not want the responsibility of the expenses associated with the costs of additional training, however, it was important that these teachers maintained up to date knowledge and skills.
- 6.14 During exit surveys, large workloads were often the reasons stated for permanent teachers leaving the profession.
- 6.15 Some teachers had been asked to leave schools because they did not reach competency targets.

7. BOROUGH TREASURER'S OBSERVATIONS

The allocation of financial resources to priorities within the Education Service will continue to be agreed by the Chief Education Officer in conjunction with schools. The provision of support for teacher recruitment will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the business and financial planning process.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 On the basis of the information received, there is no overriding evidence to suggest that there is a serious borough wide problem regarding the recruitment and retention of teachers. It is noted however, that some individual schools, do have particular recruitment and retention issues which need to be addressed.
- 8.2 It was recognised, however, that the burden of paperwork and regulation facing classroom teachers is a major contributory factor for teachers leaving the profession.
- 8.3 The Panel welcomes the strong marketing techniques, currently being introduced by the LEA, to encourage newly qualified teachers to the borough's schools.
- 8.4 The Panel welcome the efforts being made by the LEA to introduce an agency of supply teachers.
- 8.5 The Panel agree that although the use of supply teachers is often necessary, their use should be kept to a minimum, and the use of

teachers employed on a fixed term contract basis should be considered as a more suitable alternative. This would prove to be financially more cost effective, and would provide the pupils with some measure of stability for a set period of time.

- 8.6 The Panel considers that the practice of re-employing a teacher in a supply capacity, who has previously resigned from the same school, should be discouraged and regarded as bad practice.
- 8.7 The Panel welcomed the involvement of the Strategic Directorate monitoring the situation relating to this subject, as recognition of the potential serious implications for one of the Council's priorities.
- 8.8 It was noted that the Voluntary Aided Sector was totally responsible for the appointment and pay of all staff, but should benefit from any improvements to supply teacher arrangements.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the LEA's efforts to publicise this area to attract and encourage teachers to the borough be welcomed.
- 9.2 That the LEA be encouraged to continue to examine the possibility of establishing its own agency of suitable supply teachers.
- 9.3 That all Tameside schools be asked to produce a forward plan for the LEA, which anticipates any periods when supply teachers may be required.
- 9.4 That the LEA considers the introduction of Refresher Courses, and ongoing training for Supply Teachers who may have been away from the profession for a period of time, part funded by applicants for posts of supply teachers, should be seriously considered.
- 9.5 That the LEA reminds schools to ensure the implications of Best Value are considered when using Supply Teachers.
- 9.6 That the possibility of the LEA establishing a 'pool' of newly qualified teachers be encouraged.
- 9.7 That careful consideration be given to the effects on schools who "loan" their good teachers to schools, which are experiencing teacher shortages, to ensure that the "donor" schools do not suffer.
- 9.8 That the LEA continues to regularly undertake a thorough analysis on the Exit Questionnaires, to ascertain the numbers of teachers leaving the borough, the reasons why and the numbers of new recruits.

- 9.9 That the LEA continues to ensure that requests for teacher application packs are despatched immediately.
- 9.10 That the creation of a permanent post of Teacher Recruitment Officer be actively pursued, perhaps to be funded from monies previously utilised for small grants to schools.
- 9.11 The LEA would like to see an improvement in the GCSE results for looked-after children, as the national results show that these children are not faring well at all. However average attendance figures compare favourably with other metropolitan authorities.