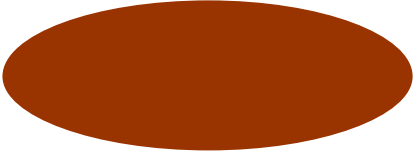




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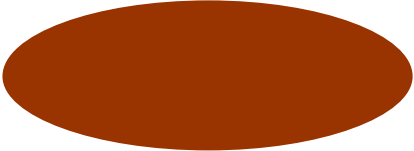
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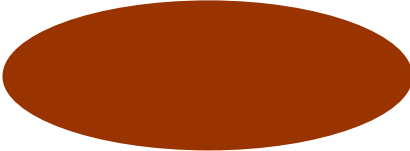


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2.3 Successes

There have been significant improvements in the education service in the City, giving tangible results endorsed in the recent positive OFSTED inspection of the Education Service.

The review found evidence of schools, services and projects making huge efforts to engage young people, often in very difficult circumstances. Some of this is detailed in the evidence taken from witnesses reported in subsequent chapters. Many initiatives and programmes have been developed and there is a considerable will to engage with problems which may seem intractable.

Evidence of improvement is demonstrated in:

- § decreasing year on year exclusion rates for a number of years with the exception of the current year
- § the inclusion in the city's schools of over 1000 children from asylum seeker or refugee backgrounds in recent years
- § improvements in systems for tracking young people who are displaced or mobile
- § continuous year on year improvements in educational attainment overall

2.4 Concerns

However there is no time for any complacency. There continues to be strong evidence that the potential of young people in some neighbourhoods is at significant risk because they are not engaged in learning in the current system. Substantial development is necessary to accomplish the vision of successfully engaging all young people.

There is compelling evidence that the initiatives and efforts of schools and services have not worked in all circumstances and that there are difficulties affecting particular groups which need to be addressed.

Key concerns identified were:

- i. The potential for young people with challenging behaviour to become disengaged from schools and to be taken off registers without alternative provision being made, apparently to avoid "exclusion fines" for schools.
- ii. Difficulties in tracking young people who might be out of school, or who are only nominally on a school roll or who are at risk of dropping out of school.
- iii. Schools with larger concentrations of more challenging young people are prone to higher levels of staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting



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staff. The result can be significant problems in maintaining the school's internal stability and major barriers in providing young people with the consistency required to engage and motivate them. The attractions of less stressful jobs elsewhere and the need to gain a break from the accumulation of stress on individuals over a period of time are no doubt major factors at work. There is a potentially vicious circle against which many schools battle - those with the more challenging young people, who require higher levels of consistency and stability in their lives to maintain their engagement, are often the very schools which have higher staff turnover rates.

- iv. There was some evidence that parents, in exercising parental preference, together with some schools trying to protect their position and not acting inclusively, overlaid with selective schools, actively supports flight from certain localities. The key drivers in the system tend to militate against schools which are most inclusive and are already facing the greatest challenges. We cannot avoid the conclusion that effective strategies need to be in place to reverse this process and ensure that there is support for promotion of neighbourhood schools in challenging areas.
- v. Difficulties in identifying vacant school places and ensuring access to school places. Particular difficulties were identified for:
 - § Secondary age children who show challenging behaviour
 - § Newly arrived children. There are complex reasons for this, and the lack of a pro-active service for helping parents finding school places is significant
 - § Children who are temporarily homeless, possibly living in hostels, were reported to be at particular risk of not being able to access a school place

The reality is that a significant number of children appear to be out of school for lengthy periods.

- vi. Transition between primary and secondary phases was identified by both primary and secondary schools as a difficult period for young people and seemed to be a factor in young people becoming disengaged from learning. There was evidence of some good practice but there seemed to be potential to strengthen support to particularly vulnerable young people, who were not always well supported at this time. There are particular difficulties for children in any form of temporary home as they might have missed the dates for secondary transfer or might be moving to a new area which hadn't been anticipated previously.



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- vii. There are particular difficulties in transition and access to school for children who for any reason move home or school mid term and particularly those children who have multiple moves. This affects particularly vulnerable children such as those who are homeless, forced to move because of domestic violence or other traumatic circumstances.
- viii. Shortcomings in the extent to which schools act collectively to meet the needs of a whole neighbourhood. More inclusive schools are often in grave danger of becoming victims of their own success, making it easier for other schools to close doors one way or another to young people perceived as more challenging.
- ix. Some difficulties were reported by schools in identifying services (statutory and voluntary) to support children. This appears to be related to gaps in family support and mental health services in particular, and sometimes difficulties in communication with agencies. There is potential to encourage schools and local agencies to be better informed about each other, and to work more closely together at a planning and communication level. A number of initiatives have begun to connect services and schools together (such as the Behaviour Improvement Programme and the development of extended schools) and there are examples of new services such as the Birmingham Signposting Service making a valued contribution. However, there is scope for bringing agencies and schools close together in a consistent way to support particular neighbourhoods.

2.5 The recommendations from this enquiry aim to:

- § Provide a framework within which schools can prosper in especially challenging circumstances and contribute to the development of flourishing neighbourhoods
- § Ensure that ALL young people have a guarantee of the most effective support to their learning and development in their own neighbourhood

A serious approach to ensuring that these entitlements are guaranteed should be based on the following key recommendations:

- § Radical thinking and systemic change is required. In particular this needs to encompass a perspective rooted in an appreciation of how individuals and the community can be actively engaged in learning processes as the basis for development and growing self-confidence. To achieve this, individuals, groups and the wider community need to be supported and validated in constructing active learning processes which go beyond the boundaries of more institutionalised learning frameworks.



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2: Summary of recommendations

Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R1 A feasibility study should be commissioned into the potential for establishing an "Aspiration and Achievement Zone" as a joined up holistic partnership approach in at least one neighbourhood	Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning	1 November 2003
R2 That mechanisms are established with schools to work collectively and to develop a plan for supporting all young people within a Lifelong Learning	Education and Lifelong Learning	1 November 2003



3: INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Education and Arts Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of its schedule commissioned this review for 2002-2003. Committee members had identified a number of concerns about children at risk of becoming disconnected from education and learning. They decided to prioritise key areas for a fuller examination where there were indications of a need to ensure coherent and effective strategies are in place to guarantee that barriers to learning are overcome. In particular there were concerns about: -

- i. Support for newly arrived children (particularly refugee and asylum seeker children)
- ii. Issues related to displacement and mobility of children
- iii. Issues related to behaviour and exclusion

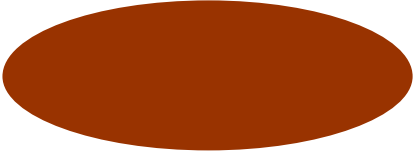
3.2 Members of the review team were:

Councillor Tony Kennedy (Chair)
Councillor Les Lawrence
Councillor Phil Murphy
Mary Edwards, Diocesan Director of Education (Church of England)
Father Edwin Cownley, Roman Catholic Diocese representative
Ted Eames/ Kate Oliver, Birmingham Children's Fund
Brian Martin, Birmingham & Solihull Connexions Service
Tom Tierney, Birmingham Education Service (Lead Officer)

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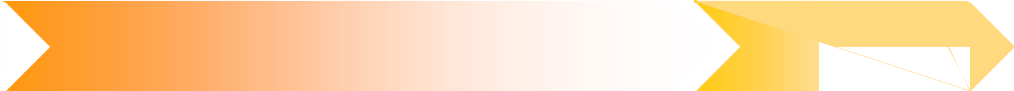
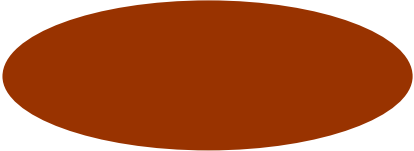


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KEY ISSUES – NEWLY ARRIVED CHILDREN

- 5.10 Ensuring effective induction is essential, involving children and parents supported by interpreting from which the school is able to gain as much information as possible about the child's background and previous educational experience.
- 5.11 There was appreciation by schools of BASS developing a framework based on Barking and Dagenham models.
- 5.12 Because of the experiences of trauma and loss for many children there is a complex set of needs which children bring with them into school, some of which require support from external agencies.
- 5.13 Parents have also experienced very traumatic events and some children were effectively carers for parents because of their emotional and mental health difficulties.
- 5.14 Many newly arrived adults have professional training and qualifications which could contribute to areas of skills shortages with bridging training and support.
- 5.15 There are particular issues for funding in schools for African refugees who have arrived after gaining a passport from another European country. Admissions of these children to schools do not qualify for the £500 grant per for asylum seekers. Between 1999 and 2000 these were the majority of newly arrived children. Numbers of new arrivals from European countries have reduced considerably in the last 12 months or so, although the effects of the first waves of new arrivals is still significant as the children progress through the year groups.
- 5.16 Schools experience great difficulty because of very high turnover rates of asylum seeker children caused by changes in housing for the family (this can be as much as 3 moves in 12 months).
- 5.17 It appears that some schools are seen by the community as welcoming (e.g. Moseley and George Dixon) whilst other schools seem unable to offer places very easily. This concern was reiterated by evidence from refugee support organisations, who reported major difficulties in finding school places for newly arrived children.
- 5.18 Whilst most children developed increasing fluency in the English language a small number of children give rise to concern both about their progress and their behaviour, seeming to indicate a level of difficulty needing a co-ordinated response from agencies.
- 5.19 Support for children with special educational needs can be problematic. The process for assessment takes some time, and may take even longer



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for newly arrived children because of initial difficulties with English language and the lack of professional staff with the appropriate community languages.

- 5.20 Concerns about the lack of appropriate external agencies to support emotional and mental health needs were identified in schools, which applied to both children and parents.
- 5.21 A small number of children are particularly vulnerable, having arrived without any parents. These “unaccompanied children” would usually be in the care of the Local Authority.
- 5.22 Schools are interested in being part of a wider network within Birmingham of schools learning from each other.
- 5.23 Community leaders are struggling to find resources to establish supplementary schools as newly arrived communities have very few resources.
- 5.24 Need to support newly arrived community members to access effective training qualifications. An opportunity to develop support for education was identified in the numbers of overseas-qualified teachers who could not at this stage teach in the English education system.
- 5.25 Children are sometimes on waiting lists for schools that had vacancies but experience delays in being admitted to schools because of a lack of uniforms, sports and other equipment, or lack of money to pay for transport costs.
- 5.26 Whilst the Newly Arrived Children’s Service, funded by the Children’s Fund, is a very promising support system there are questions over the longer term funding for this project which has a guaranteed funding for only another year. This needs to be considered by the key agencies.
- 5.27 The LSC is co-ordinating a review of provision for post-16 newly arrived young people.
- 5.28 Provision for adults learning English as a second language has improved but difficulties occur in providing more specialised language development to gain employment.
- 5.29 The Somali Immigrants Resource Development Organisation (SIRDO) wanted Education provision to be local, where possible, rather than for families to have to travel across the City.
- 5.30 There is no service in the Education Service for ensuring newly arrived children access schools. EWS is focused on promoting school attendance. Admissions and Appeals Team provides information about schools to



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6: DISPLACED CHILDREN

- 6.1 The team heard evidence from pre school workers, Roger Minchin (Adviser), Noran Flynn (LACES Manager BASS), Amy Wallace (Virtual College), Gethin Davies (Second City Second Chance), Mike Innocenti (Pupil Connect EWS), John Smail (Head of EWS), Chrissie Garrett (A/D SEN).
- 6.2 The pre school workers service provides a direct visiting service to hostels and refuges. The service provides book loans, workshops for families, stay and play sessions, sessions on parenthood, welcome packs, visiting service to hostels and refuges, sharing book sessions and links with Women's Aid, St Basils, City Council Housing Department and a number of other housing providers. Their aims are to build trust and break down barriers to learning, promote good practice, signpost parents to relevant services, assist hostel staff in developing skills and practices to promote engagement in education.
- 6.3 Roger Minchin is a Headteacher seconded to BASS to look at issues related to homelessness/high mobility and education. He provided information about key issues identified in his current research as well as his experiences as a Headteacher of a school located opposite a housing hostel.
- 6.4 Noran Flynn is the LEA's lead officer on Looked After Children. She has recently provided a Scrutiny Report on their achievements and gave information about the proposed structure of the service and key projects being undertaken to raise achievements of Children Looked After. These children are likely to be amongst high mobility groups in the City.
- 6.5 The Virtual College is located within the UFA and has worked with 50 children in Key Stage 4 who did not have a school place. Students are allocated a tutor, have a laptop, receive 5 hours 1:1 tuition each week and build up additional learning opportunities over a period to a maximum of 25 hours tuition. Referrals are received from EWS, Pupil Connect, parents, etc., and most students achieve ASDAN bronze or silver awards, with 90% going on to another training provider or gaining employment.
- 6.6 Second City Second Chance provides a mentoring service for young people but has also been commissioned by the Children's Fund to carry out action research on children disconnected from education (the ReachOut Project). Elements of the ReachOut project include a consultative programme engaging in discussion with young people, a focus on "Asian and less visible communities, including refugees," a focus on disconnected youngsters in council estates, a focus on disconnected African-Caribbean young people, particularly girls. The service is using 15-18 year olds to reach to younger people as peer mentors. These pilots will be evaluated



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and extended. The service is currently working with 20-30 children. The numbers of children without any school place is quite small but there are a



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always well prepared for these children. This is an area for further evaluation.

- 6.27 There is clear evidence that some schools are taking the lion's share of displaced pupils whilst others are sheltered from any need to make provision. This inequity is a major factor of stress and strain on the



7: BEHAVIOUR AND EXCLUSIONS

7.1 BEHAVIOUR AND EXCLUSIONS Similarly, headteachers from the Secondary Headteachers Forum for the purposes of this scrutiny it is likely to refer to any behaviour which is perceived as challenging and has a potential for exclusion of any sort. It was recognised that "behaviour" is used to identify undesirable behaviour. It is not an objective word but is highly subjective.

7.2 The team heard evidence from a group of secondary headteachers and a group of primary headteachers. The Secondary Headteachers Forum has 2 1



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literacy and social skills. Mentors are also participating in after school clubs and other activities, acting as a point of contact for external agencies, providing role models for children and supporting teachers with behaviour management strategies. Questionnaires sent to teachers indicate that learning mentors are having an impact.

- 7.8 Moira Healy gave evidence of the National Research on Learning Centre Extensions and about the Birmingham based Zacchaeus Centre. The Zacchaeus Centre was established in 1995 between the LEA and the Catholic Partnership. It offers social and emotional competency courses for pupils (anger management, assertiveness, separation and loss, classroom and social skills, leadership). The project has been considered to be very successful by the schools involved. As well as working with children work also takes place with staff. Zacchaeus will also be offering parenting courses.
- 7.9 Learning Support Centres are being evaluated and a report on this will appear in due course from DfES. In Birmingham there are 17 of these – 11 large ones and 6 mini.
- 7.10 Nicky Kendall (BASS) gave evidence about the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP), which is a Government funded initiative in 4 secondary schools in high crime areas and their feeder primaries. Each is establishing a multi-agency Behaviour and Education Support Team (BEST), receiving funding of £250,000 per year, and each has a linked police officer. There are targets around behaviour auditing, reducing exclusions, improving attendance. It is trialing multi-agency approaches to make a significant difference. The DfES have indicated that they see BIP as a pathfinder, not a pilot and there are links with the concept of extended schools.
- 7.11 Peter Wild, Head of the Behaviour Support Service, gave information about national requirements and developments, the difficulties about establishing consistent responses to “unacceptable behaviour,” funding which is going directly into schools, the role of the LEA as a facilitator, and information about some services offered by the BSS.
- 7.12 Gilroy Brown (BASS) gave information about RACA (Raising Afro-Caribbean Achievement) Project. The first stage looked at factors in 10 successful primary schools and the second stage is looking particularly at Key Stage 3 issues around motivation for Afro-Caribbean pupils. RACA2 is being supported by DfES and Standards Fund. Gilroy was able to present initial findings which include around 30 recommendations; the full report is yet to be completed.
- 7.13 Chrissie Garrett, Assistant Director for the Education Services Inclusion Support Division, provided a paper on the Educational Needs of Disconnected/Vulnerable and Excluded Young People in Birmingham. She explained that the paper makes recommendations about secondary schools



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expressed concern about the possibility of its25 sources25 ducing.
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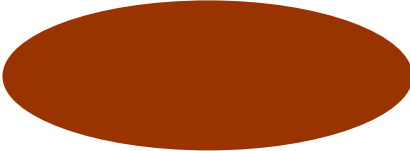
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- 7.51 Some of the Connexions experience in alternative curriculum provision needs to be given further consideration.
- 7.52 Connexions identified a lack of provision for teenage mothers in relation to childcare. This will need to be referred to the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership.
- 7.53 Connexions is working closely with BIP schools and providing across various parts of the City diversionary activities for young people in summer time to reduce street crime. It was suggested that of the 1500 children coming into this service in summer 2002, 724 were not known to agencies or schools. This needs further investigation.
- 7.54 Of the 269 children who were officially permanently excluded last year only 49 were taken back onto a school roll. This is a key issue which the Assistant Director for Special Educational Needs is trying to address.
- 7.55 Chrissie Garrett provided a potential structure for schools coming together collectively in the Leadership Improvement Groups.
- 7.56 A number of new appointments are proposed by the LEA, including a lead officer for "disconnected young people" and a lead officer for newly arrived children.
- 7.57 The Chief Executive made observations about the need to plan services in a better way, establish closer links between universal and targeted services, and ensure that there are effective partnerships supporting vulnerable children. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership was identified as the overarching place where strategic planning across the City would be located for vulnerable children.
- 7.58 She felt there was a need for universal services to improve but also for gaps in targeted services to be addressed, such as in family support.
- 7.59 The Chief Executive recommended that emphasis was placed on finding "cultural solutions" which would facilitate schools and services co-operating, rather than too many new structural solutions that might be imposed and absorb energy. The target needs to be focussed on the child and wherever possible keeping a child in school.



8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

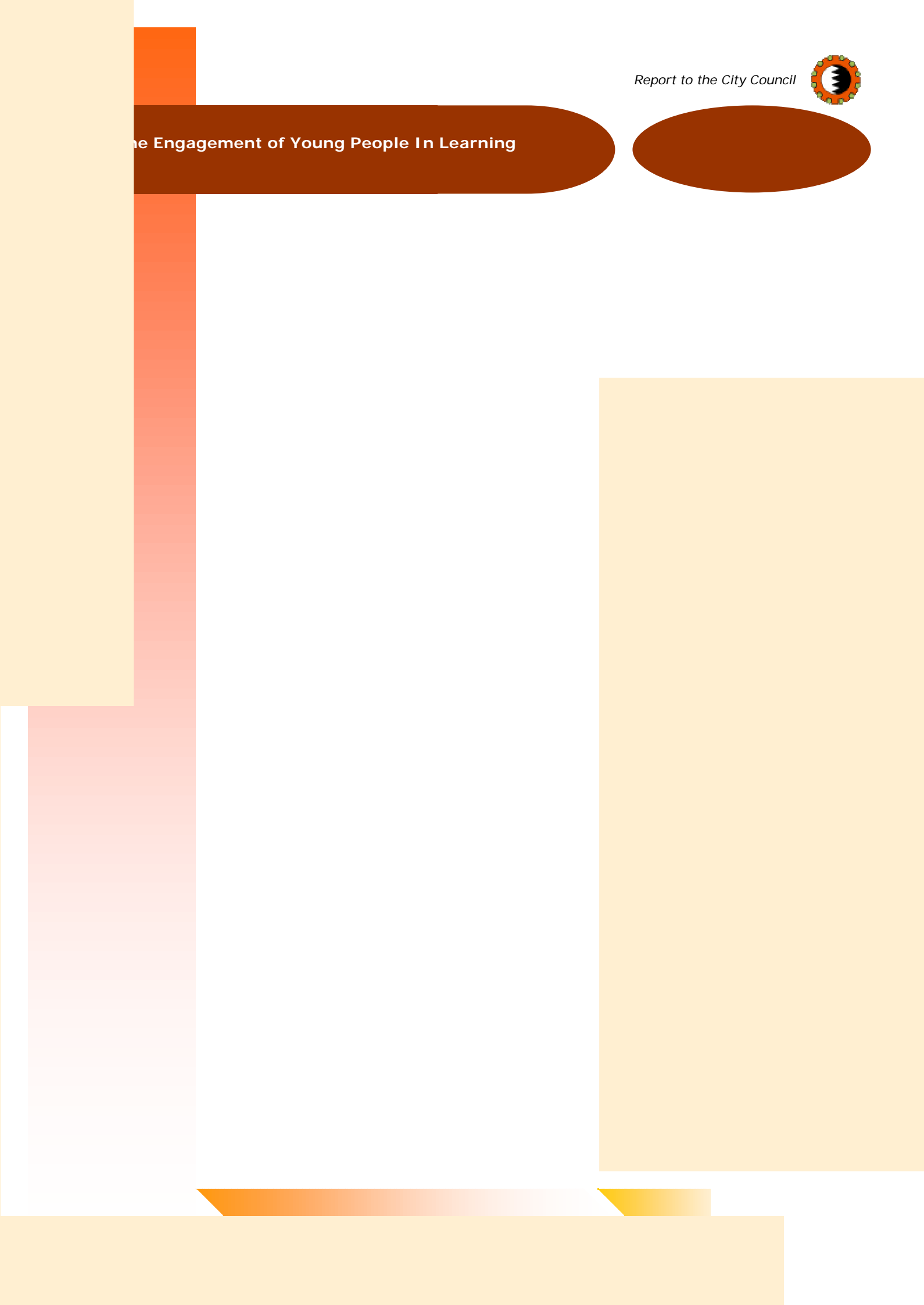
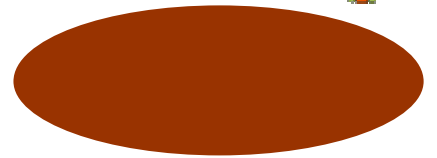
8.1 Piloting New Ways of Working Within Neighbourhoods

Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R1 A feasibility study should be commissioned into the potential for establishing an "Aspiration and Achievement Zone" as a joined up holistic partnership approach in at least one neighbourhood	Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning	1 November 2003

New ways of encouraging learning in neighbourhoods need to be considered where there is evidence of established approaches failing to reach young people at risk. It seems likely that there could be an opportunity to establish an "Aspiration and Achievement Zone" in an area of high need as a pathfinder project. This is a concept moving a step further than education action zones, involving a much wider set of partnerships. Such a Zone should establish a radical approach in ensuring that schools have collective responsibility for a neighbourhood and that all the young people in the neighbourhood are guaranteed effective support from the partnership of schools in accessing learning. As well as pulling schools together the Zone will incorporate a raft of initiatives and commitments from all the agencies and community organisations in an New



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8.2 Improving Collective Working Between Schools and With Agencies in Neighbourhoods

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R2	That mechanisms are established with schools to work collectively and to be accountable for supporting all young people within a geographical area as a collective rather than as potentially competing individual institutions	Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning	1 December 2003
R3	That more coherent frameworks are established for connecting schools with local service providers delivering health services, social services, support for young offenders or children at risk, leisure, sports, arts, family support and family learning	Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning	1 December 2003

Currently schools come together in consortia for maintaining professional and organisational development. However, schools consortia are not necessarily aligned with particular communities or areas served by other key agencies. Although this is an agenda which is being worked on, there is a need to ensure that the outcome is clearer relationships and responsibilities to neighbourhoods. The Education Service's proposals to establish Leadership Improvement Groups of schools focussing on Excellence in Cities areas is a welcome step in this direction but further work is needed to ensure that there is a close fit with the locally devolved structures of other key agencies. The success of such structures will be demonstrated by:

- Collective responsibilities being established
- Young people supported more holistically
- Joint commissioning of local projects
- Improvements in attendance and exclusion
- A variety of choices at the local level to match individual needs whilst ensuring that individuals are not sidelined or only provided with low level opportunities for learning
- Contributions to community cohesion and reductions in crime
- Value added in the achievements of young people
- The ability to harness strengths of particular schools and communities
- An ability to work creatively with a win/win approach
- Use of schools as community resources for learning, leisure and other services
- A closer fit between schools' networks and the local structures for serving particular neighbourhoods
- Improved partnership working between agencies and schools in neighbourhoods

Many schools are already providing or developing extended services, community use of their facilities and inclusion of services from various

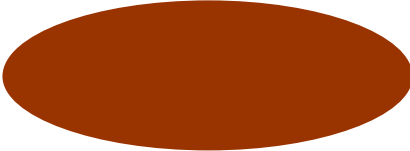


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8.4 Improving Support to Children in Transition and Children Who Are Particularly Vulnerable

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R5	That improved support is established for children and young people who are in transition between schools, or are out of school, or are particularly vulnerable for any reason	Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning	1 December 2003

There is evidence of vulnerable young people slipping through the net of support and improvements need to be considered to address this.

Key elements are likely to be:-

- Improving support to transitions of children between primary and secondary phases and mid-term transitions, particularly for those young people subject to multiple transitions
- Systems for ensuring vulnerable young people are identified and supported throughout processes of transition.
- A good practice pack or set of guarantees about transitions.
- More robust systems for ensuring admissions into schools with improved systems for ensuring school places for those out of school.
- Systematic identification of vulnerable children at Y6 with planning for transition from secondary to primary school, and a presumption of the need for support across the transition through to the end of Y7. The support available should include guaranteed mentoring where this is identified as useful.
- Pupil database to be improved and linked to the emerging inter-agency Identification Referral & Tracking Project

These are identified as key elements for the project.



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- Explore the potential for paying bus fares to maintain attendance at an



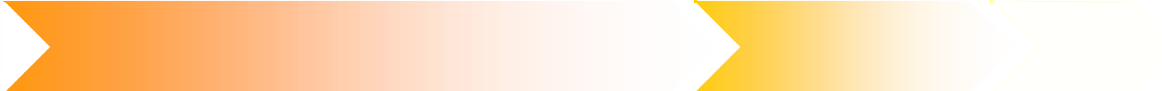
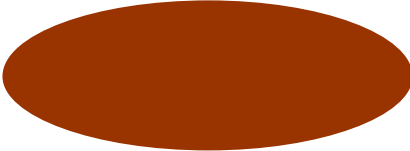
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8.5 Improving Support to Newly Arrived Children

R6	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
	The Chief Education Officer should establish a co-ordinated education strategy to ensure		

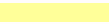
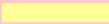
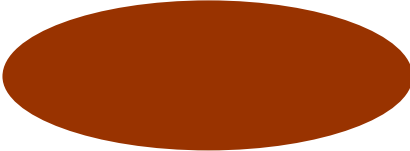


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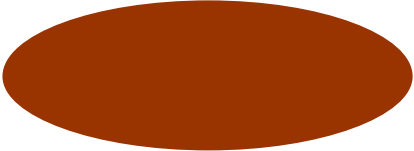


APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND REPORTS

General Issues	
DOCUMENT	AUTHOR
Aiming High	Department for Education and Skills Consultation Paper 2003
Issues Relating to Asylum Seekers and Refugees	
DOCUMENT	AUTHOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Joined up approach for delivery of Education Services to meet the needs of the vulnerable/'at risk' young people in Birmingham: Draft report Meeting the needs of the 'disconnected/vulnerable' and excluded young people in Birmingham: Consultation 	Chrissie Garrett, Acting Assistant Director – SEN
Permanent Exclusions Commentary - Academic Year 2001/2002 Fixed Period Exclusions Commentary - Academic Year 2001/2002	Education Department Exclusions Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper outlining issues related to mobility and support structures for pupils EAL Information 	Jan Ferguson and Mrs Meelhu, George Dixon International School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newly Arrived Children from Overseas (Feb 2003) Birmingham LEA: DfES Claims for Asylum Seeker Children (Oct 2002) Birmingham LEA: DfES Claims for Asylum Seeker Children (Feb 2003) 	Tom Tierney, Head of Strategic Partnerships Team
Work in Progress/Issues related to Asylum Seekers and Refugees (Feb 2003)	Jennifer Legare, Project Co-ordinator, Services to Newly Arrived Children and Their Families Sue Hadley, Leisure-Schools/Out of Hours Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAL / SEN Procedure for Identifying the Learning Needs of EAL Pupils Causing Concern Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit (EMPSU) – Code of practice: December 2001 / EAL Staff Handbook EMAG Prioritisation Details – Primary Schools 	BCC Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit & KS3 Core Skills EAL/SEN Project in collaboration with Sandwell LEA BCC Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit BCC Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit
Strategy for the Integration of Newcomers from Abroad in Birmingham	



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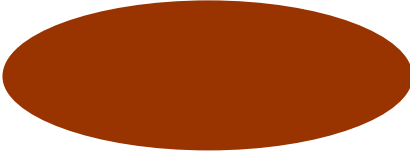
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Issues Relating to High Mobility and Displaced Children (continued)

DOCUMENT	AUTHOR
Education & Arts Overview & Scrutiny Committee Report: 18.12.02	



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APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PEOPLE WHO GAVE EVIDENCE

Abdi Rahman Ali, Secretary of Somali Immigrant Resource Development Organisation (SIRDO)

Alan Bamber, Headteacher, St Andrews Primary School

Amanda Daniels, Framework for Intervention

Amy Wallis, Project Officer for CiPC (Virtual College)

BANUT – briefing on Extended Schools

BCC Ethnic Minority Pupil Support Unit & KS3 Core Skills EAL/SEN Project in collaboration with Sandwell LEA

Brian Martin, Birmingham & Solihull Connexions Service

Carol Jones, Birmingham & Solihull Connexions Service

Carol Lyndon, Headteacher, Kings Rise Primary School

Caroline Quilty / Elaine Bane, Education Department Exclusions Team

Chris Palmer, Lead Adviser, Corporate Strategies, BASS

Chris Seal, Adviser, BASS

Chrissie Garrett, Acting Assistant Director, Special Needs Division

David Gould, Headteacher, St Albans CE Secondary School

Gethin Davies, Consultant Director, Second City Second Chance (SCSC)

Gilroy Brown, Adviser, BASS

Jan Ferguson, Head of English, George Dixon International School

Jennifer Legare, Project Co-ordinator, Services to Newly Arrived Children and Their Families

Jim Foley, Headteacher, St Thomas Aquinas School

John Smail, Head of Education Welfare Service



The Engagement of Young People In Learning



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Report to the City Council



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