

**Report of: Health Scrutiny Committee**

**To: Executive Board**

**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

**Item No**

**Title of Report : The Healthy Schools Programme**



### Summary and Recommendation



**Purpose of report:** To report to the Executive Board the recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Committee as part of their discussions on the Healthy Schools programme



**Key decision:** Yes

**Portfolio Holders:** Cllrs Caroline Van Zyl & David Rundle

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report Approved by:**  James Pownall - Legal Services  
Andy Collett - Financial & Asset Management



**Policy Framework :** n/a



**Recommendation:** The Executive Board is asked to respond to the Health Scrutiny Committee's recommendation that the Leisure & Cultural Services Business Manager contact the Healthy Schools Team to investigate the potential for Leisure Services' involvement in the Healthy Schools programme and joint working.



## **1. Background.**

1. The Health Scrutiny Committee received an update on the Healthy Schools Programme, with a particular focus on its implementation within the City's Secondary & Primary Schools.

'There has been significant progress in the Oxford City Schools engaging with the Healthy Schools Programme in the last 2 years. The current position is:

- 54% of City schools achieving Healthy School status
- 98% of City schools engaged with the programme
- 64% of County schools achieving Healthy School status
- 92% of County Schools engaged with programme

The Every Child Matters agenda has resulted in schools having increased awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing, and the Healthy Schools Programme enables them to demonstrate how they are contributing to these outcomes in their school.

The aims of the Healthy Schools Programme are

- to support children and young people in developing healthy behaviours
- to help raise pupil achievement
- to help to reduce health inequalities
- to promote social inclusion

The programme also contributes to other government targets e.g. reducing teenage pregnancy, reducing drug, tobacco and alcohol misuse, reducing childhood obesity, improving behaviour and attendance.'

2. The programme focuses on four key themes: Personal & Social Education, Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Emotional Health & Well-being.

Health Scrutiny Committee noted that there were currently no formal links between the Leisure and Cultural Services Business Unit and the Healthy Schools programme. The Committee thought that it was an opportune time for Leisure Services to explore the potential for joint working, particularly around increasing physical activity in children and young people.

Oxfordshire PCT are due to launch an Obesity Strategy and will be looking to develop more detailed actions plans around themes such as increasing Physical Activity, in partnership with District Authorities. It would therefore be beneficial for Leisure Services to extend this partnership working to include the Healthy Schools Team.

## **2. Extract from the Minutes of the Health Scrutiny Committee – 29<sup>th</sup> November**

### **27. HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF LEARNING (SEAL) PROGRAMME**

Briefing papers concerning the Healthy Schools and the SEAL Programmes (previously circulated, now appended) were submitted. The Committee welcomed to the meeting Ann Whitehead ((Healthy Schools Co-ordinator, Oxfordshire County Council), and Karen Errington (Advisory Teacher for Personal Social Health Citizenship Education in Primary Schools, Oxfordshire County Council), who attended to speak on these topics.

#### Healthy Schools.

Ann Whitehead outlined the contents of the Healthy Schools programme briefing paper to the Committee. She stressed that it was important to take a “whole school” approach, and that proper policies needed to be in place to support the practice. Training for staff was important, and both parents and pupils were consulted to ensure that the programme was appropriate for their needs. Bullying could not be tolerated in a Healthy School, and schools were required to have a robust anti-bullying policy.

Schools were required to have a travel plan, and there was greater emphasis upon the promotion of walking or cycling to work. From 2008, the Government would require schools to provide more opportunities for cooking by pupils. Generally, more wholesome food was being provided in schools, and there was a bigger take up of school meals within Oxfordshire.

It was anticipated that a further 3 schools within Oxford would achieve Healthy School status very shortly. The scheme had clearly proved very popular in Oxfordshire, since the number of Healthy Schools countywide exceeded levels nationally.

#### Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme.

Karen Errington outlined the contents of the SEAL programme report to the Committee. She informed the Committee that this formed a large part of the Healthy Schools programme. The scheme began in 2005, and 90 schools in Oxfordshire were involved, including 10 in Oxford City. It encouraged the development of self-awareness and social skills, including motivation, resilience, empathy and managing feelings.

Funding was available for training for teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors. A “family pack” of information was also available to encourage parents to work with their children. The effect on schools so far had been positive, with fewer exclusions from schools, less conflict at playtime, and improved self-confidence for all members of school staff.

### Additional Information.

The following additional information was then provided in answer to questions from members of the Committee:-

- (1) The SEAL scheme was not compulsory. There was increased pressure on the National Curriculum that meant that Personal, Social Health Citizenship Education (PSHCE) was often forced to the outer limits of the curriculum. SEAL empowered teachers to develop pupils.
- (2) Many parents were now running after schools clubs as part of the Extended Schools programme. It was acknowledged that running events such as Yoga for Families might encourage parents to interact with their children in a positive way.
- (3) Healthy Schools was a self-assessment programme. When a school felt that it met the required criteria it would apply for Healthy School status, and a panel would consider its application and the evidence it provided. This was quite a rigorous process. The programme was designed to last for 3 years, and schools were encouraged to keep the role of the Healthy School Co-ordinator "live" within the school.
- (4) Oxfordshire County Council had carried out a Scrutiny Review of Healthy Schools, and Ms Whithead was due to meet relevant Councillors to consider this shortly.
- (5) The majority of primary schools used the County catering service. Many schools also used a programme called "Eco schools", which focussed on matters such as ethical food production, sourcing food locally and so forth. Where possible schools used locally produced food for school meals, and attempts were made to reflect the seasons and acknowledge religious and other festivals. This programme was likely to cover the issue of "embedded water" (water used in food production).
- (6) The SEAL programme did not claim to be therapeutic, but it could help young people develop self-awareness and self-understanding. Teachers did not claim to be experts in behaviour. The SEAL programme looked at issues of sex and relationships, but concentrated on the social and emotional aspects, rather than the physical. Schools were required to provide a suitable sex education programme, as well as a drugs awareness programme. Healthy Schools encouraged these, and could offer training and support for them.

- (7) Encouraging different sports and fitness events (for example Salsa and Yoga) did not mean that traditional games like football would be discouraged. The aim was to encourage everyone to participate.
- (8) There were no formal links between the Healthy Schools programme and the City Council Leisure and Cultural Services Business Unit, but there had been contact during the establishment of the Well Being Hub. A greater role might develop for the City Council might develop when the issue of obesity in children became a major focus for activity.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Thank Ann Whithead and Karen Errington for their attendance and informative presentation;
- (2) Note the contents of the presentation;
- (3) Recommend that the Head of Leisure and the Head of Parks investigate ways in which they could become more closely involved with the Healthy Schools programme;
- (4) Ask Executive Board to request that contact be made with the Healthy Schools programme by the Leisure and Cultural Services Business Manager, in order to explore means of joint working; the outcome to be reported back in due course.

### **3. Recommendation**

**The Executive Board is asked to respond to the Committee's recommendation that the Leisure & Cultural Services Business Manager contact the Healthy Schools Team to investigate the potential for Leisure Services' involvement in the Healthy Schools programme and joint working.**

### **4. Comments from Portfolio Holders (Cllrs Caroline van Zyl & David Rundle)**

None received

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**Background papers** : None

