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**OVERVIEW OF LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken by the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee :-
  - (a) **Racial Incidents in Schools: Academic Year 2003/04 – Monitoring Report –**  
Consideration was given to the number, nature and outcomes of racist incidents in schools in the Borough during the academic year 2003-04. Although concerned by the increase in the numbers of reported incidents the Committee appreciated that as a result of training a greater number of people were more aware of what constituted a “racial incident”. We learned from a pupil from Longfield School and two staff from the Language for Learning Section in the Education Department, about the scheme which had been running in Comprehensive Schools throughout the Borough, whereby anti-racist leaflets had been produced by students. School’s training and development packs have also been developed and distributed. .
  - (b) **Forward Plan –** We received an overview from a Senior Democratic Support Officer on the changes to the Forward Plan and how it could be accessed via the Council’s website.
  - (c) **Workforce Innovation –** We received an interesting and informative presentation on the nationally agreed Workforce Innovation which provides opportunities to raise pupil standards whilst improving working conditions for both teaching and support staff. It was useful to learn more about how innovation teams were meeting targets and positively affecting schools in the Borough.
  - (d) **School Performance in 2004: Schools Inspected by OFSTED –** It is pleasing to report the many positive inspection outcomes of the nine schools inspected during the last academic year and the congratulations of the Committee was conveyed to the Governing bodies of these schools. The Committee is working toward forging closer links with schools through examination of OFSTED results and through follow-up on their post inspection agreed plans.
  - (e) **Joint Education and Social Services Strategy for Supporting the Education of Children Looked After – Progress –** We have received a progress report on the implementation of the joint Education and Social Services Department Strategy for supporting and raising of achievements for children looked after by the local authority and look forward to hearing from the Looked After Children Co-ordinator on the use of a National Audit tool to identify areas for improvement in the services provided.

- (f) **Audit Commission: Survey of Schools' Views of their LEA 2004** – We received a summary of the key results of the Audit Commission 2004 Survey of Schools' View of their Local Education Authority and are particularly pleased to report that Darlington ranked in the top ten of national performance in relation to its quality of financial information; financial support and advice; the quality of programming and management of building projects; and the effectiveness of educational psychology support. There was also an improvement since our last survey on the view of elected members. This is no doubt down to the positive work undertaken by Councillors as LEA Governors.
- (g) **School Performance in 2004: National Tests/Exams** – Consideration has also been given to the analysis of pupil performance in Darlington in 2004 across the Key Stages, in particular, the significant gains in the performance of pupils at Key Stage 2.
- (h) **Oral Healthcare of Children in Darlington Review Group – Future Direction** – A special meeting was held with members of the Social Affairs and Health Scrutiny Committee and Nonnie Crawford, Director of Public Health to discuss the future direction of this review following which, it was agreed that a joint review on obesity in children be undertaken in the Municipal Year 2005/06. The Group also agreed to do some preparatory work through a Task and Finish Review over the coming weeks.

I also attended the following meetings as Chair of Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee:

- Addressed a meeting of primary school head teachers at Morton Park on the work of this Scrutiny Committee.
- Met with Peter King, Chair of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to discuss the end of year report.
- Met with Education Officers to discuss plans for the new Skerne Park School.
- Attended a meeting of the Sure Start Partnership
- Attended a concert of the Darlington Schools Orchestra.
- Attended a meeting of the Monitoring and Co-ordination Committee to discuss activities of our Committee.
- Met with David Walker, Assistant Director of Education.
- Attended the LEA School Governors' Appointments Panel.

**Councillor Cyndi Hughes**  
**Chair Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee**