

REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEE REPORT

NAME OF COMMITTEE:	Schools Forum
DATE OF MEETING:	25 April 2012
SUBJECT:	English Bacculaureate
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IS THE REPORT EXEMPT?	No
IS REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?	No

SUMMARY

At the Schools Forum on 25th January 2012, discussion took place around the proposals to support the English Bacculaureate (EBacc). The committee asked for further feedback on the value for money of the 2 year programme. Although the programme is over 2 years the larger part of the programme will relate to Year 2 as there were delays to the start of the programme in Year 1.

I have set out below some indicators which will help members assess the programme. However it is not possible to fully assess value for money until 2013 examination performance data is available. I would therefore like to bring a second report to Schools Forum at that time.

INTRODUCTION

Seeking to provide data on value for money part way through a 2-year programme is not a simple task, however I have used a number of proxy indicators to give some sense of measurement for members to assess. It will be easier to assess the outcomes of the programmes at the end of 2013, when we can measure against examination performance. It is worth noting the funding was seeking to work on two dimensions at the same time, both of which have very different expectations. The first dimension is to reinforce English Baccalaureate subjects in schools, ensuring a very strong base in Primary education where standards in some schools are lower than the national median, and to support schools at Secondary level where performance is below expectation or where it is challenging to raise standards. This dimension is also linked to improving transition between Primary and Secondary, therefore this area addresses the standards issue and relates to improving teaching in EBacc subjects.

The second and equally important dimension of the work is to promote activities which bring schools together to raise the level of enjoyment in subjects and enable gifted and talented young people to excel, on occasions in a competitive manner, such as Maths Mania or SlamJam.

At the end of January we were able to analyse the complete set of performance data for every school, LA maintained and Academies, to see where our strengths and weaknesses lie. At Primary level these were clearly visible and well known. At Secondary level the performance in most subjects was well above national level, however the performance in modern languages in each subject was lower than other EBacc subjects, at A*/A level and Grade C level. This will mean changes to the programme in 2012/13 to support this weakness across almost all schools.

In line with the Outstanding School Services brochure, these programmes are available to all schools and Academies.

ASSESSMENT OF VALUE FOR MONEY

Dimension 1 – Raising Standards in EBacc Subjects

In the Primary sector there have been 65 courses in subjects ranging from Phonics, to English, maths, science, gifted and talented, transition KS2 to KS3, and maths and English digital media. The take-up of these courses has been extremely good with the best average group size being 29, and the lowest being 15. The evaluations to date indicate 95% are deemed good or better; we offer money-back guarantees plus 10% for any course deemed inadequate. It should be noted some of these courses are spread over the financial year. There have been 18 Subject Leader cluster meetings for English and maths. There have been a number of conferences to support science and each of these have attracted 45 or more schools. More are planned for 2012/13 and these will seek to help schools run their own workshops in future years. Many of the requests for support have been school based and vary in nature from support for individual teachers, to whole staff development. Over 240 schools have accessed this support. This bridges the raising standards and the dimension concerned with engaging and enthusing young people and developing gifted and talented.

The final area in this section concerns the Booster Classes where 66 targeted schools are engaged in RALF (Reading at Level Four). RALT (Reading at Level Two) engages 90 schools. These are sustained, in depth programmes working on under-performance in schools. There are also 57 targeted Easter Schools with new resources specifically written

for Lincolnshire programmes. The 57 schools were the maximum we could assist, but there will be more in 2013. The 2012 Summer Schools have yet to take place, but 10 schools have been identified with focus on Y5 pupils. Most of this work is school focused, with links to support programmes for in-school work.

In the Secondary sector there has been greater emphasis on in-school work in specific subject areas. This has targeted schools with low performance across Secondary Modern, Grammar and Comprehensive sectors. As well as the traditional English, maths, science, MFL and Humanities support across the 48 Secondary schools, some have support in more than one area, and 9 schools have received intensive 6-week support in Phonics. This has proved highly successful and will be extended to 2012/13. This Secondary support work has included tutoring in specialist subject areas or where new knowledge or skills are required to help schools prepare new schemes of work. Schools are constantly seeking additional support to improve the quality of teaching and we see this emphasis growing over the coming year. Analysis of the data indicates the need to place more emphasis on intervention in MFL.

Dimension 2 – Bring to Life EBacc Subjects and Promote Gifted and Talented

In the Primary sector we have Maths Mania, a competition in a regional format leading to finals with 100 Primary schools taking part. This programme is very competitive and places real focus on maths, both for fun but also linking it to high achievement. The Family Maths Challenge also has a regional structure. In the first year this had 30 schools taking part. The third area is the Junior Varsity Challenge. An EBacc subject quiz which has 80 schools taking part. In addition to this there are 20 schools involved in the French Culture Days, 15 schools in the World War 2 experience, and MFL Masterclasses where schools have 10 days of MFL support. There is also the Breaking History Code and planned activities for geography with the environmental activities. A popular event is the 'Isaac was Here' science course and this links to the Secondary course 'Labs 4 U'. In total more than 170 schools including Academies have been involved in these activities and many are already signed up for the 2012/13 programmes. The response to these activities has been first class and we expect growth in these programmes in the next 12 months.

In the Secondary sector there has been a range of activities and these have been student focused, ranging from language activities, geography and history days with specific themes, to the highly successful SlamJam and a new initiative called Debate Mate. These seek to develop self confidence in young people.

Another new initiative, which currently involves 12 schools, is called 'Tall Ships' and is training in schools that focuses on the delivery of weekend activities; this currently involves 10 schools. This programme also supports the excellent cross-phase work in the LAFTAs and the nationally acclaimed Rooted in Reading programme.

CONCLUSION

This report gives some background information to the early activities developed as part of the EBacc programme which have been very well received by schools, teachers and young people. 87% of Lincolnshire schools have accessed parts of the programme to date and evaluations overall show 94% good or better in terms of assessment. We have correspondence praising these programmes, and have received no complaints. In the pupil based activities we have over 310 different schools engaged in these and these will increase over the next few months. All feedback has been very positive.

It is not easy to categorically state if it has been good value for money until outcomes on the standards issues are fully assessed. It does mean however that Lincolnshire schools are in a stronger position to meet the needs of the EBacc and the emerging tougher agendas set by Ofsted and the Government than schools in many other parts of the country.

A more detailed report will be provided in 16 months time, when we will have clear statistical data on outcomes for young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum to accept this report, with a view to receiving a more comprehensive report in 12 months' time, when outcomes can be fully measured.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

N/A