

REVIEW OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION

Since November 1997 Norfolk LEA has been engaged in a formal Review of School Organisation, focusing on three main issues:

age of transfer;
small rural schools;
unfilled places.

Extensive County-wide consultation took place early in 1998 on these issues and there was widespread support for the Authority taking positive initiatives to secure a more coherent and robust pattern of organisation which would:

lead to greater stability and accountability;
guide long-term planning;
help win bids for capital funding from Government;
give parents and staff a clear indication of long-term objectives;
contribute positively to LEA and school improvement strategies.

2. The reports to the Education Committee on the Review have been sent to all Headteachers on each occasion. This paper provides a summary.
3. In September 1998, the Education Committee agreed policy on age of transfer, as follows:
 - The Committee recognises that a coherent and cohesive pattern of school organisation is vital to the quality of education in the County.
 - The LEA will plan towards common ages of transfer at 7+ and 11+ across the County with a recognition that where 5-11 schooling is a practical and affordable alternative to 5-7 and 7-11 this be preferable so as to avoid children changing school twice in the primary years.
 - Given the need to secure capital resources and to engage in extensive local consultation, a phased approach be adopted to achieving this goal. Each area within the County should be given an indication as soon as possible of when specific proposals for reorganisation would be capable of being brought forward and in the LEA's School Organisation Plan at the latest.
 - The Committee intends to address the situation in those areas with dual age transfer as the highest priority, although single age 12+ transfer areas which appear to offer cost effective schemes of reorganisation because of the incidence of unfilled places should also be seen as a high priority.
 - Particular attention will be given to minimising the adverse effects on staff displaced in any way by organisational change.