



ITEM No. 0 9 (APPENDIX)

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

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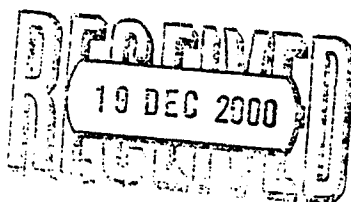
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BARONESS BLACKSTONE

Minister of State

Mr Mark Carriline
Director of Education
and Leisure
Chapel Street
Salford
M3 5LT

14 December 2000



Dear Mr Carriline

AREA INSPECTION: FOLLOW UP

I am writing to invite you to play an important role in the follow up to the report of the area inspection of Salford which is being published today. I enclose for reference a copy of this report.

Area inspections of 16-19 provision are a key means of securing improvements in education and training for young people. By looking across an area as a whole, the inspectorates are able, for the first time, to identify what weaknesses need to be addressed and what opportunities there are for structural change, better collaboration and what may need to be done to raise the competence of all organisations involved in provision for young people. The inspections provide a platform for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the LEA to work with partners to raise standards across the whole range of provision for young people in the areas covered.

The Salford inspection includes much that is positive. There has been a significant improvement in the staying on rates and participation in work based training is above the regional and national average. There is effective collaboration between institutions which is beginning to have real impact and a range of successful strategies have been developed to encourage young people to continue in post 16 education. However, the report highlights a number of areas which need improvement. For example,

- staying on rates which are well below the national average;
- 'A' level achievement rates which are below the national average with considerable variations across the area;
- similar variance in achievement at GNVQ level;
- a decline in NVQ achievement for those on work based training;
- a high percentage of young people in the area who do not participate in education, training or employment;



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



- many students in the area start their post 16 studies with poorer entry qualifications than is the case nationally;
- no unified strategy for 16-19 provision in the area.

Some of these issues will need a collective response from all local partners with others more individually focused.

For early reports the Department has co-ordinated the follow up. From April 2001 the LSC and the LEA will be responsible for preparing action plans in response to area inspection reports. We should start to reflect that position now.

I should like LSC and the Authority to provide the Department with a co-ordinated action plan, on how issues raised in the Salford inspection report can be taken forward, by the end of May 2001. All partners in the area will have something to contribute to the development and implementation of the strategy to follow up on the issues raised in the inspection. They should be engaged at the outset. I would expect the local Learning Partnership to play a particularly important role. I would be grateful if you could let John Harwood at the LSC have your thoughts and proposals for action by 30 March 2001. I know that John will want to ensure that the local Learning and Skills Council establishes effective links to take forward this work as soon as possible and the LSC will be in touch with you direct. In the meantime, I encourage you to consider the report within the LEA and with schools and begin developing possible proposals for action.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Harwood at the LSC.

Yours sincerely
Tessa Blackstone

TESSA BLACKSTONE

ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN AREA INSPECTION REPORT ON SALFORD

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