

Council, Tuesday 28 June 2005 : Agenda Item 9.2

Opposition Policy Item to be moved by Councillor Barry Rawlings

Council is ashamed to be the worst Local Education Authority (LEA) in London with more failing schools than in any other London borough, including Hackney, Lambeth and Islington.

Council notes that ten schools where the quality of education is not satisfactory have gone into special measures or serious weaknesses since 14 May 2002, and that five schools went into special measures during 2004 alone.

Council recalls the debate held at the council meeting in July 2004 concerning Barnet's schools in special measures, with serious weaknesses and underachieving, at which the Administration ignored proposals to take action to tackle failing schools.

Council believes that the hard work and commitment of teachers and other staff at the schools affected should be recognised, but Council regrets that - rather than improve education services in Barnet - the administration's Cabinet Members for Education are responsible for Barnet becoming the worst LEA in London.

Council urges the Cabinet to now take responsibility for turning around those schools already in difficulties and to prevent any more of Barnet's hard working schools from falling into serious weaknesses or special measures.

Council requests Cabinet to bring forward a report to the Cabinet meeting on 11 October:

- setting out an analysis of why the administration fails to prevent schools falling into special measures/serious weaknesses, and setting out a strategy for early identification and support for schools causing concern/in difficulties, and to work more closely with parents and families,
- to introduce a mentoring system for young people as proposed by Councillor Agnes Slocombe's Private Member's Bill in January 2003,
- to review how the cuts in the youth service since 2002 have had an impact on schools, discipline, and pupil attainment,
- to restore investment in the youth service to work with disaffected pupils, and
- to implement Department for Education and Skills guidance for respecting political balance on the School Organisation Committee.