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Sent: 01 June 2009 07:31
To: ██████████, ██████████ DCSF OFFICIALS
Cc: LA OFFICIAL ██████████@somerset.gov.uk; info@homeeducationcentre.org.uk
Subject: Report of Field Trip to Chard Home Education Centre May 6th 2009.

Attachments: ChardHomeEdCentreSomersetLA.doc



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Hi everyone

I am attaching a report of the recent Field Trip I made to Chard Home Education Centre which I am also pasting inline below.

██████████, please could this be shared with Graham, thanks.

I need to say a big thank you to everyone who took part in the meeting and helped me with the follow-up questions.

CHARD HOME EDUCATION CENTRE AND SOMERSET LOCAL AUTHORITY

██████████, Chair Education Otherwise Government Policy Group May 2009

On Wednesday May 6th I visited Chard Home Education Centre to meet members of the HEC Management Committee as well as many family visitors to the centre.

LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA) OFFICIALS

In the afternoon ██████████ and ██████████ from Somerset Local Authority came over to the Centre to share information about support for home educators in Somerset.

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The field trip to Chard was initially planned with ██████████ from the DCSF Elective Home Education team to investigate a model of innovative good practice with regard to support for home educators. (The first field trip to North Yorkshire took place in February 2009). It was envisaged that DCSF would send a report to Graham Badman at the DCSF Independent Home Education Review.

The Home Education Centre, Chard
Home educators and Somerset LA
Access to exams for home educated young people in Somerset

The Home Education Centre

<http://www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk/>

The Home Education Centre is a Somerset-based home education group. HEC has families from Somerset, Dorset and Devon, with over 50 children ranging from babies to teenagers. It has a management committee which meets regularly to discuss policy issues. HEC gathers for 2 full days a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays during term time.

More information and photos can be found here
<http://www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk/blog.html>

There is a sliding scale of charges for families with more than one child, plus a reduced rate for

families on low income. Children who attend both weekly sessions get a discount on the second session. Families can pay weekly or termly. HEC hires a 'Young Peoples Centre' in Chard for each session, comprising a studio, a quiet space, the main hall, the outside space, several storerooms. HEC also has use of the kitchen. There is parking space outside and level access for disabled participants. Rent is covered from annual membership subs and session fees.
http://www.somerset-youth.co.uk/club/chard_young_peoples_centre/8

On a practical level, there is a jobs rota drawn up at the beginning of each session, including outdoor supervision of free play sessions and organised sport activities. Different parents volunteer to share skills, for example music, languages, science, drama. The children have devised their own acceptable behaviour policy which is pinned on the wall.

Recently, through a good working relationship HEC built up with Somerset, the LA offered a specific HE grant to buy equipment and resources for the centre to "support as many home educating families in Somerset as possible".

The Management Committee of HEC wished me to recap several points which have previously been made to the Review team, namely that the LA grant supported the provision which HEC had already developed and also that HEC co-wrote the contract for the grant with the Somerset EHE team.

The Management Committee believes this demonstrates that Somerset LA is supporting home educators in the way the home educators actually want. The Committee also feels it highlights the willingness of the LA to work co-operatively with home educators.

Sport

HEC negotiated use of a field, belonging to the neighbouring rugby club for sports use.

HEC obtained a specific sports funding from 'the Healthy Living Pooled Fund' to purchase sports equipment, hire sports coaches and train parents in order to be able to continue providing sport in the future.

<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=34730>
for more information about Somerset's Healthy Living Pooled Fund.

HEC says "this means that the children will be able to experience many different sporting activities led by qualified coaches. It also gives any of our adults, who wish to participate, a chance to work alongside the coaches, so that we will be able to continue to offer a variety of sports to the children in the future."

Home educators and Somerset LA

In Somerset, they talk of home educators "being registered with the authority" or "being on the register." This does not simply mean that home educators are known to the LA. There is an additional level of voluntary registration whereby collective funding is obtained by the LA in order to support the group of home educated children and young people in "Alternative Provision." The collective funding is used not only to offer resources and support to individual families on the register but also to benefit home educating families in general, for example with the grant to the Home Education Centre, which is located in Somerset but has members from outside the county.

Somerset LA website says:

"Last year the Local Authority accessed some funding which enabled us to develop our role in respect of home educating families. Over the year the Local Authority offered a number of activities and resources for children and young people on the home educating register. The activities included literacy and numeracy workshops, anti-racist drama workshops, storytelling workshops and a residential experience at Kilve Activity Centre in the Quantocks. The two

advisers working with home educating families also provided resources such as check sheets, topic worksheets, mind maps, information from the Basic Skills Agency, Connexions and Anne Frank DVDs. <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/learning/eds/electivehomeeducation/>
The following is taken from Somerset Council website which asks home educating families to consider registering in order that the LA can access funding.

"The LA has worked with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to find ways of accessing funding to support home educating families. We understand that if we register children and young people who are home educated as being members of an 'Alternative Provision' we will be able to get some funding.

Agreeing to your child being on this additional register does not mean they will be on a school roll or have to attend school. It does mean the Local Authority has to report anonymously on the group as a whole to DCSF."

http://www.six.somerset.gov.uk/equalities/do_download.asp?did=23452
non compulsory registration form (so that the LA can access funding for EHE)
http://www.six.somerset.gov.uk/equalities/do_download.asp?did=23777
Link to report of residential for EHE children and young people 2007

The week after my trip to HEC, David Taylor, Somerset's Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Directorate was due to visit Chard in mid May.
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/childrenservices/>

Access to exams for home educated young people in Somerset

HEC has been working hard to establish links with local colleges in the area and has been supported at meetings by Somerset LA who are looking to fund exams for home educated young people under 16 on the Somerset register. Richard Huish College in Taunton has proved favourably disposed towards home education and HEC has just finalised a series of exam options to be made available to home educated children in neighbouring Devon and Dorset as well as Somerset.


HEC has undertaken to research the number of young people wishing to sit exams in the summer of 2010.

Issues raised with the college include: access to exams for under 16s; cost of exam board fees; cost of invigilation; additional needs/Access Arrangements costs; additional needs assessments; non-standard entry (ie entry to Level 3 or A Level equivalent courses without GCSEs) ; authentication of coursework; assessment for Science practicals; the new system of controlled assessments; IGCSEs as increasingly likely option because of problems with GCSE controlled assessments for private candidates.

<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/qca.htm>
for more information about the problem with controlled assessment.
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/538/29.%20Access%20Arrangements%20Booklet.pdf> for more information about Access Arrangements with regard to candidates having disabilities or special needs.

Contacts

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<http://www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk/contact-us.html>
Contact form on the HEC website.

LA OFFICIAL

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Fiona

[REDACTED]
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Trustee Education Otherwise
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