

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES****Councillor Maureen Bateson****PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: Gladys Rhodes White  
DATE: 08 June 2012****CHILDREN'S SERVICES****Children In Our Care Celebration Of Achievement**

This year we decided to hold two separate events one for secondary/post 16 young people and one for primary aged children. The secondary event was held on 23rd May and was based on an Oscars evening. The primary event was held on Saturday 9th June and there was a children's entertainer, circus workshops and a short circus show. Both events were held at Blackburn Youth Zone who very kindly sponsored the events. All young people nominated were awarded with a prize and a special award was given to one young person in each of the five categories who had done the most towards each outcome.

**Peer Challenge**

A Peer Challenge took place over 2 days in May within the Department. These peer challenges form part of a programme of sector-led improvements co-ordinated by, the Local Government Association and Childrens Improvement Board and supported by the DFE. All regions have to arrange a programme of reviews, with officers from neighbouring authorities participating. Bury conducted our review and we will be conducting one in Cheshire East in September. The focus of the challenge was around the post-inspection activity including the action plan. They met with a number of managers and also attended a social worker training session.

The Peer Challenge team concluded that overall judgements reflected the good quality of work seen and our action plan was clear, comprehensive and contained appropriate actions, with a good system in place to track progress and collate evidence. Our staff made an excellent impression on the team who said they found our staff to be "high quality, bright, reflective and dynamic people" who work well as a team and are being well invested in through the Framework for the Future.

**Children in the Care of the Local Authority and Children subject to Child Protection Plans**

As at June 1st, there were 348 Children in care; and 233 children subject to child protection plans. Both these figures remain steady from the year end position in 2011/12 (and mean there are 40 fewer children in care and 30 fewer children subject to child protection plans than was the case in November 2011). In spite of these falls in the number of children with critical safeguarding risks, the amount of incoming work at the front door of children's social care continues to be high (15% higher than the year before); and the pressure on workers remains. This requires careful on-going management of caseloads.

## Multi-Agency Forum

The Children, Young People and Families Trust held a multi-agency forum on Wednesday 23rd May at the Boulevard Centre in Blackburn. This was well attended with representatives from both the Trust and the voluntary sector. The format of the event was a 'question time' style panel of experts, who responded to a series of questions from the attendees. Questions covered the role of the new Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), the impact of the changes around schools and education and the relationship with the local authority, the impact of the Welfare Reform Bill particularly on the most vulnerable and also the role of the local authority.

## EDUCATION

### Schools and Learning Celebration Event

The department held their annual breakfast Celebration of Achievement on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012. This is an opportunity for all our borough schools and Children's Centres to get together and celebrate their educational achievements. Activities are held throughout the morning for the pupils to enjoy and be a part of the celebration. We have been fortunate to secure sponsorship for this event from Connexions and Twin Valley Homes.

### School Inspections

A new Ofsted inspection framework for Schools was introduced from 1 January 2012. Under the revised inspection arrangements, Ofsted assert that inspectors are focusing more sharply on those aspects of schools' work that have the greatest impact on raising achievement.

The following schools have been inspected by Ofsted since the last Council Forum meeting:

- Tauheedul Islam Girl's High – following a 2 day Ofsted inspection on the 1st and 2nd May, TIGHS was rated as **outstanding** across the board
- St Mary & St Joseph's RC Primary – Ofsted inspection on 2nd and 3rd May with outcome as **good** across the board
- Cedars Infants – Ofsted Inspection on 10th and 11th May with an inspection outcome of **good** across the board
- St Stephen's 23/24 May – HMI Monitoring Visit –

### Music Service Events

A number of very successful events have taken place during the last few weeks showcasing the talents of our pupils. These include:

- A keyboard concert involving 30 pupils from 12 schools took place at St. Paul's RC to celebrate the progress of individual pupils. It was very well received by over 150 parents and friends.
- **Darwen Live** - both the Music Service Big Band and Wind Bands performed
- **Steel Pans** – performed and offered workshops at Lytham Road Adolescent Support Unit Jubilee Fete
- **The Mini Sing** – Now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year saw the largest number of participants to date with over 500 pupils taking part with the final performance taking place in King Georges Hall on 12<sup>th</sup> June.
- **The Big Sing** - took place over two days on 13/14<sup>th</sup> June rather than one after we were overwhelmed with requests for places.
- **Celebrations for the arrival of the Olympic Torch on 23<sup>rd</sup> June** - included performances by pupils learning the Dhol through the Wider Opportunities and

peripatetic tuition, our Primary Choir being joined by some school choirs and our Senior Steel Pan Group.

- **Annual Rockfest** will take place on 29 June. This is now in its 7th year and involves 6 of the Secondary Schools. This year we have also formed a Primary Rock Group from Year 6 pupils and we hope this will support Year 6/7 transition.

### **BSF Operational Projects**

**Pleckgate** – The external works are progressing well with handover of the landscaped areas to the front of the building and external sports pitches on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. The final work to be undertaken is the reinstatement of the temporary car park adjacent to Ramsgreave Avenue which will be complete by mid June. The school celebrated its official opening on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, with an Olympic torch theme. The Olympian, Tom Lancashire was the special guest of honour.

### **BSF Projects in Construction**

All projects in construction have experienced some delay during the build phase predominantly due to extreme weather. However, the Local Education Partnership and its supply chain has implemented recovery programmes to mitigate this delay and are confident that the planned service availability dates as follows will be achieved.

- Darwen Vale 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012
- Witton Park 20<sup>th</sup> August 2012
- Blackburn Central High School 6<sup>th</sup> August 2012

The construction phase has commenced at St Bede's Roman Catholic High School. The works will be complete for the start of the September 2014 autumn term. This is a phased build which will be carried out whilst the existing school remain on site.

The construction phase will commence at TIGHS in September 2012 and be complete in time for the 2014 autumn term.

### **BSF New Project Development**

The LA is currently evaluating the LEP's stage 2 proposals for OLSJ and St Thomas's PRU. We are scheduled to achieve financial close on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2012. St Thomas's PRU will commence in July 2012 and OLSJ will commence in August 2012.

The planned completion dates for the 2 schemes still in design development are:

- St Thomas Centre November 2012
- Our Lady and St John RC High School September 2013

### **Every Action Has Consequences Education Support Pack**

Mr and Mrs Rodgers parents of Adam Rodgers officially launched the Education Support Pack for all schools and partner agencies on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012. The pack has been designed to support the key message about the impact and consequences of alcohol and violence. Adam, was the victim of a 'single punch' which killed him following his attempts to break up a fight. As a Council we are positively supporting this work and are distributing the pack to all schools through the Local Safeguarding Children Board.