

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING DIRECTOR:
LISA BIBBY**

DATE: 26 September 2013

ADMISSIONS SUCCESS

The Admissions team met the published admission dates ensuring that offers of secondary school places were made by the national offer date of 1 March 2013. Admissions to reception, were made on 23 April 2013; the local 'offer day'. Offers of school places for children transferring for the four infant to junior schools were also made on 23 April. A mini admissions round was held for children whose parents applied for their child(ren) to transfer to the Olive School and offer letters were also sent on offer day.

99% of children were offered a place at one of their preferred secondary schools. The corresponding figure for 2012 was 99.3% however there were 450 additional applications for this year.

Additionally, 86.5% of children were offered their 1st preference for primary school with 95.9% of children being offered one of their preferred schools.

THREE LOCAL PUPILS REWARDED FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The achievements of Jordan Gregory, Huzaifah Valli and Melissa Dabrowsk have been recognised under the Education Welfare Reward Scheme for improved school attendance. The three pupils each received WH Smith vouchers to the value of £30.

Melissa received the award for 100% attendance at both primary and high school and Jordan for 100% attendance at primary school. Huzaifah received the award for his determination to build up his attendance following a heart operation.

SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

Twenty nine inspection reports have been published for schools within the Authority for the academic year 2012/13 (as at 23rd August 2013). Twenty of these schools were judged to be good or better, eight were judged to require improvement and one was judged inadequate. Of the twenty nine inspections, fourteen have improved on their previous judgement, eleven maintained their current judgement and four moved down to a lower judgement.

As at the end of March 2013, 81% of all schools within Blackburn with Darwen were judged to be good or better, compared to 79% of schools throughout England. At the end of quarter 1 for 2013/14, the percentage of schools within Blackburn with Darwen judged to be good or better had risen to 82%; with 81% of children attending these schools.

CEDARS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hawthorns Junior School closed to the pupils at the end of the summer term 2013. Cedars Infant School has been enlarged to accommodate the Hawthorns pupils and become Cedars Primary School from September 2013. This process has taken one academic year from its inception in September 2012. The newly formed school is currently a three form entry school with a nursery on site and will accommodate 680 pupils when full.

A Steering Group was formed in September 2012, composed of LA Officers, Governors, staff from both schools and HR Adviser, to support and advise the Headteacher on the process. The Headteacher of the former Infant School, Mr Steve Bladon, has worked extremely hard on managing and maintaining the momentum of change to ensure that the process went smoothly and staff of both schools were dealt with in a sympathetic, yet professional way during this emotive time of recruiting to the new school. This approach also ensured that there was minimum disruption to the running of both schools and to the education of the children.

Everything is now in place for the new academic year with a new school logo, uniform, 108 newly recruited staff in addition to some of the existing staff and some refurbishments to the buildings. Further planned developments are in the pipeline to establish the new primary school as a flagship school for the borough.

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Provisional exam data has been released to primary and secondary schools in July and August. Early indications are that there has been a rise in the headline performance measures for both Primary schools and Secondary schools.

Primary schools are now being measured by the proportion of the children leaving the school at or above the expected level in Reading, Writing and Maths. Provisional figures from primary schools show that 75% of children were leaving with at least the expected level in all three subjects, up 3% on the previous year's performance.

Provisional figures for secondary schools released to them in the past three weeks shows an overall increase across the borough of 3% in the main headline measure, with 60% of students in local schools attaining 5 or more GCSEs with grades between A* and C, including English Language and Maths.

Figures will be firmed up and then published in the national performance tables before and after Christmas 2013.