

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & EDUCATION**COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING****PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING DIRECTOR:
LISA BIBBY****DATE: 7 November 2013****OFSTED INSPECTIONS**

Since the last Council Forum full inspection reports for two primary schools have been published.

Blackburn St Thomas CE Primary School was judged to be 'good' across all the key judgement areas, in line with its previous judgement. St Paul's RC Primary school, Feniscowles was judged to 'require improvement'. Previously, the school was deemed to be good.

The overall current percentage of schools deemed good or better in BwD (excluding St Paul's) is 79%, in line with national averages (as at the end of March 2013). The national figure should be updated soon as the HMI publishes their annual report in the next couple of months.

ACADEMY UPDATE

Due to the complexities surrounding the conversion of schools that are in a PFI building, the planned conversion of Witton Park is now unlikely to take place until January/February 2014.

Representatives of the DfE's Underperforming Schools and Academy Broker division visited Darwen Vale in October to explore the "presumed" conversion of Darwen Vale as a consequence of its recent inadequate judgement. No decision has yet been made on the conversion and any proposal would be subject to consultation with the Governing Body or potential sponsor.

St James CE Primary School is currently consulting on a decision to convert.

MUSIC SERVICE – BIG BAND

The Blackburn with Darwen Music Service Big Band performed 6 high profile concerts in 5 days, sharing the stage with other international artists at this year's Aberdeen International Youth Festival. This was the second year that the group performed at the 10 day festival which was once again a great success. The Big Band will also be performing a further concert at the Fernhurst on Blackburn Road, Ewood, on Sunday 10 November at 8.00pm.

SCHOOLS STAFF RETIREMENT EVENT

The Mayor played host to retired headteachers and staff on 2 October, thanking them for their hard work and dedication to children and young people across schools in Blackburn with Darwen over many years. A presentation

ceremony took place inside the Mayor's Parlour with The Mayor and Cllr Harling presenting guests with commemorative gifts.

'YOUR CALL' INITIATIVE

A proposal was put forward to the 'Your Call' corporate steering group to support good school governance and recruit school governors. Its primary aim was to raise awareness of governor vacancies across the borough, and where possible facilitate the recruitment of governors at hard to fill governing bodies.

Publicity for the campaign was extensive and so far the department is pleased with the interest and enthusiasm shown. We have approximately 20 individuals who have expressed an interest in becoming a governor. Alongside community governor vacancies the department hopes to fill a small number of LA vacancies.

TRADED SERVICES – ANNUAL SCHOOL SURVEY

This year's school customer satisfaction survey was conducted online with 42% (30) of Blackburn with Darwen schools participating - 46% (26) of primary schools, 15% (2) of secondary & special schools and 67 % (2) of nursery schools.

The average overall service score for all services rated good and outstanding was 88% compared to 72% last year, an increase of 16%. This year 90% of schools participating in the survey have rated Schools and Education Core Services as good or outstanding compared to 63% last year, an increase of 27%. In addition 81% of schools participating rated Traded Services as good or outstanding compared to 73% last year, an increase of 8%.

It is pleasing to see that our concerted efforts to improve service delivery seem to be having a positive impact and an analysis of the comments made by schools identified a number of common factors to be considered for the continued development and improvement of services for schools.