

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: LINDA CLEGG
DATE: 29 January 2015**

BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE – PROJECT COMPLETION

The final Building Schools for the Future (BSF) scheme for St Bede's RC High School achieved handover in December 2014 and follows four years of investment in the borough's secondary schools. The programme throughout its lifetime has seen the delivery of 4 new build schools (3 of which benefit from Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding) and the refurbishment of 4 schools resulting in a total investment of £138 million.

As well as improved educational facilities and significant ICT infrastructure investment, the programme has resulted in wider social and economic benefits to the borough. The PFI school buildings and their associated sporting facilities are available for the benefit of the community and are centres for community use. Spend on local labour and local suppliers across the programme totalled £52.8m.

The BSF programme has been very effective in delivering apprenticeship opportunities for young people. As measured as a percentage of site labour across the programme, apprentices represented over 7.5% of the workforce. A total of 78 apprenticeship opportunities have been supported across the programme to date from Construction through to ICT and Facilities Management.

SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

Since the previous Council Forum, three inspection reports have been published for schools within the Authority. Both Turncroft Nursery School and Ashworth Nursery School were judged to be 'outstanding'. Turncroft Nursery maintained their previous judgement with inspectors highlighting within their inspection report that "*Children's outcomes are transformed at this exceptional school*". Ashworth Nursery improved on their previous judgement with inspectors including within their inspection report that "*The nursery is extremely successful in preparing its children for the next stage in their education...*". Cedars Primary School was also judged to be 'good' in all areas, maintaining their previous inspection judgement.

EDUCATION, HEALTH & CARE PLANS - MODEL OF BEST PRACTICE

In September 2014, Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans replaced the system for providing children and young people with a statement of special educational need to ensure a joined up approach from Children's Services, Adults Social Care and Health for children and young people with complex needs from birth up to the age of 25.

The Department for Education (DfE) has commended the local authority on publishing the Blackburn with Darwen arrangements on the EHC process

and 'Local Offer', which is an online resource that details services, support and guidance available to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0 – 25 and their families.

The DfE will be promoting the Blackburn with Darwen EHC transfer arrangements as models of best practice when consulting with other local authorities.

PUPIL ABSENCE

The latest Department for Education statistics show that Blackburn with Darwen schools are continuing to perform very well with regards to tackling pupil absence. The local authority is not only exceeding the performance levels of comparative authorities, but our secondary schools are now also outperforming the national and the North West regional figures. Illness (not medical or dental appointments) remains the most common reason for pupils' absence.

The local authority's current overall absence rate of 4.2% (for state funded primary and secondary schools combined) is lower than both the national (4.4%) and North West region (4.3%) levels.

PUPIL PREMIUM AWARDS SUCCESS

Brookhouse Primary School and The Redeemer Church of England Primary School have both won £1000 in the Key Stage 2 category of the Department for Education 'Pupil Premium Awards'. The schools have been invited to apply for a larger prize due to the excellent progress of their disadvantaged pupils in their end of Key Stage tests.

Disadvantaged pupils in both schools have made at least expected progress and achieved results above the national average. This success is testament to the hard work and commitment of staff, pupils and families at the schools.