

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & EDUCATION**

**COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: LINDA CLEGG  
DATE: 16 July 2015**

### **BIG SING & MINI SING CONCERTS**

The Music Service welcomed over 500 Infant, Junior and Secondary school children to King Georges Hall on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> June to take part in the annual Mini Sing and Big Sing Concerts. The schools were encouraged this year to perform as individual schools, in addition to the communal songs. Over 25 Primary and Junior schools took part and 2 Secondary schools. Both evenings were resounding successes which is testament to the enthusiasm and participation of the schools.

### **SCHOOL INSPECTIONS**

Since the previous Council Forum only 2 inspection reports have been published for schools within the Authority and this was due to pre-election Purdah. Both Belmont Primary School and Darwen Aldridge Enterprise Studio School were judged to be 'good'.

Since the beginning of 2014-15 academic year, 17 inspection reports have been published for schools within the authority. Of the 17 inspections, 13 schools have been judged to be good or better with the remaining 4 schools all judged to require improvement and no schools being judged as inadequate. 10 schools have maintained their good or better judgement, with a further 3 schools either receiving a better judgement of good or being judged good in their first inspection.

### **HEADTEACHER RETIREMENTS**

The following Headteachers will be retiring at the end of the Summer term. We wish them well and thank them for their service to the children and young people of the borough.

- Susan Cliffe, Lower Darwen St James CE Primary
- Bernie Bickerton, Hoddlesden St Paul's CE Primary
- Barbara Cuff, St Anne's RC Primary

Jeff Brown, will commence as Headteacher at St Anne's RC Primary in September with Headteacher vacancies at Hoddlesden St Pauls' CE Primary, Lower Darwen St James CE Primary and Sacred Heart RC Primary. Interim leadership arrangements are in place at all three schools.

### **NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER RECRUITMENT**

The department facilitated the recruitment of 77 Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) to a pool of recommended candidates for 2014-15. Currently 17 of these NQTs have secured posts within Blackburn with Darwen schools from available vacancies.

The Teaching Schools Alliance Primary PGCE programme (Teach First) has proved a success with 14 out of the 18 students securing a teaching role, 11 within the borough. The remaining 4 graduates are continuing with

the interview process. The Primary teaching partnership comprises of 14 Blackburn with Darwen host schools and the University of Cumbria.

The Secondary school PGCE programme has also been successful, with 8 of the 11 students securing a teaching role at a secondary school, 2 of these being within the borough. The remaining 3 trainees have either postponed application or delayed qualification.

## **DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION PRAISE FOR SEND PROCESSES**

The Department for Education (DfE) Advisor for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) visited the Council in May to review and provide feedback on the department's 'Local Offer' resource and Education, Health and Care Planning process. Feedback on both elements was positive, with the Advisor impressed by the volume of new and transfer plans completed. At the end of May 2015 almost 100 assessments were underway and in excess of 100 transfer reviews progressed.

A communications and engagement outcome report covering engagement activities for the Local Offer has been published and is available on [www.bwd-localoffer.org.uk](http://www.bwd-localoffer.org.uk). The Local Offer is an online resource for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (aged 0 – 25) and their families.

## **HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT CHANGES**

Home to School transport consists of statutory and discretionary transport provision. Consultations on proposed changes to discretionary home to school transport, alongside fares and rationalisation of routes, have concluded. Recommendations were approved at the June Executive Board with an implementation date of either September 2015 or September 2016. There are no changes to the statutory services provided.

The Council will continue to provide discretionary assistance where there is a temporary parental incapacity to accompany their child to school; for children with short term medical conditions; for emergency transport provision for those in dire need (house fire / flooding, domestic violence etc); and for those pupils admitted under the Fair Access protocol.

Provision will no longer be available for pupils who move house in years 6, 10 and 11 and live further than the statutory walking distance and pupils admitted under a "Managed Moves" protocol.

The charge for replacement bus passes, or amending them, will increase. Where we currently provide taxis for pupils, we will ask families to drive their children to the bus route and claim mileage.

The fares on bus services will be operated on the basis of £2.50 return for 3 miles or less and £3.50 return for journeys greater than 3 miles. Where schools agree to contribute significantly to the net subsidy costs, the higher fare will not be charged and the basic fare of £2.50 will be applied to all travellers. A review of routes and capacities will be undertaken to drive out further efficiencies.