

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

**COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: LINDA CLEGG  
DATE: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015**

### **SCHOOL INSPECTIONS**

Since the start of the Autumn term 2015/16, two inspection reports have been published for schools within the Authority. Both St Joseph's RC Primary School and St Paul's RC Primary School were judged to be 'good'. Both schools improved on their previous inspection judgement.

### **SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

Over 1900 secondary school applications for the September 2016 intake were received by the Pupil Support and Admissions team during September and October. Early indications are that 87.3% of applications were submitted online compared with 74.5% for 2015. This is a significant increase on the 2014 figure of 15%.

To encourage the uptake of the online facility, meetings and advice surgeries were held for parents in addition to information posters displayed in bus shelters and children's centres.

### **PREVENT CONFERENCE FOR GOVERNORS**

This year's annual governors conference took place in October at Witton Park Academy with over 100 governors and invited guests taking part. PREVENT was the chosen theme to reflect the new governor duty to prevent children and young people from being drawn into radicalisation and extremism.

The local authority PREVENT Team and Lancashire Constabulary provided key updates for discussion.

### **'CHILDREN FOR CHILDREN' CONCERT**

Over 300 primary and secondary school children took part in a 'Children for Children' concert on 30th November and 1st December at Blackburn Cathedral. As well as performing as schools choirs and singing collective songs, a number of children recited poems they had written about 'Winter'. Derian House Children's Hospice is the chosen charity for donations this year.

A second 'Children for Children' concert will be performed by children and young people as part of the 'Open Access Concert Series' on 8<sup>th</sup> December. The event, at Witton Park Centre, invites young people to turn up on the night to share their talents. The concert will also feature performances by the Music Hub's Music Ambassadors who are children eager to share their experiences of how the Music Hub has benefitted them.

## **HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT UPDATE**

As part of the extensive school transport consultation and our partnership work with schools, we committed to undertake a review of our existing school bus services and consider a rationalisation of routes which would deliver efficiencies in the transport service. This has been concluded and a subsequent procurement process has been completed.

With effect from January 2016, there will be revised school bus services with fewer buses and amended routes to maximise bus use and ensure that pupils are able to access an appropriate bus service to their school. This rationalisation has delivered significant savings whilst continuing to provide appropriate and timely bus services for our pupils.

An information leaflet outlining the changes has been sent to parents and the local authority website and individual school websites will highlight the new arrangements.

## **MUSIC SERVICE COMMUNITY GROUPS**

A number of new community music groups have been launched by the Music Service under the banner of 'Community Ensemble'. The groups are open access to anyone from the age of 7, from all skill levels, including those with little or no musical experience.

37 children and young people and a number of parents are currently taking part and volunteers from the community are being encouraged to get involved to support the young peoples' learning. As well as starting a new instrument from scratch, group members are mentored to compose new material and learn to read music.

Steel pan drumming is the focus for another project and children and adults are working towards a joint public performance in the town centre in the coming months. A 'Pop Recycle' band for teenagers is also attracting attention with young people supported to produce cover versions of their favourite bands.

All groups meet at the Bureau Centre for the Arts in St John's Church on Victoria Street, Blackburn.