

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

**COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: LINDA CLEGG  
DATE: 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

### **SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN CARE**

90 professionals attended the 'Children in Our Care, Promoting Educational Achievement' conference at Witton City Learning Centre in November. The event focussed on high educational aspirations for children in care and was attended by foster carers, social workers, independent reviewing officers, residential care staff and teachers. A Care Leaver gave a powerful overview of her experiences and successes in education and Clinical Psychologist, Dr Nick Shelley, provided an insight into 'Understanding the impact of early life trauma in the classroom'.

### **MINISTERIAL PRAISE FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS**

Department for Education Minister, Nick Gibb MP, has praised two local schools on their summer 2015 SATs results. St Cuthbert's CE Primary School was among the top 11 schools in the county based on sustained improvement in attainment at Level Four or above in reading, writing and maths each year from 2012.

Similarly, Intack Primary School was among the top 100 schools in the county for sustained improvement in attainment at Level 4 using the same measure. The Minister thanked both schools for their continuing drive towards high standards of educational achievement.

More widely, Blackburn with Darwen schools as a whole performed above the national average in terms of the proportion of children at or above expected levels of attainment by the time they leave primary school.

### **JUNIOR UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME**

Children's Services is working with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) to encourage vulnerable young people to engage with the Junior University programme. The 10 week part time programme delivered by the Widening Participation Team at UCLan targets year 10 pupils who are unlikely to consider progressing to university to give them a taste of university life. Topics include budgeting, broadening knowledge, life skills and academic workshops and a number of children in care have been identified to take up this fantastic opportunity.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEED AND DISABILITIES (SEND) INSPECTIONS**

The Department for Education has asked Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to undertake inspections of the effectiveness of local areas in fulfilling their responsibilities towards disabled children and young

people and those who have special educational needs, as part of the new duties contained in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The intention is that all local authority areas will be inspected over a five year period with the first inspections commencing in May 2016. The inspection is of the local area and not the local authority in isolation and the focus will be on how well partners work together to identify, meet need and demonstrate progress.

Decisions around which area will be inspected first will be based on intelligence from other Ofsted frameworks, therefore, if a recent inspection of a local authority or provision within a local authority led to a 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' judgement then this may lead to an early SEND inspection visit for the area. An Ofsted information event for North West local authorities is planned for early March, by which time the inspection framework will be published.

## **REVIEW OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANNING**

An independent review of the Blackburn with Darwen Education, Health and Care assessment and planning process has concluded. The review considered the effectiveness of the first 12 months of a new integrated process to identify and meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) across the borough.

Overall, findings have been positive with families reporting that the changes introduced have improved their experiences. Recommendations for further improvements include more family involvement during the mid part of the assessment process and further training for professionals on roles and responsibilities.

The full report will be published on the Local Offer website by the end of January, with recommendations taken forward by the 0-25 Complex Needs Strategic Partnership Board.

## **SCHOOL INSPECTIONS**

Three primary schools were inspected by Ofsted during November under a new challenging framework which was introduced in September 2015. Roe Lee Park Primary received an overall rating of 'requires improvement' with inspectors citing aspects of teaching and writing as areas for improvement. Personal Development & Welfare were rated as 'good' with many other positive areas recognised.

Avondale Primary similarly received a 'requires improvement' judgment despite Personal Development & Welfare and Early Years being rated as 'good'. The Schools Effectiveness Team is working with both schools to address the recommended areas for improvement.

St James' Lower Darwen maintained its 'good' rating from the previous inspection and staff were commended for demonstrating good pupil progress and leadership.