

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: LINDA CLEGG
DATE: 21st April 2016**

NEWFIELD SCHOOL IS 'OUTSTANDING'

Newfield School, which provides learning for children with complex needs aged 2-19, has improved on it's previous 'good' Ofsted rating to be judged 'outstanding' in all categories following an inspection in February.

The inspection report commented that the *'pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Their preparation for life beyond schools and for their next steps in education is first-rate'*.

The Inspector remarked upon the *'exceptional'* work of the school to promote pupil's rights and responsibilities and reported that *'by the time pupils leave the school, they have developed into well-rounded young people able and willing to make a positive contribution to society'*.

On academic outcomes for pupils, the inspector positively remarked that the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress, based on their starting points, is above that of their peers in mainstream schools.

CAREERS EVENT

Over 500 15-24 year olds thinking about taking their next step on their career path took part in Blackburn with Darwen's largest ever careers event on 10th March.

45 local employers and trainers exhibited in the Blackburn Sports & Leisure Centre and between them offered over 200 opportunities including apprenticeships, work placements, internships and graduate jobs. A whole host of sectors were represented including catering and hospitality, construction and engineering, digital and creative as well as health, social care, law and textiles.

Feedback from both young people and exhibitors has been very positive. The new Learning and Training Advisors, appointed to the Council's Post 16 Team in March, will make contact with a number of young people who attended to offer further support.

ANNUAL BIG SING

The Music Service's annual Big Sing brought together over 300 pupils from 14 schools to form a mass choir on 22nd March.

This year, the choir enthusiastically sang Disney Classics in King Georges Hall and individual schools also took centre stage to showcase their school choir's talent including memorable performances from St Cuthbert's and Intack Primary School.

The Music Service is working on preparations for the Mini Sing in May when over 400 Key Stage 1 pupils from 19 schools are expected to take to the stage.

SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS 2016

On 1st March the parents and carers of more than 2000 children found out which secondary school their child will be attending in September as Year 7 pupils. 74.7% of children residing in the borough received an offer for their first preference with over nine in ten local children receiving a place at one of their 3 preferences (92.2%).

The Pupil and Admissions Team has substantially increased the number of online secondary school admission applications to 85.8% from 20% just two years ago and this supports the drive to improve communication by developing online services.

The primary school national offer date is 16 April.

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN SCHOOLS DANCE FESTIVAL 2016

The 11th Blackburn with Darwen Schools Celebration of Dance was staged on 1st and 2nd March at King George's Hall to great acclaim. The event, which was organised by the Access to Learning Service, saw 1100 pupils from 45 schools performing to more than 2000 family and friends.

Audiences enjoyed a rich selection of performances this year as schools chose their own themes, which allowed them to link the dance to other work in school to maximise learning opportunities. Themes included clog dancing, the Rio Olympics, Weather; Multi-cultural Celebrations, Space and Friendship, but to name a few.

The event was a fantastic showcase for the borough and a credit to the children and staff who worked hard to put on two great shows.

THE WHITE PAPER: EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE EVERYWHERE, MARCH 2016

The Department of Education target is that all schools will be academies (or converting to an academy) by 2020. Most academies will be part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). By 2022, local authorities will no longer maintain schools and accountability will shift from the local authority to Academy Trusts who will be answerable to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

It is proposed that, by 2020, local authorities will 'step back from maintaining schools and school improvement' and deliver three core functions:

- Ensuring every child has a school place (pupil places, admissions, school transport policies and emergency planning)
- Ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met (SEND assessment and provision, attendance, alternative provision, safeguarding, LAC Virtual School)
- Acting as champions for all parents and families (promote local needs, SEND policy, commissioning and delivery, champion high standards)

There will be a new statutory duty placed on local authorities to facilitate the process of all maintained schools becoming academies.

If the White Paper is implemented, there will be a transition period from 2016 to 2022 during which the local authority is responsible and accountable for the performance of maintained schools but managing academy conversions. During this time, in local authority areas which are underperforming or where the local authority no longer has the capacity to maintain its schools, the Department for Education will take new powers to ensure schools become academies to a faster timescale.

If proposals to reform the schools national funding formula are also implemented there will also be a loss of up to £1.4m from the Education Services Grant from September 2017 but without the loss of duties or responsibilities.