

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING

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

LAUNCH OF THE 'NEW DIRECTIONS' SERVICE

A new in-house information, advice and guidance service for young people in Blackburn with Darwen was launched at the end of June. Following consultation with young people the service has been branded 'New Directions' and is part of the School Effectiveness team. The service will focus on young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training covering the 16-19 age range and up to age 25 if the young person has special educational needs or a disability (SEND).

The New Directions team is in regular contact with schools and post 16 providers and initial activity has included securing suitable post 16 destinations for all year 11 students across the borough. Drop in sessions are underway at the Everybody Centre (Blackburn) and Knott Street Youth Centre (Darwen). Over 1400 young people have been contacted via email, telephone and social media to promote the service and book one to one advice sessions.

HEADTEACHER UPDATES

The following Headteachers will be retiring at the end of the Summer term:

- Fiona Jack, Darwen Vale High School
- Gaynor Stubbs, Wensley Fold CE Primary

At Lammack Primary School, Paula Duckworth has been successfully appointed as Headteacher following the retirement of Tracey Wedgeworth earlier this year.

Headteachers who will be leaving or have left to pursue other opportunities are:

- Stuart Plowes, Avondale Primary school
- Hilary Hinchcliffe, St Silas CS Primary
- Catherine Monaghan, St Paul's RC Primary, Feniscowles

We wish them all well and thank them for their service to the children and young people of the borough. Interim leadership arrangements are in place at all schools where there are vacancies.

MUSIC PERFORMANCES ROUNDUP

Year after year the Music Service has offered an increased number of formal and informal performance opportunities for children and young people across the borough. During 2015/16 over 7,400 people enjoyed 185 concerts with 5 large events, 30 smaller concerts and 150 First Access concerts.

One of the larger events was the annual Mini Sing on 17th and 18th May, when 250 pupils from 19 Infant and Primary schools and Our Lady and St John Catholic College performed at King Georges Hall. Audiences at both performances were thoroughly entertained!

SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

Sacred Heart RC Primary School has maintained its Requires Improvement Ofsted judgement following an inspection in April. The published report makes reference to the strengths of the school including new teaching strategies introduced by the new Headteacher and how these have resulted in some improvements to the progress of pupils. Areas cited for improvement include the need to embed systems to measure, track and evaluate progress and to higher the expectations of leaders and teachers on what pupils can achieve.

Following an inspection in early June, St Edward's Catholic Primary School has improved on its previous inspection to be judged 'Good' in all areas. The inspection report highlights the 'excellent leadership of the headteacher' and remarks that the 'provision for pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being is outstanding.'

LETTERBOX CLUB FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The Blackburn with Darwen Virtual School is taking part in The Letterbox Club, which aims to provide enjoyable educational support for looked after children aged 5-11. The programme is managed by the reading charity BookTrust, in partnership with the University of Leicester.

The Letterbox Club focuses on improving a child's educational outlook by sending parcels of carefully selected materials for them to own and keep. Parcels are sent directly to the child at their home address and each parcel contains a variety of fiction and non-fiction books, number games and fun educational materials aimed at stimulating reading and educational activity in the home.

The children received their first parcel in May and will receive a monthly parcel thereafter for 6 months. If the child moves placement or returns to their birth family during this time, the parcel will be sent to their new address. Is it pleasing to note that the Virtual School has already received thankyou postcards from some of our children saying how much they enjoyed receiving their first parcel.