

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING

DIRECTOR: LINDA CLEGG

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PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Local primary schools continue to outperform schools in similar parts of the country, including the rest of East Lancashire. From initial analysis of the primary school results from 2017, it has been a year of consolidation. Based on provisional results, we are estimating an 8% rise in the proportion of children leaving Primary school at expected levels in Reading, Writing and Maths – up from 51% to 59%. National figures also show an 8% rise. Over 20 (out of 50) local primary schools have improved by 10% or more between 2016 and 2017.

Performance of schools serving our most deprived areas remains strong, as it was in 2016. However, there are schools that are struggling and we will be working with them over the coming year to improve outcomes for children attending those schools.

From the initial release of GCSE results, it appears that performance in Blackburn with Darwen schools was similar to last year in English and Maths. It is too early to comment further, as so much of the accountability framework changed from last year.

LONGSHAW NURSERY SCHOOL

Longshaw Nursery School was inspected by Ofsted on 17th and 18th May 2017. The overall outcome of the inspection was Inadequate based on the effectiveness of leadership and management.

The Ofsted report, published on 25th July 2017, states that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare; and outcomes for children are all good and informs of parent satisfaction and a number of strengths in each of these areas. However, serious weaknesses in leadership and governance is a limiting factor and this means the overall judgement is Inadequate.

The Local Authority has made an application to use its power of intervention to remove the current Governing Body and replace with an Interim Executive Board in order to move the school forward rapidly.

PRIMARY ENGINEER PROGRAMME

Last year 8 primary schools across the borough engaged with the Primary Engineer programme and received 50 per cent of the funding from Hive Business School. In the coming academic year another 8 primary schools have joined the programme and are again receiving the generous support of Hive.

The Primary Engineer programme aims to inspire children of all ages with science, mathematics and technology by using engineering as the 'wow factor'. The programme brings together teachers and local engineers to engage primary and secondary pupils with engineering, through projects mapped to the curriculum. Each school is linked to a local engineer with the aim being for teachers to deliver the project to whole classes of pupils with engineers acting as the expert in the room. Plans are underway to attract the borough's secondary schools to join the Secondary Engineer programme

CAREERS FAIR SUCCESS

The 'Blackburn with Darwen is Hiring' careers event took place on 14th September at Blackburn Cathedral and was organised by the New Directions Team and was a huge success. Over 2000 people attended the event, including over 1400 from schools across Blackburn and Darwen. The day was a great opportunity to showcase what the borough has to offer and inform young people of their potential next steps.

101 exhibitors, made up of employers, training and education providers set up in the Cathedral and the surrounding outside space. A number of exhibits offered interactive activities which were well received by visitors and helped to initiate conversation about opportunities in the borough.

The support from local business through sponsorship made the event possible and sponsors included Blackburn College, Cummins Mellor Recruitment, Hive Business School, Lancashire Employment and Skills Executive Partnership (LESEP) and Organic.

PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

2150 children residing in Blackburn with Darwen applied for a primary school reception place for this academic year. Over 95% of local children received an offer of a place at one of their three preferred schools with 86.05% being offered their first preference. This compares the same to 2016 when 95% of children received a place at one of their preferred schools and slightly higher on first preference as 84.84% last year got there first choice.

The Place Planning & Admissions Team continues to support the drive for online services with over 90% of applications being made online, up from 88% in 2016.

COMPLETION OF BUILDING WORK AT CEDARS

The building works at Cedars Primary School has reached completion seeing a previously split site school now operating on a single site. The extensive capital programme of works has seen the build of a two storey extension, housing a nursery class, two receptions, two Year 1 classrooms, and toilet facilities, alongside a main hall, link corridors to the existing school building and landscaping.

This planned programme has been achieved within budget and on schedule, and teaching staff returned to the school at the start of the academic year to prepare teaching and learning spaces in readiness for the children's return on 11th September 2017.

STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUND

The School Effectiveness Team has been successful in securing just under £200,000 from the Strategic School Improvement Fund on behalf of all schools in the Local Authority who are actively engaged in School Improvement Groups and school to school support.

The bid proposes to improve outcomes in English for pupils in each educational transition stage from Early Years to Key Stage 3. The bid was one of 25% nationally that were declared successful in Round 1 and will support projects to improve outcomes in English across most schools in the borough.

Round 2 is currently open for bidding until the 20th October with Round 3 open in December. The School Improvement Board has agreed that a Mathematics bid will be developed for Round 2 and a further bid addressing emotional health and well-being is being considered for Round 3.