

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

Blackburn with Darwen Primary schools continue to do well. Overall performance in the main measure (% of children at expected levels or better in Reading, Writing and Maths) rose by 8% on last year, to be within 1% of the national average. Many local schools improved by more than that and the performance at some of the schools in the performance tables is truly outstanding, given the challenges that local schools and families face.

Performance in Maths remains especially strong and the performance of vulnerable groups remains stronger than their peers nationally, whether children in our care; children with identified special educational needs, or disadvantaged children. The performance of local secondary schools remains stronger still – in aggregate at the national average in terms of the qualifications students leave school with; and second best in the whole of the north for the progress that students make during their time in secondary school. Again, there is particular strength in Maths, but also in English and Science.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

In the Primary School Performance Tables, published by the Government shortly before Christmas, children at St Barnabas & St Paul's Church of England Primary School on Oakenhurst Road, were revealed to make the best progress in Mathematics of any school in the whole of England – first out of over 16,000 schools in the country. In addition, provisional information about the GCSE performance of secondary schools also published by the Department for Education shows that Tauheedul Islam Girls High School and Tauheedul Islam Boys High School remain first and third nationally for the progress made by students during their school career (out of over 6,500 secondary schools).

SCHOOL INSPECTIONS UPDATE

Eight Ofsted school inspection reports have been published since the last Council Forum report. Roe Lee Park Primary school improved on their previous judgement and secured 'good' in all areas. Holy Souls Roman Catholic Primary was also judged to be 'good' with personal development, behaviour and welfare deemed to be 'outstanding.'

St. Barnabas' CofE Primary Academy received it's first inspection since becoming an Academy in October 2014 and was judged as 'good' in all areas with the inspector commenting that pupils thrive within a calm and purposeful learning environment.

Three primary schools had short inspections and all maintained their previous judgement of 'good.' These were Lammack Primary School, Ashleigh Primary and Darwen St James' CofE Primary Academy.

Two schools, St. Aidan's CofE primary and Darwen Vale received 'requires improvement' judgements, however St. Aidan's received a 'good' for early year's provision and for personal development, behaviour and welfare.

CAROL CONCERT IN THE CATHEDRAL

300 primary aged pupils from across 18 schools took part in two Christmas concerts at Blackburn Cathedral. Each school sang their own individual song as well as joining together with the Master Choir to sing two songs and three Carols. On the second night the audience also enjoyed a fantastic performance by the Bolton's Youth String Orchestra 'Bolton New Century Strings'.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) STRATEGY 2017-2020

A new SEND strategy has been developed with the involvement of Blackburn with Darwen children and young people and their families. The purpose of this strategy is to set out how Blackburn with Darwen Council, Blackburn with Darwen' Clinical Commissioning Group and partners (including education and health providers) will work together to provide services and support for children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND and their families.

The strategy has been shaped by a programme of engagement activities designed to ensure that the strategy was genuinely co-produced with stakeholders and reflects the views of our local community.

Families made it clear that they want tailored support, that is delivered at the right time by professionals who respect their views and place them at the centre of the decision making process. Families want to be aware of the support, advice and guidance services that are available for them and that information on how to access these and the eligibility criteria for these services is transparent. The strategy can be viewed at the Blackburn with Darwen Local Offer Website.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) STRATEGIC REVIEW

A strategic review of SEND provision in Blackburn with Darwen is being undertaken by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI) in partnership with Contact. Both organisations are strategic partners of the Department for Education, with significant experience working with local areas across the country to implement the SEND reforms. They will evaluate how well the SEND system works in Blackburn with Darwen, how it supports children and young people with SEND from early years and across schools and colleges.

Initial desktop research and review of the Council's Local Offer website has been completed and attention has turned to stakeholder engagement with a variety of stakeholder groups consulted. The report will be submitted in January 2018 and will include findings and recommendations to support the local area to develop their 0-25 high needs provision. The report will also help to influence the Local Authority's SEND inspection self-evaluation form.