

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES – COUNCILLOR TAYLOR

Congratulations

I am very proud that Michael Flynn has won the North West Adult Learner of the Year and the award was presented at a special event at Manchester Museum.

Michael Flynn has been volunteering with the adult learning service for the last two years and has used adult learning courses himself to make him better equipped to support other people taking on classes. Michael, who suffers from autism, started out volunteering but was shy and lacking in confidence. After taking the Learning Disabilities Advocacy course, Michael was able to express himself better, and has massively grown in his confidence. He continues to take the classes both as a learner and as a volunteer helper

Early Years.

Ofsted inspections

Early years settings, four group childcare reports and one childminder inspection report have been published since my last report. Two of these were inadequate, but both settings have had an Ofsted monitoring visit since, they meet all actions and Ofsted found that they had taken swift and effective action to address the concerns. One setting has decided to close in August due to financial sustainability reasons, the other is on track to secure an improved outcome when it is next inspected which will be by early September. One setting received a judgement of Requires Improvement, this was an improvement on their previous inadequate judgement and they continue to work with the Early Years team to improve further. The fourth was inspected under the previous framework and received a satisfactory judgement. The childminder received a grading of good, again an improvement on her previous grade. Overall 79 of our Early Years Settings are Outstanding/Good, 17 are satisfactory and eight are Requires Improvement or Inadequate.

Childcare settings (age 5+) – three reports have been published, all three met the requirements of the Childcare Register.

Two year old funding

The extended eligibility criteria which will be introduced nationally from September has been introduced early in Blackpool, which means that even more vulnerable two year olds have access to an early years education place.

School Support and Advice.

An additional Primary School Improvement Partner has been appointed and will take up post in July. Education London (who led the highly successful London Challenge) have been commissioned to support improved attainment and progress in English and are already operating within all Blackpool secondary schools. Close working is taking place with Liverpool Local Authority to share good practice in school improvement. Close working with Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) is in place and includes training sessions ('Through the lens of inspection') for head teachers, senior leaders and governors from all Blackpool schools. Revised protocols for the monitoring and challenging of schools have been shared with all head teachers. New statutory guidance has been published by the Department of Education (DfE), which states the criteria by which Local Authority's must decide to use their statutory powers of intervention in maintained schools. The guidance also clarifies the reasons for which Local Authority's should inform the Secretary of State in the case of concerns about academies.

Governor Services

Following consultation, all maintained school governing bodies are now required to reconstitute by 1st September 2015, under the School Governance (Constitution)(England) Regulations 2012. These regulations give more freedom for the Governing Body to determine its membership based on the skills required to make it more cohesive and dynamic. Whilst the Local Authority will be able to nominate any eligible person as a Local Authority Governor, it will be for the Governing Body to decide whether their nominee has the skills to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school and meets any other eligibility criteria they have set. Guidance produced by the Department for Education recommends that Local Authorities should make every effort to understand the Governing Body's requirements and identify and nominate suitable candidates. On reconstituting, the Governing Body will only have one Local Authority representative place available.

School Organisation and Buildings

Over 100 delegates attended the National Education Building Development Officers Conference. Both Blackpool school design and construction was showcased during the event. The Education Funding Agency used the event to 'cut the turf' on the new High School and Special School at the Collegiate site. Under the Priority Schools Building Programme both South Shore Academy and Hawes Side will be included in the next phase of development.

Unity Academy building works have been completed and handed back to the school. This scheme has had a significant impact on both the school and community of Warbreck Hill and has been delivered for less than £9m, which includes school and sponsor contribution. Building Schools for the Future design and remodelling within the lowest quintile of construction costs for schools nationally.

City Learning Centre (CLC)

During 2013/ 2014 financial year the nearly 6000 students accessed the facilities. While nearly 31,000 delegates used the building.

The CLC will continue with its present operational remit, providing quality internal and external training facilities, community spaces, school training, education resource centre and networks. It will continue to generate income of which a high proportion will cover building costs and budgeted within Asset management.

Continuing Professional Development and School Workforce

Continuing Professional Development brokerage continues to develop with partnerships with Fylde Coast Teaching Alliance, Liverpool LA, Blackburn LA, Edge Hill University, London Challenge and other national companies. Locally we are working close with the Blackpool Schools Partnership. A directory of preferred providers has been provided for the school improvement web site supported by Quality Assurance protocols.

Inspection and Intervention of Schools

During the 2014 calendar year the following schools have been inspected:

- Marton Primary School - Inspected 25th March 2014. Overall effectiveness Good, previous judgement was Requires Improvement.
- Stanley Primary School - Inspected 22nd January 2014. Overall effectiveness Good, previous judgement was Good.
- Waterloo Primary Academy - Inspected 26th February 2014. Overall effectiveness Good, previous judgement was Good.
- Highfurlong School - Inspected 1st April 2014. Overall effectiveness Good, previous judgement was Good.

Outdoor Learning

The expedition season for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has begun and already some groups have been on training expeditions in the Lake District and the Trough of Bowland. Interest in the Award at all levels is growing in Blackpool and the numbers of young people in the Open Access Group run by the Local Authority has almost reached 50.

The overall number of residential visits by schools has gone down year on year during the recession, which is disappointing but understandable. Secondary schools are continuing to be adventurous and visits have taken place in the last 12 months to places such as Belgium, France, USA, Spain, China and Nepal.

Music Service and Music Hub

Our Schools Music Education Plan has been written and submitted as requested by Ofsted. The drive for schools to have their own action plans is now a priority. It is essential that music remains on school timetables if we are to provide progression routes for our musicians and reap the benefits of our extensive Creative Music Making Programme.

These are just some of the Creative Music Making extra-curricular and large scale events we have provided during the last 11 weeks:

- Pop Idol. Supported by 49% of our Schools
- Three Little Pigs. A joint event between The Grand Theatre, National Ballet and our successful Tiddley- om-pom-poms programme.
- Professional Development for our conductors at the National Association of Brass Band Conference.
- Auditions for The BBC's The Voice (Series 4).
- Interaction with all Youth Music programmes in the North West
- Our LA choral performance with the outstanding Russell Watson at the Opera House
- Education, Building and Development Officers' Group (EBDOG) Conference performances at the Hilton
- Skoog flexible special needs and music therapy resource Training days for teachers of Special Needs Children
- Professional Development training for all Primary School teachers of the new music curriculum
- Charanga. Training days for ICT music
- Choir of the Year at The Tower Ballroom with capacity numbers of performers and audiences.
- A new initiative with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester.
- A joint concert with the Kings Lancashire regiment and Blackpool Youth Concert Band at the Winter Garden's in support of Armed Forces Week.

Charity status for an arms-length organisation supporting the music making aspirations of our children has now been granted. The Friends of Blackpool Music Service's two main initiatives will be to provide financial support for large scaled performances and, to provide a number of small bursaries to help finance the external examinations of our talented young musicians. Donations, sponsors and benevolent funds are now being collated and have already reached more than £14,000.

New initiatives have also been confirmed with:

- Rock Hard Studio; to provide extended qualifications for 16-18 year old pop musicians
- The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra; to offer new opportunities to play different genres of music to our talented and gifted pupils in both Jazz and Improvisation
- The Aztec Theatre; will extend the theatre experiences of our children
- Our African Festival will include an opportunity for all participants to receive an Arts Award. If this pilot works this nationally accreditation will be offered to thousands of our children.
- Curious Minds and Cultural Services

- A joint event at The Tower Ballroom with Blackpool, Lancashire, Sefton and Blackburn with Darwen Music Services/Hubs

Blackpool children are now performing in six of our nationally respected orchestras. This significant outcome has never been achieved before and identifies that our teaching, support and shared aspirations are now providing new vocational opportunities for Blackpool children.

Youth Service

The youth service is now working with new Practice Standards launched on April 1st to bring in clear expectations and processes about effective 1-2-1 case work with young people. This introduces monthly audits of case notes and requirements for timed intervention. The provision of issue-based group work continues to grow with a new running club, orienteering and equine therapy groups launching in the summer term. The number of young people engaging in group work is steadily growing with over 200 young people participating so far this academic year

Plans for the remainder of this term include, creation of three themed campaign projects on risky behaviour, relationships and anger management. Summer holiday provision planning is underway with four themed weeks for targeted young people including confidence and self esteem, identity and diversity, communication and social skills and emotional wellbeing and literacy. Included within the summer provision will be an extensive transition program in line with the HeadStart project supporting over 70 young people from Primary to Secondary school with activities including an in school 'sleep-in'

Children's Centres.

UNICEF's Baby Friendly Initiative

The assessors found that all the required elements were being achieved and the reaccreditation was passed with flying colours, endorsing the quality of support and information given to mums and the welcome that children centres and other premises provide to mothers.

The Better Start bid was submitted to the Big Lottery Fund at the end of February and an interview was held on the 6th May. The bid was an excellent bid and the preparation for the interview was very positive. Everyone has worked exceptionally hard and we hope to have positive feedback at the beginning of June.

Adult, Community and Family Learning

Adults including many vulnerable members of the community attended an awards ceremony at Central Library 24th April. Over 50 adults and families attended to receive their certificates. Awards included basic skills (maths, English, ICT), health and safety, and food hygiene. National Adult Learners Week took place between 16th and 20th June. To celebrate Adult Learners Week in Blackpool, a "Have a Go Day" on 16th June 16th was held at Central Library and a stakeholder workshop was held 20th June at Central Library again to help plan Adult Learning Courses delivered from September 2014.

14 -19 Strategy

There were 4363 (80.9%) of 16 to 18 year olds in learning at the end of April 2014 compared with 4307 (78.3%) at the end of April 2013. To sustain this improvement the Connexions Service is launching a Virtual Early Leaver Service for young people who leave college courses or training early. The college or training provider will upload the young person's details and the Connexions Service will contact the young person within 48 hours. The Connexions Service, Educational Diversity, Blackpool and the Fylde and Training Providers are working in partnership to deliver "Project 90". All Educational Diversity school leavers will be offered an innovative summer programme alongside intensive mentoring to support their transition into further learning.