

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES – COUNCILLOR TAYLOR

Children's Centres

Blackpool's Children's Centres entered a new phase of their review on the 1 September 2014 and have received a new contract. This contract will run until the 31 August 2015 and is intended to support Children's Centres over a transition year to move towards involvement in Better Start and an outcome focused approach. Children's Centres will be integral to the delivery of the Better Start Programmes.

Better Start

The Better Start Bid, which was submitted to the Big Lottery in February 2014, was successful and Blackpool has been awarded £45 million for work with children and families from their conception to the age of 3 years. The work will take place across the town but funding is to concentrate upon seven wards Claremont, Bloomfield, Brunswick, Victoria, Park, Clifton and Talbot.

Ofsted Inspection – Services for Children

From 2 to 23 July 2014, Ofsted undertook a review of Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers. The Inspection Report was published on 8 September 2014. We are pleased to advise inspectors recognised the improvements made since the last Inspection in June 2012. The Inspection team reported that it found no widespread or systematic failings in Blackpool, most importantly no child was found to be unsafe. It is vital that we continue to embed the positive changes that we have made and that we sustain the pace of improvement.

Safeguarding (Local Safeguarding Children's Board)

From the 2 July to 23 July 2014, Ofsted undertook a review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board as part of the inspection of service for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The report that was published on the 8 September 2014 recognises that Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB) has made progress in reviewing, revising and developing performance and effectiveness, whilst acknowledging areas of Board business that require further development. We are currently in the process of recruiting an Independent Safeguarding Board Chairman, as the existing Chairman is stepping down from this position from the end of September 2014. The new Chairman will have an important role to play in driving forward future developments and improvements and ensuing safeguarding arrangements are robust across the partnership.

Adult, Community and Family Learning

A consultation was held with 193 vulnerable adults on adult learning. A total of 51% were aware of courses provided by Adult Learning with 45% hearing of courses through word of mouth. Valuable information was provided to improve awareness and engagement, including leaflet drops, better use of social media and increasing the number of courses in basic ICT and arts and crafts.

Through this consultation and work with stakeholders, key priorities have emerged for the new academic year, starting in September including basic skills (Maths, English and ICT), advocacy and friendship courses for individuals with learning disabilities, courses to assist with strategies for low end mental health issues and longer courses for unemployed adults to work on their skill development.

14-19 Strategy

At the end of July 2014, 75.8% of 16 to 18 year old young people were in learning compared with 73.6% in July 2013. Summer Ventures was launched by Connexions in June a Transitional Support Programme for vulnerable school leavers. Innovative learning was provided two days a week during

July and August to help with their transition into Post 16 learning. Over 100 young people have taken part with retention being extremely high. The full outcomes will be known in September. All young people leaving Educational Diversity were also provided with additional individual mentoring.

Early Years.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

Provisional data suggests a 2% rise in the percentage of children achieving a good level of development. There have been increases in the number of children attaining at least the expected level in all of the Specific Early Learning Goals (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Art and Design) (ELG) and an increase in the number of children who achieved at least the expected level in all of the 17 Leg's. National statistical first release is usually towards the end of October.

Ofsted inspections

- Early years settings – four group childcare and 11 childminder inspection reports have been published since my last report. One Early Years setting received a judgement of Outstanding, whilst the other two, which are registered under the same provider and inspected simultaneously, received a judgement of Requires Improvement
- One “out of school” club was judged to be good, which was an improvement on their previous grade.
- Of the 11 childminder reports published, eight received a judgement of Good. One childminder was judged to Require Improvement, one was judged to be meeting requirements of the Early Years register, and one was meeting the requirements of the Childcare Register. Based on published reports, the overall percentage of settings and childminders with Ofsted gradings of good or outstanding is 81.4%, with 84% of childminders and 76.5% of group childcare settings. This compares to national figures as at 31st March 2014 (which is the most recent data available) of 78% overall, 76% of childminders, and 82% of group settings.

Support for Speech, Language and Communication Development

Six Early Years Settings have now received I CAN Early Years Accreditation for the support they provide for children's speech, language and communication development. Accreditation recognises good practice in promoting speech, language and communication development in children who are developing skills in line with expectations for their age. Accredited settings and services also show good practice in identification and referral of children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

Free entitlement funding for two year olds:

Funding for early education places for disadvantaged two year olds covers 15 hours per week for 38 weeks (or equivalent) at an OFSTED registered nursery or childminder, for all two year olds who meet the benefits criteria for Free School meals or are a Looked After child. Under these criteria, which have been in force since September 2013, uptake of funded early education places for two year olds in Blackpool has risen from around 200 in spring 2013 to 483 children in summer 2014. The Department for Education (DfE) had estimated that 491 children could be eligible. From September 2014, additional criteria come in to force, which means that more children will be eligible for a funded place with the DfE having estimated that 1090 Blackpool children could be eligible.

School Support and Advice.

Provisional (unpublished) KS1 results show slight improvements at L2+ in each of reading, writing and maths, with LA figures moving closer to national in all three areas.

First published KS2 figures show Blackpool maintaining standards broadly in line with national averages, with an improvement in the percentage of pupils making expected progress in writing.

| | % attaining L4+ in reading, writing and maths | | % making expected progress in reading | | % making expected progress in writing | | % making expected progress in maths | |
|------|---|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| | National | Blackpool | National | Blackpool | National | Blackpool | National | Blackpool |
| 2012 | 75 | 74 | 90 | 88 | 90 | 91 | 87 | 85 |
| 2013 | 76 | 76 | 88 | 91 | 92 | 93 | 88 | 91 |
| 2014 | 78 | 76 | 91 | 91 | 93 | 95 | 89 | 91 |

Key Stage 4 overall (unpublished) aggregated figures show the Blackpool score has fallen slightly, for five A* to C grades including English and Maths. Better grades in English have been seen, following an emphasis on the subject in all Blackpool secondary schools. Before publication of final results, schools will submit appeals as appropriate. Official figures are released in January.

An additional Primary School Improvement Partner took up post in July, to manage the Early Years team. Education London (who led the highly successful London Challenge) continue to work with the secondary schools, expanding their range of support from English to SEN and whole school action planning.

Services around Schools.

Governor Services

The service continues to support maintained schools with reconstitution. The majority of academy schools and multi academy trusts have asked for the provision of a clerking service and training. The service continues to forge strong links with academies in Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen through training or clerking support.

Admissions:

- School place offers have now been made for the September 2014 intake (Reception and Year 7).
- The annual 'Guide for Parents Brochures' will be issued in September to coincide with the live running of the on-line application facility. Numbers of on-line applications continue to rise.
- A new school transfer process is being piloted from September 2014. This is intended to reduce mobility between schools and to facilitate fixed points of entry at all secondary schools.

Pupil Welfare and Attendance

The Pupil Welfare Service has recruited three new Pupil Welfare Officers in the summer in order that the Core Offer to schools, the service to maintained schools and the buy-back contract with academies can be met.

Latest published attendance figures relate to the autumn term of 2014 and are shown below.

Significant reductions in absence rates were seen in both primary and secondary, when compared with the same period last year, however, rates have also reduced nationally. The gap has widened in primary schools but narrowed at secondary level.

| | Primary overall absence | | Secondary overall absence | |
|-----------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|
| | 2013 | 2014 | 2013 | 2014 |
| Blackpool | 4.6% | 4.2% | 7.4% | 6.2% |
| National | 4.7% | 3.9% | 5.7% | 4.9% |
| Gap | 0.1% | -0.3% | -1.7% | -1.3% |

Improvements in attendance can, in part, be attributed to schools' increased use of the legal powers available. In the academic year 2013/ 2014, 162 summonses were issued for failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school, compared with 110 in the previous year. Schools are also able to use Penalty Notice Warnings. Where a child has a history of unauthorised absence, a warning can be given, whereby the child must have no unauthorised absence during a given 15-day period, or a fine will be levied. 235 Penalty Notice Warning letters were issued in 2013/ 2014. This compares with 137 Penalty Notice Warning letters issued in 2012/ 2013.

Schools have in place a number of rewards for good and improved attendance and the rewards programmes are supported by the Pupil Welfare Service. A total of 1197 Primary aged pupils attended 100% attendance parties at Blackpool Football Club.

Inspection and Intervention of Schools

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

| School | Current Judgement | Previous Judgement |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bispham Endowed Primary School | Requires Improvement | Good |
| Marton Primary School | Good | Inadequate |
| Stanley Primary School | Good | Good |
| St. John Vianney RC Primary | Good | Requires Improvement |
| Waterloo Primary Academy | Good | Good |
| Montgomery Academy | Inadequate | Good |
| Highfurlong School | Outstanding | Outstanding |

School Organisation and Buildings

St Bernadette's building work was completed over the summer, providing more space and greater opportunities for the children. The final phase of the building on the St Mary's campus was also completed during the holiday, with Christ the King RC Primary pupils able to start the new school year in their new surroundings. Building works have commenced on the Highfurlong site, for the new special school and Aspire Academy. This is due to open in September 2015.

Following consultation, all Blackpool special schools have been designated for pupils aged 2-19, in line with the demographics of our special school population.

In August, the Authority took possession of Christ the King Primary School following completion of building works. The scheme completes the £23million redevelopment of the St Mary's site, the final phase seeing the addition of Christ the King Primary School and Christ the King Worship Centre. This project is part of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Academy conversions due to take place on 1 September:

- Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust comprising of St Mary's, Christ the King and St Cuthbert's schools.
- The merging of Collegiate and Bispham High Schools will create Aspire Academy sponsored by the Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT)

Work at Collegiate as part of the Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP) has started in earnest. Building works are due to be completed in August 2015, with external works due to be completed by January 2016.

Continuing Professional Development, School Workforce and the City Learning Centre

Continuing Professional Development brokerage continues to develop partnerships with Fylde Coast Teaching School Alliance, Liverpool LA, Lancashire LA, Edge Hill University, Teaching Leaders, London Challenge and National Maths partnership. The Blackpool Schools Partnership has now received its public limited company status and has plans generated from the Heads and Deputies conferences to add further capacity to school improvement professional development. A directory of preferred training providers has been provided for the school improvement web site supported by quality assurance protocols.

The ICT curriculum in schools has developed further with a joint schools group now posting primary curriculum support material and programmes of study. The new Blackpool Schools Partnership web site will host all curriculum support resources.

Special Educational Needs, Assessment and Support and Psychological

After considerable work, the Children and Families Act work is ready to be implemented in Blackpool, from September 2014. This should see services for 0-25 year olds with SEN and/ or disability and their families being further developed in the town over the next few years. The work has involved close working relationships with parents and young people. The Local Offer site is located on the Family Information Services website.

Outdoor Learning

Participation rates in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award continue to increase and have been marked in the Open Award Group, which provides access for many underprivileged young people.

The Outdoor Education Department has continued to work closely with the committee overseeing the Snogs Heights facility in the Lake District and young people from Blackpool available to use the facility for camping. Work is ongoing to develop new accommodation and education blocks.

Youth Offending Team

The Youth Offending Team's Summer Programme Celebration Event was held on the 28 August 2014. After a celebratory go-karting session in recognition of their good behaviour and achievements, young people were presented with certificates and vouchers donated by The Sandcastle.

Young people took part in a range of activities that included art, music, life skills, horse riding, fishing and sport. Each young person has worked towards an ASDAN (Award Scheme Development

Accreditation Network) Award, qualifications that explicitly grow skills for learning, skills for employment and skills for life, with the aim of keeping them engaged and motivated in education and training over the summer break. ASDAN provides “opportunities for all learning to develop their personal and social attributes and levels of achievement and the relief of poverty, where poverty inhibits such opportunities for learners”.

Blackpool Music Service (BMS) and Blackpool Music Education Hub

The Schools Music Education Plan has been accepted. Schools are now being encouraged to write their own school based plans as requested by Ofsted. Training has been offered to all schools.

The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, (who are partners of ours), provided 200 free tickets to their Bridgewater Hall concert and two new programmes have been written to support some of our most talented musicians via various jazz techniques. Several of our bands and choirs successfully participated in Armed Forces Week. The most celebrated was that of the Youth Concert Band and the Ministry of Defence’s Kings Division Band in the Winter Gardens. Capacity audiences over two days at the Grand Theatre saw 19 of our schools and more than 1000 pupils in Au Revoir. The end of term concert celebrated the significant contributions made by those leaving to study music at university and Kneller Hall. The brass instrumentalists can now audition for a new North West Brass Band supported by The Leyland Band, Yamaha and, The National Association of brass Band Conductors. The Aztec Theatre Company is supporting our thousands of young thespians. Audition techniques have also successfully supported auditions with The BBC’s The Voice (Series 4). New Partners Hard Rock Studios are now running three year accredited courses for pop musicians and sound engineers.

Youth Service

The Youth Service has just completed its Summer Programme with four themed weeks, confidence and self-esteem, emotional health and well-being, equality, diversity and identity and communication and social skills. Activities included; bike rides, climbing, horse care and riding, wake boarding, visits to the mosque and Buddhist centre, wheelchair basketball, building and racing go-karts and much more. Over 50 targeted young people who are identified as vulnerable took part.

The Youth Service has completed its first quarter as a commissioned service and is well on track to meet the target Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) set.

In July, Blackpool was successful in securing £500,000 as part of stage two of the Big Lottery’s HeadStart programme. This will fund an initial project at pilot schools throughout the town aiming to build the resilience of 10-14 year olds to stop them developing mental health problems as they get older. Work will be undertaken with young people, their families, school staff and other professionals to make sure that children are being supported at home, at school and in their leisure time.

The funding will enable transition sessions for young people moving to high school and specialist support and staff training over an 18-month period. We will continue to work with a number of partners including the NHS, MIND, UR Potential and the NSPCC to deliver activities and collectively bid for £10million at stage three, which would see the project expanded to all schools in Blackpool.