

CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ASPIRATION – COUNCILLOR KATH BENSON

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Schools under LA control, community schools
- Children with Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- LEA support to academies and voluntary aided schools
- School place planning, organisation and buildings
- Education diversity and support units/service e.g. Pupil Referral Units
- Youth Services
- Youth Employment and Education

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1 - South Shore Academy's Ofsted Inspection Report

South Shore Academy underwent an Ofsted inspection on 27 June 2023. The inspection report was published on 11 October 2023, with the school receiving a rating of "Inadequate" and now requires "special measures". The report identified a number of significant issues which are impacting on outcomes for children.

South Shore Academy was previously rated as "Inadequate" in 2015 and was subsequently rated as "Requires Improvement" in 2017 and 2019. The previous school was also rated as "Inadequate". South Shore Academy also has a termination warning notice.

Blackpool Council has worked closely with Bright Futures Trust, who have the funding agreement for South Shore Academy, to agree a way forward for issues related to safeguarding and special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Council will continue to work closely with the Trust and the Department for Education to ensure that standards improve quickly.

Theme 2 - Wrap around childcare programme

There has been a recent communication from central government about its ambition to ensure that by 2026, all parents in England with primary school aged children will be able to access term time wraparound childcare from 8am to 6pm. Parents will then have the certainty that they can go to work and return to collect their children from a safe, accredited provider.

Currently, around 60% of schools provide this option for parents. The national wraparound childcare programme is part of the childcare reforms announced at the 2023 Spring Budget.

To support this ambition, the government announced that it will provide up to £289 million of start-up funding over two academic years to support local authorities and providers in England to introduce or expand childcare provision on either side of the school day, which parents of primary school-aged children will be able to pay for or contribute towards the cost of this provision.

The programme funding aims to remove barriers to setting up new provision or expanding current provision, including removing the financial risk of setting up new provision when demand is not guaranteed. It is based on a “pump prime” model, whereby relatively small amounts of government funds are provided to spur growth.

There is a revenue funding stream and a capital funding stream and officers are currently exploring ways in which the funding can be used to provide internal capacity to deliver the projects and where this additional provision is best located. Funding cannot be used to subsidise places but can be used to help establish an offer so that it then becomes sustainable.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member’s portfolio.