Literacy for life - A journey of joy, discovery and understanding

A place-based approach to improving literacy, oracy and digital communication in Blackpool 2020-2030

A challenge that can only be completed in partnership

Everybody has a part to play in raising levels of literacy. There must be a clear partnership between schools and families, health, businesses, charities and all elements of a community to really make a difference. Working in isolation dilutes the impact and slows down the processes.

Our collective aim is that everyone who lives in Blackpool is confident at speaking, listens well, enjoys reading and writes with clarity and in detail. These are big ambitions and a big task. We know that many adults wish they could read, write and talk in public more confidently. They understand that these skills help us to enjoy life more and enable us to understand new ideas, helping us to put forward our own thoughts and dreams. They also understand that being confident in oracy and literacy can help us to secure a good job and even help us to start up our own business.

Being good at speaking and listening and reading and writing are important in many ways and their impact is felt throughout everyone's lives.

Becoming literate starts very early on. Children experience a wide range of words and conversations, are encouraged to join in with nursery rhymes and are shown how to handle books. The role of adults in the family is crucial because they are the child's first and most important teacher. If adults are not confident in reading, writing, speaking and listening it will impact on the child. This is why we have called our approach 'Literacy for Life'. To improve oracy and literacy across the town we will need to mobilise everyone from the youngest to the oldest. As they say, it is never too late to start!

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Executive summary

The Blackpool literacy strategy is one of three pillars that underpin the town's ambitious 2020-30 education strategy. At the heart of the strategy is an ambition for every resident, regardless of their age, to enjoy learning and to see this as a key element of a satisfying and rewarding life. A crucial element of improved learning, and the enjoyment it brings, is having strong literacy and oracy skills. These are some of the important skills we all require to better understand our world and our place within it.

Research has shown us that greater levels of literacy improve life-expectancy, reduce poverty, increase employment levels and enhance an individual's wellbeing, as well as many other significant gains. They are also the skills employers seek and are therefore important in enabling local people to find rewarding and fulfilling employment. More recently, the importance of digital technology, has come to the fore and is increasingly affecting our lives. So, we have included digital skills as an element of the literacy strategy.

The journey towards strong literacy, oracy and digital skills starts with the family and with pre-school settings. It continues through school, then college and into the world of training and work. If we all play our part in supporting this journey then children and families will flourish, along with our town. It is our collaborative endeavour that will make the difference.

The literacy strategy is unashamedly ambitious. It wants children to have good language and communication skills from an early age, so they thrive and are ready for school. We also want them to develop their literacy, oracy and digital skills through their school years so that they can access the curriculum and become proficient readers, writers, and speakers. They will use these skills to love reading, pass examinations, enter the world of work and training, and achieve great things.

For older residents we need to enable them to further improve their skills acquisition including those who, for whatever reason, didn't gain the necessary skills when they were at school. This is why we have engaged a range of services across the town in our efforts. These include the library service, employers and charities, in addition to schools and colleges reaching out further to support the parents and carers of their pupils and students.

We want to see more residents reading, whether that is their local newspaper or an online review of a film they are considering watching. We want to encourage more of it, so we have introduced a 30 minute reading challenge. The 'Blackpool 30 Challenge' is for everyone regardless of age, so get involved and use the improvement of literacy, oracy and digital skills as a passport to a more enjoyable and fulfilling life.

Neil Jack
Chief Executive

Cllr Lynn Williams
Leader of Blackpool Council

We have momentum but need to improve further

Blackpool has long been regarded as a town with a lot of social and economic challenges. But things are changing. The Council's 2030 Agenda for Action provides an ambitious vision for the future with more jobs, better homes, more employment for 16-24 year olds and an improved perception of Blackpool as a 'can do' place. The Council has agreed with its partners to focus on three Priority Areas, one of which is Literacy.

Our Early Years settings, primary schools, secondary schools, Post 16 provision, special schools and alternative provision are improving strongly, with nearly all judged as good or better by Ofsted. Additionally, Blackpool Adult Learning provision is also judged as good. This sadly doesn't mean that all children are good at literacy and oracy. We know that some settings need to focus even more on these skills so that all children and young people benefit from the joy, discovery and understanding that come from being confident at speaking and listening and reading and writing. We want to encourage more cooperation between Early Years settings and their feeder primary schools and encourage even higher expectations in the training of staff for Early Years settings.

Much good work is underway, including a successful Literacy Project for younger students in secondary schools, Better Start's literacy family learning project and the considerable efforts of an English Hub. Blackpool Libraries have always been at the heart of local communities across the town, but recently they have developed a 4 year Ambition Plan, which redoubles their efforts to become 'the living room of the community.

The town has many amazing businesses including some with a national and international reputation for excellence. These businesses contribute much to the fabric of our town, providing employment and driving innovation. They require confident and ambitious employees with strong literacy and oracy skills.

It is apparent that we have much good work going on, but every Early Years setting, school, college, father, mother, carer, child, student and resident knows they can improve their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

To date there has been no overarching strategy for developing literacy and oracy across the town. This plan brings together all of the amazing work that is taking place so that they are better known and better connected.

We are ambitious because we love Blackpool and we want all of its residents, regardless of age, to benefit from the joy, discovery and understanding that comes from strong oracy and literacy skills. Our town's future depends on this plan succeeding. So, get involved!

The vision

This literacy strategy will improve outcomes for everybody in Blackpool by championing literacy at every stage of a person's life. We believe that greater levels of literacy will improve life-expectancy, reduce poverty, increase employment levels and reduce offending rates, as well as many other significant gains.

An often quoted statistic is that just thirty minutes of reading a day can significantly increase levels of literacy.

Our Blackpool "30" challenge will ensure that all children and adults see the real value of reading for pleasure for 30 minutes a day.

The Blackpool 30 Challenge

We hope to inspire all organisations to encourage their employees, members, children and contacts to read for thirty minutes a day. This could be anything from a magazine, newspaper, article or book. The main message is that reading is fun and good for your wellbeing. You don't have to read to achieve a goal or read in a particular place, at a particular time or for a particular reason. Just form a "reading habit" and be part of the Blackpool challenge and your own, personal reading journey.

We want every child and adult to be reading every day. Make it your mission to share the message that reading is fun and that reading with a child is a massively important part of parenting!

A library opens up a world of possibilities and every child and adult should be able to access a local library.

What do Blackpool children enjoy reading

Children have turned to adventure, comedy, fantasy and real life stories during lockdown and have found joy in discovering books they'd never read before

- Children are reading more fiction (genres: adventure, funny books, realistic stories and magical/fantasy), song lyrics, news, non-fiction, etc. with a real uplift in reading on screen, compared with before lockdown

- Almost 1 in 2 (46.3%) children said that they had read new books during lockdown and 1 in 7 (14.1%) had re-read books they have at home

Reading has also provided refuge in this difficult time, supporting children's mental wellbeing and enabling them to dream about the future

- 3 in 5 (59.3%) children and young people told us during lockdown that reading makes them feel better

- 3 in 10 (31.6%) said that reading helps them when they feel sad because they cannot see their family and friends

- Reading is encouraging half of children (50.2%) to dream about the future

While the gender gap in children's reading has widened during lockdown, audiobooks may provide a route into reading for boys

- Lockdown has increased the literacy engagement gap between boys and girls, with the gap in reading enjoyment widening from 2.3 percentage points at the beginning of 2020 to 11.5 percentage points during lockdown. The gender gap in daily reading also widened during lockdown, increasing from a 4.3 percentage point difference at the beginning of 2020 to a 7.4 percentage point difference during lockdown

- Audiobooks might be a way to re-engage boys with stories, as this is the only format where more boys than girls said that they enjoy it more and are doing it more often.

- Overall, slightly more boys than girls (25.0% vs. 22.4%) said they had listened to audiobooks more during lockdown than before

- Audiobooks also appear to offer a way into literacy for boys, with 1 in 2 (51.1%) boys saying that listening to audiobooks has increased their interest in reading, and 2 in 5 (43.2%) saying that it has made them more interested in writing

Source of data, **www.literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2020-before-and-during-the-covid-19-lockdown**

The benefits of reading for pleasure

> *When teachers know more about children's literature and children's reading practices beyond school, they widen what counts as 'reading' in their classrooms, and authentically recognise diversity in texts and readers. Our research has shown that this, responsively combined with the Reading for Pleasure pedagogy, makes a positive impact on children's reading for pleasure.*
>
> **Professor Teresa Cremin, The Open University**

> *Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read can be crucial.*
>
> *A survey of school children for World Book Day in 2002 found that 15 to 16 year old boys spent 2.3 hours a week reading for pleasure, compared to 9 hours a week playing computer games or 11 hours watching television. Girls spent considerably more time reading, namely 4.5 hours a week. However, when boys were reading they did so because they enjoyed it. Specifically, 81% of 11 to 12 year olds and 76% of 15 to 16 year olds reported reading for pleasure.*
>
> **Christina Clark and Kate Rumbold – National Literacy Trust – November 2006**

> *Evidence suggests that reading for pleasure leads to increased attainment. Clark and DeZoya (2011) found a significant positive relationship between enjoyment and attainment indicating that pupils who read more are also better readers. Although they made no inference about causality, therefore higher attainment may lead to more enjoyment of reading or greater enjoyment may lead to higher attainment. Similarly Clark (2011) in a large scale survey of over 18,000 young people found that those who reported enjoying reading very much were six times more likely than those who did not enjoy reading very much to read above the expected level for their age. Young people who reported not enjoying reading at all were 11 times more likely than those who enjoyed reading very much to read below the expected level for their age. Evidence from the OECD (2002) found that reading enjoyment is more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status. Clark and Rumbold (2006) argue that reading for pleasure could be one important way to help combat social exclusion and raise educational standards.*
>
> **Research evidence on reading for pleasure – Education standards research team – May 2012**

> *Research shows that children who enjoy reading achieve more highly right across the curriculum. Developing a love of reading is one of the most effective ways a school can improve national test results in all areas but, more importantly, it also sets children up as readers for life, with all the accompanying benefits that follow.*
>
> *Reading is a passport to the world. The benefits of reading go beyond the opportunities offered by being well-read with a good command of English. Reading great literature opens children up to ideas, experiences, places and times they might otherwise experience in real life. Reading for pleasure gives opportunities to learn about a multitude of things that cannot be covered by a school curriculum.*
>
> **Building an outstanding reading school – Six strategies for making reading for pleasure work in your school – Oxford School Improvement.**

> *Billington (2015) undertook a UK-wide study exploring the benefits reported by adults regularly reading for pleasure. The study surveyed 4,000 individuals from diverse demographics through an online poll consisting of fourteen questions designed to elicit participants' perception of their general mood, well-being and levels of social interaction in relation to reading. The findings indicated that reading for pleasure is positively associated with a greater sense of community, a stronger feeling of social inclusion, a stronger ability to enjoy social occasions, and enhanced openness and talkativeness.*
>
> **The Reading Agency Literature Review: The impact of reading for pleasure and empowerment June 2015**

LITERACY IS
EVERYBODY'S RESPONSIBILITY!

A lifetime of communication, literacy and reading and literacy development

Learning how to read and continually improving the skill through reading for pleasure, is an important part of this strategy. It needs to be embraced and everybody needs to put time aside to read, every day. We can all help to ensure that there is a reading culture in Blackpool.

Early Years

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 2

Key Stage 4

Reading for meaning

16 – 19

Adult literacy

Key Stage 3

Reading for pleasure

Reading together

Oracy

Digital literacy

The vision

Use up to date research and evaluation on the impact of literacy to further shape our strategy and journey.

Engage with research and researchers on improving levels of intergenerational literacy.

Introduce a town-wide reading pledge

Engage all our Blackpool partners in championing literacy and reading for pleasure.

Introduce Blackpool-wide literacy "kite-marks" that span education and business

Promote intergenerational reading.

Generate enough funding to make sure that the strategy is in place until at least 2030.

Priorities

Encourage businesses to commit to add social value through funding literacy programmes and interventions.

Raise awareness in the community of the importance of literacy, particularly reading for pleasure.

Improve outcomes at the end of each Key Stage in a child's education.

Increase the level of adult literacy

Improve digital literacy

The Blackpool context

A localised approach is needed to improve literacy and life expectancy in England

- Improving local literacy levels could raise life expectancy in the most deprived wards in England by reducing inequalities in health and socioeconomic circumstances:
  - Compared to people with poor literacy skills, those with good literacy skills are less likely to exhibit poor health behaviours, have lower incomes or live in more deprived communities – all of which are risk factors to longevity.
- Inequalities in literacy and life expectancy are related to geographic community and solutions therefore need to be tailored to meet local need and built on local assets.

Literacy and Life Expectancy - National Literacy Trust 2018

Attainment in Blackpool shows a picture of some challenges in the Early Years with good performance by the end of primary school and a significant drop-off by the end of secondary school, although this is showing early indicators of improvement.

- At the Early Years Foundation Stage 67.9% of children achieved a 'good level of development'.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, 67% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By Key Stage 4 however just 47.8% of pupils achieved a 9-4 pass in English and maths (national 59.8%) and 9-5 pass rate was 26.3% (national 40.1%).

While this shows some challenges within the education system, it also points clearly to work that is needed in the home learning environment.

If we take account of wider factors impacting Blackpool, entitlement to free school meals in primary school is close to double the national average (30.8% - 17.7%) and for secondary age pupils this is even higher (33.3% - 15.9%). Referrals of children to Children's Social Services is similarly dramatic at over 1,000 per 10,000 (national is 544.5 per 100,000). From Jan-Dec 2019, 19.9% of Blackpool households were classified as workless.

Taking these factors together, the challenges which communities face are compounded by deprivation which robs people of self-confidence and self-esteem. This can make parents less active in their children's education especially when their own skills may be low and their experience of education is poor.

A major challenge emerges among teenagers (and young adults) when their comprehension exceeds their ability to decode with fluency. Young people have a far greater understanding of the world, spoken vocabulary and range of interests than they find in texts that they can read independently. Use of graphic novels, comics and other formats which carry complex meaning with a blended offer (text and images) can be useful in strengthening motivation among people to continue reading.

The Millennium cohort study, conducted by UCL, looked at the link between reading for pleasure and vocabulary among 14-year olds. The link was conclusive:

- Teenagers who read for pleasure every day understood 26% more words than those who never read at all in their spare time.
- Teenagers from book-loving homes knew 42% more words than their peers who had grown up with few books.
- Better readers can articulate more clearly.
- Better articulation leads to a better expression of feelings, moods and knowledge.
- Better articulation leads to less frustration in articulation which often leads to poor behaviour and anti social behaviour.

"Even taking into account other factors, like parents' qualifications and their professions, teenagers who read for pleasure still got 12% more words right, while those from book-rich homes scored 9% more."

The ability to read and decode and then express yourself is critical to any aspect of learning and later success in life. A good vocabulary is fundamental to a teenager being able to engage across the secondary curriculum. Subject specific vocabularies in history, the sciences and maths mean young people without that knowledge will do less well, are less likely to select subjects which are optional and are then blocked from further education or the job market when those qualifications and knowledge are required.

Once children have developed decoding skills it is often felt that they have learned to read. Parents often feel that it is acceptable to then allow pupils to read unaided. The reality is that children now need to learn for meaning and for pleasure and will need their parent's guidance to do so.

At the same time parental engagement, in role modelling behaviours and supporting aspiration remains important and may be even more important for low-income families. Research has found that parental engagement can help to counteract the socio-economic gap in attainment. For example, the performance advantage among students whose parents read to them in their early school years is evident regardless of the family's socio-economic background (OECD, 2010).

Therefore, what is needed is an approach which starts from an assets-based approach, works to celebrate what is good about Blackpool and fundamentally looks to people in communities to be supported to help one another. Sustained long-term change, through a place-based approach, has an evidence base going back to the first iteration of the Harlem Children's Zone in the 1970s. It requires the empowerment of the community, facilitating greater engagement by them with existing partners and provision and shaping a response which aligns with their life experience and needs.*

Our own place-based reading hubs for families at locations such as Grange Park will support families who have no reading resources in their homes.

Working with families from the start of their lives, in conjunction with Blackpool Better Start, will see levels of early literacy and intergenerational literacy increase in Blackpool.

*With thanks to the National Literacy Trust for providing this contextual section.

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Key Blackpool reading indicators

Figure 1a shows is that although many children are able to read at a level above their chronological age, many do not reach that standard by the time they are 8 or 9 years old.

Figure 1a. Reading Age (in years) source - GL Assessments Reading Test 2019 (pupils Y4 are 8 or 9 years old and in Y5 are 9 or 10 years old).
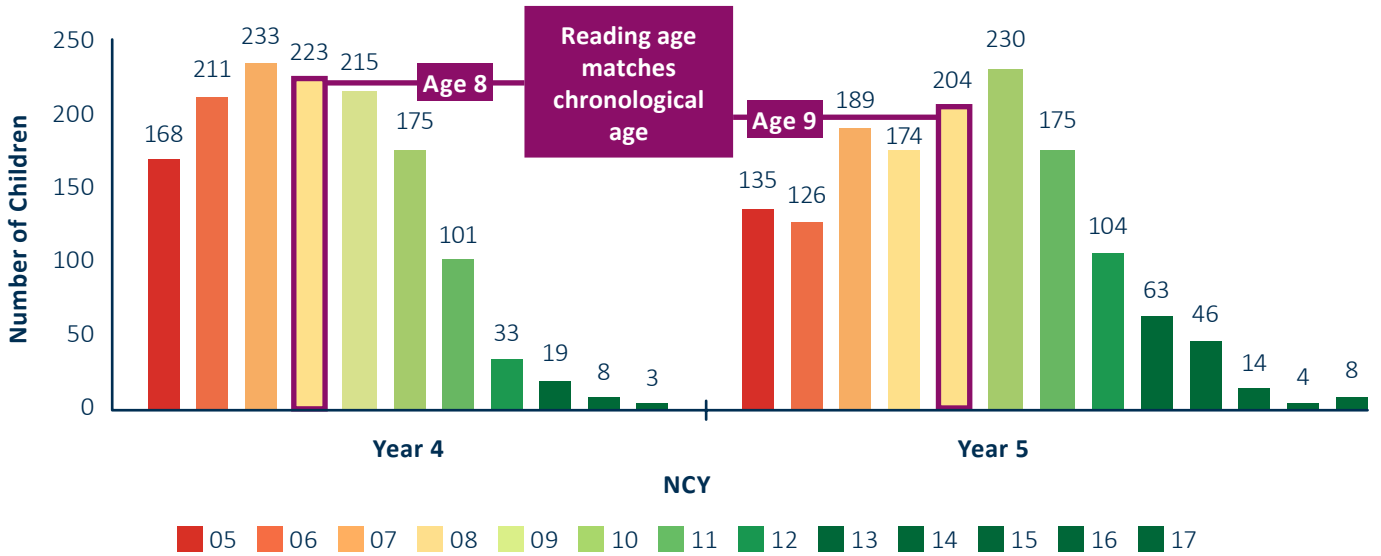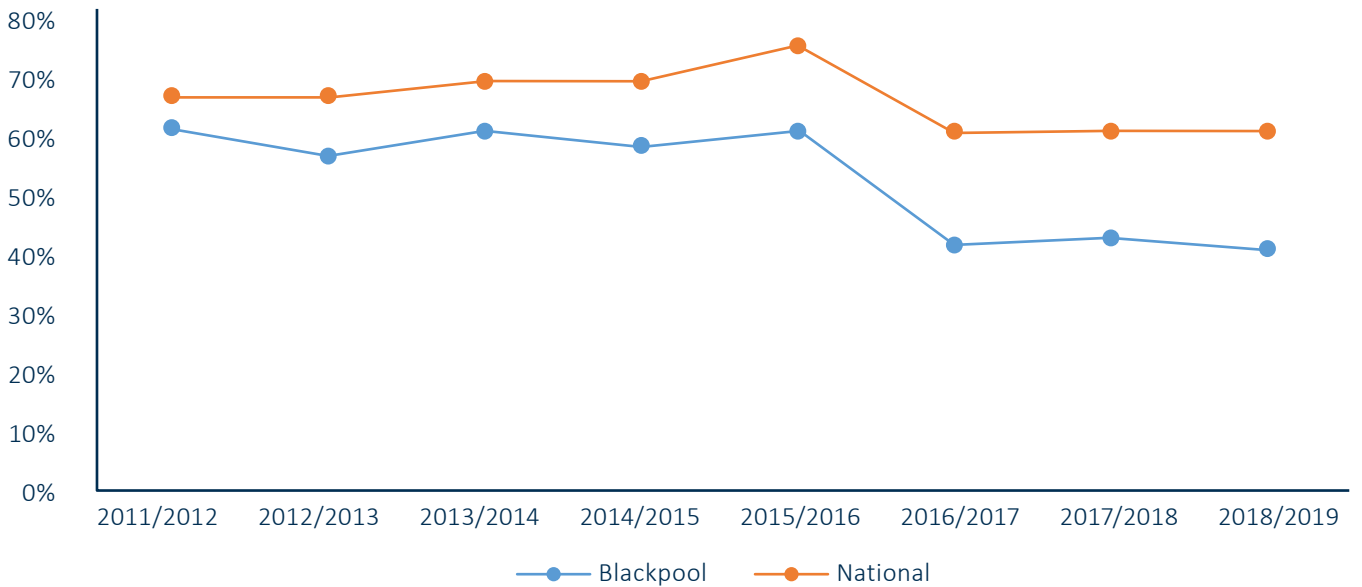

Figure 1b shows that the percentage of children achieving a C grade or Grade 5 at GCSE level in English is stubbornly low in Blackpool and has shown little sign of improving over the last few years.

Figure 1b. KS4 English - Percentage at C+ / 5+

The impact of transience and transition on the Blackpool literacy journey

A strategy that places transience at its heart

As a seaside town, with a significant seasonal element to its economy, Blackpool sees large amounts of movement into and out of the town. Some schools see over 25% of their cohort change on a yearly basis. Where pupils move into Blackpool part-way through their school journey, they may often have lower than average levels of literacy, as may their parents.
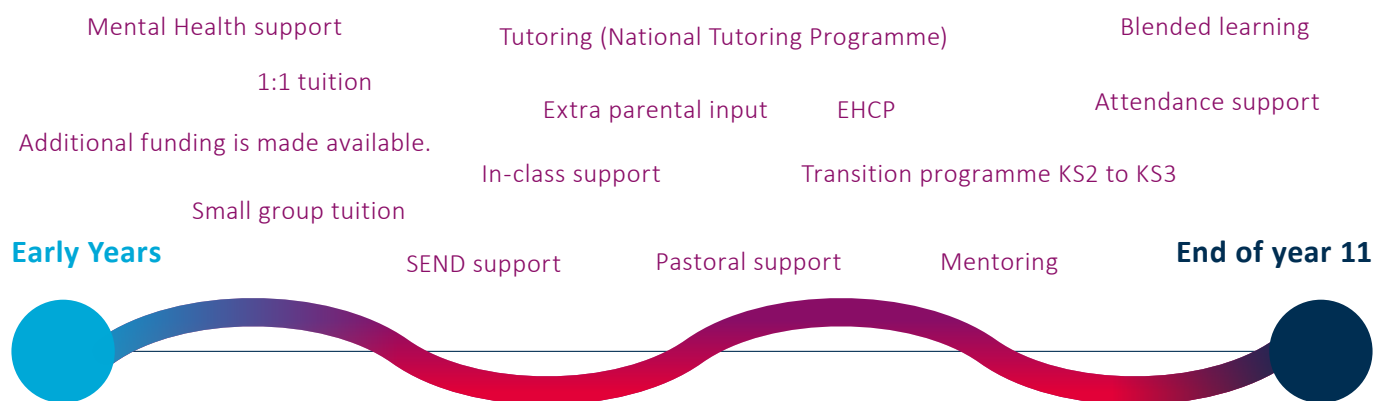
If we do not plan for a high level of pupil movement within our strategy we will not make the progress that we require. Unlike some areas that are able to teach a large percentage of pupils all the way through their education, at each major key stage Blackpool has to pick up, or put down provision for many pupils during their childhood.

This break in the continuity of provision and the reduction in progress, attainment and school readiness that this brings, means that we need to have programmes in places for pupils who are consistently educated in Blackpool schools and for pupils who join our system at different points in their lives.

Transition between schools, key stages and life stages is also, therefore, a highly significant element of an individual's literacy journey.

This also applies to adults within our community and how we work with those adults who have low levels of literacy.

The catch-up journey interventions

Mental Health support

Tutoring (National Tutoring Programme)

Blended learning

1:1 tuition

Extra parental input   EHCP   Attendance support

Additional funding is made available.

In-class support   Transition programme KS2 to KS3

Small group tuition

Early Years   SEND support   Pastoral support   Mentoring   **End of year 11**

Barriers to literacy

Long-term illness   Leaves Blackpool   Arrives in Blackpool   Bereavement

Short-term illness

Permanently excluded   Becoming looked-after

Choose Elective Home Education

Child protection processes   School closure

KS2 to KS3 transition

School to college transition   Transition into the workplace

Parental disengagement in education   Parenting skills

A literacy journey is never a linear journey.

Our minimum expectations for Blackpool

Breaking the cycle

Blackpool has been the focus of many initiatives over many years, yet Blackpool's outcomes in the key indicators at GCSE level remain stubbornly low.

Interestingly, the quality of education in Blackpool has increased across all phases, with most schools rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted in the Primary phase, Special School sector and Alternative provision sector. Half of the secondary schools are good, with all Post 16 provision good or better.

If the general quality of education is higher, yet the outcomes lag behind, the question is for how long this will persist? When will the improvements in educational quality have a real, tangible impact upon outcomes?

As a town we need to build further upon the improved quality of education by setting ourselves some challenging targets.

Our town-wide literacy targets

- Children receive speech and language support at the right time, without unnecessary delay.
- At least 80% of all pupils must meet the end of Key Stage 1 expected levels of performance relating to literacy.
- At least 70% of disadvantaged pupils must meet the end of Key Stage 1 expected levels of performance relating to literacy.
- At least 80% of pupils must meet the end of Key Stage 2 expected levels of performance relating to literacy.
- At least 70% of disadvantaged pupils must meet the end of Key Stage 2 expected levels of performance relating to literacy
- At GCSE level at least 70% of all pupils must achieve a Grade 4 or above in English.

A significant element of this strategy is the notion that "you are never too old to learn" and therefore there are also significant key performance indicators related to adult literacy levels.

We must, therefore, strive to raise the level of adult literacy in Blackpool so that it is at least in-line with national averages.

The table below (figure 2) shows that Blackpool has a greater proportion of adults that do not have an Entry Level 1 qualification in English than Lancashire and the North West and people in Blackpool are statistically less likely to have a qualification in English at L2 or above compared to Lancashire and the North West.

| 2011 Council Ward Name	EL1 and below	EL2	EL3	L1	L2 and above
Blackpool	5.4%	2.5%	9.3%	31.4%	51.4%
Lancashire-14	5.0%	2.3%	8.6%	30.3%	53.8%
England	5.0%	2.1%	7.9%	28.5%	56.5%

Our focus upon assessment and action at every stage of the literacy life cycle

At every stage of the literacy journey, high quality assessment of the relative position of each child is essential to the delivery of this strategy.

Only by harnessing the power of high-quality assessment data can we intervene effectively and assess the impact that our projects are having on outcomes in Blackpool.

Throughout the lifetime of this strategy we will use data from GL assessments, data from statutory end of phase assessments, validated GCSE (and equivalent data), Fischer Family Trust data and national adult-literacy data to assess our progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of our strategy.

GL assessment overall reading stanines for Blackpool secondary schools (Year 7 pupils) 2020

Overall stanine
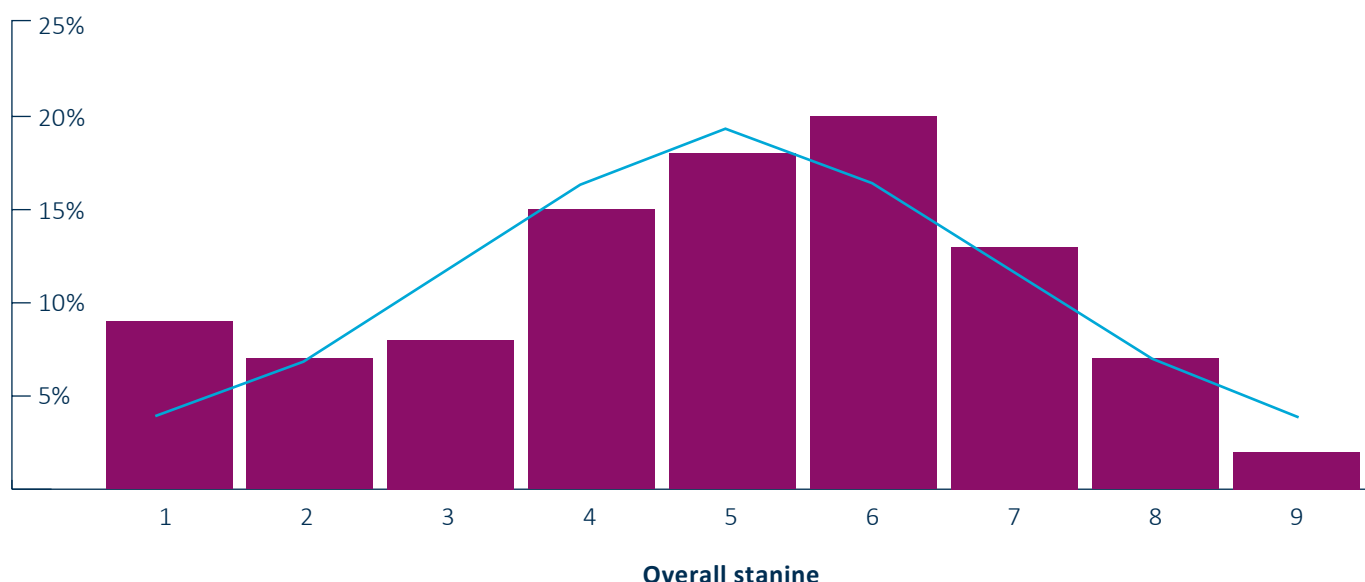
GL assessment data is able to show us how cohorts of children in Blackpool perform in relation to national cohorts. For example, this chart show us that Blackpool pupils in Y7 have are overly represented in the 1st stanine (lowest performing) and under-represented in the 9th stanine (highest performing) relative to national.

How we are tackling the issue

We have identified six areas to focus on that will ensure oracy and literacy improves across the town.

6 Promote and build digital literacy across the town

1 Improve Early Years outcomes in literacy and oracy and in transition to schools

5 High quality learning programmes to enable adults to improve their literacy and oracy skills

Use all of the town's resources to improve oracy and literacy for all of its residents

2 Improve teaching of literacy in all settings, schools and colleges

4 Improve access to libraries and ensure libraries reach out to their communities

3 Improve the literacy curriculum in all settings, schools and Colleges

Blackpool Families Rock - role in the Literacy Strategy

Heart: Feelings
- We are all human
- We can all make mistakes
- Trusting relationships are important
- Respect each other
- Be kind
- Let's be brave together
- Never give up on me
- See me (I am unique)
- See the good things
- Share the power

Hand: The doing of what we think and feel
- See our strengths
- Find out what works for us
- Show you've listened by your actions
- Be clear about expectations
- Get to know me
- Know who is important to me
- Support us to develop our own plans and solutions
- Have meaningful meetings
- Celebrate positive changes
- Make time for me
- Be honest

Head: Knowledge, culture and thinking
- Don't be nosy (ask yourself if you really need to know this)
- Use plain language
- Share knowledge
- Take care in how you talk and write about us
- Share what you know about us
- Be non-judgemental
- Walk in my shoes

We should all support families to help themselves to move forwards, becoming self-sustaining.
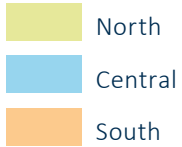
Reading must be a large part of the interactions in the family hubs.

Understanding the impact of poor levels of literacy on families must be a key part of service delivery in Children's Social Care.

We would like all foster carers to sign-up to the Blackpool literacy pledge and we will ensure that all foster carers have the resources and training to improve children's reading and literacy.

Cross phase areas

**Blackpool Education Improvement Board Cross Phase Areas**

- North
- Central
- South

Blackpool Schools

- 🟡 Primary
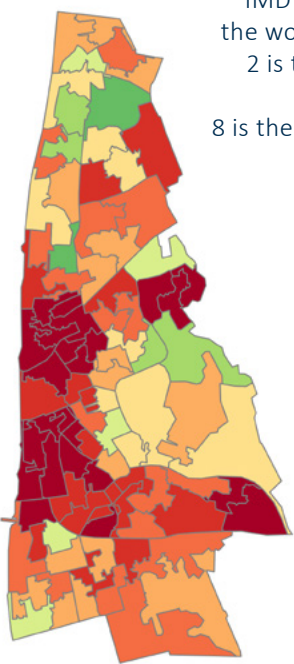- 🔵 Secondary
- 🔴 All through
- 🟣 Special
- 🟠 College

The Literacy Strategy will be developed to incorporate elements of the strategy that are bespoke to the three different cross phase areas shown in this diagram.

We accept, however, that these artificial boundaries do not really take into account how people actually live their lives and that people will move in-between and across these areas to access support for literacy.
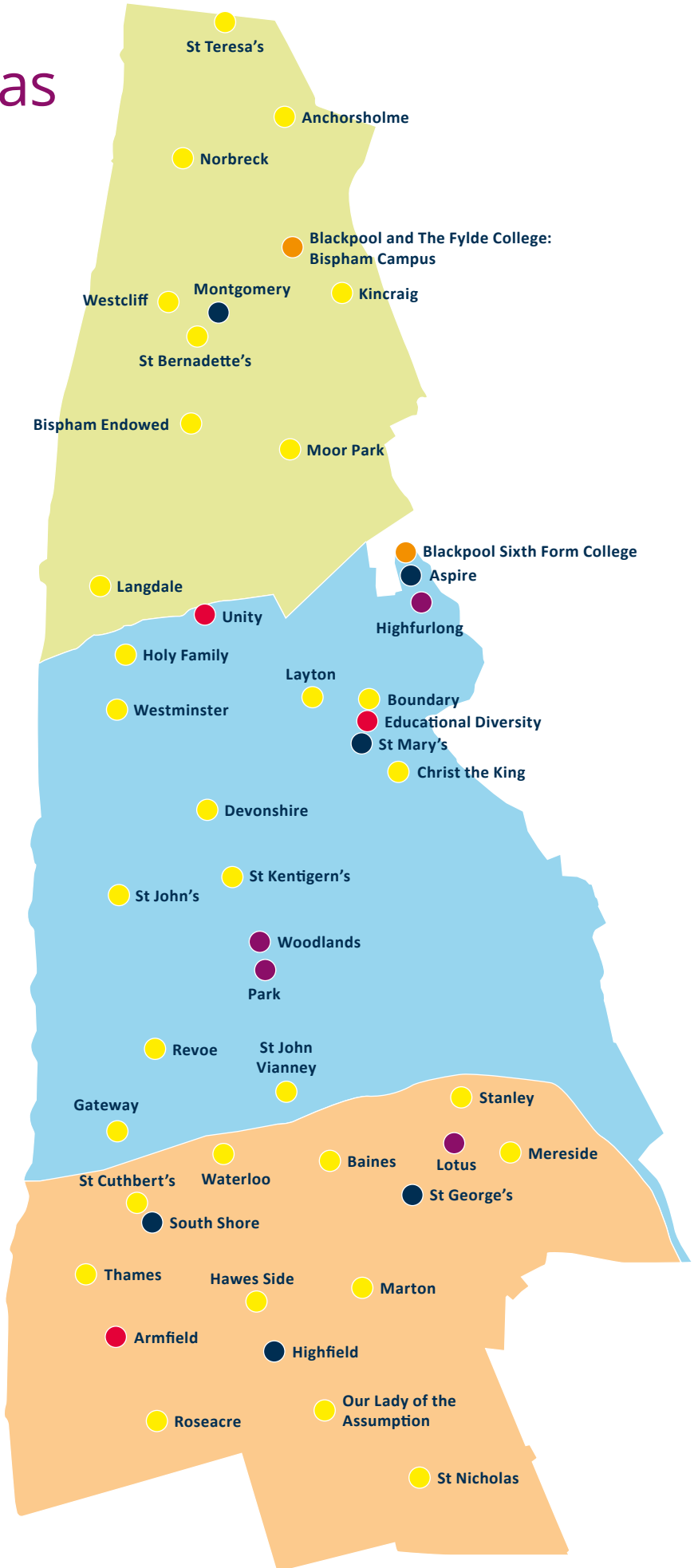
IMD Decile where 1 is the worst 10% in England, 2 is the worst 11-20% in England... 8 is the top 20% in England.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

St Teresa's
Anchorsholme
Norbreck
Blackpool and The Fylde College: Bispham Campus
Westcliff
Montgomery
Kincraig
St Bernadette's
Bispham Endowed
Moor Park
Blackpool Sixth Form College
Aspire
Langdale
Unity
Highfurlong
Holy Family
Layton
Boundary
Westminster
Educational Diversity
St Mary's
Christ the King
Devonshire
St Kentigern's
St John's
Woodlands
Park
Revoe
St John Vianney
Gateway
Stanley
St Cuthbert's
Waterloo
Baines
Lotus
Mereside
St George's
South Shore
Thames
Hawes Side
Marton
Armfield
Highfield
Our Lady of the Assumption
Roseacre
St Nicholas

Developing our Blackpool literacy projects

- Early Years literacy programme
- Key Stage 1 pledge
- Key Stage 2 pledge
- Key Stage 3 literacy project
- Post 16 project
- Adult literacy project
- Mother & Child literacy programme
- Family literacy demonstration programme
- Blackpool literacy in the workplace programme
- Champion dads programme

The KS3 Literacy Strategy

Summary:

The Key Stage 3 (KS3) Literacy Project is a collective impact project focusing on improving the literacy capability of all 11-14 year olds across the town. Blackpool Opportunity Area, 8 secondary schools, working in partnership with Right to Succeed, are committed to taking a collective, research informed, asset-based approach to tackling the issue of literacy capabilities in KS3.

Project Overview:

The Key Stage 3 (KS3) Literacy project is working to improve the literacy capability of all 11-14 year olds across the town, which has been a major factor in academic underperformance (children were on average one year behind in reading age, with 30% 2+ years behind). The project has continued to go from strength to strength and has gained recognition as a result.

The aims of the project are as followed.

1. To improve the decoding skills of students at Key Stage 3

2. Enhance the vocabulary acquisition of students in order to improve pupils' reading stanine, in sentence or paragraph comprehension, by one or more stanines

3. To increase the amount of time students read leading to increase fluency and comprehension

4. To develop, implement, test and embed a process for the reading of text within identified secondary school subjects leading to increase in the English mean standard age score of each cohort

5. To develop, implement, test and embed a systematic improvement in Key Stage 3 Literacy and the use of evidence informed practice across Blackpool Secondary schools

6. To develop schools' ability to undertake a Response to Intervention approach to meeting pupil needs, matching intervention to identified need

7. To improve students' social and emotional development, particularly confidence and self-efficacy

Key Messages/Quotes:

The powerful impact of the project continues to be seen across a number of areas. For example, the project was highlighted in South Shore academy's recent OFSTED report, which sees them move from Inadequate to Requires Improvement. The report says:

*"Leaders know that pupils' literacy skills often get in the way of learning. Teachers across the school promote literacy well. They focus on key vocabulary and make sure that pupils understand any new terms that they meet. We saw pupils learning new words as their teacher read a novel during form time. The school provides extra teaching for pupils who find it hard to read. Pupils' reading ability is improving quickly. **Pupils' behaviour is improving swiftly because they can understand what the teacher wants them to learn. The pupils we saw had a positive approach to their learning.** This meant that their teachers did not have to waste time waiting for everyone to concentrate."*

The project was also recognised positively when South Shore Academy narrowly missed out on a Bett Award for their collaborative work with GL Assessments in the project. Alex Quigley Educational Endowment Foundation National Content Manager and author of 'The Confident Teacher' 'Closing the Vocabulary Gap' and 'Closing the Reading Gap' says:

"Working on the KS3 Literacy has been a real privilege. There are few evidence-based, sustained projects that train teachers and school leaders in challenging circumstances. Working so closely with Blackpool schools, with the support offered by the project, has meant I could engage in a sustained way to support the schools to improve. The professional knowledge of the project leads has developed quickly and their implementation plans are strongly evidence-informed and of a very high quality."

The KS3 Literacy Strategy

Reflections, Learning and Evaluation

The following is a selection of the reflections and learning of the project so far.

Literacy and Reading now being identified as key priority/focus for all schools

Literacy and the Special Educational Needs provision being more strategically joined up via the SENCO

Schools implementing a far more robust, holistic offer for their pupils and staff around reading – both in relation to how new and pre-existing interventions are utilised

The well-established network of project leads being an excellent support and practice/information sharing network within and across the schools

School leaders, supported by Heads are prioritising more time in CPD calendars for literacy specific professional development

Both the project heads and schools are seeing the interventions as a catalyst for whole school change, not the silver bullet solution to improving literacy/reading and social emotional development

A greater prioritisation on middle leader development, collaborative planning and taking an evidenced approach to professional development across the schools.

Insight from the EEF secondary literacy guidance and the results of town wide literacy audit, the focus of the project has now progressed from the monitoring of fidelity of the transactional interventions to:

The more effective targeting of those interventions

The transference of impactful approaches and techniques into mainstream classrooms

Building the capacity of middle leaders to lead on disciplinary literacy within their specific subject areas and departments

Reviewing their existing approaches to supporting pupils in stanine 1 and 2

Improving literacy capabilities requires a multi-agency approach, bringing together the energy, enthusiasm and resources of those agencies with responsibility for promoting social justice for young people in Blackpool. The aim of the KS3 Literacy Project is to develop a sustainable change that identifies and responds flexibly to the needs of young people, supporting them to achieve through a place-based, multi-agency lens. A universal understanding of how we develop these 3 overarching essential protective factors, through an integrated early intervention approach, is key moving forward:

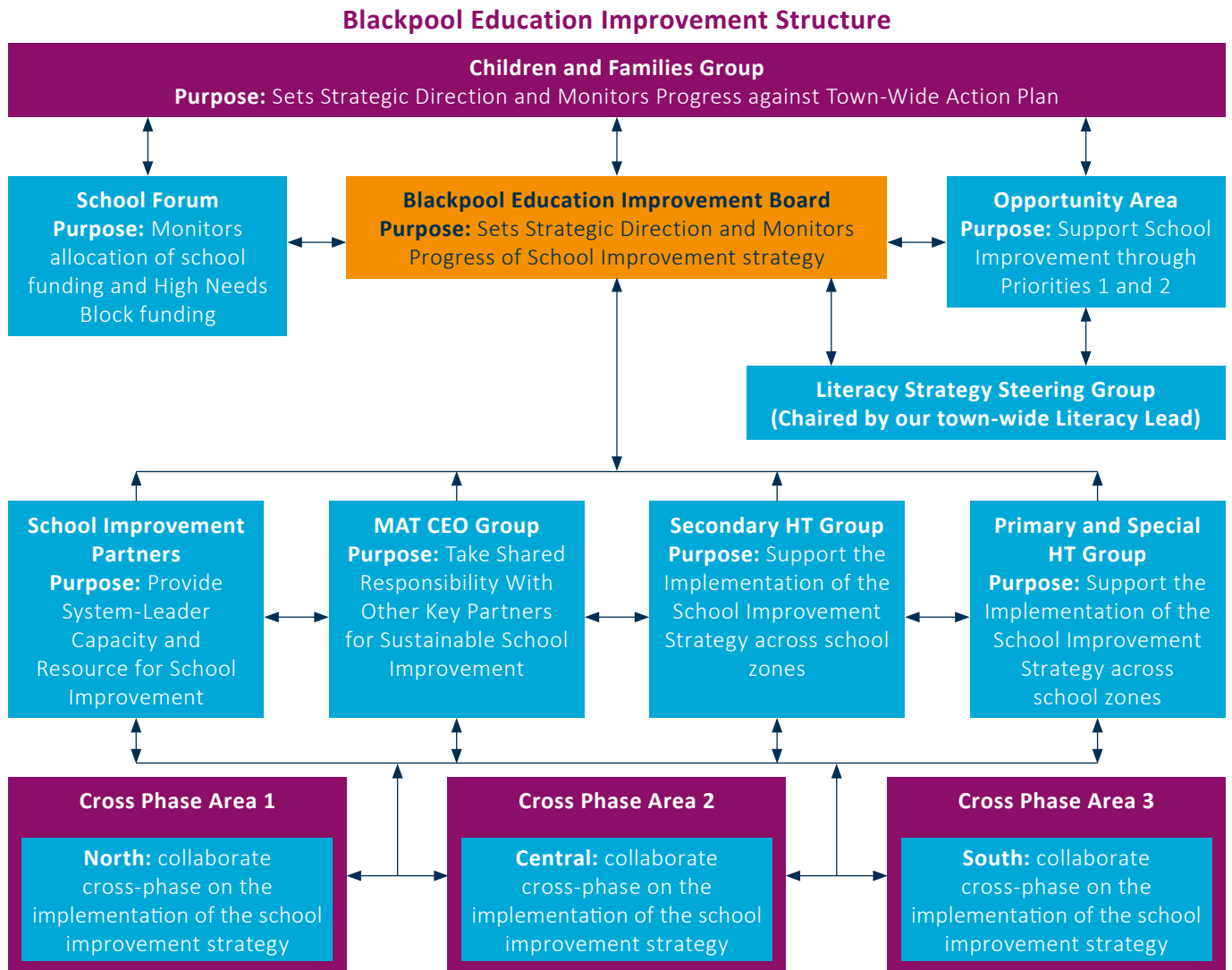Enhancing the overall capability and well-being of young people

Effective implementation of research-informed interventions

Greater connectivity around issues affecting young people

Literacy Strategy Governance

Blackpool Education Improvement Structure

Children and Families Group
Purpose: Sets Strategic Direction and Monitors Progress against Town-Wide Action Plan

School Forum
Purpose: Monitors allocation of school funding and High Needs Block funding

Blackpool Education Improvement Board
Purpose: Sets Strategic Direction and Monitors Progress of School Improvement strategy

Opportunity Area
Purpose: Support School Improvement through Priorities 1 and 2

Literacy Strategy Steering Group
(Chaired by our town-wide Literacy Lead)

School Improvement Partners
Purpose: Provide System-Leader Capacity and Resource for School Improvement

MAT CEO Group
Purpose: Take Shared Responsibility With Other Key Partners for Sustainable School Improvement

Secondary HT Group
Purpose: Support the Implementation of the School Improvement Strategy across school zones

Primary and Special HT Group
Purpose: Support the Implementation of the School Improvement Strategy across school zones

Cross Phase Area 1

North: collaborate cross-phase on the implementation of the school improvement strategy

Cross Phase Area 2

Central: collaborate cross-phase on the implementation of the school improvement strategy

Cross Phase Area 3

South: collaborate cross-phase on the implementation of the school improvement strategy

Monitoring and evaluation

The strategy recognises that literacy support can come from many places, community partners, volunteers etc and the strategy commits its members to support/train/provide information for others who believe they can play a part.

We require access to in-depth analysis of our town's data and to be able to see how it is changing in "real-time".

For this we will use the expertise of nationally recognised data analysts and providers of national comparative data to highlight the progress that we have made and the potential next-steps.

We will capture a wide range of qualitative data from all parts of our community to measure the need and to help us to monitor the impact for all, or for different groups within our community.

We will establish a literacy steering group that reports into the Blackpool Education Improvement Board, the Children and Families Strategic Partnership Board and the Opportunity Area Board.

There will be a standing agenda item on the Blackpool Education Improvement Board that measures the impact of our literacy strategy.

We will employ a literacy leader who monitors and evaluates the impact of the initiatives and projects that we deliver.

Evaluation of the different elements of this strategy will be provided by a commissioned higher-education provider who can evaluate over the lifetime of the strategy.

Speech and language therapy

Understanding the scale of the problem

Every child, regardless of circumstance should be able to develop and thrive. There is increasing concern about the numbers of children starting school with poor speech, language and communication skills, with unacceptable differences in outcomes in different areas of the country. Inequalities in early language development are recognisable in the second year of life and have an impact by the time children enter school.
(Best start in speech, language and communication, PHE, October 2020)

Early language development and communication skills are recognised as primary indicators of child wellbeing due to the link between language and other social, emotional and learning outcomes. Language contributes to a child's ability to manage emotions and communicate feelings; to establish and maintain relationships; to think symbolically and to learn to read and write (Law J, Charlton, J, Asmussen, K. Language as a child wellbeing indicator. London: The Early Intervention Foundation; 2017). Without support, children and young people with SLCN are at risk of poor outcomes across the life course:

Educational attainment

- 1 in 4 children who struggled with language at the age of 5 did not reach the expected standard in English at the end of primary school, compared with 1 in 25 children (at the age of 5) who had good language skills (Hollo A, Wehby, J, Oliver, R. Unidentified language deficits in children with emotional and behavioural disorders: A meta-analysis. Council for Exceptional Children. 2014;80(2))
- 15% of pupils with identified SLCN achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of their primary school years compared with 61% of all pupils (Department for Education. GCSE results 2017)
- Only 20.3% of pupils with SLCN gained grade 4/C or above in English and Maths at GCSE, compared with 63.9% of all pupils

Social, emotional and mental health:

- 81% of children with emotional and behavioural disorders have unidentified SLCN (Hollo A, Wehby, J, Oliver, R. Unidentified language deficits in children with emotional and behavioural disorders: A meta-analysis. Council for Exceptional Children. 2014;80(2))
- Children with vocabulary difficulties at age 5 are 3 times more likely to have mental health problems in adulthood and twice as likely to be unemployed when they reach adulthood (Law J, Rush, R, Parsons, S, Schoon, I. Modelling developmental language difficulties from school entry into adulthood: Literacy, mental health and employment outcomes. Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research. 2009;52:1401-16)

Lifelong impact:

- 60% of young offenders have low language skills (Bryan K, Freer, J, Furlong, C. Language and communication difficulties in juvenile offenders. International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders. 2007;42:505-20)
- The long-term negative impacts of language difficulties suggest that their associated costs to individuals, their families, and society across the life course are likely to be high (Law J, Charlton, J, Asmussen, K. Language as a child wellbeing indicator. London: The Early Intervention Foundation,; 2017)

Understanding local prevalence and demand on services

Data regarding the prevalence of Speech Language and Communication Needs SLCN in the early years is collected but, unfortunately, is unavailable for inclusion in this paper. In response to need, A BetterStart has invested in extending service provision – there is evidence that this has resulted in increased referrals to NHS SLT services.

The prevalence of Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) amongst school aged children and young people in Blackpool is higher than the average for similar authorities (this measures all those with identified SEND, so SEN support and those with EHCPs). It has been deduced that the level of identified need is greater than for similar authorities because the proportion of the child population with both an Education, Health and care Plan (EHCP) and identified for SEN support, but without an EHCP is higher than for similar authorities. The proportion of those with those who have SLCN as their identified need is also higher in both primary and secondary schools, but particularly primary schools.

Improving the teaching of literacy in all settings, schools and colleges

What we already have in place.

- A Betterstart has supported early family literacy and family learning, alongside family literacy programmes run by Adult Learning.
- A major Key Stage 3 literacy initiative has been implemented that has improved the achievement of secondary students.
- A nationally regarded English Hub has been established in Blackpool to support local schools.
- The English Hub is supporting schools in the teaching and learning of phonics particularly for 5-7 year olds.

- Work is ongoing with Pre-School and Early Years settings to ensure they promote quality talk and improve vocabulary.
- More parents, carers and extended family are engaged to take part in school related and community based activities.
- Professional development opportunities have been established for school staff to accelerate progress in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

1. Improving the teaching of literacy in all settings, schools and colleges

What are we aiming to achieve and how will we do it?

- Improve the quality of literacy and oracy provision in pre-school and early years settings with high-quality adult-child interactions.
- Improve the overall standard of reading for all children in the town.
- Increase the level of enjoyment that children and young people get from reading.
- Improve motivation and engagement to develop persistence and enjoyment in reading
- Extend the role of parents and improve the level of engagement from parents/carers/ extended family in supporting their children to enjoy and achieve in reading and speaking.
- Support parent to understand how to help their children learn and improve their communication, language and literacy
- Enable more pupils to achieve above average standards in reading and writing by the time they leave primary school.
- Ensure students capitalise on the good standards achieved in reading and writing by the end of Year 6 when continuing this through into their secondary education.
- Ensure all school staff prioritise literacy and oracy skill development as an important aspect of their classroom work. (Disciplinary literacy)
- Improve literacy across the curriculum emphasising the importance of subject specific support in secondary schools
- Ensure senior leaders and governors/trustees are held to account for standards in literacy and oracy.
- Establish an expectation that all schools in the town engage in peer review audits of practice for literacy and oracy and develop timely actions to address areas for improvement.

Projects that we will deliver to improve literacy

The Opportunity Area programme has funded a range of activities through the National Literacy Trust.

Extend the Key Stage 3 Literacy project that has been funded through the Opportunity Area, which works with our weakest leaders and develops effective whole-school literacy practices.

Continue to allow access for all schools to the range of GL testing / assessments that provide a base-line and show progress.

Ensure that every school in Blackpool has a functioning, accessible library that contains at least 20 books per child at their appropriate reading age.

Increased the number of class visits to local public libraries.

Ensure that every school has sufficient resources to be able to teach a reading recovery programme in every year group.

Establish a reading school "kite-mark" specific to Blackpool that is peer reviewed and bench-marked against national best practice.

Establish a network of literacy champions at each stage of a child's education.

Provide bespoke staff CPD that improves the quality of teaching.

Assess all pupils in Blackpool twice a year to determine their relative level of "attainment", devise structured interventions and to measure impact / progress.

Improving the teaching of literacy in all settings, schools and colleges

Through our existing School Improvement Partners network that is an integral part of the Blackpool Education Improvement Board's Governance Structure, we will provide training and professional development opportunities that allow our teachers to -

- Break down complex writing tasks
- Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject
- Provide opportunities for structured talk
- Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students
- Develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and wider understanding of language
- Use a balanced and engaging approach to developing reading, integrating both decoding and comprehension skills
- Effectively implement a systematic phonics programme
- Teach pupils to use strategies for developing and monitoring their reading comprehension
- Teach pupils to use strategies for planning and monitoring their writing
- Promote fluent written transcription skills by encouraging extensive and purposeful practice and explicitly teaching

- Use high-quality information about pupils' current capabilities to select the best next steps for teaching
- Use high-quality structured interventions to help pupils who are struggling with their literacy
- Develop pupils' language capability to support their reading and writing
- Support pupils to develop fluent reading capabilities
- Teach reading comprehension strategies through modelling and supported practice
- Teach writing composition strategies through modelling and supported practice
- Develop pupils' transcription and sentence construction skills through extensive practice
- Target teaching and support by accurately assessing pupil needs
- Use high-quality structured interventions to help pupils who are struggling with their literacy
- We will ensure that staff at every stage of their career have access to high-quality, continuing professional development related to literacy.
- We would like all schools to adopt, as part of their annual cycle of lesson evaluation and staff appraisal, a focus upon high-quality teaching of literacy.

Literacy for life - A journey of joy, discovery and understanding

Improving the literacy curriculum in all settings, schools and colleges.

What we already have in place.

- An improved focus upon literacy in all our schools.
- An alignment of GCSE English curriculums in our Secondary Academies.
- A GL assessment cycle that looks specifically at reading and barriers to reading.
- Literary Canons in place in a number of our Secondary Academies.
- Improved library provision across our schools.

2. Improving the literacy curriculum in all settings, schools and Colleges

What are we aiming to achieve and how will we do it?

- Develop an audit tool for schools to use to identify aspects of literacy and oracy that may require further development.
- Introduce a parental engagement strategy to support early years literacy.
- Provide wider opportunities for debate and public speaking for pupils and students.
- Ensure maximum use of language rich books to develop vocabulary in classrooms.
- Ensure all teachers are supported to understand how to teach children/students to read, write and communicate effectively.
- Align town-wide literacy events such as those made by visiting authors with school and community activity.
- Support Early Years settings to develop their curriculum
- All schools, no matter what their educational phase, have a curriculum that teaches children to read and then how to "read to learn".
- Every school's curriculum will maximise the use of quality, inspiring texts, that captivate young readers.
- We will use the framework provided by the national curriculum and a shared list of high-quality texts that are enjoyed by Blackpool readers, to provide a strong, broad curriculum in every school.

Projects that we will deliver to improve literacy

Introduce a Reading School Kitemark Framework.

Draw on resources and training provided by the Library Service, Adult Learning, Oxford University Press, National Literacy Trust, English Hub, Research School and Teaching Schools.

Businesses agree to being proactive participants in encouraging staff to commit to Literacy and Oracy Pledge.

Laureate Schools Library Project

Improving access to libraries and ensuring libraries reach out to their communities.

What we already have in place.

We have a network of 8 libraries across the town, providing free access to a wide range of books for all ages; computers, free WiFi and printing facilities; 24/7 online services (including e-Books, e-Audiobooks and e-Magazines and newspapers); learning opportunities and resources; and a range of engagement activities throughout the week.

- We know that libraries are at the heart of many Blackpool communities and have a pivotal role in promoting literacy and a love of reading, in delivering digital access and support and in providing a safe and welcoming place where people can find information, participate in learning and cultural activity. They are also great places to meet and feel part of the community.

- We know that some residents do not have strong literacy and oracy skills so we want to enable them to improve. We also know that many do have secure skills and want to improve these further so we need to make the library suitable and accessible for all.

We removed all library fines from April 2019 and found out that:

- 40,000 people used library services in past three years.
- Over ½ million visits to our libraries occurred in 2019 with over 2k events leading to more usage and over 120k sessions on library computers.
- 90% of Blackpool residents think local libraries are important.
- 80% of those visiting libraries borrow books.

3. Improving access to libraries and ensuring libraries reach out to their communities

What are we aiming to achieve and how will we do it?

- Establish a reading culture across Blackpool that pledges that all employers and forward facing companies and enterprises will champion early reading with children, whether through parents, siblings or their wider family.
- Greater involvement of residents around choosing stock

Our plan focuses on the following core themes:

Future Readers, Future Choices
Reading and free access is fundamental to people's life opportunities so libraries will provide books, information, ICT and activities. We will champion the 'literacy of opportunity'.

Get Connected
Libraries will be 'the living room of the community' so that people have safe and trusted places to go to. We will deliver high quality top services for technology, digital enablement and support to get online and be places where the community we will support people to participate. Libraries will be places where people feel better and less lonely.

Your Library
Stay at the centre of their communities. Do more to get out into and work with those communities. Develop targeted services to appeal to existing and new users.

Projects that we will deliver to improve literacy

Expand "Rhyme-time" sessions across all libraries.

Develop and deliver regular digital story-times for all ages.

Bookstart packs for every Early Years' child in the town.

A vibrant engagement programme and visits to local schools and nurseries.

More support for children in care and care leavers.

Work with Booktrust and steering group partners to develop Early Years literacy offer and widen participation.

High quality learning programmes to enable adults to improve their literacy and oracy skills.

What we already have in place.

Combined face to face literacy classes for adults (when safe to do so) with online courses.

A number of individualised learning opportunities, using online platforms where possible. This includes a new 'Functional Skills English' Facebook page where videos, live streams and posts are shared.

Online classes using Google Classroom; We offer 1:1 meetings to learners to familiarise themselves with 'the classroom'; and we are encouraging all learners to use this.

- An online offer of digital skills courses is now in place through a secure Google Education Suite.
- Digital courses are now being offered through Google Classroom with face to face video weekly sessions to create a blended approach.
- Google has enabled learners to access their courses and tutors on a friendly and easy to use platform.
- Courses are underway ranging from eSafety to spreadsheets, to enable employment.
- We are now able to allow learners to take their ECDL exams remotely through video conferencing invigilation, meaning that they can learn and achieve their full ECDL Level 2 in the safety of their own homes.

4. High quality learning programmes to enable adults to improve their literacy and oracy skills	
What are we aiming to achieve and how will we do it?	**Projects that we will deliver to improve literacy**
• Learners who can access remotely will be encouraged to do so (with some preferring to have the face to face option) for all informal and accredited ICT courses. • The new Digital Skills for Life and Work will be rolled out. Through the British Computer Society we can deliver this accreditation remotely, also with the same exam options. This will mean that with a device and connectivity, learners can obtain Digital Skills qualification from Entry level to Level 2. • Successful literacy intervention / recovery is more successful when it is embedded into other aspects of work-related learning. So we will work will work with employers to embed adult literacy programs in their apprenticeships and their training provision.	Deliver adult reading classes in our community (ideally schools or community locations) that deliver courses such as "Read Easy" https://readeasy.org.uk so that adults can easily and confidentially improve their reading on a 1:1 basis. Employers will be encouraged to boost the use of literacy in their workplaces. From September 2020, planning a much more blended learning approach of small classes to learners who are currently unable to access activity online. During these sessions, in addition to the literacy focus we aim to help learners use online platforms, in preparation for the future, in particular, if they have the equipment to do so at home.

Promoting and building digital literacy across the town.

What we already have in place.

Blackpool Adult Learning's offer includes combined face to face literacy (when safe to do so) and online courses.

- An online offer of digital skills courses are now in place through a secure Google Education Suite.
- Digital courses are being offered through Google Classroom with face to face video weekly sessions to create a blended approach.
- Google has enabled learners to access their courses and tutors on a friendly and easy to use platform. Courses are underway ranging from eSafety to spreadsheets, through to those that enable employment.
- Learners are now able to take their ECDL exams remotely through video conferencing invigilation, meaning that they can learn and achieve their full ECDL Level 2 in the safety of their own homes.

- A digital programme of IT courses have been offered that range from the absolute basics of how to switch a device on to ECDL level certification. Adults include complete beginners who need to gain confidence, unemployed adults who need to develop their skills to apply for jobs and employees who need to improve their digital skills in the workplace. These classes have been taught face to face in a classroom environment in a variety of community buildings, mainly libraries.
- Courses have been made bespoke for different groups' needs. The service work with a wide variety of organisations across Blackpool to meet their digital needs. Groups can be as small as 6 learners so they all receive a high level of support to assist their learning.

5. Promoting and building digital literacy across the town

What are we aiming to achieve and how will we do it?	Projects that we will deliver to improve literacy
From September 2020 we are planning to have a further blended approach with a mixture of online and face to face (small group) learning. Free access to computers (>100 across the network), with staff/volunteer support available and free WiFi provision in all libraries; plus the general council WiFi provision.	The new Digital Skills for Life and Work will be rolled out. Through the British Computer Society we can deliver this accreditation remotely too with the same exam options, this will mean that with a device and connectivity, learners can obtain Digital Skills qualification with ACFL from Entry level to Level 2. Introductory programmes will be commissioned and delivered in Blackpool that inspire young and old to be digitally literate and to seek employment in the digital sectors.

Improving Early Years outcomes in literacy and oracy and in particular the transition to schools

What we already have in place.

- We have encouraged all Early Years providers and schools to formally meet to discuss how they teach literacy and oracy and how these approaches can be better forged to ensure the most progress is made.

- We have discussed these arrangements with Ofsted and have shared our findings with Early Years providers and schools to ensure that we all have a clear understanding of expectations.

- We are considering how best to support staff in a sustainable way when a Better Start concludes.

- We have raised concerns about the financial viability of some Early Years providers with government and making clear to our school leaders the negative impact this could have on their children in the future.

- We have encouraged schools to extend their professional development programmes to local Early Years settings.

- We have worked with Further Education providers to ensure qualifications in child care contain a level of expectation for learner progress that is appropriate to meet national expectations on entry to primary school.

- We are seeking local solutions so that we can support parents across transition from Early Years to school, especially those who have been unable to access much in the way of Early Years provision for their child.

- Over time the relationship between the various phases of education has improved. The link between primary and secondary sectors has gained real traction in recent years.

- Ofsted inspections have shown improving Early Years provision in all types of provision.

6. Improving Early Years outcomes in literacy and oracy and in particular the transition to schools	
What are we aiming to achieve and how will we do it?	**Projects that we will deliver to improve literacy**
- Improve Early Years outcomes in literacy and oracy and in transition to schools. - Improve teaching of literacy in all settings, schools and colleges - Improve literacy curriculum in all settings, schools and colleges - Improve access to libraries and ensure libraries reach out to their communities. - High Quality learning programmes to enable adults to improve their literacy and oracy skills. - Promote and build digital literacy across the town	Use of CLL framework to develop practice. Delivery of Hanen Learning Language and Loving it / Teacher Talk to settings. Use of CLL framework to support practice. Focus on key texts for EY settings to share with children / training on approaches to using rhyme and story effectively to promote language development and love of sharing books / reading Training and support around a progressive approach to key texts and language / pre-reading skills Support to develop Communication Friendly Status Further developing the transition document completed by EY settings and shared with schools, to reflect the changes to the EYFS / non-statutory guidance and ensure the information provided to schools is as useful as possible in giving children the right start in Reception.

The value of reading for pleasure

Our Blackpool challenge to all residents, businesses, employers and employees!

Reading for pleasure is a key part of developing individual literacy skills. It opens up a world of literature that is not always available in schools. Without access to a wider range of texts, an individual's reading journey will be much slower and have less impact.

Children who read regularly, at home, are better readers than those who read solely at school. (Insert stats).

Our Literacy Pledge

The literacy (including oracy) strategy is ambitious and we know that it requires total commitment from the entire town, including those involved in the community of each school, College and setting to succeed. Its importance is crucial to the future success of Blackpool so we are proposing to ask an independent reviewer to be appointed to determine the speed of progress against our plan. This will ensure that we maintain our commitment to the work over the next 10 years.

Blackpool Literacy Pledge

As part of the vision for the future of the town we invite you to commit to you and or your organisation to the following:

You

- I will promote literacy and oracy with all those I meet and live with
- I will lead by example so I will set myself a reading challenge per week and will let others know about it and when I achieve it
- I will encourage all young people and children I have regular contact with to read often and I will, if appropriate, accompany them to the library
- I will consider undertaking training on how better to support children and young people in literacy and oracy

Your organisation

- I will promote literacy and oracy with all those I work with to ensure Blackpool becomes a better place to live, work and play.
- I will encourage the company and/or people I work with to create a plan for encouraging the employees and their families to read more for pleasure
- I will encourage my employer to emphasise the enjoyment of reading in a public space
- I will use Blackpool's Literacy Logo on all communications from the business
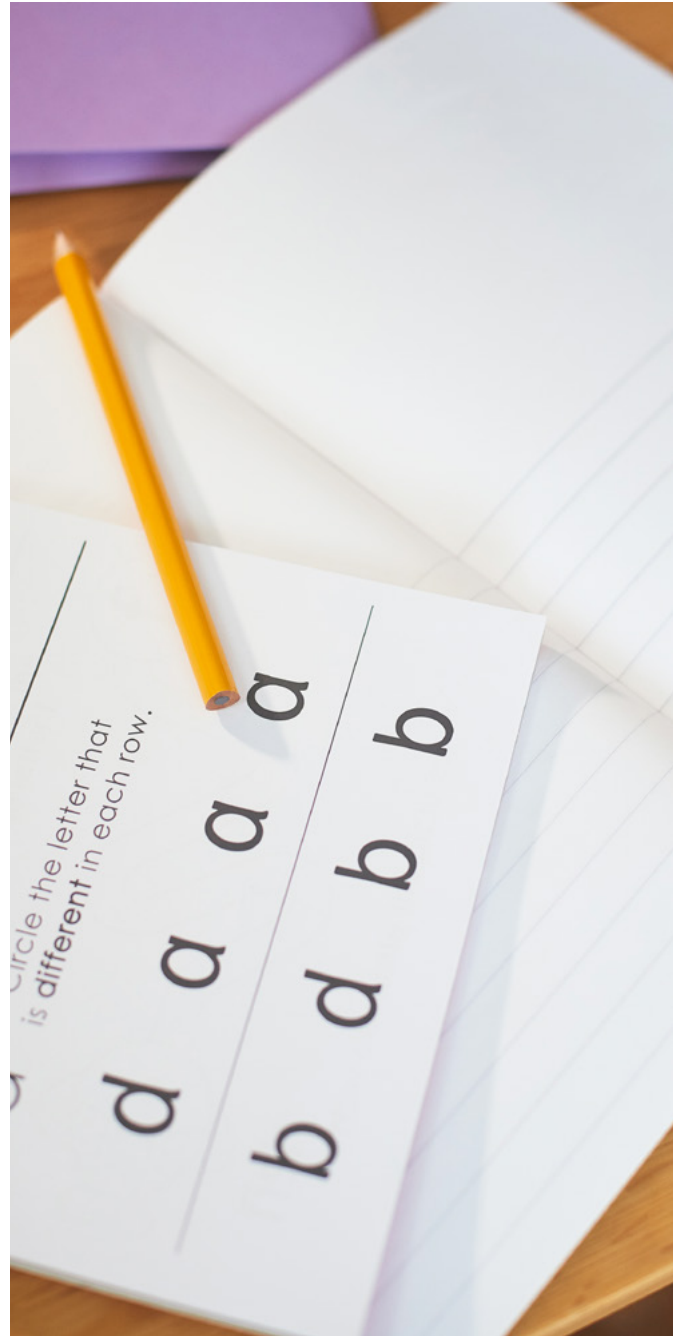
Engaging with the community and ensuring impact is felt by the "end-user"

We will champion our three literacy kite-marks.

LITERACY SCHOOL

LITERACY BUSINESS

COMMUNITY LITERACY CHAMPIONS

These kite-marks will be developed by an expert panel and assessed at three-levels (Bronze, silver and Gold).

Literacy timeline

2021

Literacy strategy launched

Blackpool literacy lead appointed

Literacy panel and steering group appointed

Place-based groups are established

Blackpool "30" campaign is launched

September 2021
New cycle of GL assessment testing begins.
Repeats every year in Sept

December 2021
Evaluation of GL assessments
(repeats every year in December)

2022
Launch of kite-marks

April 2022
2nd evaluation of GL assessments
(repeats every year in April)

July 2022
3rd evaluation of GL assessments
(repeats every year in July)

2023
All teachers in Blackpool have been trained
to teach a reading programme for all ages

2023
All schools in Blackpool have a
high-quality library provision on-site

2026
80% of pupils reach the expected standard in
reading at the end of Key Stage 1

2027
80% of children reach the expected standard
in reading at the end of Key Stage 2

2029
GCSE outcomes in English language and literature are at
or above the national average

2030

Appendix 1 - The literacy issue - Level of adult literacy

2011 Council Ward Name	EL1 and below	EL2	EL3	L1	L2 and above
Anchorsholme	4.8%	2.2%	8.4%	30.2%	54.4%
Bispham	4.4%	2.1%	8.1%	30.0%	55.5%
Bloomfield	6.0%	2.8%	10.4%	33.5%	47.3%
Brunswick	5.9%	2.7%	9.7%	31.7%	50.0%
Claremont	6.7%	3.0%	10.8%	33.1%	46.4%
Clifton	6.3%	2.9%	10.3%	32.5%	48.0%
Greenlands	4.9%	2.3%	8.5%	30.1%	54.2%
Hawes Side	5.4%	2.5%	9.4%	32.1%	50.5%
Highfield	4.6%	2.2%	8.2%	30.1%	55.0%
Ingthorpe	5.5%	2.5%	9.0%	30.3%	52.7%
Layton	5.2%	2.4%	8.8%	30.2%	53.3%
Marton	4.7%	2.2%	8.4%	30.3%	54.3%
Norbreck	4.7%	2.2%	8.4%	30.1%	54.5%
Park	7.9%	3.4%	11.6%	32.9%	44.2%
Squires Gate	4.7%	2.2%	8.4%	30.6%	54.0%
Stanley	4.7%	2.2%	8.4%	30.5%	54.2%
Talbot	6.0%	2.8%	10.2%	32.9%	48.1%
Tyldesley	5.0%	2.4%	8.9%	31.1%	52.6%
Victoria	5.2%	2.5%	9.4%	32.5%	50.4%
Warbreck	5.0%	2.4%	8.9%	31.2%	52.5%
Waterloo	5.1%	2.4%	9.1%	31.7%	51.8%
Blackpool	5.4%	2.5%	9.3%	31.4%	51.4%
Lancashire-14	5.0%	2.3%	8.6%	30.3%	53.8%
England	5.0%	2.1%	7.9%	28.5%	56.5%

Appendix 2 - The literacy issue

Adults whose first language is English

| 2011 Council Ward Name | ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) | | | | | |
| | Mean Estimates | | Lower 95% CI Estimates | | Upper 95% CI Estimates | |
	ESOL	NotESOL	ESOL	NotESOL	ESOL	NotESOL
Bloomfield	3.0%	97.0%	2.3%	96.5%	3.5%	97.7%
Brunswick	3.2%	96.8%	2.6%	96.4%	3.6%	97.4%
Claremont	3.0%	97.0%	2.3%	96.5%	3.5%	97.7%
Clifton	2.1%	97.9%	1.6%	97.5%	2.5%	98.4%
Greenlands	2.1%	97.9%	1.8%	97.6%	2.4%	98.2%
Hawes Side	2.1%	97.9%	1.7%	97.4%	2.6%	98.3%
Highfield	1.8%	98.2%	1.6%	97.8%	2.2%	98.4%
Ingthorpe	2.1%	97.9%	1.8%	97.5%	2.5%	98.2%
Layton	2.4%	97.6%	2.1%	97.3%	2.7%	97.9%
Marton	1.8%	98.2%	1.5%	97.8%	2.2%	98.5%
Norbreck	1.6%	98.4%	1.4%	98.0%	2.0%	98.6%
Park	2.3%	97.7%	1.8%	97.3%	2.7%	98.2%
Squires Gate	2.0%	98.0%	1.7%	97.6%	2.4%	98.3%
Stanley	1.9%	98.1%	1.6%	97.7%	2.3%	98.4%
Talbot	3.1%	96.9%	2.4%	96.4%	3.6%	97.6%
Tyldesley	2.2%	97.8%	1.8%	97.5%	2.5%	98.2%
Victoria	1.9%	98.1%	1.5%	97.6%	2.4%	98.5%
Warbreck	2.1%	97.9%	1.7%	97.5%	2.5%	98.3%
Waterloo	2.3%	97.7%	1.9%	97.3%	2.7%	98.1%
Blackpool	**2.2%**	**97.8%**	**1.8%**	**97.4%**	**2.6%**	**98.2%**
Lancashire-14	**3.5%**	**96.5%**	**3.0%**	**96.1%**	**3.9%**	**97.0%**
England	**10.8%**	**89.2%**	**8.4%**	**85.5%**	**14.0%**	**91.6%**

Figure 2. In 2018/19 (Y1 Phonics)

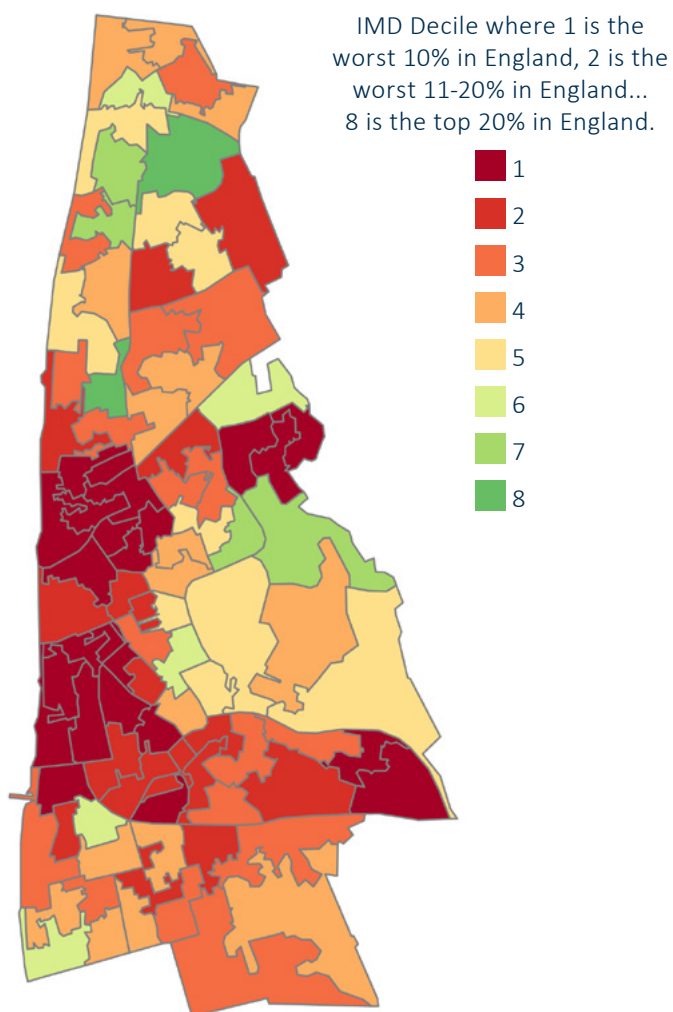| Ward	Percentage working at expected standard
Claremont	70.7%
Bloomfield	74.3%
Clifton	76.3%
Greenlands	79.0%
Brunswick	78.1%
Hawes Side	78.2%
Layton	74.3%
Waterloo	82.6%
Bispham	81.6%
Park	83.3%
Highfield	85.3%
Victoria	81.6%
Tyldesley	88.2%
Norbreck	90.0%
Stanley	88.0%
Warbreck	87.5%
Ingthorpe	87.2%
Talbot	90.0%
Squires Gate	90.0%
Marton	89.8%
Anchorsholme	88.9%

Figure 3. The percentage of children that reached the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1 (2018-19 school year)

Ward	Reading	Writing
Park	60.32	55.56
Bloomfield	60.92	54.02
Tyldesley	62.96	60.49
Brunswick	64.47	59.21
Claremont	66.04	59.43
Talbot	67.31	63.46
Highfield	69.7	69.7
Victoria	70	64.44
Stanley	70.21	63.83
Clifton	70.89	62.03
Waterloo	72.55	64.71
Hawes Side	73.33	65.56
Bispham	74.6	73.02
Squires Gate	75	64.29
Greenlands	75.68	72.97
Warbreck	76.12	74.63
Ingthorpe	76.71	73.97
Marton	78.13	68.75
Norbreck	80	76.36
Layton	81.82	72.73
Anchorsholme	85.37	73.17

Figure 4. In 2018/19 the percentage of children at or above the expected standard for reading and writing at Key Stage 2

Figure 4.

Ward	Reading	Writing
Bloomfield	58.43	68.54
Brunswick	62.35	74.12
Claremont	64.62	67.69
Victoria	64.77	69.32
Tyldesley	69.23	72.53
Greenlands	69.35	69.35
Talbot	70.59	67.65
Layton	74.19	80.65
Hawes Side	76.25	81.25
Park	76.54	74.07
Marton	77.78	94.44
Clifton	78.95	75
Norbreck	79.07	81.4
Waterloo	79.59	79.59
Bispham	80	70
Warbreck	80	84.62
Stanley	80	77.5
Highfield	80.65	87.1
Ingthorpe	82.54	79.37
Squires Gate	85.19	66.67
Anchorsholme	86.54	86.54

IMD Decile where 1 is the worst 10% in England, 2 is the worst 11-20% in England... 8 is the top 20% in England.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

Literacy for life - A journey of joy, discovery and understanding
A place-based approach to improving literacy, oracy & digital communication in Blackpool 2020-2030

Blackpool's position in summary

	2017		2018		2019		2017-2019	
	LA	National	LA	National	LA	National	LA	National
Pupils	1,689	651,237	1,668	662,047	1,723	663,363	5,080	1,976,647
Below KS1 threshold	387	147,351	407	148,914	471	153,643	1,265	449,908
Above KS1 threshold	1,302	503,886	1,261	513,133	1,252	509,720	3,815	1,526,739
Below KS1 threshold, %	22.9%	22.6%	24.4%	22.5%	27.3%	23.2%	24.9%	22.8%
Above KS1 threshold, %	77.1%	77.4%	75.6%	77.5%	72.7%	76.8%	75.1%	77.2%

If Blackpool were in line with the national average:				
	2017	2018	2019	2017-2019
Below KS1 threshold	382	375	400	1,158
Difference versus actual**	5	32	71	107

**This displays the difference between the actual number of pupils below the KS1 threshold in Blackpool and the number there would be were Blackpool in line with the national average. A positive number means there are more pupils below the KS1 threshold in Blackpool; a negative number means there are fewer pupils below the KS1 threshold.

	2017	2018	2019	2017-2019
Below KS1 threshold	456	457	484	1,397
Difference versus actual***	-69	-50	-13	-132

***This displays the difference between the actual number of pupils below the KS1 threshold in Blackpool and the number there would be were Blackpool in line with a group of matched pupils in similar schools nationally. A positive number means there are more pupils below the KS1 threshold in Blackpool; a negative number means there are fewer pupils below the KS1 threshold.

Source of data FFT Data Lab.

Glossary of terms

Academy – An independent state school.

Alternative Provision – Provision outside of what can be provided in a mainstream school.

ASD – Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Betterstart – A national lottery funded programme.

CEO – Chief Executive Officer.

Co-production – Collaborative, planning and action that involves a range of stakeholders eg: adults and children.

Cognition – Related to thinking.

Cross-phase – working across the different phases of education.

Dedicated Schools Grant – Specific funding ring-fenced for schools.

Early Help – Action to prevent escalation.

Early intervention – Early action to improve access to education.

Early Years Foundation Stage – The first stage of a child's education.

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) – A legal document that outlines a plan to support a child to ensure that they receive the appropriate level of education.

Educational Diversity – Blackpool's Pupil Referral Unit.

Fixed Term Exclusion (FTE) – Where a pupil is excluded from a school for a set-period of time, between 1 day and 45 days per school year.

GL assessments – A private provider of testing for school-aged children.

Good level of development – The expected level for a child at the end of the Foundation stage.

Graduated response – A provision that meets the needs of pupils by working up through a series of types of provision and specialist offers.

High Needs Block – A ring-fenced part of the Dedicated Schools Grant for pupils with additional needs.

Hospital school – A statutory offer from the Local Authority for pupils who are too unwell to attend school.

Inclusion – Involving and / or providing for all pupils in a school.

KS1 – Key Stage 1 – A phase of education at a Primary School.

KS2 – Key Stage 2 – A phase of education at a Primary School.

Literacy – To do with writing and reading.

Local Leader of Education – A local expert in education leadership.

Maintained School – The Local Authority is the employer.

MLD – Moderate Learning Difficulty.

Multi-agency – Involving a number of different agencies in a locality.

NEET – Not in education, employment or training.

NVQ Level 1 – A qualification type that is vocational.

NVQ Level 2 – A qualification type that is vocational.

Ofsted – School regulator.

Opportunity Area – A government initiative that aims to boost social mobility in a select number of areas.

Permanent Exclusion (PEX) – Where a pupil is excluded from a school and may not return unless a successful appeal is lodged.

Primary School – A school that provides education for pupils aged 11 or below.

Pupil Premium – Additional funding paid to schools.

Pupil Referral Unit – A provision who pupils who have been excluded and / or need alternative means of education.

Regional Schools Commissioner – Department for Education Senior Civil Servant.

Resilience – Ability to cope in difficult circumstances.

Secondary School – A school that provides education for pupils aged between 11 and 16, or with a Sixth Form, age 18.

SEMH – Social, Emotional, Mental Health.

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

SLD – Specific Learning Difficulty.

Special Educational Needs Resource Facility – A specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Specialist Leader of Education – An expert in specific aspects of school provision.

Teaching School Hub – A DFE initiative that brings together schools under an umbrella to provide school to school support and training.

Transition – Moving between schools or phases.

Vocational – Linked to work.

Voluntary Aided School – The relevant Church Diocese is the employer.