

**Report to:**

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Relevant Officer:**

Paul Turner, Assistant Director – Education, SEND and Early Years.

**Meeting:**

22 June 2023

### **LITERACY STRATEGY UPDATE**

#### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

1.1 To update the committee on progress made since the launch of the Literacy Strategy.

#### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 To support the continued focus upon literacy in Blackpool schools and the wider Blackpool community and ensure that the Strategy is implemented as agreed.

2.2 To establish the current work undertaken by the Libraries Service to support the Literacy Strategy.

#### **3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

3.1 Literacy is key to educational outcomes and employment / life opportunities for the residents of Blackpool.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

#### **4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:**

4.1 N/A

#### **5.0 Council priority:**

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool
- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

## 6.0 Background information

6.1 The general aim of the strategy is for every person in Blackpool to have the speaking, reading and writing skills to enable wider learning and employment opportunities as well as access to social and cultural activities.

The recent Government white paper sets targets for 90% of pupils at the end of KS2 to reach the expected standard for reading and writing (and Maths) and 70% of secondary pupils achieving English GCSE grade 5 or higher.

To do this we must improve literacy provision across all educational settings from Early Years through to Adult learning and ensure promotion of digital skills and literacy. This will be through -

- Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum development
- Libraries
- Early Years
- Adult Education

The strategy has twenty-four overarching Recommendations.

1. Increase level of cross-phase collaboration with the Research school (based at St Mary's Catholic Academy).
2. Promote and support the implementation of the new National Professional Qualification for Leading Literacy - middle leaders and experienced teachers.
3. Increase levels of engagement in the national tutoring programme for those pupils falling behind in English.
4. Work towards increasing the national GCSE average grade in English language from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030.
5. Have writing as a bespoke and specific project.
6. Establish a baseline in each Cross Phase Area: Map literacy teaching skills across each cross-phase areas and identify gaps/strengths.
7. Map education setting and community resources in each Cross Phase Area.
8. 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 (one focus per year).
9. Ensure that every school has sufficient resources to be able to teach a reading

recovery programme in every year group.

10. Disseminate learning and good practice within and across phases and enable opportunities for shared CPD across key stages.
11. Provide bespoke staff CPD that improves the quality of teaching.
12. Establish a reading school "kitemark" specific to Blackpool that is peer reviewed and bench-marked against national best practice.
13. Establish a network of literacy champions at each stage of a child's education.
14. Expand the work of the Literacy Hub (at St John Vianney School) to empower KS3 teachers.
15. Develop a set of effective cross-phase teaching and learning strategies for EAL pupils.
16. Develop a town wide audit tool for education settings - needs to be built upon (from existing tools) and should be bespoke to EYFS, primary, secondary and post-16 settings. It should also be used to give us a better idea of what library provision is available in schools. The audit should be linked to the kitemark so it's a full circle approach.
17. Produce a comms plan and overview of literacy approaches, tools and resources across the town.
18. Draw on existing resources and training provided by the Library Service, Better Start, Adult Learning, Oxford University Press, National Literacy Trust, English Hub, Research School and Teaching Schools.
19. Get businesses to agree to being proactive participants in encouraging staff to commit to the literacy and oracy pledge.
20. Encourage all visitor attractions to advertise and develop a parent and child literacy offer that is embedded in their offer and attraction, through their signs, information boards or activity trails.
21. Introduce a parental engagement strategy to support early years literacy and consider how this can be expanded to older children e.g. parents doing functional skills alongside children, utilising baseline data from early years literacy work.
22. Develop a curriculum map across all settings which maximises reading opportunities.
23. Develop a system to share information on interventions across settings during

transition (share what interventions worked and what didn't).

24. Develop an understanding of what happens at each stage of literacy education (Early Years, KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4, adult literacy).

A strategic group has been established containing expertise from all stakeholders across Blackpool and two eminent university professors, to drive these priorities.

Since the last report, the Early Years task and finish group is now progressing the elements of the plan that relate to Early Years education.

Blackpool library service has agreed to send the literacy survey out to partners, and support the initiatives in any way that is needed.

National Literacy Trust is working with the library service and promoting and developing literacy with young adults and through youth clubs, out of school settings and the Grand Theatre, through Arts Council funding, the Connecting Stories project and the Penguin Random House project that has worked with 18 schools so far.

From the work that has been done so far, it is clear that reading and literacy are high priorities for school leaders and other stakeholders within Blackpool.

The Blackpool 30 reading challenge still continues and reading standards at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) were high throughout the pandemic period, in Blackpool. Writing was not as strong, so this has been the focus for this year.

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**7.0 List of Appendices:**

7.1 Appendix 7(a): Literacy strategy

**8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 N/A

**9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 N/A

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 N/A

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 N/A

**12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 N/A

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 Internal and external consultation was held whilst writing the literacy strategy and this has been ongoing as described above.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None.