

**COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**Statement from: Cllr Mrs P A Bradwell, Executive Councillor for Children's Services**

**Safeguarding**

Referrals into Social Care increased from 419 in April 2010 to 569 in July 2010. Open referrals have however, remained relatively steady at 3,200 on average a month, demonstrating that the work is being effectively managed. Despite continued pressure on the front door (arising from the greater identification of need) social workers continue to perform well with 83% of initial assessments completed in timescale. The completion of core assessments has also risen from 154 in April 2010 to 249 in June 2010. Our newly recruited additional social workers are now coming into post and will ease this increased pressure on the front line.

The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan has increased to 258 in July 2010 from 248 in March 2010. This is an insubstantial increase and the numbers are actually lower than they were this time last year when they stood at 276 (July 2009). The number of children in public care remains relatively stable at an average of 535 for the first quarter of the year. We are working closely with our court advisory service (CAFCASS) and district judge to reduce delay and decrease the number of orders made through public law applications.

Our Ofsted inspection in May 2010 graded Safeguarding in Children's Services as outstanding and our Looked After Children services good with outstanding capacity to improve. In total we received 11 outstanding judgements. The council and its partners were described as 'having maintained a robust consistent and successful focus to secure the safety and well being of children and young people across a large and diverse county. Strong leadership and shared commitment across the partnership drive continual improvement with an outstanding performance management culture.'

12 authorities have contacted us to see if they can learn from us and we are hosting a workshop style conference in September 2010. We are also hosting Eileen Munro, the government's national safeguarding advisor, and her team in September. However, we are not complacent and continue to strive to improve practice across the whole of children's services.

**PRIMARY EDUCATION**

**Ofsted Inspections**

Since the introduction of the new framework we have had 72 inspections of Primary, Junior, Infant or nursery schools.

- 6 schools have been deemed outstanding
- 33 deemed good
- 33 deemed satisfactory

This represents an outstanding achievement, as we believe we are the only shire county not to have any primary school placed into an Ofsted category under the revised framework.

One school was removed from an Ofsted category during inspections last term. We now only have one primary school (Boston Staniland) in an Ofsted category and this is the best performance ever. We expect Staniland to be removed from Special Measures during the autumn term.

### **KS2 Pupils attaining Level 4**

We ran 24 Easter Booster schools across the county. Of these schools, 4 improved above the floor target for English and Mathematics combined. We now have only 11 schools that remain below the floor target, a reduction of 8 on last year.

Maths outcomes at Level 4 in Lincoln City rose by 5.0% following significant consultant input across the City. Hopefully, we will be able to continue with this targeted work in schools – funding permitted.

1:1 tuition across the county was very well taken up by schools, and we were one of only two authorities in the country to deliver all our allocated tuition places, for which we received a congratulatory letter from the DfE.

A 10 week intensive reading focussed project was provided for 187 pupils at risk of making poor progress in reading. Over the 10 week programme all children made at least a year's progress in their reading.

The launch of Maths Mania 2010 saw a brand new competition specially designed to celebrate maths skills and to encourage and develop enthusiasm for maths. Heats were held for schools in the district areas, and the winners from each district came to a Grand Final held at RAF College Cranwell. The RAF very kindly spent time in the afternoon with the pupils showing them around the air base and explaining how maths is important in the work they do. I attended the Final and the room was buzzing with young people who were all very excited to be representing their school.

### **Key Stage 2 SATs**

We had 23 Primary schools that took industrial action and did not take part in the Key Stage 2 SATs. This represents 9.7% of our pupils compared to a national figure of 26%. 11 year olds in Lincolnshire have achieved results in line with those in the rest of the country in English and Mathematics with 80% of pupils achieving Level 4 in both of these subjects. 74% of our pupils attained a Level 4 in both Maths and in English. Results taken from teacher assessments, which include those schools that did not take the tests, show 82% of our pupils attaining Level 4 in English and 83% in Mathematics.

Once more we are celebrating improvements in Mathematics, with a greater number of children achieving Level 4 this year. Although the test results in English across Lincolnshire appear to be the same as they were last year, many of our schools are reporting yet again, inaccuracies in the marking of their papers. A significant number of children's scripts have been returned for re-marking. Results at Level 5 have been maintained.

## **Headteacher Vacancies in the Primary Sector**

We currently have 6 headteacher vacancies being advertised for January. We have 13 new headteachers starting in September and 19 acting headships covering maternity leave, sickness or vacancies.

## **Leadership**

We have 19 Primary headteachers who have completed the Local Leaders of Education. With this programme, headteachers can be accredited by the National College so that we can then use their skills and expertise to support vulnerable schools in Lincolnshire.

## **Co-headships**

The principle of co-headships has been established within Lincolnshire. This is based upon the highly successful project in Leicestershire. Unions have given strong support for this new initiative. It supports the retention of experienced headteachers and gives new leaders the opportunity to work alongside them to gain knowledge. Lincolnshire guidance was approved in July and the first school is hoping to begin this in January 2011.

A leadership development course for 15 experienced headteachers commenced in the summer term and is designed to develop knowledge, skills and confidence to contribute to the school improvement and transformation agenda.

## **Birth to Five Service**

A package of intensive support was offered to 58 schools last term and this has already shown a significant impact on improving provision and raising outcomes for children in foundation and reception classes.

The impact of the Early Years 2008-2010 Action Plan, which has driven the direction of the Service over the past three years, is now clearly visible. Provisional Foundation Stage results for 2010 show that the gap has been narrowed by a further 3%, and the percentage of children achieving 78% across all Foundation Stage Profile Scales.

Ofsted outcomes for Early Years Providers continue to rise, and currently stand at 80% of Providers achieving Good and Outstanding outcomes. This has risen from 61% over the last two years. I am very proud to report that our provision in this key area of work has never been better.

## **SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### **Examination Results**

Key Stage 4 - Provisional figures released on results day by Lincolnshire schools show that the overall result for the key GCSE indicator of percentage of 5+A\*-C (including English and Maths) has increased again this year by 3% to 59%. Once more Lincolnshire schools' rate of improvement is well above the national average for maintained schools.

%5A\*-C figures have improved by 3% to nearly 79%, which again is likely to be well above national averages.

%5A\*-G figures have improved by more than 2% to nearly 98%, which again is well above national averages.

3 schools achieved 100% 5A\*-C(including English and maths): Alford Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Caistor Grammar School and Horncastle Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School,

Key Stage 5 - 2010 saw the introduction of the new grade A\* at A level. This was awarded only to students completing a full A level course (i.e. not to other qualifications). In Lincolnshire, 6.9% of A level grades were at grade A\* compared with 8.1% nationally.

At the highest A level grades Lincolnshire schools showed an improvement of nearly 2% with 25.4% of students achieving grade A. There was also an improvement (1%) at A\*-B with 50.9% of students achieving grades A\*-B or higher.

Taking into account all equivalent qualifications (e.g. BTEC National), the A\*-E pass rate increased by nearly 1% to 97.4% in 2010.

### **Ofsted Inspections of Secondary Schools September 2009 to July 2010**

15 Lincolnshire Secondary schools have been inspected this academic year. The proportion of schools judged to be Outstanding was much higher than the national average, as was the proportion judged to be Good or Better. 2 schools were judged to be in need of significant improvement: structural solutions are in place for both of these schools (Grantham Church School and Boston St Bede's).

- Outstanding: 3 schools. 19%. (National average 10%)
- Good: 5 schools. 31% (National average 35%)
- Satisfactory: 6 schools. 38% (National average 42%)
- Notice to improve: 2 schools. 12% (National average 13%)
- Good or better 50% (National average 45%)

### **Academies**

From September 2010 the following Academies will open:

- **The Priory Ruskin Academy Grantham** - this replaces The Grantham Church VA High School and The Central Technology and Sports College. This academy will be run by The Priory Trust, Lincoln. The funding of this new development is subject to the Public Spending Review.
- **The Skegness Academy** - this replaces St Clement's College, Skegness. This academy will be run by The Greenwood Dale Trust, Nottingham. The Government has confirmed over £19m of capital expenditure for this new Academy.

## **14-19**

On 1 April several responsibilities of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) transferred to the Local Authority, together with a total of 10 staff. On 19 July 2010, Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, announced further changes to the funding arrangements for 16–19 education. The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed that the changes announced will **not** affect the statutory duties placed on councils and the Young People's Learning Agency set out in the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the ASCL Act). Therefore, the statutory basis of the local authority 16–19 commissioning role remains unchanged.

### **The Statutory Duties of Councils**

Councils will continue to have a duty to *"secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of :-*

- (a) persons in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, and*
- (b) persons in their area who are aged 19 or over but under 25 and are subject to learning difficulty assessment".*

The full list of the issues that the Council needs to take into account in exercising this duty is set out in Section 41 of the ASCL Act, but includes the quality of the education and training and the locations and times at which it is provided. Councils are also required to act with a view to encouraging the diversity of provision and increasing the choice available to learners.

### **The Statutory Functions of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)**

The YPLA's functions are set out in Part 3 of the ASCL Act, but principally relate to the funding of the provision of education and training to 16-19 year olds (and up to 25 with learners with a learning difficulty assessment). The YPLA also has a duty of issue guidance to local authorities on the performance of their statutory duties and has powers to intervene where councils are failing to perform their duties. The YPLA is not a commissioning or planning body; the statutory duties here rest with local authorities, and the changes do not affect that.

### **The Changes Affecting Councils Announced in the Secretary of State's Letter**

The main changes announced on 19 July relate to the funding of 16-19 education and training and not to the council commissioning role. The Secretary of State makes it clear in his letter that councils will continue to have a strategic commissioning and influencing role. However, the changes to the funding arrangements will have implications for the way that councils, in practice, carry out their commissioning role.

The funding changes are

- The YPLA will make payments directly to FE Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, and other training providers, and will manage the contracts with them. School sixth forms will continue to be paid by the Council
- From 2011/12, funding will be based on 'lagged learner numbers' (as is the case with pre-16 education funding at present).

The changes to the payment arrangements outlined in the first bullet point will have little effect on the council commissioning role. However, the changes to the funding

formula will mean the neither councils nor the YPLA will be involved in detailed negotiations with schools and colleges over funding allocations – which will, for the most part, be based on learner numbers in the previous years. The Council's strategic commissioning and influencing role will be to maintain a 'strategic overview of provision and needs in their area – identifying gaps, enable new provision and developing the market.'

The other change announced is the removal of the requirement on local authorities to come together in sub-regional and regional planning groups. In the East Midlands, the Regional Planning Group has proved useful and is likely to continue but the Lincolnshire and Rutland Sub Regional group is likely to be abandoned as it serves no useful purpose. The statutory duty for councils to cooperate with each other in relation to 16-19 education and training remains.

### **Implications for the Local Authority**

An initial meeting between DfE officials, the YPLA, the Local Government Association and ADCS has taken place, and further meetings have been scheduled for the summer period. It is therefore not possible to answer all the questions that Executive may have at this stage. However, it is clear that:

- The National Commissioning Framework has been withdrawn and will be replaced by a 'lagged learner numbers' funding model. The YPLA is required to issue statutory guidance on the way the new system will operate. The LGA and ADCS will be working closely with the YPLA on this over the summer period to ensure that the guidance is clear and will support councils in carrying out their commissioning role effectively and flexibly. The LGA and ADCS will continue to update all councils as the situation becomes clearer.
- The Council will continue to have a significant role in commissioning 16–19 education and training, although the changes to the method of funding providers mean that this will be a more *strategic* role in ensuring that local provision meets the needs of local learners and employers and will not involve detailed discussions with schools and colleges about funding allocations. The Council will still need to produce commissioning plans, in partnership with schools, colleges and other providers, and the role of the 14-19 Strategic Partnership as a consultative body is heightened. New partnerships (such as Local Economic Partnerships) will be closely linked to the 14-19 Partnership. The Executive has agreed to receive, at its October meeting, a Commissioning Statement for approval or amendment. This will continue to be an essential component of the democratic commissioning process.
- The Council will need to continue to engage in discussion with providers, employers and other partners in order to fulfill its statutory duties. It will remain essential for the Council to continue to build high-quality relationships with providers and to develop a shared picture of needs for 16-19 provision. It currently does this through the 14-19 Strategic Partnership. It will also remain essential for us to continue to work with other local authorities to understand how learners are moving across boundaries, and to support choice by young people.
- Specialist staff transferred from Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to Lincolnshire County Council will continue to have an essential role in commissioning and in

developing local commissioning plans. In the transition to a 'lagged funding model', some roles may need to change. However, the YPLA is still working up the model and this work will not be complete until late September at the earliest. It is important for the Council to be clear about the nature of this role before taking a view on staffing needs. We are strongly advised by YPLA, LGA and ADCS not to proceed with restructuring until the new arrangements are finalized.

## **LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICE**

### **Lifelong Learning Performance 2009/10**

The number of enrolments on all lifelong learning courses provided by the Council has exceeded the performance target. Our target was 12 enrolments per 1,000 adult population. We achieved more than 14 enrolments which was better than last year (at just 11). This increase has been achieved by increasing the number of providers and improving our quality monitoring.

### **Adult Learner's Week**

Adult Learner's Week was a huge success at Horncastle College. Over 170 learners took part in a variety of free taster classes. Prospective learners were treated to a sample of what's on offer at Horncastle College from bird watching and wildlife, gardening to complimentary therapies and jewellery making. A comprehensive programme of courses is now being planned with many who attended the free taster sessions already signed up.

### **Autumn Adult Learning Brochure**

The new autumn learning brochure became available on 23 August. The brochure features over 400 courses from 20 providers. Courses include everything from science and maths, beauty therapy to building and construction. In addition, more targeted marketing will be undertaken across the county with up to 30,000 leaflets being delivered to key groups (such as males, ethnic minority groups) to promote our learning courses. See [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lifelonglearning](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lifelonglearning) for the Grow brochure.