

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 FEBRUARY 2012

Statement from: Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell, Executive Councillor for Children's Services & Adult Learning

On 14 December I attended the Prizegiving for Carre's Grammar School at St Denys Church in Sleaford. This was a wonderful evening celebrating the young people's achievements.

On 30 January I presented certificates to young people from schools who have been working on a project called SCoRE, which is a programme that looks at practical and low cost ways to reduce gas and electricity use in schools. 9 schools have been participating in this pilot project and they are Lincoln Castle Academy, St Faith & St Martin's Junior School, St Peter at Gowts Primary, Monks Abbey Primary, Caistor Yarborough Academy, Caistor Primary, Grasby Primary, Nettleton Primary and Brocklesby Park Primary. Prizes were awarded to the school that had managed to make the most savings in energy.

The Local Government Association, ADCS and SOLACE, supported by the DfE, has set up a National Children's Improvement Board. This is a direction setting and decision making group that is responsible for the overall delivery of a new programme to develop a sector led improvement system for children's services. All regions have set up a Board to oversee the delivery of the programme in local authorities. All local authorities are asked to open up their self assessment processes to peer challenge, but how this happens will differ from place to place. It is important that everyone gets involved in sector led improvement, but it is also important that peer challenge moves forward in a way which works for local authorities. I was recently appointed as the Leader Member to the East Midlands Children's Improvement Board and we are starting to development a programme for peer reviews in local authorities in the East Midlands.

Childrens Centres

Every month now we are seeing more and more of our Children's Centres being inspected for the first time. Lincoln North Children's Centre has had a recent inspection, which was found to be offering a very good service to parents and children. Witham Family Centre has also been inspected and inspectors confirmed that this Centre is offering a high quality of services to families

Youth Activities

The new role of Youth and Community Development is to enable communities to take over and set up youth provision and positive activities in their areas. Youth Centres are currently still operational one night a week through Lincolnshire County Council and are in the process of developing community engagement to ensure continuity of service provision.

The new service delivery model is based on the following:

- Dedicated team of children's/youth development assistants to work with the community to encourage a range of positive activities to be offered.
- Small grants to work with the community to encourage a range of positive activities to be offered.

- REAL buses to provide targeted interventions in rural areas.
- Positive Futures - which offer a range of activities targeted at vulnerable young people (such as fair play football).
- Dedicated team of staff to work with vulnerable young people to promote participation either through 1:1 support or through group interventions.

Stakeholder events are being held to identify community interest in the management and delivery of positive activities from the 40 centres - community groups, schools, voluntary and third sector organisations are involved in this work.

Social Care

Open referrals remain relatively stable at approximately 3,500 with an intake of 458 (Dec 2011), 90% of initial assessments and 85% of core assessments remain within timescale, which is excellent performance against our regional and comparator authorities.

The number of looked after children remains stable at 496, with a reduction of 18 children subject to a CP plan to 304.

We have been shortlisted for the Local Government Children Award for the Best Management Team for our Fostering Service. A looked after child is presenting our case for winning to the judges.

Gold Medal at Commonwealth Judo Championships

Jack H from Gainsborough, with Usher Syndrome (6/36, severely deaf) has just won a Gold medal at the Commonwealth Judo Championships, Cardiff, in the under 18's and he is only 14. We are all very pleased to hear of Jack's amazing achievements - he is an inspiration to us all.

Community Budget Pilot: Families with Complex Needs 'Families Working Together'

A 'Troubled Families' Unit has been set up in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). All Local Authority Chief Executives have received letters from the Unit asking for a number of tasks to be completed, including identifying the estimated 1,340 'troubled' families in Lincolnshire, drawing up service redesign plans and appointing a senior lead for troubled families. DCLG have announced that it will be allocating 40% of total costs of working with troubled families from 1 April - the 60% is expected to be met through locally pooled funding.

Working Links, the successful provider of European Social Funding funded work with complex families, is now accepting approx 300 referrals per year. Children's Services team managers have met with Working Links and will be sending referrals

The Families Working Together team is now fully staffed. The team are currently supporting 71 families, including those being supported towards a managed exit. The team have received training from 'Families Unlimited', a training organisation led by Gill Strachen, who set up Family Intervention Services in the late 90's. Training in Triple P and Solihull training is planned for 2012.

Articles on the pilot project appeared in the winter edition of County News and in the Lincolnshire Echo (22 December). The DVD evidencing outcomes for families and cost savings for agencies will be available in early February. A briefing sheet for front line professionals has been drawn up and will be circulated in early February following agreement by the multi-agency governance board. A file for families is being developed which will include information for all family members and support them with household organisation.

Primary Schools

Ofsted Inspections

There have been 3 inspections under the new Ofsted Framework which has been in place since 1 January 2012. All 3 inspections graded the school as Good. However, the new Framework is more demanding and Ofsted will be moving to no notice inspections in September 2012. At the same time, the gradings 'Satisfactory' and 'Notice to Improve' will be removed and replaced by 'Requires Improvement'.

Ofsted's Satisfactory Schools List

In January 2012, Ofsted published their list of schools that have had a satisfactory judgement in both of their two most recent inspections.

There are approximately 3,000 on the 'stuck schools' list. Of these there are 63 Lincolnshire primary schools. However, as the list was based on inspections up to 31 August 2011, 5 schools have since been judged as Good in their Ofsted inspections.

There is a clear plan of support in place for each of the schools on the lists with a strong focus on improving leadership capacity. This is being provided through mentoring from good and outstanding headteachers. We are also looking at strategies to support schools in the new Ofsted 'no notice' era.

Final 2011 Key Stage 2 Results

Level 4+ in English and Maths combined has once again risen to 1% above the national average. The targeted areas for improvement are reading and attainment at level 5

- 41 schools achieved less than 60% Level 4+ Eng & Maths
- Of these 41, 13 had 2 levels progress in Eng and/or Maths above the national median, therefore are not considered to be below floor
- 1 of these schools had a cohort of 5 or less
- 27 schools were below the floor standard in 2011

Phonics Support

On 19 January Lincolnshire was one of the Local Authorities congratulated by the DfE for embracing the new training and resources for Phonics. Lincolnshire was the only Shire county on the list, and CfBT being one of the providers of the training has helped in this.

Update on Academies

To date, 14 Lincolnshire Primary schools have converted to Academies with a further 10 currently going through the application process.

11 to 19

GCSE and A Level Results

A key indicator of success for an education system is our performance at Key Stage 4, the end of compulsory education. Ten years ago, Lincolnshire had below average performance at this stage. This year, yet again, we have excelled with 62.2% gaining 5A* to C including Maths and English, an increase of 3% on last year, and this clearly places Lincolnshire in the top quartile of all local authorities. This figure is 4% above the national average. The older measure of 5A* to C shows 84% of all Lincolnshire children achieving this award, which is an increase of 5% on last year.

At 'A' level we have exceptional results, with 92.1% gaining 2 or more 'A' level successes.

It would be fair to say that Lincolnshire is one of the best places in England to receive Secondary education.

Ofsted

Ofsted inspections continue to be very positive, and the Local Authority currently has no Secondary school in a category.

Olympics – Live & Learn Like a Champion

9 January saw the '200 days to go' to the Olympics. 'Live & Learn like a Champion' programme has now been delivered to every school and setting in the county.

Funding has been provided to the Looked After Children Education team for them to organise a number of trips and events for this group of young people. The first visit to the Olympic/Paralympic stadium takes place in January, with further trips planned.

The Live & Learn Like A Champion website is now up and running and is accepting contributions from children and young people across the county. We are hoping to create an archive of what has happened across Lincolnshire during 2012. There are a number of competitions planned in addition to the legacy logs and this will culminate in a celebration event in December 2012. In December 2011, a special event was held for 80 young leaders from across the county. They have been selected to raise the profile of 'Live and Learn' in their area. They will be going into schools and attending events and hopefully capturing and creating materials for the archive. In order to help them do this they have all been loaned an Apple i-pod touch. The children and young people will be sending in podcasts, e-books, DVD clips and photographs to show what is happening across the county.

School Sixth Forms

The YPLA funding statement in December 2011 announced an extension of transitional funding arrangements to 2014/15 and a cap of 2% on reductions in funding resulting from changes to success rates. This will have some impact on the predicted overall funding to Lincolnshire's school sixth forms, but we still expect funding to reduce overall by £1.1m in 2012/13 (compared to £1.8m as predicted prior to the YPLA changes). The impact on individual institutions is varied, with 2 schools facing reductions of over £200k, and 7 over £100k. However, 13 can expect to receive more funding than in 2011/12.

Vulnerable Learners

We have launched two European Social Fund Tenders to support vulnerable young people aged 16–19 (25 for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) in education and employment;

1. To develop and deliver customised support packages that will meet the needs of young people age 19–24 that have Learning Difficulties & Disabilities (LDD) and are either Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or are at risk of being NEET.
2. To develop and deliver customised training and skills packages that will meet the needs of employers and individual vulnerable young people aged 16-19 (16-24 for LDD) already in employment who need extra up-skilling to ensure more sustainable employment outcomes with increased employer buy in. This will include those young people who are in full-time, temporary or part-time employment (excluding Apprenticeships) and formulated to meet individual needs, and will provide a transferable portfolio of work-readiness and employability training, skills and experiences.

Apprenticeships

Two Apprenticeship champions have been recruited via the Work Based Academy and have commenced employment. Their role will be to stimulate demand for apprenticeships in particular by employers and therefore create more opportunities for young people.

As a way of overcoming the barriers that small and medium sized businesses have in recruiting apprentices, Lincolnshire County Council has given a contract to 'Access Your Future' to set up an Apprenticeship Agency. They will employ more than 100 Apprentices on behalf of small businesses across a range of sectors. They will start operating during the next eight weeks.

It is clear from discussions that there is still work to do in promoting Apprenticeships as an important route to employment for young people, and we are going to focus on construction and food businesses, working with leading businesses and educational institutions on this issue.

Accredited Training Programme

The commitment of the County Council to securing the best possible outcomes for children and young people is being further enhanced through a programme of accredited training for teachers and support staff working with children and young people on the autistic spectrum. This programme is being funded by the County Council in the first year and is being offered by CfBT in partnership with the University of Northampton. It is anticipated that 75 teachers and support staff will have achieved accredited status in 2012. CfBT continues to provide a range of specialist training and professional development for staff working with pupils with special education needs. This includes a national accreditation award for newly appointed SENCo's. This award is now in its third year and is fully funded through a government grant.

Sustainable Schools Showcase

This has now become a regular feature of the education calendar. Many councillors have attended the previous two events and they would be more than welcome at the 2012 event being held at The EPIC Centre, Lincolnshire Showground on 21 March from 09.00-15.30. The event has been planned to include talks and workshops as well as 120 exhibitors in the main exhibition hall. These exhibitions range from technology to reduce energy use, to ideas about using the school grounds for growing plants and as an outdoor classroom. Confirmed talks and workshops include those focusing on new technologies such as LED lighting, boiler optimisation and automatic metering; Ofsted on sustainability in schools; developing pupil voice; engaging parents in schools and growing food in schools. Activities for students include bicycle maintenance, bikeability training and forest schools activities. Further information from www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/sss

Life Long Learning

Ofsted have recently visited the Lifelong Learning Service for a monitoring visit and reported them as a Local Authority which has made significant progress in two of its themes. They were particularly impressed with the arrangements for managing the providers with whom we commission services, the increase in learner success rates and the highly effective bench-marking club that the Service has developed. The Lifelong Learning Service continues to improve all aspects of its work, including targeting courses at the right learners in the right place through its work with Lincolnshire Research Observatory.