

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**Statement from: Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell, Deputy Leader and Executive Councillor for Children's Services and Life Long Learning**

### **Appointment of Director of Children's Services**

I am pleased to inform Council that Debbie Barnes has been appointed substantively as Director of Children's Services following an appointment Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> July. Debbie will take up her position with immediate effect.

### **Provisional Results for Summer 2012**

Members will be aware that there has been considerable interest in this year's results at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and A/AS Level performance. I must stress that the data in this statement is provisional and not verified by the DfE. The Key Stage 2 results were to be published in early August, but have been delayed until 20<sup>th</sup> September and we are unsure when any updates on GCSEs will take place following Ofqual's investigation into the GCSE English results. I will update members as soon as we have the final results.

Provisional Early Years results show an improvement of 5.5%, which is outstanding and builds on the top quartile performance of last year. This area narrowed the gap in 2011 and did so again this year, where the gap has narrowed by 1.7%.

The Key Stage 2 results remain provisional but the data shows a 6% increase in the key measure of combined Level 4 in English and mathematics. This increases the performance from 74.7% to 80.7%. There was also a 6.9% increase in the same measure at Level 5. I understand the national picture also shows a significant improvement, but the Lincolnshire increase is greater than the national average and in fact we are above the national average on all key indicators. We are particularly pleased to have significantly reduced the number of primary schools below floor targets. All of the schools that the DfE informed us last year would need to transfer to Academy status because of their position of being below floor targets, have now exceeded the floor targets before they transfer to academy status.

The Key Stage 4 results are evidenced from Lincolnshire's maintained schools and academies and are unvalidated at this stage. The national position indicates a small fall in overall performance which was overshadowed by some serious concerns regarding the English GCSE results. At the time of drafting this statement, the outcome of the enquiry by Ofqual into English is not known, but the impact of English results in some schools was significant. However the provisional results indicate a small increase of 0.3% for 5A\*-C including maths and English. The data shows a small fall in academies overall results and a small increase in maintained schools. Lincolnshire schools performance against the new measure introduced by the Government, called the English Baccalaureate, has improved from 18.6% to 21.3%. In terms of schools improving, 12 LA maintained schools improved and 12 were lower than last year. 13 academies improved and 18 had lower results. However, this may change following the review and re-marks.

The A Level provisional results indicate that Lincolnshire's pass rate continues to be above the national average. From the schools and academies that have shared their results with us, the pass rate is 98.2% compared with a figure for England of 98%. 7 schools out of 32 achieved 100% pass rates: Boston High, Caistor Grammar, Gainsborough Queen Elizabeth's High, Kesteven and Sleaford High, Louth King Edward VI Grammar, Priory The Witham Academy in Lincoln, and The Giles Academy Old Leake. 19 schools had pass rates that exceeded the national figure.

Nationally there has been a concerted effort to address what some have termed 'grade inflation'. For the first time in several years, the proportion of students awarded the highest grades has slightly reduced. Lincolnshire's figures mirror this national reduction almost exactly. The highest pass rate at A and A\* was 37.7% at Caistor Grammar School, while the highest pass rate at A\* alone was 12.2% at Queen Elizabeth's High School in Gainsborough. Many students in Lincolnshire also follow courses that are equivalent to A Levels alongside their traditional A Levels or as an alternative to them. Although no national comparators are available at this time, initial reports from schools show that the overall pass rate has increased by half a percentage point when these results are added in.

Amongst the results there were some outstanding performances in the county from particular students and schools; I would like to congratulate all students and staff on some excellent achievements.

### **Peer Challenge Visit**

Children's Services were subject to a peer challenge review on July 9-11<sup>th</sup> 2012. The focus of the review which was led by Nottinghamshire County Council was to examine the effectiveness of the arrangements in place for narrowing the gap so that children eligible for free school meals achieve as well as their peers.

The Review Team concluded that staff and partners showed strong commitment to their work with children and young people, that the Service benefits from strong and integrated political leadership and praised the high quality services which are helping to narrow the gap. The team noted that a striking feature of the provision is the value for money returns in several key services. Lincolnshire has an extraordinarily low spend on out of county placements for children in social care, the per student costs of the County's Pupil Referral Unit provision are exceptionally low and yet outcomes are beyond those typically achieved either nationally or by statistical neighbours.

### **Primary Events Academic Year 2011/12**

Throughout 2011/12, Lincolnshire's primary school children have been participating in a number of events, specifically designed to encourage them to join in a range of activities to enhance their language and literacy skills, creativity and agility in problem-solving and reasoning.

- **Film Education-** Film Education continues to be a driving force for improving language and literacy skills across the county. This year children and staff from Woodhall Spa St Andrew's CE Primary School were invited to take part in Cinemateque Francaise. 1000 children from across the world took part in this prestigious three-day event. Children from the school had to make their own film and share this with 30 other nations. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> October the sixth annual

LAFTAs celebrations will be held and a total of 45 schools have entered 115 films and animations for consideration at this event. If any members are interested in attending the LAFTAs, please let me know.

- **Problem – Solving and Reasoning-** One of our main aims has been to instil a love of learning, particularly in mathematics, which is often a subject viewed with in trepidation by adults and children alike. Our annual competitions: Maths Mania and IMP (Interactive Maths Project) had a distinctly Olympic/Paralympic theme this year in our endeavour to show the necessity of understanding mathematics in context. A record breaking 100 schools participated in the regional heats for Maths Mania. The Maths Mania Champions of 2012 were Metheringham Primary School.
- **KS2 Olympic/Paralympic Athlete Menu Competition-** Over 300 pupils from all regions of the county participated in this cross curricular competition, where the brief was to design and produce a leaflet to include information about a favourite Olympian/Paralympian, the sport itself, their dietary requirements and a typical day's menu. The year 3 winner was from Bassingham Primary School, the year 4 winner was from Sutton St James Primary School, the year 5 winner was from Dunholme St Chad's Primary and the year 6 and overall winner was from Gainsborough Parish Primary School.

### **14-19 Partnerships**

In partnership with providers we have been successful in securing capital funds from the Education Funding Agency demographic growth capital fund to the value of almost £1.2m to support capital projects in four Lincolnshire providers. (22 bids were successful across the EFA Eastern Territory consisting of East Midlands and East of England regions so we achieved well above our share). £500,000 will support improvements to sixth form facilities at Queen Elizabeth's High School Gainsborough, and Boston, Lincoln and Grantham Colleges received between £190,000 and £290,000 each to develop and improve facilities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Olympics and school sports**

CfBT, in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council, has led on a very successful 2012 Olympic and Paralympic legacy programme called Live and Learn like a Champion. This countywide programme, for children and young people and colleagues working in schools, has achieved national recognition and endorsement and has involved up to 70,000 young people engaging with their own Legacy Log, bringing the Olympic and Paralympic Values to life through sport, music and the arts. Training for Legacy Co-ordinators in each school has also been provided and Young Leaders have been provided with I-PODs to capture Lincolnshire's legacy. Live and Learn curriculum resources have been produced for schools and a wide range of Live and Learn competitions around cookery and photography have taken place with winners being celebrated at the Lincolnshire Show. An inspiring, Olympic themed 'Slam Jam' also took place and an outstanding 2012 Anthem called 'We Live, We Learn', was written and performed by over 800 Lincolnshire children and the ACM Gospel Choir to celebrate the arrival of the Olympic Flame. On the sporting front, a very successful Lincolnshire School Games took place at Yarborough Leisure Centre,

to coincide with the arrival of the Olympic Torch Relay in Lincoln with 1,200 school children taking part.

### **The 'Sew into Fashion' Show**

I attended the annual Sew into Fashion Show at the Drill Hall, Lincoln. This year's event continued the trend for showcasing high quality fashion - all of which has been designed, made and modelled by Lincolnshire students. The show is the culmination of a year's work for the students who have worked alongside industry professionals to produce catwalk standard garments. The 2012 Sew into Fashion Show was a phenomenal success with over 100 pupils from across county having the opportunity to model their own clothes to a paying audience. Each school not only had to design, make and model, but they also had to choreograph their catwalk performance with the help of Lincolnshire Dance

### **The Young Journalist Academy**

Building on the 5 successful years since this programme began, 2011/12 has been by far the biggest year for the programme with 19 Primary and Secondary schools taking part. This year we also launched our dedicated Primary channel Junior News ([www.juniornews.co.uk](http://www.juniornews.co.uk)) which is the sister site to the now established Young Journalist Academy main site ([www.youngjournalistacademy.co.uk](http://www.youngjournalistacademy.co.uk)).

### **School Admissions**

There are over 15000 children starting school or transferring to secondary schools each year. This year over 95% of parents received their first choice of secondary school and if we include first and second choices this increases to over 99%. Primary schools have seen an increase of over 600 extra applications this year but over 93% of parents received their first choice of school and over 97% if we include second choices.

### **Celebrating the achievements of looked after children**

We held a FAB (Fantastic, Amazing, Brilliant) event on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. This event celebrates the achievements of our looked after children. The awards are an important way for the Council and our partners to recognize the achievements of our looked after children and to thank foster carers and staff as well as children and young people for their positive contributions.

The year ended with another very successful JUMP scheme. This involves children and young people between the ages of 9-16 in local authority care. 90 pupils were delighted by the range of new experiences available to them, the opportunity to make new friends and achieve accreditations including Duke of Edinburgh, Arts Awards and ASDAN. One outcome is that several pupils working with university mentors (48 were involved this year) have now set their sights on entering higher education. A recent national Ofsted report had a case study on the Lincolnshire JUMP scheme.

## **Inspection Reports**

Since the end of March 2012, there have been four Children's Centre Ofsted inspections. Sleaford, Lincoln Abbey and Welton Children's Centres all received a judgement of "Good", with Lincoln Abbey demonstrating some elements of "Outstanding" practice. Spalding Children's Centre has also hosted an inspection, receiving a judgement of "Satisfactory" with some "Good" features.

**Haven Cottage** - a respite care centre for children with disabilities has been graded "Outstanding in all areas", with no recommendations and no requirements in its first inspection under the new framework.

## **Adoption**

Lincolnshire has entered into a partnership with After Adoption, a national adoption charity, to provide the SafeBase training for adopters. SafeBase is a nationally recognised programme delivered in partnership with After Adoption. This exciting new partnership will further enhance adoption support available to children and families in Lincolnshire.

SafeBase is a parenting programme that teaches parents about attachment theory, child development and the impact of trauma and loss.

SafeBase means that adoptions work, more than 99% of the families who have had SafeBase are still together, resulting in fewer disruption rates for children.

## **Youth Provision**

Following the changes made last year to the delivery of open access youth provision the level of interest in the management of our youth centres by voluntary and community groups has surpassed our expectations and we are currently in discussions with a number of providers on the management and delivery of positive activities for young people. This way of working has already seen a considerable increase in opportunities for young people's access to youth provision in many areas of Lincolnshire, and further diversifies the types of activities available to young people. Mobile provision continues to serve some rural areas of the county.

Targeted Youth Support continues to provide additional support to young people who are particularly vulnerable or who are facing significant challenges in their lives, and our Fair Play Football and Positive Futures provision continues to engage large numbers of young people in sports led activities. Work within schools to support young people in making informed decisions regarding their on-going learning or career choices has been successful under the new statutory arrangements, however it is clear that there is still a significant cohort of young people who will need further support in this area given the current economic climate; a challenge we continue to face and meet.

In Lincolnshire we have been pro-active in our response to Positive For Youth and feel confident that the young people of Lincolnshire are well listened to; provided for; and supported, and we look forward to another positive year for our young people's services.

## **National Citizenship Service**

Five hundred Lincolnshire and Rutland young people have been involved in the NCS project this summer. The young people have spent two weeks away from home on a challenging residential course where they learn vital skills for life and work, such as interview techniques and time management.

They return home for the last two weeks and work in teams to improve their communities by planning and undertaking a social action project in their local community. I met with some of the young people during the social action projects and they really had enjoyed the four-week programme, learning new skills.

## **Life Long Learning**

Our adult learning programme continues to exceed its targets – over the past twelve months we have worked with more than 9500 learners.

There are a lot of learning opportunities available to people in Lincolnshire, but it can be difficult for individuals to find out which ones suit them best. That is why we have created a new website which provides information for learners on all the opportunities available to them. It can be found at [www.2aspire.org.uk](http://www.2aspire.org.uk).

We are also increasing support for young people to help them find employment when they leave school or learning. We have produced an employment and skills bulletin called “Aspirations” which is providing learners, parents and teachers with more information about the local economy. Highlighting our important and growing sectors, and challenging some inaccurate perceptions and stereotypes limited choice of job and career opportunities in our local industry, will help young people make more informed choices about the skills they need to gain jobs locally. The bulletin has been distributed to all Lincolnshire schools and is also available online.