

Councillor Janet Looker, Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People

Report to Full Council – March 2015

First of all I would like to register the changes that have happened within the Department since the last Report to Council in July 2013. Kevin Hall moved to East Riding of Yorkshire Council as Director of Children's Services. Kevin was with us for 13 years and made a great contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people during his time with us, he will be missed. Jon Stonehouse arrived in post as the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills in March 2014. Maxine Squire was appointed as Assistant Director for Education and Skills after a period acting up in this role. I am very confident that these two posts will be well covered and we will not see any reduction in the level of drive and energy.

Education and Skills

Within Education the overall headline figures at key stages 2 and 4 show York schools continue to be achieving in line or above national averages and above the regional position, with key stage 4 outcomes being in the top quartile nationally. This is good, but gives us no reason to be complacent. We have made progress in narrowing some of the gaps in achievement but we need to do better. We have raised the profile of this issue and have implemented a range of new initiatives to ensure that we are unrelenting in our drive to make sure all pupils achieve as well as they possibly can.

As of early March 87% of our primary schools are rated good or outstanding; 91% of our secondary schools and 87% of all our schools. We now have no schools that are inadequate. We saw good headline results across all key stages, with York schools continuing to be in line with or above national average.

The new 'first entry' GCSE performance was reported on a national level this year, whereas 'best entry' had previously been reported. York's performance was above national average, with 62.3% of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C (including English and Maths). This result put us top in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers widened at Key Stage 4 last year. Analysis showed that the widening of the gap was affected by several smaller pupil groups. Conversely, the gap at Key Stage 2 narrowed considerably in a year where national performance

remained stable. This will be our unrelenting priority, badged as “The York 300 project” and it has also been the subject of a York wide conference and a well researched Scrutiny Committee topic.

My aspiration remains that every child in York will be able to attend a Good or Outstanding School. It is achievable, it is what the children of York deserve and we will continue to set a pace for schools to meet these targets. We are currently developing new arrangements for school improvement in the city. This will see schools taking a central role in a ‘sector led’ system of school to school support. This will ensure that the huge skills and expertise that we have within our school workforce will benefit schools that are in need of support. The Local Authority’s role will be to commission schools to provide school improvement, I am excited about the prospect of our two teaching schools Ebor and Pathfinder playing a lead role in delivering these new arrangements. I am hugely impressed by the way in which headteachers across the city are embracing this new way of working and feeling able not just to work to improve the outcomes for their own school but for those of the whole area.

We have implemented new partnership arrangement for education in the city since my last report. The York Education Partnership no longer exists. It is replaced by the York Learning Partnership. This new partnership chaired by a local head teacher has five strategic priorities – school improvement, early years, vocational learning, inclusion and school place planning. As the central funds for education continue to be significantly reduced it is essential that we refocus our work around school leadership and skilful use of the resources within the schools themselves. Schools working within geographical clusters remains a feature and is going from strength to strength.

The skills agenda continues to be an important part of the work of the education part of the department. It is not only important for our children to be well educated, but we also need to look to the skills they will need to progress on into adulthood. We continue to improve the % of young people that progress in to learning post 16 our participation rates are very strong. We continue to enjoy extremely positive relationships with York College and Askham Bryan College both colleges work with us to bring some of our most disadvantaged young people back into learning.

Within our Transformation programme we are developing new approaches to ensure that all children are ‘starting life well’. Together with a range of partners we are reshaping our early years and how

children's centre services. We have listened to consultation and currently retain our existing children's centres sites.

Schools have received considerable support to implement the changes linked to the SEND Reforms (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). Training has included half-termly cluster meetings, city-wide training and forums. The individual support from SEN Designated Officers and peers has been well received. York has been nationally recognised as a progressive local authority in relation to the implementation of the SEND reforms and was invited to attend a third ministerial roundtable event with the Department for Education (DfE). This event provided the opportunity to help shape and influence the future national arrangements. All of this has been achieved without York having the financial benefit of Pathfinder status.

We have seen continued impressive improvement in the proportion of young people entering education, employment or training after Year 11. 97.4% of last year's Year 11 pupils were "In Learning" in November 2014. The proportion of young people whose situation is unknown is consistently low in comparison to other authorities, as is the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Analysis of the Year 11 Destination Survey showed that boys appear to be more successful at becoming settled "In Learning" than girls. Work with girls' groups and mentoring is taking place to raise the aspirations of girls who are struggling.

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) has had recent successes with some complex young people in relation to securing education, employment or training when they finish being supervised by the YOT. Those young people not in Education Employment and Training will remain a focus of targeted interventions. A particular achievement of a group of these young people was the display in York Minister of art work around the subject of heroes which was later displayed in the entrance of West Offices.

Children's Specialist Services

Early Help

Our Early Help offer has been reviewed and presented to the YorOK Board and we will be focusing on further on the quality of Early Help assessments undertaken by all partners. Over the past year more than 170 Early Help assessments have been initiated.

Our Family Focus arrangements are City of York's response to the national Troubled Families initiative, coordinating a whole family approach to working with those with multiple and complex needs. 282 families have been helped by these arrangements, resolving truanting and antisocial behavioural problems, helping family members tackle issues such as debt, addiction and supporting progress into employment. York's success means the City has become an early adopter of the expanded 5-year programme which aims to reach a further 1,040 families.

Safeguarding Children

The numbers of children looked after and children subject to child protection plans have seen a continued reduction over the past year. At the end of December, there were 211 Children Looked After and 118 Children with a Child Protection Plan.

The Council is continuing to work closely with Children Looked After to explore their experiences of care in the city and a film called Arts4Care, looking at this subject, has been produced by some of York's looked after children. Work such as this will inform the production of the new *Looked After Children Strategy*, alongside York's 'Guarantee to Looked After Children', which was approved in December 2014.

Outcomes for Children Looked After

At the heart of the new *Looked After Children Strategy* is the desire to further improve the outcomes for this group of children, while significantly reducing their sense of being treated differently from their non Looked After peers. Discussions between Children's Social Care and our key partners, Police, Education and Health, are starting to shape a more ambitious, meaningful and exciting strategy.

Taking into account the wider role the Council and our key partners play in young people's lives, the YorOK Board has set up a working party to produce a new Children and Young People's Plan to cover 2016 – 2019. This will be launched later this year.

The Corporate Parenting Board has contributed significantly to this work, including a significant meeting with the Show Me That I Matter Panel to develop the new strategy.