

## **Council – 16 November 2015**

### **Portfolio Holder Report for Learning, Skills and Apprenticeships**

In 2015 the outcomes for Walsall Children and Young People improved at the end of each Key Stage and the gaps in achievement with national averages on most or all of these measures narrowed; Walsall achievement was closer to the national average. There are challenges in the performance of some particular group of children and young people which we are aware of and are addressing in partnership with Schools and Academies. At the end of July 2015, 75% of Walsall Schools and Academies were judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding compared with nearly 84% of schools nationally. Challenge and support to schools to ensure rapid improvement so that they are judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted is a priority; all children in Walsall deserve to be in a good or outstanding school.

At a strategic level we work with our stakeholders and partners to build relationships, embed an improvement culture and develop and implement a School Improvement Strategy that sets out our shared vision, direction and expectations, now and in the future. This is being delivered through a very detailed action plan designed to focus on six key priorities:

- Ensure strong leadership in Walsall schools
- Ensure the School Improvement Strategy meets the needs of Walsall children and young people
- Ensure the LA maintains an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the performance of all schools and Academies
- Ensure appropriate and timely intervention and support to meet the needs of all schools
- Ensure high quality school improvement interventions and initiatives all phases of education
- Ensure effective school to school support and improvement across the Borough

An Education Challenge Board with an Independent Chair and external members to monitor impact and hold the Local Authority and officers to account for delivery of these priorities is in place. The Chair reports directly to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee which dedicates half of the agenda at each meeting to scrutinise educational improvement. Reports are also provided to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board.

#### **What have we done?**

Across the Portfolio of Learning Skills and Apprenticeships we have:

- Reviewed and revised service delivery plans to ensure alignment with the School Improvement Strategy and the post Ofsted action plan, both of which are currently being updated. This signals the move towards an improvement model based on stronger school to school partnerships that challenge where Headteachers and senior school leaders support each other's improvement.

- Re-focused the work of the School Improvement Team to ensure consistency of support, monitoring and challenge across all schools and settings, following the permanent appointment of two highly experienced School Improvement Partners from September 2015. This has included the continuation of fortnightly School Performance Review meetings chaired by the Director of Children's Services, which challenge the school and Local Authority's role in the performance and improvement of all schools that are not yet rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding or that are causing concern to the Local Authority. Key decisions are taken about next steps and actions required to lead to rapid improvement. The Local Authority's School Performance Review process continues to have significant impact in supporting school improvement.
- Successfully delivered the Learning entitlement for 2 years old so that nearly 75% of eligible two year olds have access to a free place. Walsall has been recognised nationally for its successful delivery of the programme. Many Early Years providers and schools have taken up the opportunity to deliver provision for 2 year olds and their families. This delivery is support for children's early learning and family learning.
- Continued to hold regular meetings with the Department for Education and the Regional Schools' Commissioner who is responsible for the performance of Academies, to ensure that we have a robust mechanism for addressing the under-performance of all education providers within Walsall including Academies.
- Two serving Headteachers, one primary and one secondary, are seconded for one day a week to develop and implement the school's leadership strategy across Walsall. This has led to the development of a programme of training for middle and senior leaders and a revised protocol for the induction of new Headteachers, including providing an experienced Headteacher as a mentor and support. The Headteacher induction programme has been fully revised and improved.
- Evaluated the quality of governance in every school in Walsall using information collected from Governor reviews and scrutiny of performance information. This is being used to challenge the effectiveness of Governing Bodies, monitor improvement and plan appropriate support, training and development, in partnership with the Governors' Association and Walsall's National Leaders of Governance.
- Planned and delivered a series of conferences and workshops for Chair of Governors, Headteachers and school leaders on a variety of priority areas, including literacy, numeracy, boys' writing, pupil premium, school to school improvement and preparation for the revised Ofsted Common Inspection Framework. Alongside this has been the development of a comprehensive strategy on literacy and numeracy with a focus on reading in the first instance. Some of this work has been in partnership with Ofsted, and Her Majesty's Inspectors.

- Further developed the Walsall Link website as a means to improve communication between the Local Authority and schools. This site now contains a large number of case studies of good practice posted by schools themselves and these are contributing towards a directory of effective practice.
- The Education Business Partnership (EBP) deliver learning experiences that support the acquisition of key skills in learners, and contextualise and enrich the curriculum. Through a recent re-branding exercise the EBP has been able to broaden its offer of bespoke services available to help education providers and employers give young people real experiences of and in the workplace as well as developing important 'Employability Skills'.
- The EBP facilitate and broker partnerships and relationships within communities between a wide range of partners - from the education, voluntary, private and community sectors with the primary objective of providing young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will require to reach their potential, both in continued participation in education and in the workplace, enhancing their career and personal development curriculum and contributing to improving levels of motivation, aspiration and achievement.
- The Education Business Partnership has provided work related learning activities and support for over 5,400 young people in secondary school provision in the Borough. Aimed at raising aspirations and developing 'work readiness' skills, all of these activities have been supported by more than 250 people from 73 businesses and partner organisations in and around the Borough.
- 1867 14-19 year old students have been supported into work experience placements across the region with the support of Education Business Partnership and the business community they were placed with.
- The Education Business Partnership has engaged with 1620 primary aged children in 18 primary schools in the Borough. Activities are aimed at enhancing the curriculum, raising aspirations and providing insights into the world of work, as well as supporting basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- The Education Business Partnership Breakfast Seminar on 21 October attracted employers and schools to have open discussions on how employers and schools can work together to improve life chances and success in employment for young people.
- Launched the 14-19 Partnership Network with schools, colleges, training providers and employers to drive up performance in results, improve the preparation of young people for the decisions they make at 14, 16 and 18, and improve their employability skills. The Partnership is focused on ensuring that Raising the Participation age to 18, will enable more young people to study and gain the skills and qualifications that lead to sustainable jobs, whether through school, college or with a training provider or employer. This will ensure that fewer young people are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The Partnership will do this by helping schools focus on improving qualifications gained by young people, ensuring they get the best possible advice and support, and engage with local and national employers to understand what employers

want from young people. The revised Education Business Partnership will bring schools and employers closer together, and will continue to support business so that the transition from learning to work is a successful one.

The 14-19 Partnership Network has:

- Created sub groups and compiled a comprehensive set of Action Plans to address the following priorities:
  - Improve attainment, achievement and raise aspiration across the 14-19 age range
  - Provide high quality Independent Information, Advice and Guidance and to all young people
  - Skills Development for accessing apprenticeship and employment
  - Reduce further the number of young people who are NEET
- A Task and Finish group has been set up to audit the quality and effectiveness of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) provided by schools. It is proposed that this leads to the development of a quality assurance award for IAG across the Borough
- Meetings with schools to plan how we best equip young people skills for life; helping young people to be skilled and ready for the world of work and life after school and fulltime education. This will include bringing employers into schools in a pilot programme to be developed with a small group of schools with the intention of rolling out to all schools and Academies in the Borough.
- The most robust recent NEET data available is June 2015. This shows the percentage of NEET young people aged 16 – 18 in Walsall was 4.4% and this performance is consistently among the best in the West Midlands Region and is the best amongst Statistical Neighbours who range from 4.8% (Bolton) to 7.7% (Telford and Wrekin)
- The In Learning percentage reported by the DfE is 92.3% of which 83.2% are in Full time education and training, 3.1% are in Apprenticeships, 5.0% in other work based learning and 0.7% in Employment with training. A further 0.3% are in part-time learning. The remaining 7.4% are either not known/in work or NEET.

The Youth Support Services' Active Involvement Team worked with the Youth of Walsall to conduct a survey of the views of young people in the Borough. The survey was taken up by 6 secondary schools with 3,500 young people completing the questionnaire - providing a wealth of intelligence about what young people think about their lives and is being used to inform future service design. The information is being used by the Children and Young People's Partnership to inform priorities and shape partner delivery. Young people have attended the Partnership Board.

Young Chef of the Year - Walsall Rotary Club

- Active promotion and support for the Boroughs schools in the annual Rotary 'Young Chef of the year' competition in which 2 schools made it to the UK district semi-finals

Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – 'Skills Factory' initiative

Education Business Partnership delivered activities under the European Social Fund (ESF) provided through the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES); a programme designed to promote careers in engineering, particularly for women through various activities;

- Ten work experience placements – Specifically engineering related
- Four Skills Challenges – 270 14 -19 students
- Three school visits to industry – 79 students visited local industry for insight tours
- Eleven Teacher placements – Insights into high value manufacturing businesses aimed at informing and helping teachers develop classroom based learning around these sectors
- Four Careers Fairs – Providing access for 1,698 11 – 16 year old students to meet high value manufacturing companies, understand routes into employment and a greater understanding of their sectors.

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Network (STEMNET) –

- The Black Country EBP network currently hold the STEMNET contract to deliver Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) activities into secondary schools across Walsall and the wider Black Country region. This is a three year ongoing programme providing free activities and resources into school that focus on these core subjects. The programme is aimed at promoting careers in sectors that use STEM subjects and is monitored nationally by STEMNET.
- Submission of our Black Country European Investment Strategy and Implementation Plan which has the potential to draw in £67m of ESF funding across the four Black Country Councils, of which some will be ring fenced to support Skills for the Unemployed, Skills for the Workforce, and better Information, Advice and Guidance for young people.
- As part of this Investment Strategy and Implementation Plan, Walsall is partnering with the 3 other Black Country Local Authorities and Talent Match (a BIG Lottery funded project to support 18-24 year olds into employment) to outline and submit an application for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) which sets out the needs of those 15-29 year olds who are NEET or Unemployed. If successful, the programme will draw in £17m of ESF and £17m YEI across the Black Country to break down barriers and support our young people into positive destinations.
- Submitted Expressions of Interest for funding into the Big Lottery Building Better Opportunities programme which aims to support 25+ unemployed clients with skills development and in particular to tackle skills deficits around financial and digital inclusion.
- Establishment of a new Walsall Employment and Skills Board, a sub group of the Walsall Economic Board, which has been set up to deliver improved skills development.

- Successful delivery of the Walsall Works programme which has created 520 subsidised apprenticeships, with a fifth of these being at an Advanced Level. A further 500 young people have been supported into Traineeships across a number of subject areas such as Sports, Construction, Health & Social Care, Business Administration. The programme has also supported an additional 420 young people to access employment and 200 into full or part time courses of study.
- Walsall Works has actively worked with 25 training providers to help them access incentives to encourage employers to recruit local apprenticeships. It also pro-actively promotes the offer of traineeships with all providers, with a close partnership working relationship with Walsall College and Walsall Adult Community College (WACC).
- Securing funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Public Health to support the development and delivery of services to help Looked After Children post 18 and leaving care into training, apprenticeships and jobs. This partnership working has resulted in 40 care leavers engaging with the programme, of which 5 accessed training, 5 into traineeships, 2 in apprenticeships and 3 into employment.

#### **What we plan to do next:**

- Through better use of performance data, focused challenge and our support to help more schools to be good and outstanding.
- Continue to provide regular updates on the impact of our actions to the Education Challenge Board, so that it can challenge and monitor progress against the post Ofsted action plan.
- Continue to hold school leaders to account for the performance of the school and if necessary use our statutory powers of intervention to bring about improvements for children and young people.
- Further develop our monitoring and quality assurance systems so that all schools have access to consistent and high quality advice and support.
- Work more closely with colleagues in the Special Education Needs team to deliver a more joined-up service that will better address the needs of children and young people.
- Develop a Borough wide Quality Award for Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) that provides young people with the information and advice they need to make appropriate choices for a successful future in employment, training, education or apprenticeship.
- Develop a 'Skills for Life' pilot with schools that equips young people with the skills and qualities needed in the world and life after school.
- Through the EBP employer engagement plan, increase the number of local businesses that actively engage and support our local schools.
- Working in partnership with the Black Country LEP, EBP will be providing the engagement activity for schools and businesses as part of the new Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) programme from October 2015

For information – Definition of key Stages

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)	Age 4-5 years	Infant Schools Primary Schools
Key Stage 1	Age 5-7 years	Infant Schools Primary Schools
Key Stage 2	Age 7-11 years	Junior Schools Primary Schools
Key Stage 3	Age 11-14 years	Secondary Schools
Key Stage 4	Age 14-16 years	Secondary Schools
Key Stage 5	Age 16-18 years	Secondary Schools College, WACC, Training Providers, Employment in businesses with Apprenticeships

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Age</b>
Reception	4-5 years old
1	5-6 years old
2	6-7 years old
3	7-8 years old
4	8-9 years old
5	9-10 years old
6	10-11 years old
7	11-12 years old
8	12-13 years old
9	13-14 years old
10	14-15 years old
11	15-16 years old

**Councillor Chris Towe**  
**Cabinet Member Learning, Skills and Apprenticeships**  
**November 2015**