

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

10 October 2007

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Early Years education and all school related education issues and advisory services)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN WATSON OBE

LANGCLIFFE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

A proposal to close Langcliffe Community Primary School near Settle is currently under consideration.

The Authority previously proposed closure of the school in 2005/06 but the proposal was turned down by the School Organisation Committee on 12 May 2006.

There is now only one pupil on roll, who actually comes from outside the school's normal area. There are no children from the Langcliffe School area on roll. Public consultation has again been launched on a proposal to close the school. The closing date for comments is 5 October. The Executive will consider the proposal on 16 October. The next step then would be to publish statutory notices with the Executive taking the decision on the proposal on 11 December. The School Organisation Committees were abolished in May this year.

If approved, the closure would be from 31 December 2007 and the area now served by Langcliffe would become part of the area served by Settle CE Primary School which is 1.2 miles away.

SCHOOL RESULTS

School Performance 2007

Once again North Yorkshire has had very good results. In some cases we already have the full national data which we use to work out how well we have done compared to others, but we will not have the full picture on GCSE and 'A' levels until later in the year. On all measures from the Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 4 North Yorkshire results have improved again, and the rate of improvement is greater than the national rate of improvement in most instances.

At **Foundation Stage** there are currently no comparisons nationally and so we are as yet unable to gauge our progress. The methods of assessment used are

also in their infancy nationally, so it will be another year or two before anyone can use this data reliably.

At the end of **Key Stage 1**, when teacher assessments are made in Speaking and Listening, Reading, Writing, Maths and Science, our progress closely matches the national progress. This means that North Yorkshire is in a comparatively high position, but there is a good deal of variability.

At Key Stage 2 where pupils are at the end of their primary school education, our results improved at a faster rate than nationally in all the assessed subjects, English, Maths and Science. At level 4 and above there was a national increase of 1% in all subjects, but in North Yorkshire English increased by 2.3%, Maths by 2.6% and Science by 1.3%. The increase in Science took the proportion of level 4 and above over 90% for the first time. At level 5+ Maths maintained a gap of 4% above the national figures while English increased by 2.7% more than national and Science by 0.7%.

Schools which received extra help from the Directorate for Maths or English, or which were part of support programmes for other aspects of their work, showed greater than average gains. The number of schools below what the DCSF call the floor targets (a nationally determined minimum standard) in both Maths and English reduced from 15 to 5 overall.

North Yorkshire now ranks in the top quarter of Local Authorities in all three subjects - a considerable achievement given the immense effort being made nationally to close the attainment gap, which includes the allocation of much larger resources to those places with lower attainment.

At Key Stage 3 where the LA results are well above the national figures in English, Maths and Science the gap was maintained, or widened in all three subjects at level 5+. Results are more than 5% above the national, and place the authority in the top 10 of LAs in all three subjects. At level 6+ the gap widened by 1.5% to 8% above the national figures in English whilst the gap remained at 10% in both Maths and Science.

At GCSE we do not yet have national data against which to compare our results. However, based on early returns from schools the proportion of pupils achieving 5 GCSE or equivalent qualifications at grades C and above has reached 67%. This is a further improvement on last year's results, and shows us maintaining a higher than national rate of improvement over the last three years. Seventeen schools out of 43 now have more than 70% of their pupils achieving 5 good passes with six schools showing an increase of more than 10%. Eight of the twelve schools which had additional support from the Directorate showed an improvement in their results - significant given the challenges which some of those schools face.

There are no national comparisons yet for **A level**.

PROVISION OF INTERNET AND E-MAIL FACILITIES TO SCHOOLS

Members are aware of the difficulties which have arisen in the services contracted by the Authority for schools to provide internet access, web hosting and e-mail services.

Overall performances of internet and web hosting services have been satisfactory over the second half of the summer term and the first half of this term. There have been one or two “outages” but these have been minor in duration and have not affected all schools.

However there was a significant and unacceptable outage relating to e-mail during early September. This did cause enormous frustration to schools and arose from a serious failure on the part of supplier. Whilst the firm, Bull, can, and will, be “penalised” under the financial terms of the contract this is little comfort to schools if the service is not being delivered.

The terms of the contract are based upon “outputs” and require the firm to provide services which meet the needs and capacities of schools. This has been reflected in a 6 point action plan which has been submitted to the Chief Executive of the supplier - Bull. This involves both ensuring that the existing service is maintained without interruption and the company producing an improved product. This product will require our approval and has to be implemented in a way which minimises (but can't completely avoid) some disruption when it is introduced.

A more detailed briefing has been circulated to all Members of the Council.

County Councillor John Watson OBE
Executive Member for Education

26 September 2007