

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**20 JULY 2022**

### **STATEMENT OF EDUCATION & SKILLS PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

#### **Schools White Paper**

Government published its Schools White Paper “Opportunity for All” on 28 March. The White Paper sets out their ambitions for state funded schools as part of the levelling up agenda. They cite four areas of priority in their strategy: Teachers, Standards, Targeted Support, and System. The latter would mean significant change for schools in North Yorkshire (currently 63% LA Maintained) to move to a fully academised system by 2030. To facilitate this shift, the DfE are offering a small number of LAs the opportunity to take part in test and learn pilot programmes, this includes the creation of LA-established Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). The Council’s response to the white paper will be discussed by The Executive on 19th July.

#### **Holiday Activities and Food programme (FEAST)**

The FEAST programme is now in its second year and sees holiday activities including sports, outdoor activities and creative workshops taking place in each North Yorkshire district over the school summer break. The programme will provide children with nutritious food and a chance to take part in exciting and engaging activities to improve health and wellbeing. Activities are open to all children and young people in North Yorkshire and children and young people who receive benefits-related free school meals can attend for free and will also receive a hot meal or packed lunch each day. Eligible families will receive a letter with a code to claim their free place via their school.

The FEAST programme is run by North Yorkshire Together, a partnership between North Yorkshire Youth, North Yorkshire Sport and Rural Arts that supports residents to be happy and healthy. North Yorkshire County Council received funding to coordinate the programme from the Department for Education’s Holiday Activities and Food programme and the scheme was first launched last year, over the summer holidays, when 15,909 holiday clubs places were provided in the county.

The North Yorkshire Together website contains online resources and inspiration for activities all families can enjoy over the holidays, as well as a directory of holiday clubs taking place in the county. <https://northyorkshiretogether.co.uk/feast/>

#### **School Inspections**

As we reach the end of the academic year when inspections resumed at pace across the county, it is important to celebrate the many schools retaining their Good or Outstanding judgements and in particular the schools demonstrating sustained improvements against the challenging backdrop of the last few years. Of note are Gargrave CE, Thirsk CPS, Kirby Hill CE, Northallerton School, Danby CE, Nawton CPS, Summerbridge CPS, St Stephen’s Academy, Appleton Wiske CPS, Outwood Greystone, Barton Primary Academy, St Aidan’s and Stokesley School – all schools that saw judgements improved from RI or inadequate to Good judgements. (There are also several unpublished reports which have not been referenced here but will be mentioned in future updates.)

Unfortunately a small number of schools have received judgements that indicate a drop in performance from Good or Outstanding to Requires Improvement, and for some – to inadequate. Furthermore, in an increasing number of schools that were inspected under section 8 of the framework, the evidence gathered suggests that the strong grade might not be retained if a full inspection had been carried out. These schools will be re-inspected within 1 – 2 years and the school improvement team have prioritised support accordingly. Several schools in special measures received monitoring visits and were deemed to be ‘taking effective action’ at the time of the visit – this includes Woodfield Primary, Brompton Hall School, Alanbrooke Primary, Carleton Endowed and The Skipton Academy.

There are four live Interim Executive Boards (IEBs) in the county at the moment, and your appreciation is requested for the members of Weaverthorpe CE, Brompton Hall School, Carleton Endowed and the federation of Beckwithshaw, Kettlesing and Ripley Endowed – many of whom are volunteering on the IEBs in addition to demanding jobs and other voluntary positions on various boards and organisations. Their continued support for our most vulnerable schools is invaluable.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategic Plan**

The SEND Strategic Plan for Education Provision is entering its final phase. A cornerstone of the plan is to establish 31 specialist bases within mainstream schools across the county. Capital investment at Alverton Community Primary School, Wensleydale School and Thirsk have recently been agreed. This investment will significantly enhance the facilities at these new provisions providing a high quality local offer for children in the surrounding areas with SEND. In addition, Caedmon College in Whitby is currently consulting on establishing an additional specialist base at the school. That would bring the total to 10. The Council will be seeking to further extend this type of provision to all areas across the county.

Whilst the current plan is in its final phase, Officers are already developing proposals for our future SEND provision plans to be brought forward for approval in summer 2023. This will allow us to continue to plan strategically for the needs of the county’s children and young people and provide high quality local provision.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Provision Changes**

Work is continuing to further develop our SEND provision across the County. Following a thorough review of residential education provision use and demand two consultations were started in relation to Welburn Hall School and Brompton Hall School:

- **Welburn Hall**

Proposals to alter the residential offer at the school to meet the needs of those with more complex needs were brought forward in October 2021. Formal consultation took place prior to Christmas with engagement with the school community and wider interested stakeholders.

The feedback from the consultation has been largely positive with broad agreement that the proposed model would help us keep young people closer to their families and reduce the need to seek high cost independent school provision, often at greater distance. Final recommendations were approved in March and officers are now working with the school to coordinate the changes as well as some capital investment in the schools facilities.

- **Brompton Hall**

More recently, on 21st June 2022, approval was given to enter the second phase of consultation with regards to making changes to the designation of Brompton Hall School. Over recent years the number of pupils accessing residential provision has reduced, a trend that is expected to continue. Despite the decline in residential provision the demand for day places at the school continues to grow.

The proposals being consulted on set out a planned phasing out of residential provision in order to allow the school to increase the number of children who can access places on a daily basis. In addition to that the proposal is seeking views on changing the designation to allow girls to take up places as it has been identified there is currently no specialist provision for girls in the east of the county.

### **Baldersby St James CE Primary School**

Baldersby St James CE Primary School is an academy and has been subject to a closure process managed by Hope Sentamu Learning Trust and the DfE. In January 2022 the Minister confirmed the School will close in August 2022.

The Council, in conjunction with Elevate Multi Academy Trust, has consulted regarding the future treatment of the Baldersby catchment area from September 2022. The process is now underway to formally enlarge the catchment area of Dishforth CE VC Primary School. Elevate MAT are dealing with the catchment process for their two schools, which are Carlton Miniott Primary Academy and Topcliffe CE Academy.

### **Woodfield Community Primary School, Harrogate**

The Executive formally rejected the amalgamation proposal for Woodfield and Grove Road primary schools in Harrogate at their meeting on 19 April 2022 following the Governing Board of Grove Road CP School withdrawing their support for the proposal. Subsequently the Governing Board of Woodfield CP School requested a consultation on the school's future. This consultation has now ended on a proposal that Woodfield CP School should close on 31 December 2022.

The Executive are scheduled to consider the consultation feedback at their meeting on 19 July 2022 and determine whether to proceed with the publication of statutory proposals.

### **Weaverthorpe CE (VC) Primary School**

The School is subject to a Directive Academy Order following an 'Inadequate' Ofsted judgement but no academy sponsor has been identified due to viability concerns. LA officers, together with the Church of England Diocese, explored opportunities for collaboration with other schools but no acceptable proposal was identified. A statutory proposal for the closure of the School was published with a closing date of 29 April 2022.

The Executive determined the proposal at their meeting on 21 June, and the school will now close on 31 August 2022.

### **Fountains Earth, Lofthouse Church of England Primary School**

After careful consideration of the viability of the School, the Governing Board of Fountains Earth Primary School have asked the Council to undertake a consultation on the school's future. In September 2022 the Executive Member for Education and Skills will be asked to approve consultation on a proposal that the School should close at the end of the next academic year in August 2023.

### **School Funding**

We continue to work with schools that are facing financial difficulty through support, challenge and where necessary, intervention. As with the wider economy, schools are facing inflationary pressure particularly around energy costs and we will continue to represent schools in advocating for a fair financial settlement. The government has indicated that they intend to continue to move towards a direct funding formula for all schools. A current DfE consultation proposes additional funding for super-sparse schools could be incorporated within the sparsity factor and we will look carefully at those proposals.

### **Jubilee Concert by the County Music Service**

Young musicians from schools across North Yorkshire were joined by the world-famous Grenadier Guards for a spectacular concert on 17 June to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The concert at Harrogate Convention Centre was organised by North Yorkshire County Council's School Music Service and also featured about 350 children and young people from schools in the county. The evening featured performances from children and young people performing with North Yorkshire County Schools' Big Band, the Junior and Primary Schools Choirs and Wind Band, Richmond Chamber Choir and the County Youth Choir. They played a selection of popular music from each decade of the Queen's reign.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANNABEL WILKINSON