

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

21 FEBRUARY 2024

## STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

### Adult learning and skills

- Adult Learning and Skills Service was subject to a monitoring visit from Ofsted in December. The monitoring visit outcomes reported good progress from the service against the key areas raised in the inspection of February 2023.
- Recruitment of learners is strong with more learners recruited this year in comparison to the same point last year.
- Multiply progress continues to be positive with the team taking an increased focus on progression into maths related qualifications as we approach the third year of the programme.
- The service has been successful alongside a consortium, led by York College, in obtaining over £200k funding through the Learning Skills Improvement Fund. This is intended to support wider engagement; digital skills and it is hoped it will encourage greater progression into Health and Social Care careers.

### Music service

- The Music Service has increased pupil numbers by over 100 compared with the same time last year.
- The service will run its annual County Youth Ensembles residential in July, which will include Orchestra, Training Orchestra, Choir and Big Band (with special guest to be confirmed).
- The service is still awaiting the outcome of its bid to become lead organisation in the combined North Yorkshire/York Music Hub. We expect to hear the outcome in April.
- The service has started two new Early Years music groups at Harrogate Music Centre – both are already full.
- The Music Centres were very busy over the Christmas period, performing at a range of venues and community events and are soon to perform at the Great Northern Big Band festival in February.
- The Music Hub has provided a new singing resource for all North Yorkshire primary schools, giving them access to over 640 downloadable songs and videos to support music in the curriculum.

### Outdoor learning

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) provided a £1.5 million grant to organisations to act as a delivery partner for the Adventures Away From Home Fund up to 31 March 2024. The fund aimed to provide bursaries for up to 7,500 disadvantaged and/or vulnerable young people to take part in outdoor learning activities. North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service was awarded 48 places for young people to attend a three day / two night residential. Two North Yorkshire secondary schools have identified suitable young people and have booked their residentials.

Since the last full council, the Executive agreed to provide capital investment into phase 1 of the development of Bewerley Park and towards essential improvements at East Barnby. Work is expected to commence on site before the end of the year. The service will remain open throughout.

## **School organisation**

**Fountains Earth, Lofthouse, CE Endowed (VC) Primary School** – The consultation on the proposed closure of the school ended on 22 December 2023. The Council’s Executive reviewed the consultation on 23 January and have agreed to the publication of the required statutory proposal. This provides a further four-week representation period between 1 February and 29 February. The Executive are scheduled to determine the proposal on 19 March 2024.

**St Hilda’s Ampleforth CE VC Primary School** – The Governing Board have requested that the Council consult on a proposal to close the school. The Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills will consider the request on 20 February 2024.

## **Home to School Travel**

A consultation on a new Home to School Travel Policy for North Yorkshire is to be held between 19 February and 12 April 2022 leading to adoption by the Council in July 2024. Any changes to the travel policy would apply to new travel applications received on or after 1 September 2024 and would affect new entrants to schools (REC and Y7) with effect from September 2025.

## **School performance**

### **Autumn Term 2023**

In the period 1 September 2023 to 31 December 2023 there were 35 published state-funded school inspections of North Yorkshire schools. Of these 30 were of primary schools, 4 of secondary schools and 1 special school inspection.

Of the published inspections 20 were Section 8 (ungraded inspections) and 15 were Section 5 (graded inspections). All of the graded inspections resulted in the schools and academies retaining their good (14 schools and academies) or outstanding (1 academy) judgements.

It is pleasing to note that safeguarding has been judged effective in all schools and academies during this period. This continues the positive trend previously reported.

### **Ofsted performance – North Yorkshire compared with national**

- The proportion of schools and academies judged to be good and outstanding has continued to improve.
- As at 31 December 2023, 85% of North Yorkshire state-funded schools and academies are good or outstanding.
- The table below summarises the proportion of North Yorkshire schools and academies at each Ofsted grade:

Outstanding	10%
Good	75%
Requires Improvement	11%
Inadequate	4%

- Following the prevention of future deaths report and recommendations to Ofsted, the DfE and Reading Borough Council, the NY school improvement service has reviewed and formalised its process of supporting local authority headteacher well-being during inspection. This protocol has been positively received by school leaders.

### **Early years**

- Nationally we have seen some attention on the issue of funding rates. This relates to the short timescales available to determine the rates prior to the implementation of the new entitlement. Councils are being asked to publish rates as soon as they can.
- As a reminder, the council has a statutory duty (so far as reasonably practical) to secure sufficient early years and childcare provision for children aged 0 – 14 (and up to 18 for disabled children). The local authority's role is to:
  - ensure that the childcare is available, accessible and affordable so that parents have the opportunity to use childcare in their area.
  - ensure the childcare is of good quality so it benefits the child.
  - provide parents with a choice of childcare so they can choose suitable childcare that meets their needs.
- The LA has published *proposed* rates as part of a consultation with early years' providers operating in North Yorkshire.
- The proposed rates in North Yorkshire reflect that we are funded at floor rate for 3&4 year olds, are the 143<sup>rd</sup> lowest funded local authority for 2-year old funding, and are the 142<sup>nd</sup> lowest funded local authority for under 2-year olds.
- The consultation runs from 15 January 2024 through to 16 February 2024. The proposed rates and consultation process have also been discussed with the North Yorkshire Schools Forum.
- We do not propose to cut short our consultation and engagement with nearly 650 early years' providers. Following the consultation, officers will prepare a report which takes into account feedback from early years' providers and an equalities impact assessment.
- This will be published one week later on 26<sup>th</sup> February. Our Council Constitution requires that a report is published for 5 clear working days before a decision is made. Therefore, a decision will be made on 5 March 2024 which is three weeks in advance of the statutory deadline of 31 March 2024.

### **Finance**

Following consultation with all schools and academies in the Autumn Term 2023, school budgets have agreed including a 0.5% block transfer to the high needs block. Recognising the financial pressure on school budgets, one-off use of Schools Block reserve and Pupil Growth funding has been used to help fund the school budget requirement for 2024/25. A decision on the use of a one-off fund (£972k) to assist LA maintained schools in financial difficulty is planned to be made in March 2024. Academies in financial difficulty will be able to access funds directly through the Department for Education.

Following the Department for Education's publication of Local Authority early years funding rates on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 on the proposed approach to distributing entitlements funding for two-year olds and under from 2024/25, I approved a consultation with nearly 650 early years' providers operating in North Yorkshire. The consultation, setting out proposed provider funding rates, runs from 15 January 2024 through to 16 February 2024. Taking into account consultation feedback, confirmation of rates will be decided in early March 2024.

COUNCILLOR ANNABEL WILKINSON