

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**12 NOVEMBER 2025**

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

Our education, learning and skills services continue to be shaped by a commitment to inclusion, opportunity and excellence for all learners - from early years through to adult education.

Between September 2024 and August 2025, 85 inspections of North Yorkshire state-funded schools were published. These included primary, secondary, special schools, nurseries, and pupil referral settings. Encouragingly, no schools were judged inadequate and safeguarding was found to be effective in every case.

This reflects the strength of leadership and the dedication of staff across our schools. We welcome Ofsted's renewed inspection framework, which comes into effect this month. It introduces a five-point grading system and places greater emphasis on inclusion - an area of which North Yorkshire is already prioritising.

Our Adult Learning and Skills Service (ALSS) continues to grow. Enrolments in adult skills qualifications rose by 14% and tailored learning participation increased by 7% this year. Since 2021/22. Learner numbers have grown by 56%, demonstrating strong community engagement.

The Personalised Learning College now supports 200 learners increased from 181 last year. We have secured additional funding to boost engagement in basic skills and are proud to be a key delivery partner in the Mayoral Combined Authority Trailblazer initiative, which will enhance local skills provision. Planning for Year 2 is underway, and we continue to work closely with regional partners

The Council has made significant capital investment at Bewerley Park Outdoor Learning Centre. The work has been completed and the improved facilities officially opened in September. The new facilities are already enhancing the residential experience for students and staff, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive outdoor education.

Our Music Service is thriving, with over 2,400 children receiving lessons this term. We are delighted to welcome Nicola Skrzypczak as the new Head of Service. Five Music Centres are running weekly rehearsals and festive concerts will showcase over 500 performers. We have appointed eight Lead Schools of Music to support professional development and launched our first SEND music conference, introducing Soundbeam technology to schools.

North Yorkshire continues to lead in early years - improving inclusion and development for our youngest children. Over 1,000 staff have accessed free Dingley's Promise training and 11 providers have earned the Mark of Achievement. Under the Best Start in Life strategy, 348 new early years places have been created through capital funding, with nearly £855,000 awarded to 18 providers.

Wraparound childcare has expanded significantly, supported by £1.63 million in Department for Education (DfE) revenue funding. Currently, 58% of primary schools meet the ambition for term-time care from 08:00 – 18:00 with nearly 2,000 additional places planned by March 2026. Quality assurance visits are helping embed sustainable, high-quality provision.

From September 2025, eligible working parents can now access up to 30 hours of funded childcare for children aged 9 months and older. Around £90 million in early years funding will support families across North Yorkshire.

Applications for school places are being processed for the 2026/27 academic year, with secondary applications closed and primary applications due by 15 January 2026. We continue to support families through a fair and transparent admissions process.

Consultations have taken place on proposed changes to four primary school federations, aimed at supporting high-quality education and meeting DfE requirements. Outcomes will be considered by the Executive in December.

Twelve Targeted Mainstream Provisions are already operating, with five more opening soon. The new special school in Harrogate is progressing well, and expansions at Springwater and Brooklands are increasing capacity.

Delays in the publication of indicative school budget allocations for 2026/27 due to the national Spending Review have created uncertainty. In response, we have consulted with schools on key funding principles, including the minimum funding guarantee and a proposed block transfer to high needs. The results will be shared with the Schools Forum in November and inform Executive decisions in January 2026.

Despite these challenges, our priority remains clear: to protect and enhance frontline education services. We continue to advocate nationally for fair funding and work collaboratively with schools to ensure every child receives the support they need to thrive.

In summary, North Yorkshire is delivering strong outcomes across education and skills, despite national pressures. We remain focused on inclusion, opportunity, and ensuring every learner - regardless of age or background can achieve their potential.

COUNCILLOR ANNABEL WILKINSON