

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

18 MARCH 2026

STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

Our Education, learning and skills services continue to focus firmly on inclusion, opportunity and strong outcomes for children, young people and adult learners across North Yorkshire. Over the past four months, we have continued to strengthen school standards, expand early years and wraparound provision, enhance enrichment opportunities, and progress significant developments in SEND sufficiency. We continue to advocate for fairer funding nationally.

Education Standards and School Inspections

Ofsted inspections resumed nationally on 10 November 2025 following a temporary pause linked to the introduction of the renewed framework. Fourteen North Yorkshire state-funded schools have been inspected since that time, with two report cards published so far. Safeguarding was judged as met in both. Where evaluation areas require attention, schools will receive a monitoring visit. This level of scrutiny provides clear assurance around safeguarding practice and supports consistent improvement activity where it is needed.

Adult Learning and Skills – Participation, Quality and Readiness for Change

Our Adult Learning and Skills Service, together with the Personalised Learning College, continues to prioritise learner experience, inclusion and readiness for inspection.

Participation has grown strongly, with:

- 917 Adult Skills enrolments (an increase of 234 on last year)
- 1,966 Tailored Learning enrolments
- 199 learners at the Personalised Learning College

Achievement and retention remain positive, reflecting quality and strong learner engagement. We have also secured further national and regional investment to support literacy, numeracy and digital programmes, widening access to lifelong learning across our communities.

Early Years – Expanding Places and Growing the Workforce

Our work to strengthen early years sufficiency continues at pace. Seventeen providers were awarded £854,003.98 in DfE Early Years Capital Grant funding, enabling the creation of 336 new childcare places for children aged birth to 35 months. Fifteen projects are already complete, with the final two nearing completion.

North Yorkshire now has an extensive network of 625 early years providers, including childminders, day nurseries, pre-schools and schools with nursery provision.

Workforce development also remains a priority. A new course funded through the Combined Mayoral Authority—*Working with Children in Early Years, Schools and Colleges*—launched in November 2025. Thirty-five learners have successfully completed the programme, with a further 34 enrolled for the March 2026 cohort.

Wraparound Childcare

We continue to expand school-age wraparound provision. Sixty per cent of primary schools now offer full 8am–6pm childcare, with around 2,000 new places created across 105 schools. This is a vital support for working families and significantly enhances access to high-quality enrichment before and after the school day. Further expansion work is planned during March.

Elective Home Education, Alternative Provision and Inclusion

We remain focused on reducing the number of children moving into Elective Home Education by strengthening engagement with school leaders and ensuring families receive clear, timely information about their options.

Alongside this, we are progressing significant reforms in Alternative Provision. Following consultation, we have agreed to lower the age range for Pupil Referral Units to enable preventative places and deliver the statutory sixth-day provision for primary-aged children following permanent exclusion. Implementation is now underway with settings.

Music and Outdoor Learning

Our Music Service continues to broaden access through whole-class tuition pilots, collaboration with lead schools, and free ensemble and vocal events planned for spring and summer.

East Barnby remains temporarily closed, following the December condition survey, and the service has successfully relocated the majority of bookings to Bewerley Park, day activities, or alternative dates. Where this was not possible, refunds have been issued. Our priority remains safe, high-quality outdoor learning for North Yorkshire's children and we are working on ensuring that disruption to our schools is minimal during this period.

SEND Sufficiency and Specialist Provision

We continue to make progress in expanding local specialist provision. A key milestone was achieved with the groundbreaking ceremony on 11 February 2026 for the new specialist school in Osgodby, near Selby, which will help reduce our reliance on distant placements. The Department for Education recently offered a £5.6m capital contribution as an alternative to our existing plans for the Grammar School Lane site. Following careful consideration—and recognising the importance of delivering a 120-place special school aligned with assessed need—we have chosen to continue with the Grammar School Lane development rather than accept funding that would prevent the school's construction.

Financial Context – Schools Funding and High Needs

Funding decisions for 2026–27 have now been confirmed. High Needs remains a significant challenge nationally. The Department for Education have published some initial information on grant support for local authorities who have accrued high needs deficits within their Dedicated Schools Grant. Whilst the announcement of grant support is welcome, the operation of any grant support – and therefore the value of any grant – requires further clarity. Any grant support will be subject to an agreed local SEND reform plan. We await further detail on future-year arrangements.

National Reforms

The Government published its schools and SEND White Paper, *Every child achieving and thriving*, on 23 February 2026. We are now reviewing its implications for inclusion, mainstream support, specialist provision and the transition arrangements for families. This is a major national development and we will bring forward further detail as the Government's implementation timetable becomes clearer.

COUNCILLOR ANNABEL WILKINSON