

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 14 October 2013

ITEM 6(h)

Title: School
Improvement Strategy

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Ian Grayson

Report from Directorate: Children, Young People and Learning

Report Author: Jean Griffiths, Head of Children, Young People and Learning (Tel: 0191 643 8782)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet's authorisation for the delivery of the North Tyneside School Improvement Strategy.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet authorise the Head of Children, Young People and Learning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning, to put in place and take forward the North Tyneside School Improvement Strategy and the associated action plan.

1.3 Forward Plan:

The report is listed on the Forward Plan that was published on 11th September 2013.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

- This report relates to the priority in the Our North Tyneside 2013-2014 action plan 1B: Our people will be supported to achieve their full potential, especially our children and young people.
- This report relates to the priority in the Children, Young People and Learning Plan: Theme 2, Learning, Participation and Personal Development:

Improve attainment at all key stages particularly key stage 2, key stage 4 and key stage 5. The educational gap between the priority groups and their peers is reduced.

1.5 Information:

North Tyneside has a proven track record of high attainment amongst school age pupils that has risen steadily over recent years. Sustained improvement at key stage 2 has established us as one of the best performing authorities in the region. At key stage 4 64% young people achieved five or more A* - C grades, including English and maths in 2013. This represents an increase of 2% on the previous year's figures and is North Tyneside's best ever results for this indicator. There has also been a dramatic increase in the achievement of 2 or more A*-C grades in Science at GCSE from 2010 - 2013 (56% to 80%). Young people aged 18 have also improved on their achievements at level 3 in comparison to previous years in both individual subjects and overall performance.

North Tyneside's schools are striving to address educational disadvantage. 86% of the borough's nursery, first and primary schools are currently rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by OFSTED which is above the national average. Whilst in middle and secondary schools the figure is 71%, slightly below the national average. All special schools in North Tyneside are judged to be good or outstanding. The entitlement of every child to go to a good school is a high priority for the school improvement service.

However, we have some key priorities to address. North Tyneside currently has fewer young people with higher level skills and higher levels of youth unemployment than the national average. North Tyneside also has lower levels of participation and attainment in the important STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and maths) subjects and in modern foreign languages. The proportion of young people in North Tyneside progressing to higher education exceeds the national average. However the borough recorded an 18% drop in university applications in 2012, the 13th biggest drop nationally. It is important that North Tyneside establishes clear pathways from education to higher level employment and skills. More details on how we intend to do this can be found in the Employment and Skills Strategy.

Children and young people with Special Educational Needs are at increased risk of poor education outcomes. Partners are working to develop high quality integrated services that address the needs of each family with a child who has a disability or additional needs. The team will have a strong focus on improving educational attainment.

We have made progress in reducing the attainment gap between some groups of vulnerable children and their peers. Results for Looked After Children at key stage 4 are amongst the top quartile nationally this year. However overall the gap in attainment between vulnerable learners and their peers remains significant and in some areas is widening.

North Tyneside's School Improvement Strategy

North Tyneside's School Improvement Strategy sets out a vision for sustained improvements across the local authority but particular for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people. It acknowledges that resources should focus on schools most in need of improvement but stresses the importance of school collaboration which is a key component of the improvements achieved so far.

The strategy sets out 5 key themes:

1. Ensure every school in North Tyneside is good or outstanding

We will continue to use outstanding headteachers, national and local leaders of education and governance and the teaching schools to strengthen capacity in vulnerable schools and those that are not securely good. We will also ensure that aspiring and new leaders are provided with appropriate support for them to confidently address the challenges of headship. This will be done through direct delivery of leadership programmes; commissioning of activities through the Education Improvement Partnership, North Tyneside Learning Trust and Teaching Schools. Schools causing concern and vulnerable schools will receive targeted support through the intensive Supporting Schools Programme managed by senior staff in the Early Years and School Improvement Service. This will include direct support to governing bodies where necessary.

2. Ensure all schools can accurately evaluate their performance and know what to do to improve

The Early Years and School Improvement Service will continue to work in close partnership with the Research and Intelligence team to ensure that high quality data and information are available at an early stage. We will also ensure that schools are able to interpret and evaluate the quantitative and qualitative data effectively. The School Development Partners will be instrumental in providing support and challenge to schools. If a school's performance data indicates a dip in standards or is a major cause for concern the local authority will support the school to take remedial action immediately.

3. Ensure all schools have an appropriate curriculum offer

We will ensure that schools continue to focus on the basics of literacy, numeracy and information technology. Young people will need to become skilled in subjects which will prepare them for a rapidly changing world including science, technology, engineering and mathematics and also modern foreign languages. Employers also seek young people with personal skills in communication, resilience and problem solving. We will ensure that the employment and skills team work closely with school improvement for these aims to be realised. This will result in more young people especially from areas of disadvantage progressing to high level apprenticeships and the best universities. We will continue to offer or commission high quality professional development to teachers in order to deliver the curriculum.

4. Improve educational outcomes for vulnerable learners

In recent years schools have striven to provide high quality teaching which inspires and engages all young people. This has clearly had an impact on the learning of the vast majority of children as their achievements continue to rise year on year. However, despite the addition of extra resources through the Pupil Premium, there remains a gap between the achievement of our vulnerable pupils and their peers. We will ensure that vulnerable children and those from areas of disadvantage are well supported in their learning including identifying areas of good practice in those schools that have narrowed the gap. We have reorganised our resources including staff to provide a coherent offer to all children from disadvantaged groups. We now intend to enhance our delivery model to provide different levels of support to vulnerable pupils including providing more effective tracking and reporting arrangements as well as developing 'nurture support' to improve emotional health and wellbeing. We will ensure that risk-taking behaviour is addressed,

with a specific focus on e-safety. We also recognise the importance of ensuring that our very youngest children are ready for schools and are able to make a good start in their learning. The Early Years and School Improvement Service will work closely with the Prevention and Early Intervention Teams to achieve this aim.

5. Continue to support and promote collaborative and partnership working

Collaboration and partnership work in North Tyneside is central to this school improvement strategy. We have achieved a great deal by working together and this continues to be a priority. We will build on the strengths of this partnership including working closely with colleagues in Public Health to ensure children and young people are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle and consider their health and wellbeing.

Next steps

This strategy will be reviewed and refreshed through an ongoing process of consultation and refinement with partners including schools, children and young people. This will include a suite of performance measures that allow us to monitor our progress against the objectives. A quality assurance framework will also be developed. The Primary Learning Partnership and Secondary Education Improvement Partnership will be key to these arrangements.

Governance

The Children, Young People and Learning Partnership has overall responsibility for the School Improvement Strategy. An annual progress report will be presented to the Children, Young People and Learning Partnership Executive Commissioning Board, with exception reports provided as appropriate.

1.6 Decision options:

Option 1

To agree the actions proposed to implement the North Tyneside School Improvement Strategy.

Option 2

Not to agree the actions proposed to implement the North Tyneside School Improvement Strategy.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Cabinet is recommended to agree to the North Tyneside School Improvement Strategy. Improving the achievement of young people at all ages continues to be a key priority for the Authority. In order to respond to the challenges of the 21st century our children in North Tyneside are entitled to attend a good school where educational disadvantage is robustly tackled through excellent teaching and an appropriate curriculum. This will ensure that young people's aspirations are raised thereby improving their readiness to work in a globalised and technologically focussed economy.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix1: the North Tyneside School Improvement Strategy.

1.9 Contact officers:

Jean Griffiths: Head of Children, Young People and Learning, tel: 0191 643 8782
Anthony Gollings, Financial Business Manager, tel: 0191 643 8071

1.10 Background information:

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The Early Years and School Improvement Service is aligned to available funding. No additional funding is required to deliver the resultant action plan.

2.2 Legal

The Education Act 1996 as amended places an obligation on the Authority to promote high standards in education and the fulfilment in potential of children.

In addition the Authority has more specific duties for example in relation to schools in need of special measures or significant improvement.

This strategy is intended to meet both the general obligation in the Education Act 1996 and the more specific duties placed on the Authority.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 The Early Years and School Improvement team has been consulted together with other services in Schools. Learning and Skills including the Employment and Skills team.

2.3.2 First, primary, middle, secondary and special school headteachers have been consulted.

2.4 Human rights

There are no specific human rights affected by this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The School Improvement Strategy has a focus on addressing educational disadvantage.

2.6 Risk management

There are no specific risks directly arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no specific issues relating to crime and disorder arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no specific issues relating to the environment and sustainability arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive x
- Strategic Director(s) x
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) x
- Chief Finance Officer x
- Monitoring Officer X
- Strategic Manager Policy, Partnerships, Performance and Communications x

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