
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council and under the Children and Young People Portfolio, Cabinet has received the following:
 - (a) **Financial Cost of Placement of Looked After Children:** A report was introduced informing members of the current position relating to external placements for Looked After Children and requesting that consideration be given to the proposals to increase the level of foster carers fees in line with other local authorities. Darlington currently has difficulties in recruiting a sufficient range of foster carers and needed to ensure Darlington's fees compared well with neighbouring authorities. The proposed increase in foster carers fees was agreed and the projected overspend and actions being taken to reduce costs detailed in the report were noted.
2. **Developments in Children's Services**
 - (a) LA Officers and Darlington Headteachers held their regular consultation meetings through the 14 to 19 Partnership, Primary and Secondary Headteachers groups and the Joint Consultative Group. The Darlington Behaviour and Attendance Partnership has been established following a conference at Carmel College earlier this year. The partnership is chaired by Pat Howarth, Head teacher at Hummersknott.
 - (b) Officers facilitated well attended meetings of Link Governors, Chairs of Governing Bodies and LA Governors.
 - (c) The School Condition Group met as did the School Improvement and Development Commissioning Board.
 - (d) The third Bright Sparks Young Entrepreneurs Competition was held at the Dolphin Centre with Young People selling their ideas to a panel of experts including Duncan Bannatyne.
 - (e) Wendy Ripley took up her seconded post from Ofsted on 1st September 2010 as Assistant Director for Schools, Improvement and Development.
 - (f) The 12-19 Youth Work team have been leading on a full summer positive activity programme combining high profile multi-activity days in parks and open spaces (Lascelles, Tommy Crooks, Red hall, North park, Stanhope Park, Hartington Way); on-going evening centre-based activity; street based and targeted engagement work (focusing on Friday and Saturday nights and in hot spot areas); and specific activity in the town centre - engagement sessions on Mondays and Fridays, Chill Out café (at the Dolphin centre Friday evening) and consultation/engagement activity with young people on Saturdays (including opening the One Stop Shop in Houndgate as a base and focal point for young people). The programme began (and will end with) high profile events at South Park and in the Town Centre (Beach Party).

- (g) All activities are being well received by young people - in the first three weeks of the programme there were 2612 attendances by young people aged 11-19 (with a further 424 under 11's at the parks/open spaces events).
- (h) The Youth Work team have liaised with early Intervention/Prevention partners (Connexions, Education Welfare, health) to identify and target vulnerable and disaffected young people to enable and encourage their participation in positive activities.
- (i) Workers have also been continuing to work 1 to 1 and in small groups throughout the summer with targeted young people who are on their 'case load' during term time. This is to ensure that issues which arise during the summer break are responded to and the young people have the continued support to meet theirs and their family's needs. This also supports their transition back into education / training / employment in September.

3. Children Looked After

- (a) There are currently (18/8/10) 163 children and young people looked after by Darlington Local Authority. This continues the upward trend – 14% increase in the past 12 months. This increase has resulted in an increase in external placements and includes 3 secure placements. These continue to put pressure on budgets.
- (b) The majority of these placements are subject to a legal order (104), the remainder being 'Sec 20' – accommodated with agreement from parents.
- (c) The Looked After provision and process, is under continual scrutiny to ensure children and young people are safe, and appropriately placed, in addition to maintaining 'value for money' with regards to the level of care in the provision.
- (d) The Corporate Parenting Panel receives regular reports concerning the detail of provision (fostering and residential); support to young people; and their outcomes and achievements. The Panel meets young people and has recently been awarded membership of 'Investing in Children' following nomination by the young people.

4. Child Protection

- (a) There are currently 85 (18/8/10) children and young people in Darlington with a child protection plan. This is an 81% increase over the last 12 months. The main categories which result in the need for a plan, continue to be neglect and physical abuse.

	18/8/10	31/8/09
Neglect	51	34
Physical Abuse	28	8
Emotional Abuse	3	4
Sexual Abuse	3	1
	85	47

5. Darlington Children's Trust Update

- (a) A recent Department for Education statement has set out changes to form part of the forthcoming Education Bill. Statutory guidance on Children's Trusts will be withdrawn in the autumn, as will regulations underpinning children and young people's plans. The Bill will remove the requirement on local authorities to set up children's trust boards and relieve schools of the duty to cooperate in local children's trust arrangements. As statutory requirements these only came into force in April of this year. The Bill will also remove the requirement to publish children and young people's plans.
- (b) The Children's Trust Executive Group agreed in August 2010 to continue Darlington Children's Trust Partnership arrangements and to proceed with the development of a new Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) in 2011-2014. Darlington's current CYPP ends in June 2011 and it is envisaged the revised plan would be ready within Ofsted current timescales to submit the plan for consideration as Darlington's Children's Services self assessment for the beginning of July 2011. This was endorsed by Darlington Children's Trust Board in September 2010.

6. School Standards

- (a) Looking at all of the results, from those most recently released to those released early on in the Summer term, clearly shows a picture of a thriving system.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) Threshold Target

	Target	Performance
2008	62.5%	48.1%
2009	54.0%	50.6%
2010	55.9%	57.3%

- (b) The above table shows that we have maintained an improving trend over three years and exceeded our target at this stage for the first time. (Note: these results are waiting for verification so may change only a tiny bit).
- (c) The gap between the lowest 20% achieving pupils and the rest of the cohort has narrowed by 2.5% reducing from 38% in 2009 to 35.5% in 2010
- (d) **Key Stage 1**
This years' teacher assessments show that there is a mixed picture of performance at this level, mirroring the emerging regional picture. There are some small increases in performance on some performance measures and some slight declines in others when compared to 2009.
- (e) **Key Stage 2**
Results from Key Stage 2 SATs were not comprehensive this year because of the boycott in administering tests by thirteen of our primary schools (that is, over half of our schools) so we do not have a truly representative figure as to borough wide test performance. Comparison of test data year on year is therefore possible but we are not comparing like with like and eventual comparison to national figures will be difficult as some LAs, notably Hartlepool in the North East, will not

have any test data as they had a total KS2 SATs boycott. We can however compare year on year teacher assessment as this information is available to us.

- (f) For the pupils who did sit the tests there was a big percentage increase in those making 2 levels of progress in English and Maths. The proportion of children making two levels progress across Key Stage 2 rose from 84.2% to 90.0% in English and from 85.3% to 87.8% in maths. The Teacher Assessments at Key Stage 2 (for all pupils) served to confirm pretty accurately the test data.
- (g) Table 1 shows the performance of all Darlington Junior and Primary schools for 2009 in SATs tests whilst the figure for 2010 represents the performance of those 14 schools that undertook SATs testing.

Table 1

Subject	2009	2010	Difference
English Level 4+	83.8%	83.9%	Up 0.1%
English Level 5	32.8%	38.9%	Up 6.1%
Reading Level 4+	88.3%	86.9%	Down 1.4%
Reading Level 5	55.3%	55.7%	Up 0.4%
Writing Level 4+	70.4%	73.9%	Up 3.1%
Writing Level 5	21.4%	26.0%	Up 4.6%
Maths Level 4+	82.7%	85.0%	Up 2.1%
Maths Level 5	41.6%	39.9%	Down .1.7%
Science Level 4+	87.9%	86.1%	Down 1.8%
Science Level 5	41.9%	38.1%	Down 3.7%
English & Maths Combined Level 4+	77.6%	79.5%	Up 1.9%
English & Maths Combined Level 5	24.8%	28.8%	Up 4.0%

(h) Key Stage 3

Teacher assessed scores at Key Stage 3 saw big increases in the percentage of pupils achieving Levels 5 and 6 in English, Maths and Science.

(i) Key Stage 4

Once again, academic performance in the Borough broke all records. Darlington LAs headline figure in 2010 from the last set of results to be published, the GCSE results, saw a record pass rate in the Borough.

80.2% of pupils gaining 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C., up from 60% in 2007.

56.4% of pupils achieved five or more A* to C grades including English and Maths compared to 52.9% in 2009 and 46% in 2007.

- (j) Performance in Darlington was the best of all 12 North East local authorities. . A three year trend analysis of data supplied by schools can be found at **Appendix 1**, together with a comparison of Darlington’s performance to that of the North East Region

(k) A level Results

A-Level results were published in August. Carmel's pass rate this year is 99.3%, above the national pass rate of 97.6%. The average point score per student went up by 177 points, which is an

outstanding improvement.

7. Conclusion

- (a) Overall pupils in Darlington schools at every age and Key Stage are receiving generally high quality teaching (Ofsted reports confirm this), which is also improving year on year.

8. Meetings

- (a) Since the last meeting of Council, I have:

- Participated in lessons at Skerne Park Primary School to celebrate European Day of Languages;
- Attended a coffee morning at Mount Pleasant Primary School;
- Attended Darlington Partnership Executive Committee;
- Addressed an event to celebrate Darlington's contribution to the 2010 European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion;
- Attended a meeting to discuss a review of library services;
- Attended a number of briefings with the Director and Assistant Directors of Children's Services;
- Chaired the Children's Trust Board;
- Addressed the Darlington Partnership Board;
- Presented prizes to winners of the "What makes me happy?" children's art competition at Crown Street Library;
- Attended a meeting with representatives from schools on cooperative development;
- Convened a meeting at the Education Village;
- Attended a coffee morning with parents of disabled children to discuss issues with them (CDCD);
- Attended the official opening of the new developments at Hummersknott School and Language College;
- Attended a meeting of the Darlington Christian Youth Ministry;
- Attended the Corporate Parenting Panel;
- Addressed Polam Hall Junior School on citizenship issues;
- Met with the Chief Executive of the YMCA (Darlington).

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