
**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

1. Since the last ordinary meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:-
 - (a) **Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, 2, 3 GCSE and A Level Results in 2008** – Members received a report informing them of the cumulative performance of Darlington schools in national tests in 2008, and the report was based on the headline figures for provisional test results. Members were pleased to note the provisional improvement in the majority of areas and were particularly pleased to note that the overall performance at GCSE level was the best that this Authority has ever recorded. The vast reduction in permanent and fixed term exclusions, and the improvements made in school attendance, were also warmly received, however Members did express slight concern at the performance at KS2 and were keen to receive the validated data at a future meeting following re-marks, borderline checks and appeals. Members were also eager to receive information in relation to contextual value added scores at a future date.
 - (b) **Development of 14-19 Curriculum Offer and New Diplomas** – The Committee were extremely pleased to receive a report outlining the development of the 14-19 Curriculum Offer in Darlington, and the new diplomas. Members were informed that, whilst GCSE's and A Levels will continue to be provided as free-standing qualifications, the 14-19 Trust are developing a new range of qualifications designed to bridge the gap between vocational and academic education, which will be offered to 14-19 year olds. Members heard that these new qualifications will commence in September 2009, and keenly await the outcome of the impending 14-19 Trust Report in relation to a new Skills Centre for Darlington.
 - (c) **Safeguarding Children and Young People Role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board** – The Director of Children's Services submitted a report to update Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the role and responsibilities of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board. Members were impressed with the multi-agency approach adopted by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and look forward to receiving an update report on the work of the Board at a future meeting.
 - (d) **Specialisms in Schools** – A report was submitted to the recent meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee that informed Members of the process a school must adopt to become a 'specialist school'. Members

were interested in the access arrangements in place for those children displaying a particular aptitude in a specialism, and how this worked in relation to the school admissions policy on a micro or individual pupil level as well as the role specialist schools play within the family of schools and the wider Darlington community. Members resolved to visit schools to see how the specialisms are rolled out in practice.

(e) **Work Programme 2008/2009** – The Committee considered the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2008/2009, and examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan, in order to identify areas of particular interest or concern. Members of two Task and Finish Groups, Language Learning in Darlington, and the Use of Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA’s) in the Borough, will be meeting shortly to establish the terms of reference for their work. The Chair extended an open invitation for the inclusion of additional items on the Committee’s Work Programme.

2. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a Special Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, which will be taking place on Monday, 13th October 2008, in support of Local Democracy Week. Two children from each Primary School in the Borough have been invited to the meeting, so that young people can get a taste of local democracy in action. I would also like to extend an invitation to all Members to attend the meeting, so that the children have the opportunity to meet as many Members as possible.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended the following:-

- Food tasting at Skerne Park Primary School
- Met with the Principal of Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College
- Children’s Services Gold Star Awards at the Forum
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- LEA Governor Appointments Panel
- Hummersknot Language College to celebrate European Day of Languages
- Meeting with the Director of the North East Strategic Migration Partnership
- Meeting with the Borough Solicitor
- Meeting with the Assistant Director of Children’s Services