

Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All

Foreword

I am pleased to provide a foreword to Nottinghamshire's Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All. The new Strategy builds on the past successes of Nottinghamshire schools in raising attainment and increasing progress for all students, underpinned by the Closing the Gap Strategy 2012.

The new Strategy reflects current national priorities, which recognise the central role that education plays in breaking down the barriers to social mobility that face too many young people. Disadvantaged children and young people are less likely to achieve their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future emotional and financial security.

It is intended that the new Strategy will deliver key ambitions in the Nottinghamshire County Council Plan 2017-2021, 'Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future', with a particular focus on:

"A great place to bring up your family", which acknowledges the importance of giving children the best possible start in life and the opportunity to attend good schools.

"A great place to fulfil your ambition", which aims to increase the number of young people who leave education with better qualifications and skills, thus able to find higher paid, more skilled jobs.

"A great place to start and grow your business", which acknowledges the need for a skilled workforce. It identifies the importance of teaching employability skills in our schools and colleges to match the needs of local businesses and so support the ambitions of our young people.

Your Nottinghamshire, Your Future recognises that everyone deserves a chance to go as far as their hard work and talent can take them. It is proposed that the new Strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All will act as a driver for this plan and its vision where 'all children have the same opportunities and life chances.'

We will continue to work in partnership across the Council with learning providers, alongside key services and partners and, of course, with children, young people and their families.

Cllr Philip Owen

Chairman of the Children and Young People's Committee

Context

The “State of the Nation” report from the Social Mobility Commission (November 2017) ranked all English local authorities into hotspots and coldspots for every life stage from the early years through to working lives. The East Midlands was the worst performing area in terms of social mobility in the country. In terms of Nottinghamshire, 6 of the 7 districts were ranked as coldspots (worst social mobility outcomes), where Ashfield, Newark and Sherwood and Mansfield were ranked in the lowest 10 of the 324 local authority areas assessed.

The Department for Education’s ‘Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential’ (December 2017) sets out the government’s national plan to improve social mobility through education. The report sets out four key life-stage ambitions:

- close the word gap in the early years
- close the attainment gap in school while continuing to raise standards for all
- provide high-quality post 16 choices for all young people
- ensure everyone achieves their full potential in rewarding careers.

The Nottinghamshire strategy for Improving Educational Opportunities for All aims to ensure that the full range of Nottinghamshire County Council services and partners work coherently with learning providers and businesses to maximise the impact of available resources in further raising the attainment and increasing the progression of all, including the most vulnerable groups of learners.

Vision

Our vision is for Nottinghamshire to be a place where children increasingly grow up free from deprivation and disadvantage and where birth, social background and special education needs and disabilities (SEND) do not hold people back from achieving their potential.

Rationale

There remains a need to accelerate the progress of all children from their starting points, with a particular focus on those children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), looked after children (LAC) and those ethnic minority groups whose progress is below expectation.

The new Strategy will have a particular focus on:

- Improving outcomes in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, phonics and reading to ensure the best possible start in life for all Nottinghamshire children and young people
- Developing emotional health and well-being, independence, self-esteem as well as the desire to learn
- Maximising partnership working across the secondary and Post 16 sectors to improve pathways into adulthood and employment

Multi-agency working

The County Council is fully committed to working in partnership to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all. To achieve this, we will continue to work collaboratively with learning providers and partners, including parents and carers, to increase the progress for all children and young people whatever their starting points.

We recognise that the majority of Nottinghamshire learning providers serve communities that have low social mobility outcomes and will need to work collaboratively with a range of children's services, employers and partners to reach the ambitious goals within this Strategy. This means that the County Council, in its role as strategic champion for children, families and communities, will support all educational settings to embrace their responsibility and accountability to improve educational opportunities for all.

Our partners include:

- Children's Centres, Primary, Secondary, Special Schools, Alternative Education Providers, Independent Non-Maintained Schools, Colleges of Further Education and Universities

- Children's Social Care
- Clinical Commissioning Groups, Public Health and Health Providers
- District Councils
- Early Childhood Services
- Economic Development
- Education Standards and Inclusion Services (Education Improvement Service, Schools and Families Specialist Service, Governing Body Services)
- Education Access and Partnership Services (Fair Access, Elective Home Education, Partnership, Admissions, Strategic Place Planning and Health Related Education)
- Educational Psychology Service
- Employers
- Family Service
- Integrated Children's Disability Service
- Local Enterprise Partner
- Parents / Carers
- Performance, Intelligence & Policy
- Voluntary Sector and Charities
- Young People

The Role of the County Council

The County Council can make a significant contribution to improving educational opportunities for all by providing strong strategic leadership. In its role as champion of children and families, the County Council can facilitate, broker, commission and influence existing and new ways of working to support learning providers to improve progress, wider outcomes and employability skills for all children and young people in Nottinghamshire.

We can support effective implementation of the strategy for improving educational opportunities for all by:

- ensuring that the voice of the child and family is heard and their views are used to shape our work
- re-focusing and, where appropriate, integrating Nottinghamshire County Council services, to improve collaborative working within localities
- working with key services and partners to bring closer alignment to the ways in which County Council services work with learning providers to improve educational opportunities for all
- using data to analyse where Nottinghamshire children and young people make least progress from their starting points to inform work with all learning providers as well as targeting resources and capacity where the need is greatest and where collaborative work could potentially make the biggest difference
- ensuring that children, young people and families receive the most appropriate intervention and support to meet their needs, including the use of multi-agency approaches to prevent underachievement of the most vulnerable learners at all phases in their education
- promoting the use of specific, evidence-based language and skills programmes to accelerate progress at the earliest opportunity
- working with learning providers, key services and partners to support a whole system approach to planning and commissioning in order to raise aspirations, build school readiness and academic resilience, promote health and economic well-being to ensure accelerated progress and good attainment for all
- working with employers and learning providers to pilot innovative approaches to develop and embed employability and life skills in learning programmes from the earliest opportunity
- evaluating the impact of locality-working to improve educational opportunities for all and sharing any identified successful strategies across the county

Action Planning and Resources

In conjunction with our partners, actions have been agreed to support all learning providers to use data and target resources more effectively to improve educational opportunities for all.

Key actions include:

- continuing to use the Improving Educational Opportunities for All Performance Board to hold key partners/teams to account for the impact of their contribution to the Strategy
- sharing data and relevant research with learning providers and employers
- the provision of guidance on the most effective strategies to improve educational outcomes
- the use of data to identify localities for priority, targeted action
- sharing new ways of working at locality level to inform further developments in other areas of Nottinghamshire
- brokering and commissioning access to key resources, research and strategic partners
- developing quantitative and qualitative datasets to describe how new ways of collaboration at locality level are impacting positively on learners' achievements and employability.

Accountability

Learning providers are closely monitored and held to account for the attainment and progress of all learners, including their most vulnerable groups through Department for Education (DfE) performance tables and the Ofsted inspection framework. Schools are required to publish on their website details of how they are spending the Pupil Premium funding and the effect this is having on the attainment of eligible pupils in their school.

Local systems of accountability are in place and operate to hold individual schools to account where additional "high needs" funding is sought in regard to children and young people with SEND.

The Improving Educational Opportunities for All Performance Board holds key partners/teams to account for the impact of their contribution to the Strategy and reports to the Children, Family and Cultural Services Leadership Team, the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Committee.

How we will measure success

We will be successful if:

There is an increase in the take up of funded 30 hours childcare for children from entitled families and for eligible 2-year olds

The percentage of children receiving a 2.5-year-old health and development review increases

The proportion of disadvantaged children (FSM, SEND, LAC) who achieve the expected level of development in literacy in the Early Years Profile increases

There is an increase in the confidence and knowledge of Early Years Practitioners of how to support parents through the development of a Home Learning Pathway

The progress from KS1 to KS2 of disadvantaged children (FSM6 - those eligible for free school meals in the last 6 years, SEND, LAC) in reading is at least in line with national outcomes for comparable groups

There is an increase in the number of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants trained and working in Nottinghamshire schools

There is an increase in the number of schools involved with the Attachment Aware Schools Project including supervision networks

The number of schools involved with the Ready for Secondary Project increases

The progress of disadvantaged children (FSM6 and LAC) at KS4 is above national outcomes for comparable groups

The progress of children with SEND at KS4 is at least in line with national outcomes for comparable groups

The percentage of young people in the Academic Age Years 12/13 Cohort who Education, Employment and Training (EET) status is not known is reduced

The percentage of young people in the Academic Age Years 12/13 Cohort who are not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) is reduced

The number of young people with SEND who secure sustained employment, following a supported internship, increases

Summary

This strategy cannot be fixed in stone. It will evolve over time as learning providers embrace their collective responsibility for meeting the needs of all children and young people, including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

As champion for children and families, the County Council has a duty to ensure that all services which are provided, brokered or commissioned are informed by latest research and best practice, whilst providing good value for money. This will require effective partnership working based on a shared moral purpose to raise aspirations and maximise life chances for all children and young people, but particularly for the most vulnerable.

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