

# LIFELONG LEARNING 2011/12

Report for Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel



## OVERVIEW

Local Authorities have three distinct but overlapping roles and the Lifelong Learning Division contributes strongly across all three:

- **Core Role:** to guarantee the infrastructure of a universal 'school' system – that every child has a school place and changes in the population are planned for.
- **Leadership Role:** local authorities have a unique legitimacy in that they are part of an elected structure. This gives us the authority to lead the local education community, to set a vision for education, and to bring a range of partners together to achieve improvement.
- **School Improvement Role:** where authorities have a duty to offer support to headteachers, governors and teachers as well as monitoring and challenging schools' performance particularly for those schools below floor standards.

The Lifelong Learning branch exists to raise aspiration and achievement not only for children and young people but also through opportunities to encourage and deliver lifelong learning within the adult population.

The branch is in the process of major realignment in how core business operates. As a consequence of the new Government's Education White Paper "The Importance of Teaching" the branch is repositioning in order to provide a significant element of its business through directly traded services to schools. These will range from services which support school governors to a wide range of support to school leaders and managers. At the same time the move towards a stronger emphasis on commissioning services and provision, including school places as opposed to the historic model of direct provider of education provision is well underway.

Through this period of change, a period likely to be approximately ten years, the role of Local Authority Champion for Children and Families will grow larger.

The branch plays a critical part in establishing and propagating the bedrock upon which the future citizens of the city will develop the necessary ambition, to translate their aspirations into higher level skills which in turn will create the high wage economy of Plymouth in 2020. Over the past two or three years the branch has been remarkably successful in setting the trajectory for some of these changes. We have:

- Narrowed gaps in achievement
- Gained national recognition for innovation and achievement
- Achieved the highest levels of educational attainment at KS4 that the city has ever experienced.

Nevertheless our current overall performance only places us as achieving the national average in educational performance, albeit outperforming our statistical neighbours. For a city with aspirations to be a leading European maritime city we cannot be satisfied with "national average" educational performance. It is vital to the strategic ambition of the city that the highest possible educational outcomes are achieved by our leaders of tomorrow.

The Branch will need to also work closely with Learner and Family Support in order to achieve the deployment of professional staff to localities as the Council looks to translate "localism" into a Plymouth context.

## **RESPONDING TO CITY AND COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

We are excited about the opportunities that are created in times of significant change. We believe that we have the right people with the right skills to make a huge contribution to Plymouth's 2020 vision through active support of the four key priorities.

Our aspirations for the next three years:

- To promote the talents and achievements of Plymouth's young people so that the city is proud of the next generation;
- To deliver a quality induction programme for those working with children and young people in Plymouth as well as various learning and development opportunities to ensure that children and young people are served by well qualified and highly motivated staff;
- To assist schools in appreciating and capitalising on the amazing educational resource that is Plymouth and its immediate environment;
- Lift all Plymouth's schools above the escalating floor standards in English and mathematics so that Governing Bodies retain the choice about when and if to change their school's status;
- Continue to improve the quality and diversity of educational provision in Plymouth so that children and families have a range of options to meet their aspirations;
- Work with partners to strengthen the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) agendas so that students leaving school have the best chance to find highly skilled and sustainable well paid jobs thus contributing to the Plymouth economy;
- Work with our partners to create the conditions necessary to develop sustainable high quality system leadership in Plymouth;
- Deliver a high quality service to motivate and inspire adults to undertake lifelong learning and to increase the numbers of adults with Level 2 qualifications and above;
- To work with a diverse group of partners to ensure a high quality range of universal and targeted services that successfully engage 13-19 year olds;
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, thereby improving the literacy and numeracy skills of the Plymouth population;
- Tailor the services provided through Children's Centres to ensure reduced health and educational inequalities, reduced child poverty and an improvement in parental capacity to safeguard their children from harm;
- Strengthen systems to share best practice in early years settings, developing peer mentor support for Leaders;
- Improve early years practitioner knowledge on how to develop children's early language and communication skills;
- Keep the focus on the needs of children and young people;
- Continue to narrow gaps in attainment by further improving outcomes for children in care and other vulnerable groups;
- Deliver the Plymouth Promise within mixed economy of providers;
- Maintain our collaborative ethos whilst introducing primary academy sponsors and teaching schools to the city's provision;
- Enable Governing Bodies to make informed decisions;
- Increase the number of Young People aged 16-19 participating in education and training, including those from vulnerable groups, thus reducing the numbers of young people who are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEETS).

## **Departmental and Service priorities**

As well as the city and council priorities above the following is a list of our most important departmental and service priorities:

- Restructure Lifelong Learning in-line with the Plymouth 2020 key priorities to add value and accountability to achieving these important outcomes;
- Develop the Plymouth Youth Music Service to ensure that it remains well placed to take advantage of the changing nature of national funding arrangements and can continue to deliver excellent value for money for its clients;
- Ensure the sustainability of the Plymouth Children's University and the Summer mix programme through partnership engagement and the mainstreaming of activity;
- Play a leading role in achieving the outcomes expected within the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14;
- Work with the DfE to deliver a successful phase 3 Raising the Participation Age (RPA) trial in Plymouth as well as in the South West in our capacity as a local leader;
- With multi-agency partners, provide the leadership necessary to coordinate and deliver the outcomes expected within the Early Years Strategic Plan for Plymouth;
- To become the school improvement service of choice for Plymouth's schools.