

TO: The EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Children, Young People and Learning

DATE: 28TH MAY 2013

**CREATING OPPORTUNITIES – VISION, VALUES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR EDUCATION**

Director of Children, Young People and Learning

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents a revised vision for education in Bracknell Forest which has been developed with schools and other partners. It has been written as a means of articulating the Council's clearly stated policy that 'All schools should be good schools'.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Executive Member **ENDORSES** the vision statement (Annex 1)

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Local Authority maintains a key position in ensuring the quality of education provided in the Borough's schools. Even given a changing education landscape this role has been recognised and endorsed by central government and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Although the Local Authority is not required to publish a vision statement failure to do so would not permit the Council's expectations and aspirations in relation to the education of children and young people to be articulated clearly.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The first decade of the 21st century has seen a fast moving and changing landscape for education which shows no sign of slowing down. This statement is the product of discussion and collaboration between the Council, the local education community and other stakeholders. It has been prepared in response to a desire by the Council to re-affirm its ambitions for education. Details of the proposed vision statement are included in Annex 1.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 No specific legal issues arise from the matters discussed in this report or the annex to it.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that sufficient funds exist to meet the vision statement

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The partnership in learning statement in Annex 1 applies to all children and young people taught in the Council's schools. The statement on the school curriculum was subject to a separate EIA when it was approved by the Executive Member in 2011.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 None

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Discussions have taken place with headteachers.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Meetings and discussions with interested parties.

Representations Received

- 7.3 None

Contact for further information

Janette Karklins, Children, Young People and Learning - 01344 354185

Janette.Karklins@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Bob Welch, Chief Adviser – 01344 354182

Bob.Welch@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Creating Opportunities - vision, values and responsibilities for education

Bracknell Forest's partnership in learning statement

Ambition

Bracknell Forest Council (The Local Authority) has set high ambitions and expectations for its residents which were articulated through the manifesto in 2011. In essence the Council wants every young person and adult in Bracknell Forest to have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and their personal and parental ambitions. In turn the Council wants to ensure that there is a drive by children's centres and pre-school providers, schools and colleges to meet that ambition by inspiring their pupils and students to learn and to prepare them to make a positive contribution to a world in which they can thrive and achieve.

The ambition is for all Bracknell Forest schools to be good schools. Good in this context is judged against a range of pupil outcomes including attainment, personal well-being, behaviour and a positive attitude to learning as a life-long activity.

Education is delivered in partnership with the local education community, parents and other stakeholders. Whilst pre-school settings, schools and colleges are the main educational providers, wider Council Services and our partners are also essential in developing the well-being of young people. These include partners such as the Youth Service, the voluntary sector, health services and sports and leisure services.

The Council will support and challenge providers to do their very best for the local population and will champion children and young people, especially the more vulnerable, so that all can achieve well.

Vision and Values

The Council is committed to further raising pupils' achievement, working in partnership with all providers, schools and parents to secure continued improvement. The Council will provide challenge and broker support for providers and school governing bodies so that they are able to carry out their statutory duties but we also want them to be ambitious to do much more for their pupils than meet the statutory requirements.

From a parental/carers perspective all schools being good means that all schools in Bracknell Forest offer a high standard of both education and care. Whilst parents/carers may express a preference for a particular school they should be confident that whatever school their child attends, that school will be doing their very best to support and enable their child to achieve. The school will also have clear expectations of parents and how they can best support their child's learning.

The Council's statement on the school curriculum establishes seven clear aims. These have been adopted by many schools in the Borough or used as a basis for establishing their own priorities and policies.

The school curriculum is all the formal, informal and extended learning experiences that a school offers its children and young people. Our aim is for the curriculum to promote the:

- *enjoyment of learning and the highest standards of achievement;*

Unrestricted

- *development of independent, reflective learners who are confident, resilient and resourceful;*
- *active participation of children and young people in shaping the direction of their own learning;*
- *celebration of childhood and adolescence for its own sake;*
- *preparation of children and young people for adult life, capable of responding positively to the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly changing and increasingly diverse world;*
- *development of active citizenship and community cohesion;*
- *commitment to personalised, lifelong learning.*

These ambitious aims will be reflected in the structure and content of the curriculum which will be tailored by each school, reflecting its ethos and the views of the school community, including parents and governors.

Alongside the promotion of high level skills in literacy and numeracy the curriculum will also promote children and young people's knowledge and understanding of the creative arts, sciences, technologies and the humanities.

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development will be central to the processes of education.

The role of the LA is changing in response to the increasing diversity and autonomy of the school system. Bracknell Forest wants all its schools to work together collaboratively.

Governors are responsible with the headteacher for the standards achieved in schools and will be held to account by parents/carers as well as the Local Authority for their achievements and wider contribution to the education community. Experience has shown that a partnership approach is best and most likely to achieve public confidence and satisfaction, especially when it is a partnership where the views of service users are welcomed and used to further improve service provision.

Quality

There is an explicit commitment to high quality in education. The Bracknell Forest strategy for school improvement is encapsulated in our *Policy for Challenge, Support and Intervention in Schools*. This aims to enable all schools to maximise the potential of all their pupils and students, recognising their talents and achievements and encouraging them in the pursuit of life-long learning.

All processes of school improvement are underpinned by appropriate support and challenge. Challenge is provided through the LA's programmed visits to schools to agree targets, observe teaching and validate a school's own procedures for self-review. Support is provided through the brokered services of Local and National Leaders of Education (LLEs and NLEs), Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) and lead teachers, external providers of training (including teaching schools) and support and through peer-to-peer networks, including school clusters and consortia.

Unrestricted

The LA also undertakes focussed reviews involving headteachers and governors. These have proved to be particularly effective in supporting schools to improve outcomes for learners. An external evaluation of each school's effectiveness is undertaken by Ofsted.

Maximising the potential of all their pupils and students can present schools and settings with challenges with regard to some individuals and groups, whose emotional, social, behavioural and/or learning needs require particular support. The Council is committed to ensuring that all schools have access to such support through services provided locally or commissioned from external agencies.

Where services are commissioned, the Council will not hesitate to intervene if provision falls below acceptable standards. It will work with providers, including schools, to help them to improve.

Governance

Effective governance involves partnership and teamwork with headteachers, staff, governors and the community. Governors come from many different backgrounds, but all have one important thing in common, they are dedicated to ensuring that the children and young people in their school have the best education possible.

All governors are responsible for giving the school overall direction, acting as a link with parents and the community, supporting the school and ensuring the required curriculum is taught. Governors in Academy schools have greater responsibilities and accountabilities.

The LA will support governors to fulfil this rewarding role through the provision of training and guidance and assist with self-evaluation and reviews.

Strategy in relation to Academy schools

The current Department for Education policy is for all schools to enjoy the freedoms associated with being independent of the Local Authority through becoming an Academy school. Bracknell Forest Council has always delegated considerable powers and responsibilities to schools and trusts the judgement of governing bodies to determine what is in the best interests of their school. The Council will respond to the changing landscape by advising and assisting schools to form trusts and other partnerships when necessary.

The Role of the LA

The LA has a number of core statutory responsibilities in relation to education. Some aspects of these responsibilities are changing or have become more challenging to achieve in the context of the new and emerging landscape. Central to those responsibilities is to maintain an overview to ensure that there is a fair and equitable system.

Core responsibilities

- Strategic planning of schools and school places (including those for the under 5s) and appropriate provision post 16 including vocational provision
- Special educational needs assessments and commissioning provision
- Pupil support for attendance, exclusions and managed moves
- Fair access and fair admissions
- Intervening when schools are a cause for concern and fail to provide an acceptable level of education
- Championing opportunities and support for the more vulnerable e.g. looked after children and those with special needs

Unrestricted

- Meeting the requirements of legislation and regulations including health and safety, employment and equal opportunities

In relation to promoting educational excellence, the LA will work with headteachers, school governors and academy sponsors, principals and parents to promote educational excellence for all children and young people and be ambitious in tackling underperformance. More specifically, the Director of Children's Services (Janette Karklins) and the Lead Member for Children's Services (Gareth Barnard) have a range of specific duties.

Together they will:

- take rapid and decisive action in relation to poorly performing schools, including using their intervention powers with regard to maintained schools and considering alternative structural and operational solutions;
- develop robust school improvement strategies, including choosing whether to offer such services in a competitive and open school improvement market, working beyond local authority boundaries;
- promote high standards in education by supporting effective school to school collaboration and providing local leadership for tackling issues needing attention which cut across more than one school, such as poor performance in a particular subject area across a cluster of schools;
- support maintained schools in delivering an appropriate National Curriculum and early years providers in meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (as outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework);
- establish a schools forum for their area, maintain a scheme for financing maintained schools and provide financial information; and
- undertake specified responsibilities in relation to staffing and governance of maintained schools.

April 2013