

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER

EDUCATION STRATEGY - SCHOOLS

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report asks the People Cabinet Member to approve, adopt and publish the North Lincolnshire Education Strategy for Schools.
- 1.2 The strategy document has been informed by consultation with young people, headteachers, school governors and the public.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The education system is undergoing systemic change and North Lincolnshire Council has a crucial role in ensuring that the needs, aspirations and potential of our children and young people are fulfilled. Recognising the emergence of new forms of school organisation and governance, the proposed strategy reaffirms North Lincolnshire's commitment to '*All our Children*' - demonstrating how the council will fulfil its legal duty under the 1996 Education Act for standards of education standards in the area as a whole.
- 2.2 North Lincolnshire has strengths to build on, particularly in the high level of engagement that our children have in education at all ages and the quality of care that they receive. In the academic year 2012/13, the proportion of children and young people being taught in schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted increased significantly: from 64% to 75% in the primary age range and from 44% to 85% in secondary. Despite this evidence of improvement in the quality of learning provision; across North Lincolnshire as a whole, education outcomes need to improve faster if we are to catch up and overtake national averages.
- 2.3 Given our starting points, our ambition is to
 - exceed national average outcomes by all measures within two years
 - achieve top quartile performance within four years

This document sets out the overarching strategy that will help us achieve these outcomes for the children and young people of North Lincolnshire, focusing our efforts on creating an enabling culture, developing area wide capacity for school improvement and embracing structural reform

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 To approve, adopt and publish the Education Strategy – Schools

3.2 Not to approve the proposed strategy.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The preferred option is to approve, adopt and publish the Education Strategy – Schools. This recognises the involvement of stakeholder groups in the development of the strategy and the subsequent consultation processes. The strategy sets out a vision for school age education in North Lincolnshire, the overarching drivers that are required to deliver the improved outcomes and actions for delivery.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 The delivery of the strategy will be met from within existing resources.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 The proposals are within existing arrangements for procurement, risk management and legal duties of the local authority. The potential risk to the council is failure to deliver on the commitment, leading to loss of reputation and possible failure at inspection.

6.2 The strategy is expected to impact positively on groups by narrowing achievement gaps for children and young people by gender, ethnicity, relative deprivation and special educational need and disability. Rising attainment will narrow the gap for each age cohort against national and regional performance measures. The strategy reaffirms expectations on schools and academies for ensuring that children are safe and feel safe, and the expectations for improving outcomes for children in care.

6.3 The Education Strategy – Schools is expected to make a positive impact on employment in North Lincolnshire by promoting skills development and participation in life-long learning. Higher prevalence of good and outstanding schools over time will support the continued regeneration of the local area, encouraging inward investment.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation was undertaken during and after the construction of the draft version of the Education Strategy - Schools. This included ongoing discussion and presentations to headteacher groups, the executive of the North Lincolnshire Association of Governing Bodies and Chairs of Governor briefings. The draft strategy was circulated to all headteachers and chairs of governors for open response. Public consultation was invited between 2 and 29 September through the council website.

Amendments throughout the process included: making more explicit the key role of parents, especially in children's early development; including *celebrating success* and *building on strengths* in the vision for success; ensuring that *creativity* and *imagination* were seen as important; increasing the level of ambition so that outcomes *exceed* national. Some minor changes were made to language.

Consultation was undertaken through discussion with the Youth Council. This led to further amendments: strengthening the *prominence of pupil voice* in an enabling culture; adding a request for meaningful *reporting to parents*; emphasising the need for effective *careers advice and guidance*.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The recommendation is to approve, adopt and publish the Education Strategy – Schools.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB
Author: Pete Thorpe, Assistant Director: Education
Date: 16/10/2013

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None

North Lincolnshire
Education Strategy for Schools

‘All our children’

(Post-consultation version – awaiting democratic sign off)

Version	Date	Author	Review date
Post-consultation	21 October 2013	Pete Thorpe	August 2014
Final approved by:			

The overarching aims of the Education Strategy

North Lincolnshire Council's Strategic Plan commits services to '**Raising Aspiration and empowering our Young People**'. Within the People Directorate of the Council, the overarching ambition for children and adults is captured within the vision of **safe children and vulnerable adults; supported families and carers; transformed lives**.

As an integrated service for children and young people, working with a wide range of partner organisations, this commitment translates into the three education aims of:

- **raising achievement**
- **championing inclusion**
- **supporting regeneration**

Our current context

It is an exciting time to be involved in education. Unprecedented changes are occurring across every level of the system affecting all aspects of how education is organised, delivered and valued.

At the centre of this systemic change remain **all of our children and young people; their needs, their aspirations and their potential**. These are the important factors for the education sector in North Lincolnshire. We have strengths to build on, particularly in the high level of engagement that our children have in education at all ages and the quality of care that they receive. Parents, school leaders, governors and staff are committed to ensuring better standards of education and increasing numbers of providers are being recognised as providing good and outstanding learning opportunities. But, we need much more...

Across North Lincolnshire as a whole, education outcomes need to improve faster if we are to catch up and overtake national averages. We firmly believe that this is possible and that we can make the necessary changes so that collectively we:

- **exceed national average outcomes by all measures within two years**
- **achieve top quartile performance within four years**

This document sets out the overarching strategy that will help us achieve these ambitious outcomes for the children and young people of North Lincolnshire. We will focus our efforts on three main driving forces:

- **creating an enabling culture**
- **developing area wide capacity for school improvement**
- **embracing structural reform**

North Lincolnshire Council is passionately committed to improving the wellbeing and education outcomes of all our children and young people. We call on schools, academies, colleges and partner organisations to join us in creating the education system that our children and young people deserve and that their parents demand.

The role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority retains a range of statutory duties related to education in schools and academies, which sit alongside the Council's strong local commitment to education. In summary, the role of the local authority is to act as a:

Strategic commissioner

- understanding the needs of our population and our communities
- setting the local priorities
- providing strategic direction and leadership
- ensuring sufficiency of places that meets the needs, aspirations and potential of all children and young people
- ensuring area wide standards and educational excellence
- jointly commissioning services with partners to meet local need

Champion for the disadvantaged child

- ensuring all children are known and are kept safe
- as Corporate Parents, demanding high quality outcomes for our looked after children
- providing direct services for some vulnerable children and young people
- ensuring fair access to education, and intervening when required

Systems shaper

- setting national policy in the local context
- bringing together system leaders from across agencies and organisations to work in partnership
- liaising with and influencing the agencies of national government
- enabling structural reform
- ensuring area wide accountability
- capacity building



What will success look like?

- **We will exceed national average outcomes by all measures within two years**
- **We will achieve top quartile performance within four years**



Raising achievement

Our youngest children will have access to a wide range of pre-school learning opportunities. This will help them develop a sense of self and the social skills to interact confidently with their peers and adults. Critically, they will have increasingly well developed communication, language and literacy skills that will form the bedrock of future learning. They will have positive dispositions towards learning and a thirst for knowledge and skills acquisition that drives them to investigate through play and more structured learning.

As children progress through their primary years and into secondary, they will develop further as independent learners. They will become confident readers and communicators in a range of media, including writing. They will become secure in the essential mathematic functions and the methodologies of investigation. Children will explore their own creativity and express their own ideas and thinking, drawing on their cultural heritage and individual talents. They will demonstrate maturity; being reflective in their learning, keenly aware of their strengths and seeking the next steps to further their learning. Self esteem will blossom.

With increasing maturity as learners, we will expect young people to actively articulate their ambitions for their futures and to seek the progression routes that will allow them to realise their aspirations. Well supported and skilfully challenged, students will excel in their chosen subjects and core curriculum. They will be self motivated to succeed and this will be recognised in their mature outlooks and determination to be recognised through public examination and other accreditation. As learners with a high sense of self worth, they will be confident and courageous in their choices – believing that their future is in their own hands.



At every stage of learning and development, parents will be provided with meaningful information and guidance to help them support their child's learning, development and achievement of full potential.

Championing inclusion

Our schools, academies and colleges will be representative of the entire community that they serve wherever possible. The vast majority of children and young people will access mainstream provision, where their needs and aspirations can be met and their full potential realised. Diversity and difference will be welcomed as an opportunity for learning and understanding. Children and young people will be equipped to challenge intolerance or indifference. All children, and especially those in public care, will be well supported to overcome barriers to their learning or wellbeing. The views and expectations of individual children and young people will routinely inform how services to support their learning and wellbeing are delivered.



Engagement will be high for all groups of children and this will be seen in low exclusions and high attendance – the quality of the learning experience will be worth turning up for. Those from relatively disadvantaged starting points will attain as well as their peers. Points of transfer will be well planned and provide for both continuity and an increased level of learning challenge. All children and young people will be provided opportunities to engage and achieve regardless of individual circumstance - we will go the extra mile for them.

The needs of some children and young people will be best served by specialist provision, either fulltime or for episodes. Wherever re-integration into mainstream is in the interests of the child or young person, this will happen. There will be a sufficiency of specialist places and wherever possible, these will be close to home. Progress will be outstanding from each individual child's or young person's starting points.

Supporting regeneration

There will be an increasingly strong link between education providers and local business and industry. Information about the current and anticipated local and regional economies will be used to fire young people's imaginations and support them in planning for their futures. The full range of opportunity will be made clear. Young people will acquire the essential employability skills throughout their education, with progress tracked with the same rigour as for other curriculum areas. First class careers guidance will ensure that young people make transitions that provide meaningful pathways into employment, training and further or higher education.

There will be an increasingly diverse range of options and points of transfer that allow young people to chart a course to the career they aspire to. Young people will participate in education and training until they are 18 years old (25 for those with Learning Difficulties & Disabilities), choosing from a wide range of pathways that afford meaningful progression to higher level qualifications; jobs with training; apprenticeships and work experience. Hard to engage and vulnerable young people will access tailored provision through an Engagement Hub promoting a wider range of post-16 learning opportunities.



Driving forward – how we get to where we need to be

We will focus our efforts on three main driving forces:

- **creating an enabling culture**
- **enhancing area wide capacity for school improvement**
- **embracing structural reform**

Creating an enabling culture

In an enabled education system for North Lincolnshire, school leaders and staff will be truly responsible for ‘all our children’. Achieving this demands a step change in leadership within the education sector, where leaders and governors act to secure outcomes for children and young people beyond the immediate confines of their own organisation. Partnerships and school-to-school working needs to be embraced as a means by which good and outstanding schools keep learning as organisations and keep getting better. Autonomy and individuality will be valued. Each individual school will have a complex and dynamic set of connections to other schools and organisations from which to further their own capacity and identity.

There needs to be a shared commitment to achieving our aims of raising achievement, championing inclusion and supporting regeneration. Existing strengths will be recognised, celebrated and built upon. Our shared ambition for all children and young people will make us intolerant of the causes of underperformance, especially where this impacts on children of relative disadvantage. School leaders at all levels will be confident in seeking help from the sector. The education sector will be collectively determined to support, challenge and intervene with schools and academies in a timely manner to secure swift improvement and prevent formal failure. There will be mechanisms to ensure that decision making is open, transparent, consistent and in the long term interests of learners. Integrity will be our watchword. Through strong partnership work and meaningful consultation, we will drive system wide change and make sense of the multiple lines of accountability within an increasingly diverse education system.



Pupil voice is recognised as essential to engaging young people; ensuring that the needs and aspirations of groups of children and young people are provided for. Schools and North Lincolnshire Council will model meaningful consultation and democratic processes with young people, actively seek their views on issues that affect their life chances and demonstrate the impact of their engagement in decision making.

North Lincolnshire has a strong track record of safeguarding children through effective multi-agency work, local partnership practice and the capacity of individual schools. We need this holistic view of children and young people to prevail. As a key universal service in the lives of children and young people, schools will remain an essential interface with wider services for children such as health, social care, police, the local safeguarding children board and the local authority. Moreover, children will feel safe and be safe.

Enhancing area wide capacity for School Improvement

The outcomes of the school improvement driver are:

- **effective, confident, resilient schools and academies working within a locally agreed school improvement framework**
- **strong school-to-school partnerships driving improvements to a shared agenda**

This creates a model of area wide school improvement where each individual school is the foundation of its own improvement journey. All schools will have access to a universal school improvement offer from the local authority and a level of targeted support relative to their position on the 'graduated approach'. Schools will draw from the market place of providers those services that they need to operate effectively. All schools will be subject to inspection by Ofsted and in some cases this will lead to extra input from the inspectorate.

Governing bodies will be expected to review their capacity to act as a *critical friend* to school leadership and act on their findings. Understanding and application of effective governance will make a significant contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people.

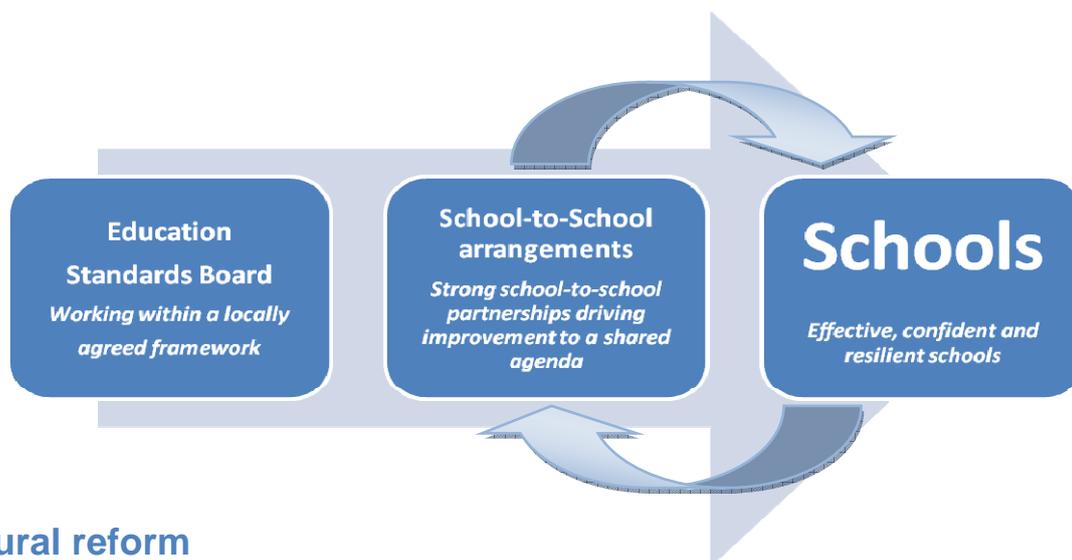
The largest source of school improvement capacity will be through school-to-school arrangements. There will be an unrelenting focus on developing the core business of teaching and learning. At the systems level, there will be a continued offer for schools to form into Learning Networks, a commitment to support the phase consortia and locality working. As a strategic partner to the local Teaching School Alliance, the local authority will commit resources to supporting the alliance to reach maturity. The local authority will ensure that it has an understanding of all schools and academies in the local area and will increasingly position its resources to be able to broker and facilitate school-to-school support. This will involve having a detailed knowledge of the sources of support, including other local schools, peer leaders, Specialist Leaders of Education, Local Leaders of Education, National Leaders of Education and academy sponsors. A shared understanding of quality will help schools to consistently evaluate the effectiveness of school improvement providers.

The Local Authority will establish an **Education Standards Board** to provide the local framework of accountability and invite partners from the Headteacher Consortia, Ofsted, Department for Education, Schools Forum, Dioceses and academy sponsors, along with governor representation. This recognises that the accountability for overall education standards and outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people is owned collectively, not by any single organisation or agency. The expected outcomes of the Education Standards Board will be:

1. **A collegiate and coordinated approach to improving education outcomes** within a diverse education system
2. **Open and professional engagement** between local schools, academies and academy sponsors, and with local government and the agencies of national government
3. **Enabling cultures for partnerships and alliances** as the building blocks of a self-improving system
4. Early support, challenge and intervention for all schools and academies to address causes of underperformance – **mitigating the risk of formal failure**
5. **Quick turnarounds** for any school or academy that does become inadequate
6. A coordinated approach to ensuring high quality outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people – **sustaining the North Lincolnshire culture of inclusive practices** and cooperation within the schools' sector for vulnerable children
7. Long term stability within the education sector – supporting **strong, sustainable schools for the future**

The local approach to school improvement

- Effective, confident, resilient schools and academies working within a locally agreed school improvement framework
- Strong school-to-school partnerships driving improvements to a shared agenda



Structural reform

Governors will be encouraged to make strong decisions for the long term future of their school. High quality analysis of the likely impact of any structural change on the viability and effectiveness of their school and the contribution to area wide education provision will be carefully considered.

The Local Authority's position is to support schools to choose a designation that best ensures the long term delivery of high quality outcomes for children and young people. Where there is evidence that schools are providing a high quality learning experience or are on a strong upward trajectory, the Local Authority will continue to support governors to remain as a maintained school or to convert to academy status. Where schools and academies cannot demonstrate the capacity to improve swiftly enough, or the viability of the school prevents a risk to providing a high quality education, the local authority will expect governors to seek a structural solution.

Structural solutions may include; federation with a strong school, formation of an 'umbrella trust', amalgamation, conversion with an academy sponsor, or in exceptional cases - closure. Where schools are already academies, the local authority will liaise with governors, trustees and the Department for Education. Local solutions will be encouraged and groups of schools supported to build themselves into stronger organisational models, such as trust arrangements.



Further details for Primary Schools can be found in the document: Framework for developing a sustainable primary school estate.

True to the mantra of **All our Children**, the Local Authority will support, challenge and intervene with all schools and settings educating North Lincolnshire children and young people regardless of designation.

Appendix A – Overview of activity for September 2013 to August 2015

We will focus our efforts on three main driving forces:

- creating an enabling **culture**
- developing area wide capacity for **school improvement**
- embracing **structural reform**

Creating an enabling culture	
ACTIONS:	LA LEAD
Consult stakeholders on the 'Education Strategy for Schools' and seek Council approval through the democratic processes	Pete Thorpe
Establish the Education Standards Board	Pete Thorpe
Transform the Behaviour & Attendance Partnership to create an Education Inclusion Partnership and develop a North Lincolnshire Inclusion Charter Mark	Darren Chaplin
Develop the Education and Economic Engagement Partnership as governance for the work streams on raising aspiration, employability skills, apprenticeships and raising participation age	Pete Thorpe
Work with post-16 providers to ensure sufficiency of places and breadth of offer to meet the Raising Participation Age requirements	Julie Lane
Develop approaches for intervening earlier with children and young people at risk of becoming Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)	Darren Chaplin
Further develop schools' oversight of the Fair Access Protocols	Steve Piper
Roll out the Imagination Library to all 0-5 year olds within North Lincolnshire	Sandra Simmons
Embed the local partnership for Initial Teacher Training	Kim Francis
Develop Educational and Cultural partnership working with the Music and Arts Education Hub	Erica Hardy
Develop a systematic approach to schools sharing their strengths and areas for development	Tina Page
Undertake peer review of local authority school improvement functions	Pete Thorpe
Develop ongoing stakeholder evaluation of the effectiveness of Local Authority school improvement functions, and impact of statutory powers of intervention	Tina Page
Develop partnership work with North Lincolnshire Association of Governing Bodies	Pete Thorpe
Introduce a safeguarding audit to support governors in discharging their statutory duties	Tina Page
Support Schools Forum in evaluating the impact and value for money of School Improvement Partners and Learning Networks	Tina Page
Evolve local authority services beyond reliance on de-delegated schools funding where this creates efficiencies and equity	Pete Thorpe
Provide regularly reporting of education standards through the democratic processes	Pete Thorpe
Further develop the partnership delivering Better Education for Children in Care	Julie Frost

Enhancing area wide capacity for school improvement	
ACTIONS:	LA LEAD
Support the Primary Consortium in implementing the Primary Improvement Vision	Tina Page
Support the North Lincolnshire Teaching School Alliance to maturity	Sandra Simmons
Embed the Graduated Approach to School Improvement	Tina Page
Develop the universal School Improvement Partner offer	Tina Page
Embed the Learning Networks offer, under the strategic oversight of schools	Sandra Simmons
Develop a Peer Leader Programme to provide capacity for school-to-school working	Sandra Simmons
Develop an Aspiring School Leaders programme	Sandra Simmons
Develop a Securing Good programme for schools judged to Require Improvement	Tina Page
Deliver a Narrowing the Gaps action plan	Tina Page
Redesign the traded school improvement and training offer to schools	Sandra Simmons
Redesign the professional development offer for Governors	Steve Piper
Further develop data tools to support school and area wide evaluation of performance and targeting of resources	Tina Page
Introduce quality standards to support schools in evaluating and sharing the effectiveness of school improvement support	Tina Page

Embracing structural reform	
ACTIONS:	LA LEAD
Deliver the Framework for developing a Sustainable Primary School Estate	Becky McIntyre
Support governing bodies to identify potential structural solutions to entrenched underperformance or viability issues; or, where a formalised collaborative arrangement has the potential to accelerate improvement	Pete Thorpe
Support successful schools and academies to become 'sponsoring academies', creating local multi-academy trust arrangements	Pete Thorpe
Develop an area wide plan for extending post-16 provision for young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities	Julie Lane
Forecast future demand for special school places on a sub-regional basis and ensure sufficient high quality local provision for complex needs	Darren Chaplin
Forecast demand for school places and engage schools in sufficiency planning	Sandra Burniston
Deliver the Schools Capital Investment programme, including Priority Schools Programme	Sandra Burniston