

CABINET

DATE	15 th June 2022
REPORT OF	Councillor Margaret Cracknell - Portfolio Holder for Children and Education
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Joanne Hewson, Director of Children's Services
SUBJECT	Education and Inclusion Strategy
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 06/22/02

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Our ambition for North East Lincolnshire (NEL) is that all of our Children and Young People are healthy, resilient, safe and are supported to achieve in school & reach their full potential.

The creation of an Education and Inclusion Strategy (EIS), along with a key set of priorities is a fundamental building block in the delivery of the Council's aims and objectives and statutory functions, specifically those related to skills and educational achievement and attainment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the Education and Inclusion Strategy (at appendix 1), its key priorities and its contribution towards the Council's aims and objectives.
2. Delegates authority the Director of Children's Services to discharge their statutory duty through the delivery of the Education and Inclusion Strategy and its key priorities with appropriate consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The Council has a duty under the Education Act, and the recently published Schools White Paper and Special Education Needs Green Paper, to effectively plan, manage and deliver a range of statutory functions and activities across the Borough.

The Education and Inclusion Strategy clearly outlines the Council's future role and priorities in respect of skills and educational achievement for the children and young people within its Borough.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The Local Authority has not refreshed its Education Strategy since 2016, the new Education and Inclusion Strategy aims to provide a clear strategic direction for the Local Authority, by outlining its statutory duties, its role with education

providers and its role within the Local and National Education context.

- 1.2 NEL has a high number of education providers across a range of setting types - private, voluntary, independent early years providers, single academy trusts and those who are part of a multi-academy trust.
- 1.3 Currently only a small number of school settings (10%) remain maintained by the Local Authority. The remaining schools in NEL are all academies.
- 1.4 The Education and Inclusion Strategies main purpose is to provide clarity on the new Local Authority education role within the Borough – emphasising the need to balance the delivery of our statutory duties whilst endeavouring to act as a broker for service delivery across education settings and partnerships.
- 1.5 The high level of academisation within the Borough, requires the Local Authority, if it is to be effective, to adjust its position and role in the provision of education and services. The Local Authority needs to work towards becoming an enabler and facilitator of change, fostering positive relationships with our education providers and all of our schools (academies and maintained) if we are to achieve the best outcomes for learners collectively.
- 1.6 The Local Authority is aspirational for its learners but also recognises that for improvements in attainment and achievements to be delivered it cannot do it on its own, it must work in partnership with all education settings in the Borough. The EIS sets out the Local Authorities commitment to this new approach, via its six key priorities for change.
- 1.7 The Local Authority will also be required to plan and manage the very recent changes and aspirations outlined in the Schools White Paper (adopted nationally) and the Special Education Needs Green Paper (currently subject in national consultation). The EIS provides a mechanism for the Local Authority to develop plans alongside partners to meet these new challenges.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The lack of an up-to-date Education and Inclusion Strategy presents a risk to the Local Authority; the Local Authority has a statutory duty to discharge a range of key functions across all education settings. A refreshed strategy mitigates any likely future risk.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Doing nothing. Not having an up-to-date Education and Inclusion Strategy is not an option given the Local Authorities responsibilities, and particularly its duty in respect of protecting the vulnerable and ensuring all learners have access to a suitable school place.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

The positive benefit to the Council's reputation will be to clearly define its role within Education locally and nationally.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no known additional financial implications from adopting the Education and Inclusion Strategy. The Education and Inclusion Service has an allocated budget and brokers funding between itself, the Department for Education, and schools, all of which is based on a clear financial formula.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

The Education and Inclusion Strategy provides a clear direction for the Local Authority to help children and young people in respect of their education experience, through Schools. This also includes a clear statutory duty to safeguard and ensure all learners can access learning.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

The Education and Inclusion Strategy will follow the democratic process in respect of Scrutiny.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is recommending the adoption of the Education and Inclusion Strategy and as such there are no direct financial consequences arising from the report. Actions and objectives contained within the report may have resourcing implications but where this is the case these should be able to be met from the existing service budget allocation.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. As mentioned in the above report the Council is statutorily required to set out its vision and strategy for delivering its key strategic ambition for children and young people in terms of education provision. This timely strategy will underpin such delivery.

10.2. The recommendations sought are appropriate.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

All wards are potentially affected as the school estate serves the entire borough

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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COUNCILLOR MARGARET CRACKNELL

PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION



North East Lincolnshire Council Education and Inclusion Strategy 2022-25



1. INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT AND AIMS

North East Lincolnshire Council wants all of its residents to benefit from a stronger economy and live within strong communities. Our approach is to do everything we can to support our children and young people to achieve a better quality of life, to be ready for school, college and work, be able to live long and healthy lives, to have good jobs that people aspire to work in and engage in lifelong learning.

In doing this we want to ensure that all of our children and young people achieve their best educational potential by accessing and attending good or outstanding local schools, academies, colleges and other education establishments. This will ensure that we develop our children and young people into confident citizens who will be able to benefit from local opportunities, have opportunity to access lifelong learning opportunities, and be ready to play an active role in the local economy and the community.

This document sets out North East Lincolnshire Council's strategic vision for learning and education in the context of a changing educational landscape. In this area, we have been at the forefront of change with the increased autonomy of schools, academies and colleges and their new roles in education. We will continue to develop partnerships with schools in order to achieve positive outcomes for all our children.

North East Lincolnshire Council is committed to working in ways that encourage all schools, academies and colleges to make best use of their autonomy to lead their own improvement. The Council exercises a range of roles and responsibilities with a growing mix of education providers and wants all schools, academies and colleges to exercise their choices and freedoms to the benefit of all children, young people, their families and the wider community, collaborating and creating networks and partnerships that are mutually supportive.

All of our learning establishments are vital stakeholders within our communities. They provide not only learning environments, but are critical spaces for the development of life skills and the forming of relationships. These establishments are the centre of our communities for families and partners alike, and provide opportunities, together, to work with our learners to provide them with the best possible outcomes.

Our goal is to work in partnership on a collective vision to:

- Proactively build positive relationships through an ethos of respect, openness and trust and put schools at the centre of our community.
- Embrace collective responsibility for improving life chances by working Together for All.
- Develop and champion outstanding education opportunities for all children, young people and families, importantly, making sure we understand and meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people at risk.
- Secure high quality provision within the Borough, to enhance local opportunities and promote equalities.
- Develop system-wide school-led improvement, working closely with key partners.
- Work collaboratively across the Borough to promote, protect and improve our children and young people's mental and physical health and wellbeing, recognising that this underpins the ability for us to achieve all other priorities.

The Education Strategy will enable North East Lincolnshire to better define its future role with partners, education settings and other provision and services over the next three years. Our role will be to work together to facilitate positive relationships with all partners whilst working collaboratively to advocate for our local children and families, providing high quality education provision for every learner, where they can access the right support at the right time.



The Local Learning Context:

North East Lincolnshire has a high number of education providers across a range of setting types - private, voluntary and independent early years providers, single academy trusts or are part of a multi-academy trust. We currently have 8 primary schools and 2 nurseries that remain maintained by the Local Authority.

Despite North East Lincolnshire being one of the most deprived local authorities in the country (20th out of 326, IMD 2019), our schools perform well:

- 85% of pupils attend a school judged Good or Outstanding, which is in line with national.
- 100% of our nursery schools are judged Good or Outstanding, which is above national, and
- 100% of our Pupil Referral Units are judged Good or Outstanding, which is well above national (85%).

Our aspiration is for all of our education settings to be Ofsted rated Good or Outstanding by 2023.

In 2019, our secondary mainstream academies (excluding special schools and independent schools) achieved an average Progress 8 score of +0.23 at the end of Key Stage 4, compared to England State-Funded Schools at -0.03.

Within our school aged settings, we have an average rolling pupil admission of 24,500, of which, 7,100 children and young people are classified as disadvantaged and in receipt of Free School Meals. Following COVID, locally there has been a 10% rise in the number of children receiving free school meals, with the pandemic having major impact on the education, safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Over the last five years, North East Lincolnshire has had a significant increase in the number of children and young people receiving an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). In addition to this, there has been a steady rise in the number of children and young people coming into care.

Cases of Elective Home Education have risen locally from 141 in March 2020 to 232 in May 2021, an increase of 91 children and young people over the last year.

Whilst the vast majority of young people leaving year 11 make a successful transition into a positive destination, be that further education, training or employment, as they get older, a number disengage from provision. It is also worth noting that, since 2017, there has been a year on year increase in the number of school leavers who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) at the time of the destination reporting.



Image: Children at school learning using computers

North East Lincolnshire, Our Borough in Context:



Total population
159,826



2015 - 2019 population of Children and Young People aged **0 to 19** decreased by **0.6%**



Significant differences between most deprived wards most affluent re the proportion of children in poverty



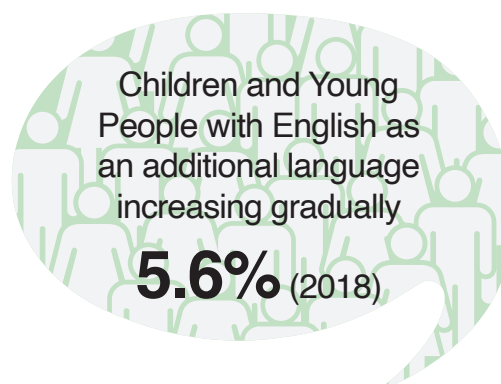
20th most deprived out of **326** local authority areas (Indices of Deprivation 2019)

Children and Young People under 18 years

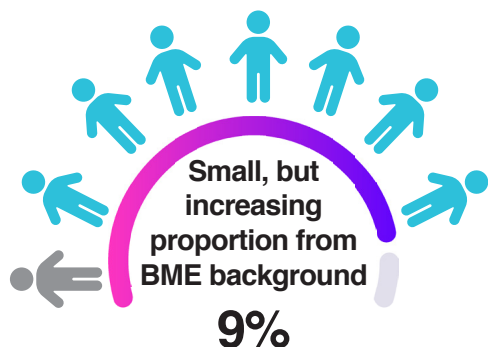
37,614 / **23.5%** of the total population



50.7% female **49.3%** male



26% children living in poverty compared to **17%** nationally (2016)



National figures **33.9%** - primary, **32.3%** secondary)



2015-2019 the annual number of births decreased by **13%**.

Free school meals

17.4% (Y1 to 11).



primary schools **15.7%**
national average **13.7%**
secondary schools **14.9%**
national average is **12.4%**



Image: Children working on arts and crafts with teacher

National context for learning:

COVID has had a significant impact on the education sector in terms of lost learning, mental health, attainment and progress, and employment opportunities. In particular, vulnerable groups who have traditionally struggled within education, lacked aspiration and have had limited training and employment opportunities have been affected. Whilst there is still some uncertainty as to the full extent of the impact of COVID, this will significantly impact upon how the Education Strategy is implemented and achieved. The government catch up programme has been provided directly to schools to ensure that they can implement recovery plans.

- There has been no statutory assessment data since 2019.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals has risen by 5% nationally over the last year.
- There has been a steady rise in the number of children receiving Education Health and Care Plans, and nationally 3.4% of the school population are in receipt of one.
- The number of families choosing to electively home educate their children has risen over the last 18 months.
- Mental health services have seen huge increases in the numbers of children and adults in need of their support.



Image: Teenager in discussion with support worker

2. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

This strategy supports the overall aims of the Council Plan to achieve a Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities in North East Lincolnshire. North East Lincolnshire Council has three core statutory educational responsibilities, which we will meet as detailed below each responsibility:

To support vulnerable children

- Expect all schools, academies and colleges to provide access and inclusion to vulnerable children and young people so that they achieve their potential.
- Provide a strategic focus on the most vulnerable children and young people at risk.
- Promote good practice in respect of safeguarding all of our children and young people.
- In partnership with a range of stakeholders including health and social care to implement the new special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms and raise achievement for children and young people with SEND.
- Maintain Operation Encompass to support young people experiencing domestic abuse.

To ensure sufficient supply of school places

- Employ a robust and fair system to ensure a sufficient supply of school places. Where additional places are needed, new providers will be brought-in to increase choice.
- Determine the strategic planning of school places in North East Lincolnshire.
- Promote shared accountability and provide the opportunity for solution focussed discussions on school place planning related issues (including advice, support, direction etc. from internal / external parties as and when required).
- Ensure that all settings are clear about their accountability for North East Lincolnshire's learners and equity of access to a good education.
- Consider all requests from individual schools and academies.
- Review priorities in response to changes to legislation, national / local policies and guidance.

To work together on underperformance in schools and settings and ensure high standards

- Provide and facilitate strategic leadership based on commissioning, brokerage and championing children and families.
- Engage with schools, academies and colleges in the development of local education policy.
- Encourage a range of collaborative educational partnerships to work collectively to improve outcomes for all children and young people.
- Promote system-wide resources such as National Leaders of Education, Local Leaders of Education and Teaching School Hubs.
- Encourage development between schools, academies, colleges and local businesses.
- Be transparent about the statutory powers and other mechanisms that we will use to ensure that underperformance or inequity is addressed.
- Support the UK Youth Parliament national campaign to have a 'curriculum that prepares young people for life.'



3. PROVIDER AND COMMISSIONER ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the Local Authority providing a range of services to schools and the commissioning of school improvement, special educational needs and inclusion services, it also has a statutory duty and responsibility for the following activity:

Place Planning	Funding schools
Facilitating fair access	Ensuring attendance
High Needs and alternative provision	Statutory and regulatory functions
Funding school transport	Monitoring national curriculum assessment
Asset management	Supporting school improvement
Therapies and other health related service	Central support services
Premature retirement costs/redundancy costs	

To undertake our statutory responsibilities effectively, we will:

- Commission school places and specialist provision from schools and other educational providers using robust accountability frameworks.
- Encourage successful schools / academies and school leaders to provide school improvement services to one another and foster a culture of self-help and partnership across all settings.
- Deliver high quality, cost effective services to ensure statutory responsibilities for individual learners are met regardless of their educational setting.
- Raise concerns in an honest and transparent way directly with maintained schools, academies, colleges and other providers and provide brokerage for partnership working and where underperformance is identified.
- Secure a local and sustainable school improvement and SEND and inclusion service offer for all schools and academies to access / purchase and commission specialist provision and expertise for children with SEND.

In an autonomous education system, the Local Authority's core responsibilities are heavily dependent upon and in turn impact upon the work of all schools, academies and colleges.

As either officers or elected members, we are all proud of our diverse educational landscape where schools, academies and colleges are progressively more autonomous. This also means to achieve good outcomes we need shared responsibility, and it is essential that the Council works collaboratively with all of our schools, academies and colleges to achieve this.

We are confident of the benefits of a more diverse educational offer and are committed to enabling all providers to work together for the benefit of all of our children and young people.

Our vision is one of collective responsibility for the benefit of all of North East Lincolnshire's learners. In this respect, we recognise that the emergence of new provisions such as free schools challenges our existing providers whilst offering more choice to families.

For North East Lincolnshire's maintained schools, we will also:

- Create links to innovative practice across the borough.
- Facilitate educational dialogue with head teachers, governors, teachers and support staff of maintained schools.
- Support the recruitment and retention of high quality staff.
- Promote career development through collaboration and systems leadership.
- Manage the collective resources of maintained schools and de-delegated funds fairly and transparently on behalf of schools.



4. OUR SIX PRIORITY AREAS

In addition to our core responsibilities, we will also work collaboratively to underpin this by a set of six key priority areas of focus:

1	Attainment & Progress	Raise attainment and close the attainment gaps between key pupil groups across all key phases and key stages, ensuring that all children and young people are able and confident to access good or outstanding local education provision to meet the needs of our families.
2	Capacity Development	See all our schools as good or outstanding. Support each education provider to ensure recruitment, retention, and training to ensure highly skilled staff across all key phases.
3	Inclusion & SEND	Commission and secure high quality alternative provision which includes a mainstream offer, and implement a vision for SEND that ensures all children and young people have equitable access to a great education.
4	Employability & Skills	Ensure all children and young people have access to high quality careers, information, advice and guidance, which includes bespoke education and skills pathways, working with partners in the public and private sector to unlock opportunity for, and meet employment needs of, young people. Work in partnership with local businesses and organisations to support all young people to have the opportunity to become economically independent, productive citizens and fulfil their aspirations.
5	Wellbeing, Safety & Pupil Support	Promotion of an inclusive approach to education, creating improved mental and physical health as well as providing environments that nurture healthy emotional and social relationships and behaviours within the communities.
6	Rigour & Partnership	Work in partnership with education providers to develop relationships which will allow us to be the constant critical friend, regularly applying data and information to support and challenge in order to ensure that problems are never a surprise, that our practice stands up to scrutiny and that we are always Ofsted ready.



Image: Students using the electronic interactive screens in classroom

5. OUR COMMITMENT

- Provide strategic local leadership and development of an increasingly autonomous and diverse education.
- Ensure the safeguarding of children is at the heart of all partners' decision making and planning.
- Work with partners to promote prevention, early identification and intervention so concerns are collectively addressed in a timely manner.
- Advocate for the interests of children, young people, parents and families and work with local communities to stimulate and support a diverse education and skills/employment provision that meets local needs.
- Provide opportunities for co-production, working with local families, children and young people, listening to their voice, informing delivery.
- Work with head teachers, principals, school governors and academy sponsors to promote educational excellence for all children and young people and be ambitious in tackling under performance.
- Work with Careers Leaders in our local academies in order to promote local and exciting regeneration and economic opportunities, ensuring that they are well equipped and ready to respond with up to date local intelligence to support students' career planning.



Image: Students talking

6. OUR KEY PRINCIPLES

- Education is the driver for improvement and the Council is an enabler of educational improvement and effectiveness.
- Education providers are self-managing and autonomous institutions working with local and national context and they are responsible for their own performance.
- The role of the Local Authority is to commission or broker support for education providers and to intervene should provision and high-quality outcomes for children and young people be compromised.
- The role of the Local Authority is to encourage and support regular attendance from all children of statutory school age in order for them to achieve positive outcomes.
- Where we identify concerns, we aim to broker improvement to prevent education establishments falling into an Ofsted category of Requires Improvement or Inadequate.
- Education providers will be supported and positively challenged to continue and sustain improvement both in attainment and the rate of progress of our children and young people.
- Learning must be personalised, and partners will work together to narrow the attainment gap for all, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.
- All children and young people must have the support they need to overcome any barriers to their learning and wellbeing and to achieve the highest possible standards and post 16/ 18 destinations.
- Children and young people in the Local Authority will have access to the widest range of educational and skills opportunities and guidance in order to meet their interests, aspirations and needs, and will be able to benefit from the growth in the area which will include extending to pupils aged 19-25 with special educational needs and/ or disabilities.
- All children and young people need access to a range of opportunities, which enable them to access support when required, this includes supporting with their physical and emotional wellbeing.





Image: Students learning in classroom

7. THE PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY

We will:

- Have a fully embedded partnership model which includes all stakeholders in practice.
- Be known for our ability to work in a supportive and challenging way delivering on commitments and dealing with issues regardless of how hard they present themselves.
- Operate within budget with fully developed business areas that are recognised for quality and provision nationally.
- Increase capacity for alternative and specialist provision in the community.
- Share performance data and use the analysis of it to improve outcomes for children and young people. We will work together as one community for the benefit and ongoing improvement of all educational establishments in the borough.
- Manage capacity to ensure local children can access education provision, be included and be a part of our local community.
- Have a vibrant 'workplace recruitment and retention' model to attract and retain highly skilled staff.
- Work in collaboration early to identify and support children and their families, accessing additional support to flourish in the educational provision of their choice, whilst improving inclusive practice with education providers.
- Have a reduction in NEETS, and increased numbers of apprenticeships and opportunities for all children and young people to reach their full potential and live an independent life.



Image: Students arriving for the school day

8. CONCLUSION

North East Lincolnshire Council is committed to improving education for all children and young people. We believe that this is an achievable vision through building collaborative partnerships with maintained schools, academies and colleges. We are committed to our role as champion for children and young people and families and aim to discharge our statutory responsibilities to the highest standard.

We see education as being a high priority, as the success of all of our children and young people will directly impact on the future employability and wellbeing of North East Lincolnshire's citizens.





Image: Student using IT equipment in class





North East Lincolnshire Council
Education and Inclusion Strategy
2022-25