



Northumberland County Council

Family & Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee

7 December 2023

Education, SEND & Skills Annual Report 2022-23

Report of Councillor(s) Guy Renner Thomson, Cabinet Member for Inspiring Young People

Responsible Officer(s): Audrey Kingham, Executive Director for Children, Young People & Education

1. Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan

1.1 Tackling inequalities-

Help improve the quality of early years' settings, schools and other providers, so that all children and young people, no matter their circumstances or educational need, have access to education as close to their home communities as possible and achieve the best educational outcomes.

1.2 Economic growth-

- a) Develop the vocational education offer to provide clear pathways into apprenticeships, further education, higher education, and employment for all our young people and adults. We will do this by producing clear guidance for schools and settings on what good careers advice looks like, developing a curriculum and facilities which both support the ambition of learners and link to the workforce requirements for Northumberland. This will ensure all young people are supported to achieve their aspirations.
- b) Deliver skills and training for residents that meets their ambitions and supports the economy through greater links between learning pathways and opportunities in the economy, building on key relationships between education & industry
- c) Through providing accessible programmes to engage residents and support them to move closer to training or work to tackle inequalities, improve individuals' life chances and support the economy.

2. Purpose of report

The Annual Report 2022-23 highlights actions and progress against the key priorities for Education, SEND and Skills 22-24

3. Recommendations

FACS is recommended to:

1) Agree that Members provide scrutiny and challenge to the service responses and developments detailed in the Education, SEND and Skills Annual Report for 22-23 as appropriate.

2) Agree that Members receive and review the annual report and recognise the performance given the continued challenges in bouncing back from the impact of the pandemic.

3) Consider the education achievements of our children, young people and residents across Northumberland in 2022/23.

4) Consider the valuable support provided to all learners within:

- Early Years Settings and Schools
- Special Education Needs support and service
- Virtual School
- Learning and Skills Service
- School Organisation and Resources

4. Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable

27.7.23

5. Background

5.1 The Annual Report 2022/2023 shares the successes and significant levels of resilience that our children and young people as well as our workforce have shown throughout the year. Our schools, skills and college have adapted learning environments to be able to support many of our children and young people's needs as we live and work within increasing levels of need and challenging budgets.

5.2 The impact of the pandemic on children and their families has proved to be more significant in the North East than other areas of the country and this is reflected in Northumberland. Adaptations have been necessary not just because many pupils have missed out on learning, but also because many have missed out socially, got out of the routine of coming to school or are struggling with their mental health, very simply, more of our young people are struggling in education.

5.3 We know that many children find a school environment challenging and the work in schools supported by Northumberland Education and Skills team is significant to support continuing the education journey. Whilst many children are enjoying their journey and progress very well, the extent of the work to close gaps is still a challenge, especially for disadvantaged pupils who continue to attain below their peers.

5.4 The growth in Special Educational Needs has been and continues to be significant. Schools and settings are meeting higher needs with higher frequency.

5.5 Working with our schools and partners to support the ambition, transition and development of all of our children, young people and residents to their next stage of education, employment and life with all of the challenges that cross their paths is a privileged role that is embraced and celebrated by the whole workforce.

6. Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations

Members may take the opportunity to direct Education, SEND and Skills key priorities for 23-25

7. Implications

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| Policy | The actions set out in this report support the vision and values of the Council's Corporate Plan. All Department for Education (DFE) / Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) policies and guidance are reviewed, interpreted and shared. |
| Finance and value for money | All budgets and decisions conform to expected DFE / ESFA funding requirements |
| Legal | Northumberland County Council has statutory responsibilities with schools and academies as well as colleges and post 16 providers. The statutory responsibilities are clearly defined |

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| | within policy and priorities for Education and Skills; within specific officer roles and also within the Board structures that engage with schools and academies and wider stakeholders to engage and to assure that all statutory duties are met. Formal reporting routines are embedded across the corporate calendar to ensure oversight and decision making is clear. The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council. |
| Procurement | None |
| Human resources | None |
| Property | Schools have delegated responsibility for buildings |
| The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached? | NA |
| Risk assessment | All schools and staff have individual risk assessments. All sites are risk assessed. All Schools and Skills sites are HS risk assessed. Skills sites undertake reviews routinely as well as spot checks on premises to ensure routines and expectations are being followed. |
| Crime and disorder | The report has considered Section 1 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it |
| Customer considerations | Service plans and systems are approached from the pupil/family/customer perspective. All learner facing approaches include the learner/ customer journey to improve satisfaction |
| Carbon reduction | The increase use of digital meeting spaces has reduced the travel and carbon footprint in 2022/23 |
| Health and wellbeing | Staff well-being is of high importance. Systems such as Kooth and Qwell are in place to support pupils and staff as well as bespoke arrangements to meet the needs of particular circumstances. |
| Wards | (All Wards); |

8. Background papers

Education, SEND and Skills Annual Report 2022-23

9. Links to other key reports already published

NA

10. Author and Contact Details

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