

Improving Skills Attainment In West Norfolk



Briefing Note

Our intended result is that In West Norfolk people maximise their potential.

We specifically want our young people to leave school equipped with the skills they need to progress smoothly to the next stage of their life – be it employment, an apprenticeship or further study. We are targeting all young people in West Norfolk (there are approximately 1,700 in each school year in West Norfolk)

Partners We are working with the ten high schools in West Norfolk, the College of West Anglia, a number of primary schools in our more deprived areas and representatives from Norfolk County Council. Other public sector organisations have a role to play such as the police, and they are engaged through a wider public-sector partnership. We are also exploring the benefits of engaging local businesses in this work.

The data We have looked at the collective achievements of young people in West Norfolk (by area not by school). Performance for West Norfolk falls behind all other districts in Norfolk as well as being below national averages. In addition pupils are not leaving school having reached the attainment levels expected of them when they started.

Story behind the data West Norfolk has lagged behind most areas on most measures of skills and qualifications for as long as most of us can remember and things are getting worse. But that's not a reason to label the issue as 'too difficult' and it's every reason to try something different. This is an issue for all who live and work in West Norfolk not just for the schools or those with children.

Actions We are developing a number of actions across four work-streams. Progress against these is summarised below.

Leadership work-stream

What do we need to do?

- Leaders (Heads and senior leadership team) to learn from and implement plans successfully used by others
- Improve the management skills of middle leaders for consistency and excellence
- Inspire staff and students

How will we do this?

1. Master class and action planning
 - 18th May – participation in NASH cascade of visits to schools
 - 19th June - places booked for national Achievement Show at Emirates to learn from best practice and inform our work
 - 2nd July – Implement cascade to WASH senior leadership teams, at PDC
 - June / July - series of best practice visits to be confirmed and booked
 - Organise coaching & mentoring support from July onwards

- Data workshops to be organised as part of an on-going programme over a two year period to help share and implement good practice. First one to be held on 28th June (INSET day)
 - Organise a series of governor workshops on modern structures and holding schools to account
2. CPD and coaching opportunities
 - Investigate Specialist Leader for Education costs and how to book
 - Performance management training for middle and subject managers
 - OFSTED training - being confident about evidencing and not afraid of judgments
 - Use of data
 - Organise value for money seminars
 - Purchase and disseminate learning from James Reed - 'Put your mindset to work'
 3. Inspirational speakers and action plans
 - Source a guest speaker to provide talk/evidence to Heads on the value of IAG in improving attainment rates
 - Put on a series of seminars from world class motivators

Curriculum work-stream

What do we need to do?

- Implement plans successfully to meet the needs of all stakeholders
- Raise standards in English at GCSE to meet individual school difficulties
- Improve literacy across the curriculum

How will we do this?

1. CPD and coaching opportunities for non-specialist English teachers
 - Provide intensive CPD support for two English departments for non-specialist teachers as identified by the schools over a period of ten weeks.
2. CPD for all teachers regarding literacy across the curriculum
 - Provide seven twilight sessions of 1 ½ hrs for up to three staff per week from all ten schools to develop literacy across the curriculum., started 25th April 2012
3. Specific school interventions
 - Specialist English adviser to establish action plan and embed improvements in the English dept.
 - Focus on marking and assessment procedures to ensure consistency and best practice is available to all schools.
4. Curriculum planning to raise standards at GCSE.
 - LA adviser and specialist English adviser to facilitate workshop session to establish teacher forums for English/ Literacy
 - LA adviser and specialist maths adviser to facilitate workshop session to establish teacher forums for maths
 - CWA to host a number of Saturday sessions(s) to focus on maths and English with identified group.

Aspirations and options work-stream

What do we need to do?

- Raise the aspirations of young people, their parents and teachers in West Norfolk
- Expand the awareness of the role of good quality IAG and employer engagement in raising attainment
- Improve the knowledge of the local labour market by those who advise young people
- Ensure young people understand the whole range of education, training and employment options available

How will we do this?

1. Growing ambitions – improving the provision of careers information, advice and guidance in years 8-9
 - Series of career specific events – focus on priority employment sectors in WN (to replace progression event). Showcase of opportunities, students to use session to ‘find out’ about careers (inc some hands on) and routes into those careers. Employers to emphasis skills needed for work
 - Hold an employer challenge with a celebration event as the culmination – could have STEM and /or literacy focus (perhaps one each year). Target group – coasting years 8-9.
 - Employer matched to school and mentors group through challenge
 - Develop employer school relationships – employer sponsorship by mentoring, visits, work exp, talks, activities – 1-2 employers per school – building on other events above
2. Improving attainment – IAG as a powerful tool
 - Possible focussed use of Plan It (or something similar) – web based individual learning and career plan for young people who are within the A4A target group, to see if it aids aspiration
 - Training for IAG and other staff on routes through 16-18 and beyond, including apprenticeships, HE and employment (inc Labour Market Intelligence (LMI), both WN specific and further afield). Training to include developing excellent IAG skills amongst teaching staff
 - Visit other areas who demonstrate effective IAG within school as CPD for WN IAG staff – both senior and practitioner. Themes could be; whole school approach, innovative information sources, STEM focussed careers curriculum
3. Success in West Norfolk - turn up the volume
 - Develop a 2 year campaign to promote achievement and excellence focussing on WN young people, inc attendance at awards/celebration events, press coverage, use of social media
 - Alumni programme developed (Future first?) with individual schools
4. Social media – communicating the message effectively
 - Investigate facebook, twitter, apps and other forms of ‘new media’ as different means of communicating with young people

Achievement for all work-stream

What do we need to do?

Embed the national Achievement for All programme in West Norfolk through the high schools and selected primary schools. This is a tailored school improvement framework that

- Increases progress of children in schools
- Improves engagement of their parents with the school
- Improves the wider outcomes of children

How will we do this?

- Allocation of achievement coaches to work with the West Norfolk schools (by May)
- Achievement Coach and School Champion do the needs analysis, which helps to tailor the AfA activity to address the needs of each school (May/June)
- Grouping of the schools into networks so that practice can be shared across schools (May/June)
- Staff training sessions that need to be diarised by each school and identifying opportunities for sharing some of those sessions (June/July)

Business engagement work-stream

What do we need to do?

- Identify opportunities to engage with local businesses across this programme of work
- Discuss these opportunities with businesses to develop a co-ordinated approach across all schools that focuses business input where it is most needed

How will we do this?

- 23rd May – running a business engagement seminar. Over 80 local businesses have been invited and major public sector employers will also be invited. 3-4.30pm at the Borough Council Offices, King's Lynn.

Other issues

There are a number of issues that have been identified and are currently 'parked' whilst we progress the workstreams above. As we make progress in this work they may come on to the agenda. Issues include restructuring support, potential use of Alderman Jackson school; level of SEN provision in West Norfolk; sharing strong teachers / departments; joining-up post-16 provision; PGCE provision in West Norfolk; academies and federations.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The steering group will report to the WNP Strategy Group on progress including spend against budget. This process is supported by the partnership team at the Borough Council. In addition it is considered necessary to bring some robust evaluation alongside this programme of work to provide an independent assessment of impact and value for money. Both the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Young Foundation have been approached for assistance with this work.

Budget

The partnership has already allocated £200k to support this programme of work over a two-year period. On the back of this Norfolk County Council have also allocated £100k which is specifically to fund the Achievement for All programme in the non-academy schools.

Steering Group

This work is overseen by a steering group which reports to the WNP strategy group. It's members are:

Ray Harding, Debbie Gates, Ian Burbidge (Borough Council), David Pomfret (CWA), Trish Judson, Betsy Fowler (NCC), Jill Frances (consultant) with head teacher input from Andy Johnson (Springwood High) and Lee Stevens (Whitefriars Primary)

Further information

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