

**Report of: The Director of Children's Services**

**Report to: Children's Services Scrutiny Board**

**Date: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

**Subject: Best City for Learning Strategy**



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### Summary of main issues

1. The Draft Best City for Learning Strategy outlines the four year plan for improving learning in Leeds from 2016-2020
2. The strategy outlines where Leeds currently is as a city, where it aims to be and how it plans to get there
3. The seven key priorities in the strategy were identified through the Big Education Debate events held throughout the city from September to November last year. Councillors, Principals, Headteachers, businesses, officers and education specialists and other stakeholders all contributed their ideas to define these priorities and further the development of learning and education in Leeds.
4. The consultation process for this document was extensive, to ensure that a wide variety of perspectives were recorded

## **Recommendations**

5. The Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

1. Examine each of the seven priorities and comment on the vision for success in learning in Leeds
2. Acknowledge and feedback on the extensive consultation process that has led to this report
3. Comment on the strategic intent of the report and feedback any recommendations
4. Support the actions recommended for each priority
5. Note the Head of Learning Improvement is responsible for the implementation for the strategy

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the strategy is to define a clear vision of what learning in Leeds will look like by 2020 and the actions that will be taken in order to achieve this. It also describes the process that led to the formation of this strategy.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 We wanted a comprehensive strategic document to guide Leeds to becoming the Best City for Learning by 2020, and so this report is a product of 8 consultation events that were held across Leeds from September to November 2015. The consultation process provided a forum for those who attended to be involved in the vision for learning in Leeds, which incorporates the people who will be delivering the strategy with the process of developing the strategy. This ensures that the expertise from all areas in learning in Leeds is gathered and developed.
- 2.2 These events were held to ensure that the voices, experiences and expertise from a diverse consortium of individuals, who all have interest or specialities in education across Leeds, were gathered. These events were held in 8 different locations, including schools and colleges, in a variety of areas from Otley to city centre. This was to ensure that as many people as possible could attend in a convenient location. All Headteachers, Principals, Chairs of Governors, Councillors and universities in Leeds were invited.
- 2.3 Over 220 people attended, with a wide range of attendees, including, but not limited to: Councillors, Headteachers, Principals, Deputy Headteachers, Chief Executives, Chairs of Governors, Governors, Directors, charity and third sector groups, businesses, universities, officers, and education specialists.
- 2.4 The questions that were asked at each event were refined throughout the process, which established a mechanism of progression. The questions that were asked at the final, largest event were devised from feedback compiled from the previous events.
- 2.5 Following on from these events, subsequent consultation meetings were held with a wide range of education partners to refine the strategic pathway that will be delivered through schools and settings.
- 2.6 In future years, the Annual Standards Report will track progress against the strategic vision.

## **3 Main issues**

Please see below for a summary of the Best City for Learning priorities. The full document is available in the appendix.

- 3.1 **World Class Provision:** *"We need a collaborative approach that provides good quality provision to meet the needs of all Leeds children."*
- 3.2 **Great Leeds Schools:** *"In such a diverse and vibrant city we need schools to be distinct environments in which all children are proud to succeed."*

- 3.3 **High Expectations for All:** *"Creative and innovative approaches need to be used to address the gaps which prevent children from achieving their potential."*
- 3.4 **Strong Attainment:** *"We must have high standards where the majority of children achieve age-related expectations."*
- 3.5 **Inspirational Teaching and Learning:** *"Children need to experience an engaging and enriching curriculum that focuses on deeper learning."*
- 3.6 **Uplifting Leadership:** *"We need to nurture leaders through challenge and support in order to provide inspiring development opportunities within a collaborative community."*
- 3.7 **Fluid Transition:** *"We need to smooth transition across the whole learning continuum to enable children and young people to face the world."*

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 Consultation and engagement took place in the form of the eight Big Education Debates held throughout the city last year. The feedback from these events was instrumental to writing the strategy. Where further information is required relating to consultation and engagement more details can be requested from the relevant services.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.2 Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best city in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.
- 4.2.3 The Best City for Learning addresses the issue of inequalities throughout the city in the 'High Expectations for all' chapter. This section reports on the performance gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

### **4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.4 This strategy will assist in achieving outcomes and priorities as defined in The Best Council Plan 2013-2017, The Children and Young People's Plan 2015-19, The Best Start in Life Strategy, Child Friendly Leeds and the Leeds SEND Strategy 2014-17.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 The level of investment in children and young people is considerable. The need to continue to improve learning and education across Leeds means that this must remain a high priority when allocating resources.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 This report is not subject to Call In

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 None identified

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 This strategy is crucial in incorporating the expertise of educationalists and professionals throughout Leeds, to develop a city-wide strategy that is embraced and implemented by all.

5.2 In future years, the Annual Standards Report will be implemented to track progress against the Best City for Learning Strategy.

## **6 Recommendations**

7 Examine each of the seven priorities and comment on the vision for success in learning in Leeds

8 Acknowledge and feedback on the extensive consultation process that has led to this report

9 Comment on the strategic intent of the report and feedback any recommendations

10 Support the actions recommended for each priority

11 Note the Head of Learning Improvement is responsible for the implementation for the strategy

## **12 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

12.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.



# Best City for Learning Strategy

## 2016-2020



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## Foreword

We are incredibly proud to say that Leeds has a strong and improving picture of education, with 92% of primary schools and 80% of secondary schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted; figures which together place us top of all local authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber Region. Having said that, we are not complacent and recognise that we still have a distance to travel before we reach where we want to be as a city. In a time of budget cuts and increasing autonomy of schools and settings, we need to ensure that we can develop and grow as a Leeds learning community. We need to ensure that, despite any circumstances or external influences; we work in partnership, build and maintain existing relationships and create new links across our growing city. This is essential, as at the heart of what we do are the city's children and young people, who will grow up to be the next generation of Leeds citizens. Whilst future economic change poses challenges, it also provides a chance for schools, businesses, colleges, universities and the third sector to work together to enthuse our young people about the wide range of opportunities that the modern economy holds.

**Councillor Judith Blake, Leader of Council and Executive Member for Economy and Culture**

Leeds Children's Services has a vision to become the Best City for Learning and a Child Friendly City; to do this it is vitally important that education in Leeds is providing every opportunity for our children to become the best that they can be. Children's Services is currently in its strongest position, with an Ofsted rating of Good with Outstanding Leadership in 2015. We know, however, that in a city where schools, settings and learning places are becoming increasingly autonomous, we all need to work together towards developing a strong Leeds learning community to ensure a continuum of joined up provision and support for all children and young people in Leeds. We know that we can do more and do better if we work together to ensure that all children and young people in Leeds do well in their learning, have skills for life, and have fun growing up. This document is born from a series of consultation events held across the city, and attended by educational partners throughout Leeds. We remain committed to providing a strong community of learners across Leeds by putting children at the heart of our strategic intent.

**Councillor Lucinda Yeadon, Deputy Leader and Executive Board Member for Children & Families**



# Introduction

Leeds has an ambition to become the Best City in the UK by 2030, and to be the best place for children and young people to grow up. The vision is for all children, young people and families to have the best start in life, to be ready for learning, be both physically and emotionally safe, be healthy, be engaged in learning and be ready for work. The council wants children to enjoy growing up in Leeds and contribute to the community. To achieve this ambition, Leeds must become the Best City for Learning.

This learning strategy aims to show where Leeds currently is as a city, where it aims to be, and how it is going to get there. This document is born of the ideas and experience of stakeholders across the city, following the Leeds: The Big Education Debate events that were held in a variety of schools, colleges and settings across Leeds.

To ensure that the lives, and education, of children and young people in Leeds continues to improve, it is fundamental that the local authority continues to evolve partnerships across the city with all learning places. Children's Services wants to ensure that the outcomes for these children and young people are the best that they can be, that their future is optimistic and that they are supported throughout their learning journey. The economic success of Leeds will require its young people to be equipped with the skills and aspirations that are relevant to the modern economy. Raising levels of educational attainment is important; however, it is also crucial that all schools and settings are supported to ensure that all young people are equipped with the ability and mind-set to keep their skills up to date, to be resilient, and to prosper in the face of future economic change.

Leeds City Council will focus on improving outcomes in all areas, acknowledging that school leaders are best placed to meet the challenge of raising standards and tackling underperformance. They will direct expertise to develop structures, ways of working and expectations which support this approach. They will play a strong role to monitor, challenge, support and, where necessary, intervene to ensure effective learning is the right of all Leeds children. Children's Services know that strong development is born of effective challenge, and will continue to engage leaders in professional dialogue to drive improvement.

The role of the local authority in regards to education is something that is ever changing, however, the engagement and involvement of all schools and settings will remain a key in the drive for improvement.

# Leeds: The Context

## Population

Leeds is an expanding city with a current, growing population of over 761,000 people. Estimates indicate that in 2015 there are 186,196 children and young people under the age of 20 in Leeds. This population is continuing to change in size and composition and at a faster rate than the population of Leeds as a whole. This has implications for services in Leeds, including school places, early years provision and complex needs services. As a local authority, Leeds is constantly updating its services to meet these shifts in demand.

## Ethnicity

In Leeds there has been an increase in the numbers of children and young people of black and minority ethnic heritage and with English as an Additional Language. The increases are presently greater in the younger age ranges. The number of children and young people with English as an additional language (EAL) increased from 13% in 2010 to 17% in 2015. Levels of EAL are higher for younger age groups than for older children.

## Child Poverty & Deprivation

The city's most deprived communities show higher birth rates than the Leeds average; this is reflected in the increasing number of children living in areas of deprivation as identified in the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation. In Leeds, 28,000 children are in poverty, with 64% coming from a working family. The percentage of children who live in poverty in Leeds is higher than the national average, with 20.7% of all dependent children under the age of 20 in poverty, compared to 18.6% in England. Child poverty is associated with poor outcomes for children and young people and their families, not only in terms of health but also educational attainment and employment prospects.

## Free School Meals (FSM)

From September 2014 all children in reception, year 1 and year 2 in schools in England started receiving free school meals. The government made this decision after a recommendation in the School Food Plan.

## Pupil Premium

The pupil premium is additional funding for schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers. There are approximately 32833 children and young people in Leeds who are eligible for the pupil premium funding.

# World Class Provision

**"We need a collaborative approach that provides good quality provision to meet the needs of all Leeds children"**

## **Implications:**

The local authority will:

Provide sufficient good learning places for all Leeds children

Work with all 0-19 education providers, to ensure every Leeds child has good quality provision.

Provide specialist provision for children who require additional support

- Specific, inclusive learning for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs
- Specific, inclusive learning for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Ensure high quality alternative provision with focussed pathways for children who require non mainstream education.

Ensure that Children who are Looked After have access to the best provision to suit their need.

## **What will success look like?**

All young people will have the opportunity to attend great local provision.

All children will be able to attend a good or outstanding school or provision.

Sufficient places within specialist provision will be able to accommodate the needs of all children with Education, Health and Care Plans.

Alternative provisions will have strong pathways to successful destinations for young people.

## **How Leeds is going to get there:**

The strategic, multi-agency work of the Good Learning Places Board bringing together all areas of the council to plan and discuss school places across the city

Continue to develop a cross-directorate approach, working in collaboration with key officers to expand the strategic vision of provision

Engage in collaborative work with the Regional Schools Commissioner to identify areas of need

Work with schools, settings and local political representatives to create and maintain good provision across the city

# Great Leeds Schools

**"In such a diverse and vibrant city we need schools to be distinct environments in which all children are proud to succeed"**

## **Implications:**

The local authority will support and challenge schools through detailed knowledge of each school, using both data analysis and intelligence gathered from schools, whilst embracing innovation and collaboration opportunities.

Ensure that the local authority know each school, through designing and delivering a service package that can be individually tailored for each school, to offer bespoke support whilst ensuring school standards remain high.

Strengthen collaborative relationships between settings, schools, businesses, universities, teaching schools and the Local Authority.

Develop a targeted, traded offer that provides training, events and opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge in an ever changing landscape.

## **What will success look like?**

When considering Ofsted judgements, Leeds schools will be first regionally and in the top quartile nationally for both the primary and secondary sectors.

Leeds acknowledged as a city where all children achieve and enjoy learning in their schools and settings.

Schools are able to recruit and retain the best teachers.

A successful, robust system of working with schools to ensure standards and training are of the highest quality.

## **How Leeds is going to get there:**

Review and improve the Learning Improvement strategy, ensuring that all schools and settings are well informed.

Work with the Leeds Learning Partnership Strategy board to deliver top quality, targeted traded services.

Continue to foster and develop the relationship between the Local Authority and academies, maintained schools, free schools and teaching schools.

Maintain appropriate levels of challenge and offer bespoke support to vulnerable schools, taking early action to prevent problems from escalating.

# High Expectations for All

**"Creative and innovative approaches need to be used to address the gaps which prevent children from achieving their potential"**

## **Implications:**

Whilst it is recognised that almost all parents and carers want the best for their children, data shows that there is a gap in educational attainment for some less advantaged groups in comparison to their peers.

Therefore, Leeds will strive to ensure education in Leeds is equitable. In education, equality is used to provide the same opportunities for all, regardless of background. However equity of education acknowledges that not every child starts at the same point, so extra support is provided to ensure children who are disadvantaged have the same outcomes as their peers.

There will be variations in the type, complexity and breadth of the gap in different circumstances and instances, for all schools and settings in Leeds.

Regardless of this, the performance gap will be addressed, in all its forms, to ensure that rather than lowering standards, each child reaches a good level of attainment, regardless of predetermination.

## **What will success look like?**

Circumstances of birth or upbringing will not impact on the educational achievement of children in Leeds.

Children from more disadvantaged backgrounds in Leeds will achieve & attain the same standard as their non-disadvantaged peers nationally.

## **How Leeds is going to get there:**

Extra support will put in to 0-19 education providers to ensure equity of outcomes.

Leeds will continue to work in partnership with schools, settings and partner head teachers to promote and progress bespoke projects to close the gap in Leeds.

Partnership work with third sector groups, teaching schools and research partners will direct and support the needs of less advantaged individuals or groups within schools.

Maintain and develop the work that is already being done for the different groups.

Continue to monitor and record data on the performance gap to ensure focus on improvement and to target further action.

# Strong Attainment

**"We must have high standards where the majority of children achieve age-related expectations"**

## ***Implications:***

If Leeds is to be the best city for learning then it must be expected that the majority of children, at every stage in their learning, achieve age-related expectations in accordance with nationally agreed predictions. It is known that academic achievement is often viewed as the 'social passport' to the next phase of education, apprenticeship, training or work placement. Good results give children positive choices. Leeds needs to ensure that all children and young people have as strong an opportunity as any child nationally to follow the pathways they desire.

## ***What will success look like?***

Progress and attainment at all stages of learning will be above national average, and ultimately in the first quartile of all authorities nationally.

## ***How Leeds is going to get there:***

Work with schools and settings to monitor, challenge, and support in order to raise attainment.

Create a learning culture in the city that focusses on the attainment of all children.

Use national data to set high expectations for all schools and settings.

Analyse and share relevant data to enable schools and settings to make effective comparisons.

# Inspirational Teaching & Learning

**"Children need to experience an engaging and enriching curriculum that focuses on deeper learning"**

## **Implications:**

Leeds will work with schools and settings to promote quality first teaching in all education settings. Using the Leeds Learning Partnership, and working alongside the teaching schools and other partners, the local authority will deliver and signpost quality professional development to strengthen the understanding of teaching that can deliver deep learning in children of all ages.

Leeds will have additional services to support and enhance learning in the arts, sports and music.

Provide a relevant Health and Wellbeing Service to ensure children and young people are safe and are equipped with the knowledge to make the best choices for life.

Safeguard children and young people; ensuring children are ready for learning, attending school, and that support is available if exclusions arise.

## **What will success look like?**

Quality teaching will be reflected in both Ofsted judgements of schools and attainment in National Tests.

Leeds Teaching Schools will attract the brightest and the best students into their teacher training programmes.

## **How Leeds is going to get there:**

Strengthen the offer to all schools and settings provided through the Leeds Learning Partnership, directed by the strategic board and using the best practitioners in the city to deliver quality and continuous professional development.

Work with other professional partners in the city, particularly the teaching schools, to support the development of quality first teaching.

Work with universities and research organisations to bring the most innovative and brightest into the city.

Promote ideas and systems that have proven track records in raising attainment and delivering deep learning to children.

# Uplifting Leadership

**"We need to nurture leaders through challenge and support in order to provide inspiring development opportunities within a collaborative community"**

## **Implications:**

The quality of education in Leeds cannot exceed the quality of its schools and settings. It is also the case that improving outcomes for children can only be delivered through Leeds schools. Great schools need excellent leaders who in turn develop strong teams that can sustain development and drive improvement for all children and young people.

If it is acknowledged that leadership is the single most critical factor in improvement at all levels across the school or setting, including governance, then strong learning communities that develop and retain good leaders must be created. The local authority will need to work as system leaders, along with the Teaching School Alliances, to develop a strong basis for succession planning and leadership recruitment in Leeds. Together, all schools must be challenged to work proactively to create tomorrow's leaders.

It will be important to define the high standards of excellence that leaders need within a self-improving school system in order to inspire confidence, raise aspirations, secure high academic standards and empower the teaching profession to continued evaluation and improvement

## **What will success look like?**

Leadership will be evident at all levels within schools and settings, from governance through to interactions with children and young people. There will be a strong and clearly articulated set of values and a moral purpose that is focussed on providing a world class education for the pupils they serve. The leadership will develop expectations for:

- Quality learning through outstanding teaching
- High achievement and attainment
- High quality continuous professional development
- A secure climate for exemplary behaviour by pupils
- Recognised equity for all pupils
- Commitment to the children locally and city wide
- Effective partnerships with others

## **How Leeds is going to get there:**

Work with all schools, settings, academies and Trusts to develop a clear protocol to develop strong leadership in schools

Work towards all leaders being able to fulfil the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers (January 2015)

Ensure that leaders in Leeds know that they will be supported to build coalitions, drive reforms and embed evaluation and challenge in pursuit of a strong community of learners



# Fluid Transition

**"We need to smooth transition across the whole learning continuum to enable children and young people to face the world"**

## **Implications:**

Each phase will understand how they all fit into the wider journey, what has gone before, and what will come next.

The resilience of all children and young people will be developed, so that they transfer smoothly into the next stage of their learning.

Expectations, knowledge and understanding of each stage will be developed among all education providers and children & young people, to transform the learning journey from ascending steps to a fluid incline.

## **What will success look like?**

All children and young people in Leeds will be equipped with the skills and abilities to prepare for the next phase in their learning journey.

## **How Leeds is going to get there:**

The child or young person will be supported through each phase of the learning journey:

- Before and after birth the local authority will support parents and babies to create the conditions where stress is reduced, positive bonds and attachments can form and language and communication skills develop
- All early years settings should use the universal transition transfer record when a child moves settings
- Continue to encourage cross-phase training, development and networking opportunities
- Develop partnership models between primary and secondary schools
- Continue to work with schools and partners to develop the Post 16 infrastructure in Leeds
- Strengthen independent careers advice in schools and links to employers
- Establish partnership working designed to smooth the transition from education to employment
- Provide children with the skills and opportunities that enable them to prosper from the economic growth of Leeds

# Future Landscape

There is a strong feeling that there will always be a role for the Local Authority in enabling effective school partnerships and collaborating with partners to create a strong community of learning within Leeds. Children's Services know that the role of the Local Authority must change, and that sector led, school to school support is the new landscape. It is a complex landscape, however, and if the local authority are to 'land' Leeds schools safely into this new learning environment, the wide range of collaborative activities that schools and settings will need to embrace should be acknowledged.

## **Implications:**

If the local authority is to nurture inter-school collaborations then work will need to be done with groups of schools to address barriers to innovation, effectiveness and sustainability, to enable strong, sustainable Learning Alliances across the city.

Learning Alliances will differ across the city. In some instances they may mirror the cluster of family of schools in which they are partners. They may be formed through multi-academy trusts or faith-based collaborations. They may represent an area of the city and cut across other formal partnerships, however all will have learning and the desire to improve outcomes for their children at the heart of the collaborations.

The School Improvement Team will develop a system leadership approach to hold the Learning Alliance (LA) to:

- Form clear leadership and governance structures to enhance accountability
- Help the LA's to measure the impact of collaboration on student outcomes
- Support the development of outstanding teaching and learning and facilitate sustainability of the group through peer review and evaluation

By creating conditions for effective collaboration and fostering strong inter school collaborations, the local authority can use their natural oversight of the city to carry out the role of facilitator, developing trust and collegiality within the Learning Alliance

## **What will success look like?**

School to school support, with strong input from the teaching schools and facilitated by the local authority should:

- Develop the relationship within Learning Alliances of schools across the city
- Drive collaborations forward: taking collective responsibility for uncertainties and turbulence
- Establish common improvement agendas that include a wide range of stakeholders
- Encourage external support from credible consultants and advisors; including the Leeds Learning Partnership
- Establish professional peer review between the Learning Alliance schools to honestly discuss strengths and areas for improvement

- Create evaluative groups that use data to measure the impact of initiative and drive improvement

***How Leeds is going to get there:***

Review the School Improvement Strategy to move towards a system approach to improvement, putting school and learning alliances at the centre of the process.

Construct a new framework for working with schools and settings to enable a strong community of learning in which schools deliver great outcomes for children

Facilitate peer review as a supportive process focussed on using the professional expertise of school leaders to help schools reflect on their improvement journey, celebrate success and share experiences

Strengthen traded service to reflect the professional development needs of schools and settings to support improvement across the city

## Partnership Work

Leeds City Council will continue to play a vital role in the organisation of education in the city. The aim is to help schools to raise standards in education and to help root out poor behaviour, tackle underperformance, and to improve the way in which schools are held to account.

The local authority's role in raising standards through monitoring, challenging, supporting and, where appropriate, intervention is statutory. The strategic framework recognises and highlights that even where the local authority has a major role, the responsibility for school improvement ultimately rests with schools and school leaders as autonomous and self-managing institutions. It is the responsibility of schools to make the best use of the challenge and support available to them.

The local authority will use an evidence-based approach to determine the level and nature of support required for each school. The starting point is school self-evaluation, and schools will be asked to share their self-evaluation with key officers and colleagues from the learning improvement service who will identify which schools and settings are performing well, which are underperforming, and which are vulnerable; a range of performance and qualitative data will be used to determine appropriate categorisation.

### **School to school support**

Brokering school to school support is central to learning improvement work. The learning improvement service is building on existing models of partnership working, and strengthening, extending and formalising current arrangements. The intention of this is to improve the performance of low achieving schools and support good and improving schools to become outstanding.

### **Teaching Schools**

Teaching schools are part of the government's drive to give schools more freedom and take increasing responsibility for school improvement at a local level. The local authority has entered into a partnership with all Leeds teaching schools in the brokering of support for vulnerable schools.

Partnerships are developing across the city, providing professional development programmes and opportunities. Partnership working with other local authorities will also be developed, particularly those with schools in similar contexts.

### **National and Local Leaders of Education**

National Leaders of Education and Local Leaders of Education are outstanding Headteachers and principals who use their skills and experience to work alongside schools and academies in challenging circumstances. The aim is to drive forward improvements and build capacity to ensure that improved standards and outcomes can be sustained.

The Local Authority works closely with national and local leaders to provide support and development as part of system led improvement and school to school support.

### **Academies and Free Schools**

Leeds wants all of its schools to be strong schools that focus on outstanding learning and excellent outcomes for all children and young people. All schools now have autonomy and independence and schools are no longer 'controlled' by local councils. Leeds has a number of academies, free schools, trust and Community schools. The city will actively support all schools that work within the Leeds learning community to deliver exceptional and equitable education and support the drive for Leeds to be the 'Best City for Learning'.

Leeds City Council will neither encourage nor discourage a school's move to academy status. The aim is to ensure that governing bodies have all the facts and information they need to make an informed choice whilst looking carefully at the potential benefits that a change of status could bring for their pupils. Leeds will continue to work with any governing body that becomes an academy, whilst strongly encouraging them to keep a link with their own community and the city-wide learning community and preferably by appointing a Local Authority governor as part of their articles of association.

### **Partner Headteachers**

Partner Headteachers are a key driver in the development and promotion of school-led improvement systems. Leeds City Council will work with partner Headteachers across all phases on a part-time basis. This work is key to strengthening the partnership between the learning improvement service and schools, and helping to accelerate the rate of improvement across the city.

### **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)**

The Leeds SACRE advises the local authority on matters relating to collective worship in schools and on religious education given in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. The SACRE monitors the effectiveness and appropriateness of the agreed syllabus, which is formally reviewed every five years. The Leeds syllabus was updated in 2015. SACRE also provides support, advice and guidance on the effective teaching of religious education.

### **Faith Partners**

Leeds will continue to support and work with all faith partners, as sustainable partnerships can only strengthen education and maintain high standards for teaching and learning across the city.

### **Other partners**

Building and maintaining strong partnerships is an essential strand of Leeds City Council's ambition to become the Best City in the UK. Work with existing partners will continue, and Leeds will seek to create even stronger relationships with early years' providers, schools

and their governors and higher education providers. Equally Leeds will seek to strengthen relationships with Ofsted, the Department of Education, businesses and voluntary organisations.

## Plans & Priorities

### Best Council Plan 2013-17

The Best City for Learning Strategy is part of the vision to make Leeds the best city in the UK and a child friendly city. It highlights the importance of the following outcomes for children and families:

Ensuring the best start in life;

- Reducing the number of looked after children;
- Improving school attendance;
- Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training;
- Raising educational standards; and
- Ensuring sufficiency of school places

### Children and Young People's Plan 2015-19

The Best City for Learning Strategy is part of the wider framework for children, young people and families set out in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The CYPP identifies five mutually reinforcing outcomes:

- children and young people are safe from harm;
- children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life;
- children and young people enjoy healthy lifestyles;
- children and young people have fun growing up; and
- children and young people are active citizens who feel they have voice and influence.

The CYPP also identifies three obsessions:

- to safely and appropriately reduce the number of children looked after;
- to reduce the number of children and young people not in education, employment or training; and
- Improving school attendance

The question '**what is it like to be a child or young person growing up in Leeds and how can we make it better?**' is the reference point for all thinking and practice. Leeds' shared commitment and focus is to put the child at the centre of all the local authority does, to

listen to the voices of children and young people, and to safeguard and promote their interests.

Restorative practice underpins this approach. Leeds aims to work **with** children and families as opposed to doing things **for** them or **to** them, providing high support and high challenge, and empowering children and families to take responsibility for making positive and productive decisions about their lives.

### **Schools as community assets**

Through the CYPP, the Children and Families Trust Board and local partners have approved the following principle:

*“Children’s Trust and local partners must see all local schools as community assets and have a clear role in holding those institutions - no matter what the governance arrangements - to account for the contribution they make to the wellbeing of the local population.”*

The local authority recognises that schools and other learning settings are autonomous, self-governing and best placed to tackle the learning improvement agenda. However, the local authority’s role is to monitor, challenge, support and, where necessary, intervene to ensure effective partnership working takes place. This should be grounded in *restorative practice* and focused on building positive relationships to effect change.

### **Best Start in Life Strategy**

Leeds has made a strategic commitment to focus on the earliest period in a child’s life, from pre-conception to two years old, in order to maximise every child’s potential. Analysis shows that economic investment into early years gives the greatest return, and this shift in investment will impact on key outcomes such as emotional wellbeing, improved behaviour, school readiness and educational attainment and fulfilment of potential.

Leeds is a city characterised by a wide gap between the more affluent communities and those with greater deprivation and vulnerability. In order to achieve the best start for every child, the Best Start programme focuses on ‘narrowing the gap’ through universal progressive approaches, engagement at a local level and the delivery of early help.

### **Child Friendly Leeds**

The *Child Friendly Leeds nine point plan* outlines the support that is being provided to children and families. It focuses on strengthening social care and social work, relating directly to the welfare of children and young people. Its aim is to tackle the high numbers of children entering the care system and engage with children and families with complex and multiple problems; problems often rooted in domestic violence, parental substance misuse and parental mental health.