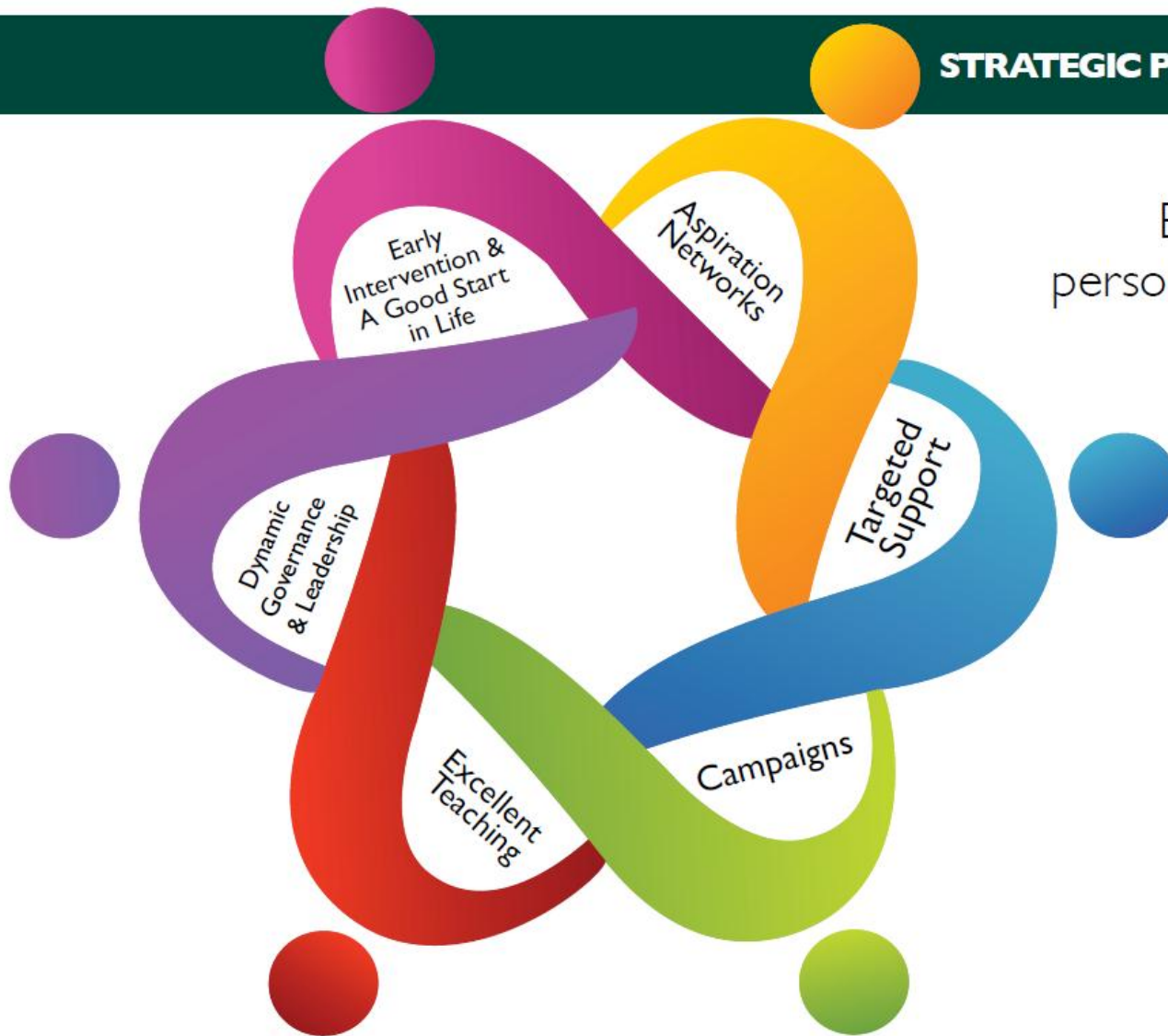


# STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EDUCATION



Every child & young person thriving in a great school or setting

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	The National and Local Landscapes	2
1.2	The Oxfordshire Challenge	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Aspiration Networks.....</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1	What are Aspiration Networks?	14
3.2	Why this approach this year?	15
3.3	What is the evidence base?	15
3.4	How will it be funded?	16
3.5	Who will be leading it?	16
3.6	Who will be involved?	17
3.7	Expectations of all parties	17
3.8	What are we trying to achieve?	18
3.9	How will we measure success?	18
<b>4</b>	<b>Dynamic Leadership and Governance .....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1	What is dynamic Leadership and Governance?	19
4.2	What will the County Council develop and do differently this year?	20
4.3	What is the evidence base?	21
4.4	What we will provide for Maintained and Aided Schools?	22
4.5	What we will provide for all schools and academies?	22
4.6	Link to Targeted Group of Schools	23

4.7	Who will be leading it?	23
4.8	How we expect schools and governing bodies to help	24
4.9	How will we measure success?	25
<b>5</b>	<b>Early Intervention &amp; A Good Start in Life .....</b>	<b>26</b>
5.1	What is the Early Intervention aspect?	26
5.2	Why is this approach an important part of the strategic plan?	27
5.3	What is the evidence base?	28
5.4	What will be taking place in 2012?	30
5.5	How will it be funded?	31
5.6	Who will be leading it?	31
5.7	Who will be involved?	31
5.8	Expectations of all parties	32
5.9	What will success look like?	32
<b>6</b>	<b>Excellent Teaching .....</b>	<b>34</b>
6.1	What is Excellent Teaching?	34
6.2	Why this focus this year?	35
6.3	What is the evidence base?	36
6.4	Who will be leading it?	37
6.5	Who will be involved?	37
6.6	Expectations of all parties	38
6.7	What will success look like?	39
<b>7</b>	<b>Targeted Support.....</b>	<b>41</b>
7.1	What is Targeted Support?	41

7.2	Why this focus this year?	43
7.3	What is the evidence base?	44
7.4	How will it be funded?	46
7.5	Who will be leading it?	46
7.6	Who will be involved?	47
7.7	What will be taking place to support vulnerable groups?	47
7.8	Expectations of all parties	48
7.9	What will success look like?	48
<b>8</b>	<b>Campaigns .....</b>	<b>50</b>
8.1	What is the Campaign?	50
8.2	Why this campaign this year and what are we trying to achieve?	51
8.3	What is the evidence base?	52
8.4	What will be taking place in 2012?	53
8.5	How will it be funded?	54
8.6	Who will be leading it?	54
8.7	Who will be involved?	54
8.8	Expectations of all parties	55
8.9	How will we measure success?	55

# 1 Introduction

The children of Oxfordshire deserve only the best.

The County Council's **vision** is for *every single child to be successful and to reach their potential; thriving in an outstanding learning environment throughout their education wherever they live across the county.*

Our **mission** in 2012 is to engage and harness the resources of all who care about children and young people and the future of a thriving Oxfordshire; to pull together simultaneously and consistently, to support our schools and our children; so that *every single school or setting is judged to be at least good and is aspiring to constantly improve, to become and remain outstanding.*

Our plan is to influence and support that improvement journey through a focus on six key themes; to clarify roles and responsibilities around each of those themes and to meet the three aspirations of the Children and Young people's Plan;

- Raising Achievement
- Narrowing gaps in outcomes and
- Keeping all children safe

The Local Authority will seek to influence and add value wherever possible through;

- Timely data analysis and data sharing.
- Seeking out and sharing best practice, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Developing a best practice web presence accessible for all learning providers (schools, colleges and settings).
- Brokering arrangements that will lead to improvements between schools and across partnerships.
- Championing the importance of pupil voice.
- Targeting support where it is most needed.
- Galvanising support from all stakeholders.

We are suggesting a focus in 2012 on six linked strands of work that are easy to understand and, when simultaneously combined, could create whole system improvement.

1. Aspiration networks – funding allocated to clusters of schools to support each other to bring about whole system improvement.
2. A concentrated approach to securing strong and dynamic leadership and governance.
3. Excellent Teaching in all subjects and across all phases.
4. Early Intervention and a Good Start in Life – helping families to make sure children get a good start in life and are in school and ready to learn throughout their education.
5. Targeted and Intensive Support for schools below the Floor Standard, those at risk of becoming so and those struggling to improve.
6. A campaign that everyone can help with; in 2012 – Every Oxfordshire Child a Good Reader.

## **1.1 The National and Local Landscapes**

In a climate of economic uncertainty and competing pressures on resources, it is important to ensure that Oxfordshire is a thriving environment in which to live and work. Our education system has a key role to play in that by making sure that our children achieve their full potential; are able to make a major positive contribution to their communities and to the local economy; and that they develop the skills and personal resources to compete in an increasingly global marketplace.

The national education landscape is undergoing a period of rapid and far reaching change; involving shifting responsibilities, new and reduced funding arrangements, revised expectations, new accountabilities and changing relationships. New ways of working are becoming increasingly important to deliver the planned system changes.

A key driver for change is the Education Bill currently at the report stage in the House of Lords, which has significant implications for new ways of working that support the Coalition Government's vision; which includes a determination to give school leaders more power and control to drive up improvement, not only in their own schools, but across the whole education system.

Whilst school performance nationally is improving and the UK features in the McKinsey report on the best education systems in the world, there is still a way to go to reach the performance achieved in some systems. We in Oxfordshire are now looking at the approaches taken by the best and learning from and seeking to apply these more widely.

The Department for Education believes that the Bill will help to create an education system that delivers ever higher standards for all children through:

- Helping teachers maintain good discipline.
- Freedom for schools and colleges.
- More accountability.
- Using resources fairly.

Alongside greater freedoms for schools, come different relationships with the local authority; more emphatically shifting responsibility for school improvement to schools and their governing bodies. The Local Authority is no longer the default provider of services and schools are expected to consider taking up services and support from a much wider range of providers, including each other.

The drive to encourage free schools and to convert all schools to Academy status instead of maintained Local Authority status is strongly articulated with targets to convert all secondary schools as soon as possible. Under current arrangements for Academies, the responsibility for school standards and progress sits with school leaders and governing bodies and, in the case of failure to meet expected standards or where pupils do not make sufficient progress, with either sponsors of academies where there are sponsors or with the Secretary of State in the case of converted academies without sponsors. In the absence of more clarity around responsibility for underperformance of academies, the LA intends to maintain a watchful brief and will encourage all schools to work collaboratively whatever their status.

However, the Local Authority, through the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services, remains the local champion for good outcomes for all children and retains the statutory responsibilities to intervene in the case of maintained schools causing concern.

For maintained schools, the head teacher and governors are currently responsible for school standards and progress and in the case of schools causing concern where there is a failure to meet expected standards or where pupils do not make sufficient progress, the local authority continues to hold a statutory responsibility and has statutory powers to intervene and to support and challenge the school to make improvements. In the case of schools that are judged to be inadequate or where pupils perform below the floor standards, the Secretary of

State expects the local authority to ensure that there is a plan in place to improve those schools and, where that cannot be delivered, to recommend structural solutions including federation, Interim Executive Boards and finding sponsors to move the school to Academy status.

Across Oxfordshire, progress towards Academy conversion has been relatively slow, with only two Academies converted to date joining our three previously formed sponsored Academies. However, the number of schools in the pipeline, expressing an interest and consulting is beginning to increase, although it is expected that it will take considerable time for all of our 286 maintained schools to convert. We currently have 29 secondary schools, 232 primary schools (of which there are 4 infant and 2 junior schools), 11 nursery schools, 13 special schools (including the Oxfordshire Hospital School), 1 PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) and 320 Private, Independent and Voluntary settings maintained by the Local Authority.

In that context, the Local Authority retains an important role in influencing improvement and even should all schools convert, under current legislation it still retains a strategic and statutory role; the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS) retain a responsibility to champion good outcomes for Oxfordshire's children. The current consultation taking place on the future role of the DCS and LMCS continues to describe their purposes as that of discharging the education and children's social services functions of the local authority. It states that within this legal framework, it is for individual local authorities to determine their own organisational structures in the light of their local circumstances. However, local authorities must ensure that there is both a single officer and a single elected member, each responsible for both education and children's social care. The DCS and LMCS should each have an integrated children's services brief, ensuring that the safety and the educational, social and emotional needs of children and young people are central to the local vision.

Between them, the DCS and LMCS provide a clear and unambiguous line of local accountability. The DCS has professional responsibility for children's services, including operational matters; the LMCS has political responsibility for children's services. Together with the Chief Executive and Leader, the DCS and LMCS have a key leadership role both within the local authority and working with other local agencies to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Local authorities should, as a matter of course, assure themselves that their arrangements enable them to discharge their education and children's social care functions effectively, especially with regard to the corporate parenting role with Children Looked After (CLA).



## 1.2 The Oxfordshire Challenge

Although Oxfordshire, and in particular Oxford City, has historic and enduring international acclaim as a seat of great learning, a gathering of the greatest minds and where achievements are highest; the accolades are not repeated in relation to outcomes for local children in the state sector.

Oxfordshire has consistently lagged behind the performance of statistical neighbours, usually in the bottom quartile and frequently bottom on a number of measures. Our performance is more often in line with national averages rather than being well above as is expected, given the overall affluence of the county. Although there are areas of significant deprivation within the county, other areas of the country perform much better in spite of high levels of deprivation. Disappointingly, our GCSE results fell below national averages in 2011.

Although there have been improvements in inspection outcomes and in the performance of some schools; overall the picture is one of a slow pace of improvement, inconsistency between similar schools, across Districts, subject areas and for vulnerable groups such as Children Looked After and the inability to sustain improvements relative to children educated in the schools of our statistical neighbours. This has been a source of concern for many years.

However, there are important signs of improvement at the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) which, if built upon, could herald a change in trend.

EYFSP nationally has shifted between 2009 and 2011 from 52% to 59% of children achieving a good level of improvement (78+ points overall and 6+ points in Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Communication, Language and Literacy) (7 percentage point increase).

The picture in Oxfordshire shows a better pace of improvement where EYFSP has shifted from 52% to 63% of children achieving a good level of improvement (78+ points overall and 6+ points in Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Communication, Language and Literacy) between 2009 and 2011 (11 percentage point increase) which should start to impact in later years.

So it is critical to build on this stronger foundation, as well as to try to improve the performance of children already in the system who may have experienced a weaker start in life.

Oxfordshire is committed to raising achievement for all children and young people and to close the gap between those facing disadvantage and their peers. It remains imperative for us to address the needs of children and families that may be facing disadvantage related to their gender, ethnicity, disability, and social deprivation. Nowhere is this more so than in our responsibility to our Children Looked After.

Children Looked After are amongst the most vulnerable in Oxfordshire's community. We will continue to work with partners across the Council, Primary Care Trust (PCT), Mental Health and Wellbeing partners, Police, Youth Offending and the voluntary sector to deliver the best possible outcomes for these children.

We are cognisant of the Equality Act 2010 which replaces existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. This new act consolidates discrimination law, in most cases this will continue the good practice in our schools and settings. However, there are some changes that will have an impact on schools as follows:

- It is now unlawful for employers to ask health-related questions of applicants before job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work.
- It is now unlawful to discriminate against a transgender pupil.
- It is now unlawful to discriminate against a pupil who is pregnant or has recently had a baby.
- New Positive Action provisions will allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics. Such measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim – for example providing special catch-up classes for Roma children or a project to engage specifically with alienated Asian boys.
- Extending the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils. However, this duty is not due to come into effect until a later date, following consultation on implementation and approach.

Additionally, schools will be expected to ensure that the intended beneficiaries of the pupil premium are in receipt of additional support and this will be monitored through scrutiny and inspection of outcomes for pupils in receipt of free school meals.

We intend to work with our schools and settings to embrace these changes. In particular, the New Positive Action provisions and improving outcomes for pupils in receipt of free school meals will be utilised in our Aspiration Networks as well as in our dissemination of best practice through our Local and National Leaders of Education working with partner schools to drive up standards of attainment for our vulnerable

groups. This is a particular area of opportunity for Oxfordshire and is at the heart of our Early Intervention reorganisation and that of our Special and Alternative provision.

## 2 Summary

This strategic plan has been shaped by officers and members of Oxfordshire County Council following discussions with a number of focus groups and following important stakeholder events in order to clarify roles and relationships, intentions and expectations in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

Whilst the responsibility for school improvement lies firmly with our schools and governing bodies, the Local Authority, through the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services, remains the local champion for good outcomes for all children and retains its statutory responsibilities to intervene in the case of maintained schools causing concern.

In a climate of economic uncertainty and competing pressures on resources, it is important to ensure that Oxfordshire is a thriving environment in which to live and work. Our education system has a key role to play in that by making sure that our children achieve their full potential; are able to make a major positive contribution to their communities and to the local economy; and that they develop the skills and personal resources to compete in an increasingly global marketplace.

The children of Oxfordshire deserve only the best, yet Oxfordshire has consistently lagged behind the performance of statistical neighbours, usually in the bottom quartile and frequently bottom on a number of measures. Our performance is more often in line with national averages rather than being well above as is expected, given the overall affluence of the county. Although there are areas of significant deprivation within the county, other areas of the country perform much better in spite of high levels of deprivation. Disappointingly, our GCSE results fell below national averages in 2011.

However, there are important signs of improvement at the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) which, if built upon, could herald a change in trend. EYFSP nationally has shifted between 2009 and 2011 from 52% to 59% of children achieving a good level of improvement (78+ points overall and 6+ points in Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Communication, Language and Literacy) (7 percentage point increase).

The picture in Oxfordshire shows a better pace of improvement where EYFSP has shifted from 52% to 63% of children achieving a good level of improvement (11 percentage point increase) which should start to impact in later years.

Oxfordshire is committed to raising achievement for all children and young people and to close the gap between those facing disadvantage and their peers. Nowhere is this more so than in our responsibility to our Children Looked After (CLA)

**The County Council's vision** is for every single child to be successful and to reach their potential; thriving in an outstanding learning environment throughout their education wherever they live across the county.

**Our mission in 2012** is to engage and harness the resources of all who care about children and young people and the future of a thriving Oxfordshire; to pull together simultaneously and consistently, to support our schools and our children; so that every single school or setting is judged to be at least good and is aspiring to constantly improve, to become and remain outstanding.

**Our plan** is to influence and support that improvement journey through a focus on six key themes; to clarify roles and responsibilities around each of those themes and to meet the three aspirations of the Children and Young People's Plan;

- Raising Achievement
- Narrowing gaps in outcomes and
- Keeping all children safe

The Local Authority will seek to influence and add value wherever possible through;

- Timely data analysis and data sharing.

- Seeking out and sharing best practice, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Developing a best practice web presence accessible for all learning providers (schools, colleges and settings).
- Brokering arrangements that will lead to improvements between schools and across partnerships.
- Championing the importance of pupil voice.
- Targeting support where it is most needed.
- Galvanising support from all stakeholders.

We are suggesting a focus in 2012 on **six linked strands of work** that are easy to understand and, when simultaneously combined, could create whole system improvement.

**1. Aspiration networks – funding allocated to clusters of schools to support each other to bring about whole system improvement.**

Aspiration Networks are the name we have given to encouraging schools to work with other schools to support one another and the wider group to improve outcomes for all children and young people educated by and in the care of the county. The Local Authority will provide financial resource to groups of schools that join together to release staff and expertise for the benefit of the wider network. The drive is to move all members of the group to being judged at least “good” by Ofsted and to demonstrably improve outcomes for children, including narrowing the gaps in performance of the most vulnerable groups. (In the absence of an Ofsted inspection taking place within the agreed timeframe, a simulated inspection will be conducted to determine the Oxfordshire County Council categorisation equivalent). Each group must put forward a compelling business case to bid for the money. A panel of educationalists will award the funding and then monitor the successful consortia to ensure they deliver the rapid improvement in outcomes that are at the heart of each initiative.

The schools and settings do not have to be in the same phase or geographical area; they can be a mixture of secondary, primary, special and early year's settings. The greater the ambition the group has in terms of the credible difference it can make on those schools that are currently "satisfactory" or "inadequate," the more likely the funding will be awarded.

**2. A concentrated approach to securing strong and dynamic leadership and governance.**

This is the suite of support and intervention strategies which will empower and enable governing bodies to focus effectively on school improvement, recruit high quality leaders and find innovative leadership solutions.

It includes highlighting and promoting engagement in available development opportunities for both school leaders and the governing body to empower them to drive school improvement.

**3. Promotion of Inspirational and Excellent Teaching in all subjects and across all phases.**

This strand of work seeks to find ways to attract and retain the highest quality teachers to work and develop their skills in our schools for the benefit of the children and young people of Oxfordshire. It proposes more innovative recruitment approaches, enhanced training opportunities, networks of support and sharing best practice between schools.

**4. Early Intervention and a Good Start in Life – helping families to make sure children get a good start in life and are in school and ready to learn throughout their education.**

Early Intervention in the context of our Strategic Education Plan consists of two particular aspects:

- i) It refers to the important work that needs to be built on with families through the evidence based successful approaches used in our children's centres and early years' settings; when children are at an early stage of development and it is vital to ensure that they get the very best start in life.

- ii) It refers to the continuum of interventions we work on with families in partnership with our schools and settings when there are problems and difficulties at any stage of their lives; ensuring that:
  - a) Children are attending school, are emotionally ready to learn, aspire to do well and are resilient enough to overcome future difficulties.
  - b) Parents feel supported and able to encourage their children's learning.
  - c) Schools are flexible in their approach to support the most vulnerable children and meet their needs.

## **5. Targeted and Intensive Support for schools below the Floor Standard, those at risk of becoming so and those struggling to improve.**

The Local Authority will continue to exercise its statutory powers to intervene where schools become a cause for concern. Targeted support is provided to those schools which are of concern to the Local Authority and those at risk of underperformance.

The level of support is relative to the category the school is in. It includes schools and settings:

1. Below the floor standards.
2. At risk of falling below the floor standards or are showing declining performance.
3. Schools judged satisfactory or below by Ofsted.
4. Where pupils consistently underperform and this is recognised in stagnant inspection judgements.
5. Where specific groups of pupils underperform even if the overall school performance is good.

## **6. A campaign that everyone can help with – Every Oxfordshire Child a Good Reader**

There is enormous interest in improving educational outcomes across the county from a wide range of people in addition to those professionally and directly engaged in delivering educational provision or related services. County Councillors, the District Councils, parents, the media, libraries, the Dioceses, our Mosques, the universities, fire and rescue service, businesses, children and young people, health, police and voluntary sector partners to name just a few all have an interest and many have demonstrated their commitment to add support for improvements to the educational achievements of our children.



The campaign is a proposal to harness that wider support by selecting one theme that would be a compelling, easily understood campaign that everyone across the county could get behind and support simultaneously.

In selecting one theme, it does not mean that all work on other areas for improvement would stop or resources be diverted or diluted. Professionals working across the education sector will, of course, continue to work on the wider improvement agendas as appropriate and will draw upon wider support where possible.

We are suggesting the first campaign starting in 2012 should be **Every Oxfordshire Child a Good Reader**. This would have value based upon what we know about the importance of reading to success in all aspects of education, the advent of the phonics test at age 6 in 2012 and the aspiration for the City to be the World Book Capital in 2014.



## **3 Aspiration Networks**

### **3.1 What are Aspiration Networks?**

Aspiration Networks are the name we have given to encouraging schools to work with other schools to support one another and the wider group to improve outcomes for all children and young people educated by and in the care of the county. The Local Authority will provide financial resource to groups of schools that join together to release staff and expertise for the benefit of the wider network. The drive is to move all members of the group to being judged at least “good” by Ofsted and to demonstrably improve outcomes for children, including narrowing the gaps in performance of the most vulnerable groups. (In the absence of an Ofsted inspection taking place within the agreed timeframe, a simulated inspection will be conducted to determine the Oxfordshire County Council categorisation equivalent). Each group must put forward a compelling business case to bid for the money. A panel of educationalists will award the funding and then monitor the successful consortia to ensure they deliver the rapid improvement in outcomes that are at the heart of each initiative.

The schools and settings do not have to be in the same phase or geographical area; they can be a mixture of secondary, primary, special and early year’s settings. The greater the ambition the group has in terms of the credible difference it can make on those schools that are currently “satisfactory” or “inadequate,” the more likely the funding will be awarded.

### **3.2 Why this approach this year?**

This reflects a new direction of travel coming from Central Government regarding their view of the future role local authorities will have with their schools. The Local Authority will no longer be the default provider of support services for schools, although their corporate parenting role remains for Children Looked After; rather there will be an increased emphasis on schools and settings turning to one another for support. The Aspiration Networks are an attempt to innovate in this new territory to offer assistance to schools in exploring what solutions make a real difference for them and to monitor the impact of successful groupings in order to celebrate and disseminate success as we collectively move into this new way of working. We are at the cusp of a significant change in the role between the Local Authority and schools and are facilitating new models of school support to ensure that our children and young people make greater progress academically than is currently the case.

### **3.3 What is the evidence base?**

Recent research by McKinsey “How the worlds most improved school systems keep getting better” analyses and identifies reform elements to help school systems achieve significant, sustained and widespread gains in student outcomes. Improving system performance ultimately comes down to improving the learning experience of students in their classrooms. The quality of teaching received by our children and young people is key; so too is the leadership of schools. Each particular stage of the school system improvement journey is associated with a unique set of interventions and it is the leaders of the schools that are empowered to take these actions with their staff.

Aspiration Networks are an attempt to identify what has worked in Oxfordshire; to sustain improvements in learning and to spread this practice more widely across our wider family of schools. Schools and subject departments that have delivered great results for their children and young people will be given a wider platform to spread this best practice to those that are seeking to do the same with their pupils. In this way, a school that has just progressed from “satisfactory” to “good” is well placed to assist those that are currently still in the “satisfactory” phase of the journey. Research shows that although each performance stage is associated with a common set of

interventions, there is substantial variation in how a system implements these interventions with regard to their sequence, timing, and roll-out – there is little or no evidence of a “one-size-fits-all” approach to reform implementation. The context of which schools are well suited to support their partners in the Aspiration Networks will, therefore, be key. It may be, for instance, that urban schools and settings are better suited to support other urban schools.

### **3.4 How will it be funded?**

We will seed fund the Aspiration Networks through a number of grants up to a maximum value of £50,000. The grants will need to be match funded by the consortia bidding for the funding. The match funding may be calculated in kind through the involvement of school staff time rather than cash. Networks will be required to meet specified and agreed outcome criteria in order to receive the funding which will then be released as identified milestones are met within their plan. These criteria include activities which help towards narrowing the performance gap of vulnerable groups such as pupils with SEN and Children Looked After.

### **3.5 Who will be leading it?**

The Education Effectiveness Manager will be leading this initiative, with support from Standards and Progress Managers and the Early Intervention Team.

### **3.6 Who will be involved?**

All schools and settings across Oxfordshire including the private sector have an opportunity to be directly or indirectly involved. We hope that groups of schools will be aspirational and involve a significant number of their peers as they come together to drive up standards and attainment for all children and young people. It is expected that Local Leaders in Education (LLEs) will play a key part in stimulating and coordinating interest. Pupil networks will also be considered. Effective practice from the Aspiration Networks will be shared via wider local network meetings and on the Aspiration Network section of the website.

### **3.7 Expectations of all parties**

This is a new and exciting time in changing approaches to school improvement. Our results at KS4 are below the national average, which is very disappointing for us all and does not reflect the hard work and effort all parties have invested. There are examples of great work and practice, but not enough at the moment to give all of our children and young people the chance in life they deserve. We, therefore, need to look at smarter ways of working to ensure our efforts deliver rapidly improved results. The Aspiration Networks are new and this will be a change for us all. It therefore, behoves us all to embrace this opportunity with a can do spirit and to collectively come together to make things work.

Working in partnership with peers, parents and agencies helps schools and settings ensure educational provision offers children and young people equal access and excellent opportunities for successful learning. Good and outstanding provision for all, through enlightened co-operation and solidarity.

### **3.8 What are we trying to achieve?**

- To raise the profile of effective schools and champion the practice that enables all children and young people to achieve the highest standards.
- To harness the energy of creative practice and enthusiastic staff and share this within a wider group of schools and settings.
- To facilitate schools and settings working together in relevant partnerships which benefit the whole community.
- To encourage staff and pupils in schools and settings to act as coaches and mentors for each other.

### **3.9 How will we measure success?**

- Percentage of schools supported that move from a satisfactory or below to good or better either from Ofsted Inspection or an internal Oxfordshire County Council simulated inspection within agreed timeframes.
- Percentage of 'lead' schools in the network who secure good judgements or move to outstanding from an Ofsted inspection or equivalent simulated inspection..
- The Oxfordshire County Council profile of good and outstanding schools improves.
- Staff recruitment and retention improves in areas where support has been offered and effective practice shared.
- The innovative practice developed in networks impacts on the skills, confidence and attitudes of children and young people as evidenced through the use of PASS (pupil attitude to self and school survey).



## **4 Dynamic Leadership and Governance**

### **4.1 What is dynamic Leadership and Governance?**

This is the suite of support and intervention strategies which will empower and enable governing bodies to focus effectively on school improvement, recruit high quality leaders and find innovative leadership solutions.

It includes highlighting and promoting engagement in available development opportunities for both school leaders and the governing body to empower them to drive school improvement.

## 4.2 What will the County Council develop and do differently this year?

For Governing Bodies:

- Provide support and advice for governing bodies, in conjunction with the National College, for the recruitment of new head teachers or the exploration of alternative leadership structures.
- Provide access to high quality support and training for governors countywide, locally and school specific (customised).
- Send school specific summaries of pupil performance data to every head teacher and governing body which will help school leaders and governors to engage in robust school self-evaluation and identify and prioritise areas for improvement.
- Enhance the governor Induction training to include school specific data, thus enabling new governors to understand performance issues and focus more explicitly on how governing bodies contribute to school improvement.
- Encourage new and experienced governors to attend an introduction to performance data session soon after the induction course so that they are better prepared and supported to ask appropriately challenging questions.
- Support the training of Chairs of Governors in conjunction with the National College.
- Encourage suitably experienced Chairs to form a cadre of Local Leaders in Governance to mentor and support chairs of governors in the more vulnerable schools and apply to train with the National College to become Leaders In Governance.
- Broker high quality clerking which is pivotal to ensuring that governing bodies operate effectively and statutory duties are met.
- Encourage all governing bodies to engage in effective self-evaluation and improvement of governance by providing bursaries to schools pursuing Governor Mark accreditation.
- Undertake Strategic Governance Reviews to assist governing bodies to understand their own effectiveness and develop strategies to improve governance.
- Where appropriate, identify Additional Governors or Mentors to support improvement and where necessary apply to the Secretary of State to remove a governing body and replace it with an Interim Executive Board.
- Seek out governors from business and other backgrounds to strengthen the range of skills available to governing bodies
- Recommend that all councillors become a governor of at least one school in their locality and show an interest in the schools in their wards.
- Expect all LA governors to take part in a comprehensive training programme



- Ensure the clerk to governing bodies is included in all relevant communication

For School Leaders:

- Facilitate the production and publication of a coherent portfolio of professional development in conjunction with schools, Local Leaders in Education (LLEs) the National College and other partners to ensure that all schools in Oxfordshire have access to high quality professional development.
- Support and broker the deployment of LLEs to add capacity to support and intervention strategies.
- Encourage sharing of best leadership practice through networks and partnership
- The LA intends to make greater use of its statutory powers to call schools of continuing concern to account and to recommend innovative and more timely solutions.

### **4.3 What is the evidence base?**

High quality leadership is absolutely critical to school effectiveness. Appointing high quality leaders and seeking innovative leadership solutions is the critical factor most likely to result in improved outcomes for children and to drive school performance.

There is a substantial evidence base from the National College and from Ofsted (e.g. *Leadership of more than one school. An evaluation of the impact of federated schools*), that innovative models which include shared headship in collaboration or federation have a significant positive impact on outcomes for children.

The governing body complements and enhances school leadership by providing support and challenge, ensuring that all statutory duties are met, appointing the head teacher and holding them to account for the impact of the school's work on improving outcomes for all pupils.  
*School Governance – Learning from the Best – Ofsted May 2011*

Ofsted evidence shows that: 'governors are most effective when they are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and use the knowledge gained to challenge the school, understand its strengths and weaknesses and contribute to shaping its strategic direction. In contrast, weak governance is likely to fail to ensure statutory requirements are met, for example those related to safeguarding. In addition,

where governance is weak, the involvement of governors in monitoring the quality of provision is not well enough defined or sufficiently rigorous and challenging.’ *The Annual Report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills 2009/10, Ofsted, 2010*

It is essential that Leaders and Governors have access to appropriate high quality support, training and coaching in order to ensure that they are able to lead and sustain school improvement. In the Ofsted research *School Governance – Learning from the Best – Ofsted May 2011*, a key feature of outstanding governance was that the governing bodies constantly reflect on their own effectiveness and readily make changes to improve. They consider their own training needs, as well as how they organise their work.

#### **4.4 What we will provide for Maintained and Aided Schools?**

- The LA will continue to fund the support for governing bodies through the recruitment and selection process and to assist governing bodies seeking to establish shared headship through collaboration or federation.
- The LA will, where appropriate, identify Additional Governors or Mentors to support improvement and where necessary apply to the Secretary of State to remove a governing body and replace it with an Interim Executive Board.
- The LA will part fund the accreditation process for Governor Mark.
- Support filling vacant governor positions working with the School Governors’ One Stop Shop (SGOSS).

#### **4.5 What we will provide for all schools and academies?**

- The LA will provide access to high quality support and training countywide, locally and school specific (customised) via the traded Service Level Agreement.
- The LA will provide a brokered high quality clerking service, pivotal to ensuring that governing bodies work effectively and statutory duties are met, via the Service Level Agreement.

#### **4.6 Link to Targeted Group of Schools**

- In order to provide co-ordinated support to identified targeted schools in category 3 or 4, the LA will fund 30 Strategic Governance Reviews each year to assist governing bodies to understand their own effectiveness and develop strategies to improve governance. Governing bodies will be supported by a designated School Improvement Officer to help them understand priority development areas for their school and by the School Governance and Accountability Service to understand how their structures and working arrangements can be improved to ensure that they effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities and hold the school to account.
- In order to strengthen the capacity of governing bodies of targeted schools, the LA will seek to recruit and deploy particularly experienced volunteers provided through the School Governors' One Stop Shop or through local recruitment to LA governor or community governor vacancies. Stronger links with the business community will be forged to support this agenda.
- Governing bodies in schools in the targeted group (category 3 or 4) will be provided with a designated SIO (School Improvement Officer) to support effective Headteacher Performance Management.

#### **4.7 Who will be leading it?**

- A dedicated SIO will be allocated to guide governing bodies of maintained and aided schools through the process of recruitment and to support the consideration of alternative leadership options
- The School Governance and Accountability Manager will manage the process of Strategic Governance Reviews
- The Manager for Traded Services for Governors will lead the review of training and prepare SLAs for Governor Development and Clerking
- The Manager for Traded Services for Governors will allocate governance advisers to work with every partnership to assist in the development of a programme of locally delivered training
- The Educational Transformation Manager will work with schools, LLEs, National College and Dioceses to produce a portfolio of leadership and professional development activities available throughout Oxfordshire.

## 4.8 How we expect schools and governing bodies to help

- Ensure that the school budget is managed efficiently and that funding for vulnerable groups, including the Pupil Premium, is spent appropriately.
- Take the lead in identifying their support and development needs. Governing bodies need to evaluate their own performance and access training and evaluation tools (Governor Mark – National Standards for School Governance) to assess their skills, knowledge and working practices.
- Ensure all newly appointed governors attend Induction Training. Ensure that the governing body are aware of performance and progress in all phases (including Foundation Stage) of the school and for all groups of children.
- Be proactive in helping Governor Services to identify opportunities to deploy particularly experienced volunteers to vacancies on their governing body.
- Ensure that the governing body has the necessary collective skills to support and challenge. It is the responsibility of all governors and governing bodies to ensure that they are well informed and have the appropriate skills and knowledge to support the school and to hold it to account.
- Governing bodies in schools which are currently satisfactory or inadequate will be expected to:
  - Actively engage with the LA designated SIO and agree a Raising Achievement Plan or School Improvement Plan which will focus on key strategies to move rapidly to good or outstanding.
  - Work with members of the School Governance team undertaking a Strategic Governance Review in order to assist in the identification of the skills, knowledge and working practices which will enable governors to focus sharply on school improvement.
- When it becomes necessary to recruit a new school leader, it is beholden on the governing body to engage appropriately with the professional advice offered and to appoint only when governors are absolutely confident that the candidate has the skills, ability and capacity to ensure that the school becomes or continues to be good or outstanding.
- Governing bodies in Good or Outstanding schools will need to ensure that they appoint an effective external adviser to assist them in the Headteacher Performance Management process.
- Governing bodies are responsible for ensuring independent challenge in place of the former School Improvement Partner

## 4.9 How will we measure success?

- Number of active partnerships/ collaborations and federations.
- Feedback from school staff and governors about the availability and appropriateness of training.
- Governing bodies have effective succession planning strategies.
- Strategies to strengthen governance in 'satisfactory' schools have been implemented to agreed timescales.
- Governing bodies' understanding of issues revealed by pupil performance data and active involvement in developing and monitoring actions to address them.
- 100% of new governors attend 'understanding school data' course.
- Evidence of active recruitment of governors with identified skills to target governing bodies with significant vacancies or skill gaps.
- Positive impact on pupil performance as a result of more active interventions by governors.
- When all schools are judged to be at least good.



## **5 Early Intervention & A Good Start in Life**

### **5.1 What is the Early Intervention aspect?**

Early Intervention in the context of our Strategic Education Plan consists of two particular aspects:

- a) It refers to the important work that needs to be built on with families through the evidence based successful approaches used in our children's centres and early years' settings; when children are at an early stage of development and it is vital to ensure that they get the very best start in life.
- b) It refers to the continuum of interventions we work on with families in partnership with schools when there are problems and difficulties at any stage; ensuring that:
  - i) Children are attending school, are emotionally ready to learn, aspire to do well and are resilient enough to overcome future difficulties.
  - ii) Parents feel supported and able to encourage their children's learning.

- iii) Schools are flexible in their approach to support the most vulnerable children and meet their needs.

## 5.2 Why is this approach an important part of the strategic plan?

All aspects of early intervention seek to create strength across the system, building solid foundations and thereby helping to iron out inequalities and inconsistencies. The Directorate's new Early Intervention Service has a key part to play in supporting children and young people and their families from birth to 19 where there are problems and difficulties which may prevent them from achieving their full potential. Making sure that all children and young people are attending, are engaged and ready to learn, is a major contributor of success across the education system.

The national evidence base and strategic emphasis on early intervention is unequivocal. In the July 2011 second report by Graham Allen, he states:

'We have all recently conducted reports for HM Government in this field and what we agree on so much; we would particularly underline that all five of us strongly support the Report's emphasis on the cost effectiveness of Early Intervention. We feel it is vital that the Government now begins the groundwork to enable our late reaction culture to be transcended by an Early Intervention one. Our collective view is that the moment for a serious sustained programme of Early Intervention, which is promoted inside and outside government has arrived.'  
(Supported by Dame Clare Tickell, Rt Hon Frank Field, Prof Eileen Munro, Jayne Mosely OBE).

In addition the Government's response to the Munro Report has been to accept in principle recommendation 10, that councils should have a legal duty to provide early intervention services.

### 5.3 What is the evidence base?

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early and pre-school learning, together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2011

Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across their life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years (starting in the womb) has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and well-being, educational achievement and economic status. Marmot, M. (2010).

The Impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage (Feb 2011) noted that ‘Local Authorities should consider how training, support and challenge can be targeted to address the existing differences in capacity and quality of provision between different types of provider.

We have significant local and national evidence on which to build.

In Oxfordshire we closely monitor Ofsted outcomes for early year’s settings and Children’s Centres and examine the EYFSP points scores:



- Settings with low scores are offered targeted training and additional quality improvement support from advisory teachers, advanced skills teachers, practitioners in outstanding settings and other expert input relevant to the objectives in their action plan.
- Advisory Teachers', reports highlight action points for development for each school and setting.
- Early Childhood Rating Scales (ECERS) audits and progress measures.
- Infant and Toddler Early Rating Scales (ITERS) audits and progress measures.
- Evaluations of the impact of targeted training and focused projects, for example, Boys' Writing.

Successful case studies from individual projects, for example, Creativity project, Banbury Initiative, Evaluations for each of the Early Years Professional Schemes (Observation Assessment and Planning, Birth to Three Language Project, Disadvantaged Two Year Olds).

Local evidence and learning from the Success Partnership and a wide range of separate early intervention services have also supported this direction and led to the Oxfordshire County Council single multi-disciplinary service which is cited as an example of good emerging practice on the C4EO website.

Evidence of best practice from other Local Authorities is being embraced by the new early intervention service. Evidence suggests that adopting a range of approaches to supporting children and young people's learning that are not only school focussed, results in the greatest success and has achieved outstanding results even in areas of the highest levels of poverty. Tower Hamlets has used this approach and pupils achieving at least 5 A\* to C passes at GCSE have risen from 44% in 2002 to 81% this year. Practice has included the following:

- Dedicated staff supporting parental engagement with a strong focus on how parents can proactively encourage their children's learning.
- Mentoring and collegiate support across schools brokered by the local authority.
- An integrated approach to out-of-school activities, making the links across youth services and extended services and ensuring children and young people's learning is built into their approaches.
- Establishing regular Communication Meetings between all schools and the local authority that adopt a supportive problem solving approach.

## 5.4 What will be taking place in 2012?

- Stage two of developing the Early Intervention Service includes a review of the impact and outcomes from the work to date of our 44 children's centres, securing what is working well and going forward to include evidence based work; continuing to reach at least as many families as currently and aspiring to extend that reach. This may require re-commissioning and re-framing the expected approach to ensure the Early Intervention Service can effectively support and strengthen the 0-19 continuum of support to families with multiple problems.
- Embedding the new Early Intervention Service to support families to ensure children are fully attending and engaged in their learning; raising aspirations in individual families and across communities.
- Developing a Performance Management Framework against which to test the impact of early intervention services on key outcomes for children and young people and to work with the National Youth Agency to test out an outcome based approach for youth work.
- Promoting the importance of parental involvement in support of children's learning and with schools and other partners developing strategies to support this.
- Ensuring that out of school activities and youth provision support the education and learning for children and young people in school.
- Enlisting support from all partners in all of these agendas.
- Implement Oxfordshire's Quality Improvement Process – as part of the Early Years Improvement cycle Early Years Advisory teachers provide support and challenge to all schools and settings. The service has been expanded for year 2011-2012 to include all Full Core and Graduated Children's Centres.
- Provide targeted training for schools with consistently low EYFSP outcomes.
- Learning from best practice nationally and ensuring web-based links and toolkits are available for schools and settings to access.
- Develop new evidence based strategies and target resources to improve outcomes for children from ethnic minority families and those with English as an Additional Language.
- Develop Hub based provision to provide education in tandem with wrap around pupil and family services to meet the needs of identified vulnerable groups such as Children Looked After.
- Increase the opportunities for multi-agency work to support Ten to Two, Hub and Children's Centres.
- Develop and implement new assessment and reporting strategies, including statutory moderation requirements.
- Develop comprehensive transitional practice between and within settings and schools by providing opportunities for joint training, specific training on continuing the learning journey and local networks and forums
- Continue to offer opportunities for practitioners to gain relevant qualifications.

- Develop and utilise the knowledge and skills of Early Years Professionals and Advanced Skills Teachers to support quality improvement across a wider range of schools and settings.
- Increase the number of schools, Private Voluntary and Independent Settings (PVI'S) and Children's Centres that are achieving good/ outstanding Ofsted judgements by providing targeted support . Providers will be given support according to identified need. This support includes visits from advisory teachers, targeted training , networks, cluster meetings and opportunities to be involved in action research projects

### **5.5 How will it be funded?**

- Using existing Oxfordshire County Council funding for Early Intervention, which includes Children's Centres and the Hubs and Early Years funding.
- Pooled budgets and joint commissioning arrangements under discussion with partners.
- Bidding for additional funding as it becomes available to support this agenda.

### **5.6 Who will be leading it?**

Deputy Director Education and Early Intervention

### **5.7 Who will be involved?**

- All staff working in Early Years.

- All Oxfordshire County Council Early Intervention teams, including Children’s Centres and countywide teams.
- All partners and in particular schools; voluntary, community and faith groups; health services; police, City and District councils
- All parents and carers.

## **5.8 Expectations of all parties**

- Integrated approaches; contributions from all partners to the achievement of the performance outcomes in the Early Intervention Service
- Data sharing protocols to be agreed and complied with.
- All partners to consider how pooling budgets and aligning strategies can lead to meeting the aspiration for a single countywide multi-agency Early Intervention Service.
- All partners to listen to the views of children, young people and families and to ensure that a co-production model of planning and delivering services is developed and sustained.
- Sharing of data analysis and interpretation which informs agreed objectives for the strategic plans for education
- Provision of up to date and relevant information for all schools, settings and children’s centres available on the Oxfordshire internet site

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

- Sustained improvements at EYFSP and evidence of that investment improving outcomes at later key stages.
- To improve results at Early Years Foundation Stage in terms of statistical neighbours and national averages and narrowing the gap for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.
- Improved outcomes and accelerated progress for all children and young people at all key stages.
- Excellent school attendance and engagement for all and improved attainment for the most vulnerable children and young people

- Every Oxfordshire school and setting to be at least “good” as judged by Ofsted.
- Children in the EYFS will access their entitlement to high quality provision in all types of settings and schools.
- Successful implementation of the refreshed EYFS will enable all practitioners with responsibility for care, learning and well-being of young children to be cognisant of key developments and competent to deliver them.
- Reviews undertaken by settings and schools regarding parent/carer involvement will demonstrate a greater range of strategies to involve parents impacting on children’s learning.
- Reduced school exclusions
- Reduction in first time entrants into the youth justice system
- Reduction in teenage pregnancy rates
- Reduction in numbers of young people admitted to hospital for non-accidental injuries including self-harm
- Support to young carers
- Reduction in substance misuse
- Improvement in attendance and attainment for children looked after
- Parents are fully supported in promoting and encouraging their children’s learning
- Out of school youth activities and provision support the learning of children and young people in schools



## **6 Excellent Teaching**

### **6.1 What is Excellent Teaching?**

According to the famous quote by Aristotle, “teaching is the highest form of understanding.”

Excellent teaching is a highly complex, context specific activity. If you ask “what makes an excellent teacher?” you will get one set of answers. But if you ask “what makes an excellent English teacher?” you will get a slightly different set of answers. And if you move to an even more specific context, “what explains the capacity of a teacher to get students interested in Shakespeare?” you will get a third, deeper and richer set of answers. Excellent teachers have a whole repertoire of metaphors, demonstrations, stratagems, and examples to transform their understanding of the subject into terms that their pupils can grasp. The metaphor for excellent teaching changes from teaching as transmission to teaching as transformation. ‘It is teaching as the representation of ideas of a field in ways which are comprehensible to and which will touch the souls as well as the minds of the children and young people’. Viewed this way excellent teaching becomes the highest form of understanding. Aristotle’s strictest measure of whether or not someone really knew something was whether they could turn around and teach it. Does the teacher know the subject so well that she or he has an incredibly rich repertoire of ways in

which to explain each concept? And if none of those works, can she or he devise a new one on the spot? If so they might reasonably be labelled excellent.

Other attempts to define excellent teaching are:

- Teaching which is driven by high expectations where learners are stretched, challenged, engaged and make excellent progress.
- Teaching which is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils building on prior learning and understanding and individual capabilities.
- Teaching which systematically and effectively checks pupils' understanding so that all are aware of how to improve.
- Teaching which inspires further learning.

## **6.2 Why this focus this year?**

Excellent teaching has always been at the core of being an excellent school. However, there is renewed emphasis on the quality of teaching in the new Ofsted framework from January 2012, where there are a reduced number of judgements. It is unlikely that a school will be judged outstanding overall unless the quality of teaching is also outstanding. In consultation with an Oxfordshire focus group of young people through the Sounding Boards and Youth Parliament, this was identified as the most important feature of an excellent school and the top priority of young people.

The importance of Teaching Schools in supporting local initiatives to secure a well trained workforce characterised by excellent teaching is becoming increasingly important. Oxfordshire does not yet have a Teaching School, although it does have an outstanding Children's Centre and Nursery School that has been awarded status as an Early Years Teaching centre. The project will run over two years and will be led by the Penn Green research centre. Skilled practitioners from the Teaching Centre will develop their capacity to train leaders and staff from surrounding settings and settings beyond their reach. This approach will facilitate the sharing of best practice, skills and understanding to develop more effective services and help Oxfordshire settings to have a greater impact, particularly for those most in need. The Local

Authority sees this as an important initiative and will encourage the submission of applications for Teaching School status from our eligible outstanding schools

The Secretary of State is currently consulting on Master Teaching status; an initiative that builds on similar previous schemes such as Excellent Teachers and Advanced Skills teachers.

To qualify for the title of Master Teacher, their pupils' outcomes must be "outstanding", although the document stops short of recommending a floor target. They must be analysed in the context of school, national and international standards, it insists. As well as displaying a "deep and extensive" knowledge of their subject, a master teacher should "command the classroom" and display "consistently outstanding and motivating, often inspiring" teaching. There should be a "stimulating culture of scholarship alongside a sense of mutual respect" in lessons, and they should share their expertise with colleagues and immerse themselves in extra-curricular activities, the draft guidelines say.

### **6.3 What is the evidence base?**

Already we have a secure and firm base to build on and there is evidence of good quality teaching in many of our schools. Most Oxfordshire schools have effective systems of self-evaluation in place where the quality of classroom teaching, including the use of differentiation for vulnerable pupil groups, is regularly monitored and many schools provide opportunities to share best practice within and between schools. Each school should build on its own evidence base of strengths and areas of development to identify priorities in the improvement of teaching.

In addition, we have an evidence base provided by Ofsted. As at August 2011, there were 184 schools in Oxfordshire graded outstanding or good by Ofsted. However, there are still over 100 schools graded less than good where the quality of teaching remains integral to raising standards and to achieve a higher Ofsted grade. Common themes related to the quality of teaching taken from Ofsted reports include:

“Teaching is most effective when lessons are well paced with a variety of activities to engage students and opportunities are available for group and independent learning.

“In lessons where students make less progress, the aims of the learning are not clear enough.”



“In the best lessons, assessment information is used most effectively to ensure different groups of students are set appropriate work.”

“Teaching though, is not yet consistently good because the pace in classes is variable.”

“In the most successful lessons, teaching promotes pupils' creativity, independence and self-awareness. For example, older pupils were recording podcasts about global warming for the class radio located on the school website. Pupils say they learn much better this way because it is both challenging and fun.”

#### **6.4 Who will be leading it?**

As is currently the case, head teachers in each school are accountable for leading improvements in teaching; distributing responsibility to all senior and middle managers and all classroom teachers. To support this agenda, the Educational Effectiveness Manager will arrange for individual school, partnership and county level performance data to be distributed at an early stage each year to all schools, highlighting where there are areas of successful pupil outcomes in order to promote better school to school working. Standards and Progress Managers across the 0-19 age range, and those supporting vulnerable learners will ensure that School Improvement Officers will be allocated to specific schools where targeted support may be required.

#### **6.5 Who will be involved?**

All Oxfordshire head teachers, senior and middle leaders, classroom teachers, governors, and School Improvement Officers have a key role in ensuring that the quality of teaching is of a high standard and that the proportion of good and outstanding lessons increases in each school. The universities also play a key part through support for teacher training and the National College will be increasingly involved in supporting this agenda in schools across the country.

There is an expectation that schools will continue to share and access examples of best teaching and will arrange cost effective and varied professional development opportunities for staff. The Local Authority is keen to support the development of school partnerships and it is expected that the formation of aspiration networks will contribute to improving the quality of and learning about what constitutes excellent teaching, across schools and settings.

School Improvement Officers will help targeted schools in identifying strategies for the improvement of teaching and in arranging support, where necessary, from specialist advisers for excellent teaching for pupils with SEN and Additional Educational Needs. There will be a greater focus on identifying which interventions can evidence most impact in order to further target resources and effectively share good practice.

Where support is required to improve the leadership of teaching and learning; it will be appropriate to use national and local leaders in education.

## **6.6 Expectations of all parties**

All parties should have high expectations of themselves and each other in ensuring that Oxfordshire's children receive the very best teaching possible. Where teaching is less than good, we all have a responsibility to draw it to the attention of the teacher themselves and to their leaders and to be persistent if things do not quickly improve.

Detailed guidance on effective teaching and learning is provided by Ofsted alongside the following examples of questions asked of all school leaders, classroom teachers and school improvement officers in order to meet the expectations required of excellent classroom teaching:

- Can all pupils make the links between previous/new learning?
- Do they consistently produce work of a good standard?

- Are pupils working independently? Are they self-reliant - do they make the most of the choices they are given or do they find it difficult to make choices? To what extent do pupils take responsibility for their own learning?
- How well do pupils collaborate with others?
- Are pupils creative, do they show initiative?
- How well do pupils follow routines/expectations?
- Are pupils interested in their work and enjoying what they are learning? Or are they easily distracted?
- Do pupils have targets and do they understand what they mean/what to do to achieve them?
- Are different groups making the same/different progress?
- Are pupils making gains at a good rate in lessons and over time as shown in their work and the school's records?
- How are weak/good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills affecting pupils' progress?
- Are assessment for learning strategies being used to enable teaching to differentiate effectively?
- Are activities pitched at the right level to challenge pupils of different abilities and with different additional needs?
- How well does marking identify strengths and diagnose next steps to improvement?
- Are teachers alert to pupils' lack of understanding during lessons?
- How effectively do staff use questioning to gauge pupils' understanding?
- Are expectations of behaviour sufficiently high or does poor behaviour impact on the use of independent learning techniques?

Where every effort has been made to support teachers to improve and there is still inadequate progress; then the LA expects formal procedures to be expedited as quickly as possible.

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

- More consistent high quality teaching leading to better pupil outcomes and progress.
- More motivated and engaged learners.
- More Oxfordshire schools judged good or better by Ofsted.

- Oxfordshire exam results improving in relation to national benchmarks and statistical neighbours.
- A reduced performance gap for vulnerable pupil groups.
- More teachers being qualified and successful moderators in their subject or area of expertise.



## **7 Targeted Support**

### **7.1 What is Targeted Support?**

The Local Authority can exercise its statutory powers to intervene where schools become a cause for concern. Targeted support is provided to those schools which are of concern to the Local Authority and those at risk of underperformance.

The level of support is relative to the category the school is in. It includes schools and settings:

- a) Below the floor standards.
- b) At risk of falling below the floor standards or are showing declining performance.
- c) Schools judged satisfactory or below by Ofsted.
- d) Where pupils consistently underperform and this is recognised in stagnant inspection judgements.
- e) Where specific groups of pupils underperform even if the overall school performance is good.

Schools are categorised and supported as follows:

- Category 4: those schools being given a notice to improve , or being placed in Special Measures by an Ofsted Inspection Team; or considered by the Local Authority to be vulnerable to falling into a category at the next inspection .
- Below Floor Standard (BFS) Schools
- Schools in Category 3b – satisfactory with only satisfactory capacity to improve.
- Schools in Category 3a – satisfactory with good capacity to improve
- Schools where there is evidence of underperformance in identified vulnerable groups.

The Local Authority is required by the Secretary of State to ensure that there is a plan in place for every school below the Floor Standards and that alternative structural solutions will be sought for schools that have been persistently below the floor standards over a number of years. The Local Authority is also required to ensure that a Statement of Action is in place for schools judged by Ofsted to be inadequate; either requiring a notice to improve or special measures. Local Authority funding prioritises these schools.

Where a school is judged to be inadequate following an inspection by Ofsted; the LA has 10 days in which to write a full Statement of Action which sets out the plan for the swift turnaround of that school.

In 2011-12, most resources for targeted support are aimed at the 20 schools below floor standards the further 20 in danger of not meeting rising floor standards and in providing proportionately more support to assist Oxfordshire schools judged satisfactory or below by Ofsted. Resources are also prioritised for schools where there is a performance gap for identified vulnerable pupil groups such as Special Educational Needs (SEN), Children Looked After (CLA), English as an Additional Language (EAL), Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) groups.

The Local Authority is planning to use its data and information systems more carefully and to work with head teachers and chairs of governors to develop an early warning system tool for identifying schools at risk of underperformance, in order to support the school or setting to get back on track more quickly.

Limited resources inevitably mean that the Directorate will be adopting a lighter touch approach to outstanding/good schools. We are mindful, however, of the importance of maintaining good performance in schools judged good and outstanding and the importance of all schools continuing to improve. We expect that good and outstanding schools will play an important part in the work across the Aspiration Networks, leading the search for good practice not only across Oxfordshire, but also beyond our boundaries and will support each other to continue to improve. We expect that governing bodies of all schools, including those judged good and outstanding, will benefit from the new approach to training and support for governing bodies.

## **7.2 Why this focus this year?**

There is renewed commitment to ensure that pupils achieve their full potential and that, as a county, we improve on previous performance. We need to respond to the challenge of rising performance indicators as benchmarks of national standards and to a new Ofsted inspection framework from January 2012 which will also raise the standards bar. The direction of travel nationally is away from a centralist approach to school improvement to placing primary responsibility with schools themselves; requiring the Local Authority to shift its working practice to brokering support for schools in need of intervention. This includes developing school to school(s) support and the promotion of more effective partnerships involving successful schools, head teachers and lead practitioners. However, whilst schools continue to be maintained by the local authority and in the absence of changes to legislation regarding its statutory responsibilities, the Local Authority will continue to intervene where schools are causing concern and will champion the outcomes for children. As corporate parent the LA has direct responsibility for the outcomes for Children Looked After and will ensure that the highest quality education is available to meet the needs of these children across the whole county.

The new Ofsted inspection will focus on the performance of identified groups. School Improvement Officers will work closely with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Equality and Diversity Achievement Service (EDAS) advisers to improve targeted subject underperformance and develop the relevant skills and confidence in school staff to sustain progress to model effective practice for schools.

The change in working practices of EDAS (Ethnic Diversity & Achievement Service) has resulted in a more strategic approach to building school capacity by developing localised learning networks supported by practice champions and linked to the Early Intervention Service Hubs. This practice can also provide a delivery model to address the needs of the increasing numbers of disengaged pupils, which at times results in demand on spaces in the Oxfordshire Hospital School and the resources linked to Meadowbrook College. The Early Intervention

Service, alongside schools and the School Effectiveness team, will need to explore strategies to improve early identification of disengagement with schools and families and can support schools to develop effective whole schools strategies to support pupils at risk.

### **7.3 What is the evidence base?**

Although we have a number of outstanding schools; including one quarter of county secondary schools, overall 35% of our schools have been judged less than good by Ofsted. Our good schools also acknowledge that they do not always manage to sustain improvements and that there are often disappointing inconsistencies across subjects and between groups of children.

Oxfordshire has less than 3% in an Ofsted category; compared with 9% nationally (2010). We have a good record of improving schools once they have entered a category, using a range of strategies, including the placing of Executive Head teachers and use of Interim Executive Boards.

The number of schools below the floor target has risen from 13 in 2010 to 21 in 2011. As the floor will continue to rise in the next 3 years, we need to anticipate and target schools at risk of failing to meet the new standards.

There is strong evidence that targeted support can help schools to make a step change. Over the last three years we have built up a strong set of evidence detailing the strategies and approaches that are most successful in raising attainment in schools. We are able to take the most effective parts of national programmes and use these with underperforming schools. In particular, the Improving Schools Programme (ISP) for below floor schools and Developing Successful Schools (DSS) for successful schools that should be doing better. The successes in these programmes have been reported to Children's Scrutiny Select Committee and the jointly hosted City Seminar.

We have seen significant rises at vulnerable schools which have engaged fully in the targeted programmes; including Rose Hill, Wood Farm and St Christopher's Cowley.

Nationally, schools that have developed strategic approaches to improving behaviour and attendance with a focus on engagement, whole school ethos and developing positive attitudes have not only reduced exclusions and persistent absence, but also raised their standards. We should all have high expectations of all pupils and support schools to develop relevant curriculum packages and approaches to ensure



young people remain engaged in education. The LA plans to continue to invest in partnership work with schools, further education colleges, third sector organisations and alternative providers to develop the appropriate skill set in their staff and to provide on-going training, kite marks and quality assurance for a wider range of education providers to support schools where an additional package is required.

The following projects have had a particularly strong impact and are being further developed this year:

- J2O Project
- MaST (working in and out of Oxfordshire training primary Mathematics teachers to Masters level and then using their skills to help less able teachers. Working with Reading University.)
- Every Child Counts (ECC) – working across Oxon, Bucks and MK with Edge Hill University.
- Every Child A Writer (ECAW).
- World Capital of Reading Bid.
- Statutory KS1 and KS2 Assessment and Moderation requirements will be met for 2012 (includes KS1 Phonics test).
- Development of the National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), which could be developed to deliver a lead SENCO programme.
- On-going training and development of dyslexia awareness and identification of early literacy problems.
- Building on the successful summer school experience for Children Looked After.
- Support for schools to train tutors to specialise in supporting new arrivals and pupils with English as an additional language.
- Early Years Targeted training – there is evidence of improved EYFSP outcomes for those schools attending this training
- Boys' writing – all schools involved in project demonstrated an increase in EYFSP outcomes for writing
- ECERS – Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales- evidence shows a significant number of settings taking part in the project moved from OFSTED Satisfactory to Good

## **7.4 How will it be funded?**

The Local Authority has retained a budget for targeted support as has been the case previously. However, the overall funding is much reduced and the number of staff employed by the Directorate is also reduced. There is an increasing expectation that schools will need to set aside funding for their own improvement journey.

The Schools Forum has agreed to further fund for this academic year some specialist programmes in the 'Every Child' range.

Funding for school improvement nationally is moving increasingly to schools so that head teachers and governors need to plan and fund their school development plan from delegated funding. The increasing imperative to work in school partnership is partly based on the cost effectiveness of pooling resources to work collaboratively on school improvement.

## **7.5 Who will be leading it?**

The Educational Effectiveness Manager will be supported by 3 Standards and Progress Managers. They will manage a small team of (10) School Improvement Officers and specialist practitioners who will be allocated to each targeted school to provide challenge and support in helping the school to deliver school improvement objectives.

Delivery of the strategy will be through a variety of methods:

- Local Authority School Improvement Officers and the Primary Support team will be supplemented with part time seconded Head teachers from good and outstanding schools – following a successful deployment strategy of the past two years.
- Excellent practitioners in SEN, EAL, BAME and CLA will be able to provide advice and support, as well as training to develop these skills for identified staff in schools and settings.
- Support will also be commissioned from LLEs (Local Leaders in Education), NLEs (National Leaders in Education) and other external professionals as appropriate.
- We will also actively seek school to school solutions to address underperformance.

## **7.6 Who will be involved?**

All our schools judged satisfactory or below have been allocated a School Improvement Officer (SIO) who will help schools in identifying improvement strategies and in providing a programme of support to deliver the required outcomes. Where appropriate for particular schools, the SIO will seek to involve the expertise of Local and National Leaders in Education (LLE/NLE), school partnerships e.g. OCL (Oxford City Learning), Training Schools e.g. Cherwell, Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) and other lead practitioners in the county.

## **7.7 What will be taking place to support vulnerable groups?**

- Identified advisers from EDAS/SEN to play an active role in task groups to support below floor standards schools.
- Joint planned intervention of SIOs and EDAS/SEN advisers to share best practice and develop common skill sets. Interventions to include the refreshed SEN pre-Ofsted health-check.
- Continued promotion of national award for SENCOs and the development of leading SENCO groups to provide additional support for underperforming schools and to distil training in dyslexia and early literacy difficulties.
- Support for schools and settings with high levels of EAL learners and new arrivals. Improved capacity to support initial assessments leading to appropriate learning packages relevant to the identified needs.
- Development of web based resources and on-line forum to promote improved learning for all BAME, EAL GRT and CLA groups.
- Introduction of the Pupil Attitude to Self and School Survey (PASS) that will support assessment and early identification of disengagement and provide strategies to support learning in core subjects.
- Development of staffed satellite provision within Hubs to support community based learning for pupils with poor attendance and/or early signs of disengagement.
- Development of outreach provision from Meadowbrook College and Oxfordshire Hospital School to meet the needs of disengaged pupils in the school or setting.

- Consideration of quality mark for alternative provision based on delivery of high quality functional and social and emotional skills supported by training and quality assurance from School Effectiveness team.

## **7.8 Expectations of all parties**

- To set aspirational targets for the success of all pupils at all key stages and achieve those targets; by raising standards and accelerating progress for all pupils.
- To ensure that all Oxfordshire schools receive the challenge and support necessary to become good in Ofsted terms, and in the wider sense, so that parents have confidence in the educational provision available.
- To further develop Oxfordshire County Council traded services so that Oxfordshire can support schools and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) across the county and beyond.
- For schools to work in partnership to provide a network of support.

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

Oxfordshire's performance in national tests and assessments at all key stages will be above national averages and should achieve top quartile performance nationally. Within the next two years, there will be no schools in an Ofsted category and we will be moving towards the goal of every school good or better. At their next inspection, all schools will cross a grade boundary in an upwards direction.

- Narrowing of the performance gap for all vulnerable pupil groups.
- Skilled and confident education effectiveness staff, able to support schools and settings on a wider improvement agenda.
- Senior Leaders in schools and settings with a wider knowledge of the SEN practice which impacts on raised standards.
- Skilled SENCOs leading on further SEN improvement with satisfactory schools and settings.
- Pupils with EAL confident in accessing the mainstream curriculum and achieving positive outcomes.

- Schools and settings (including Hubs) will be able to use data from PASS to show progress of disengaged and vulnerable pupils. Use of this qualitative data is used termly to measure attitudes to learning and alerts staff to potential areas for possible underperformance which can then be addressed.
- Satellite provision in hubs improves re-integration with mainstream schools and other full time educational settings.
- Reduced fixed period and permanent exclusions.
- Reduced use of out of county educational provision.
- Improved attendance.
- A wide range of high quality alternative education providers to enhance the school curriculum offer leading to improved attendance and engagement.



## **8 Campaigns**

### **8.1 What is the Campaign?**

There is enormous interest in improving educational outcomes across the county from a wide range of people in addition to those professionally and directly engaged in delivering educational provision or related services. County Councillors, the District Councils, parents, the media, libraries, the Dioceses, our Mosques, the universities, fire and rescue service, businesses, children and young people, health, police and voluntary sector partners to name just a few all have an interest and many have demonstrated their commitment to add support for improvements to the educational achievements of our children.

The campaign is a proposal to harness that wider support by selecting one theme per year that would be a compelling, easily understood campaign that everyone across the county could get behind and support simultaneously.

In selecting one theme, it does not mean that all work on other areas for improvement would stop or resources be diverted or diluted. Professionals working across the education sector will, of course, continue to work on the wider improvement agendas as appropriate and will draw upon wider support where possible.

## 8.2 Why this campaign this year and what are we trying to achieve?

We are suggesting the campaign for 2012 should be **Every Oxfordshire Child a Good Reader**. This would have value based upon what we know about the importance of reading to success in all aspects of education, the advent of the phonics test at age 6 in 2012 and the aspiration for the City to be the World Book Capital in 2014.

Since 2001 UNESCO has nominated a World Book Capital City to acknowledge the best year-long programme proposed by a City to promote books and foster reading. Oxford has unparalleled resources and a world renowned economy in place to support a programme of this kind. The bid estimates that there are probably more major culturally diverse authors based in or around Oxford than in any comparable city in the world. The bid is being co-ordinated by Oxford Inspires – the Cultural Development Agency for Oxfordshire – on behalf of a steering committee made up of the following partners:

- The Bodleian Libraries
- The Story Museum
- Oxfam
- University of Oxford
- Oxford Brookes University
- Oxford University Press
- Oxford City Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Oxford Literary Festival
- Blackwell's

### 8.3 What is the evidence base?

We know that having a good start at school is critical to further achievements in later years. Children who achieve well at EYFSP and at KS1 and 2 generally go on to achieve well at KS4 and beyond.

Higher-quality pre-schools produce greater long-term benefits in outcomes for children. In England, a study that controlled for background influences showed that, by age 11, children who attended high-quality pre-schools significantly outperformed those who had not attended pre-school on literacy and numeracy tests - Melhuish, E. (2011) – From Department for Education and Department of Health Evidence Pack.

Reading Recovery is a short-term intervention for children who have the lowest achievement in literacy learning in their first years at school. Children are taught individually by a specially trained teacher for 30 minutes each day for an average of 12-20 weeks. The goal is for children to develop effective reading and writing strategies in order to work within an average range of classroom performance. The programme outcomes for children on Reading Recovery in Oxfordshire showed 45 pupils (86.5% of pupils who had completed the programme) made accelerated progress and no longer needed the programme. 7 pupils (13.5% of pupils who had completed the programme) were referred for more continued support because they had made progress, but not yet reached the average band in literacy required. 19 pupils are on-going at point of data collection

When selected, these pupils would not be expected to attain level 2 at the end of KS1, but:

- 61% of pupils attained level 2c + in reading.
- 46% of pupils attained level 2c + in writing.

So whilst Reading Recovery is not an alternative to good classroom teaching, it is complementary and does work to enable children to engage in their classroom programme.

Good reading skills are vital to success across all curriculum areas; the City head teachers in particular believe that it is key to improving wider achievement across all subjects at KS4. In particular there is a desire to ensure a robust approach to reading to support a better transition from primary to secondary school.



For pupils where English is an additional language it is important to get off to the best start possible and speaking and reading well immediately opens doors to every other learning opportunity across the formal and informal curriculum.

We have had huge success with piloting Every Child a Reader programmes in schools and it is important to build on interventions that we know can make a difference.

#### **8.4 What will be taking place in 2012?**

A series of workshops designed to inspire a range of interested groups to bring new ideas to the table to share. All the ideas being suggested and tried will be on the website in the section for the Strategic Plan for Education and will be added to continuously.

Councillor Tilley, the Cabinet Member for Education, will be spearheading the campaign and working with other councillors in their localities to galvanise further support.

Examples already suggested include:

- Books for Bucks days
- Dads into reading
- Share a tutor scheme
- University students as reading mentors
- Sponsor a child for reading tuition
- Parents and Grandparents awareness raising
- Media Campaign
- Local Business support
- Buy a book for Christmas campaign

- Book buddies (pairing higher level readers with vulnerable pupils (CLA etc.) to develop both participants skills in schools and services)
- Poetry Olympics
- X Factor Karaoke

### **8.5 How will it be funded?**

It is expected that most of the ideas will be self-financing from within existing budgets and through voluntary contributions, but Councillor Tilley will also oversee a small pot of money to bid into for really innovative ideas.

### **8.6 Who will be leading it?**

The Cabinet Member for Education - Councillor Tilley.

### **8.7 Who will be involved?**

Everyone is invited and encouraged to play their part.

## **8.8 Expectations of all parties**

- All stakeholder groups to put on their agendas and develop actions to support schools and settings to identify children who would most benefit.
- Virtual School for Looked After Children to promote the campaign with foster carers and families within and outside Oxfordshire.
- Children and Young People Sounding Boards and Parents and Carers Sounding Boards to suggest ideas and lend support.
- Parents, grandparents and other family members; read at every opportunity with your children and grandchildren – don't leave it all to teachers
- Children and Youth Parliament to campaign.
- University students – volunteer to read with children in the city schools
- District, town and parish councils – get behind the campaign and lend support
- A volunteer from one of the universities to lead an evaluation of the approach and outcomes in order to determine the value of future campaigns.
- Other services – can you help to reward and incentivise children
- Businesses, partners in health, police, voluntary sector lend your support in time or resource
- Book shops, libraries, museums – put your weight behind it; offer prizes
- The media – get behind the campaign and drive more ideas and support
- Local celebrities help to promote and spread messages

## **8.9 How will we measure success?**

- Further increase in EYFSP outcomes for all strands of Communication Language and Literacy.
- Oxfordshire will be highly ranked in the national phonics test for 6 year olds in 2012.
- KS1 and 2 performance in reading will show strong improvement in 2012 and beyond in particular in Oxford City.
- Evaluation of the approach will show positive impact.