

To: Norfolk Headteachers and Chairs of
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Dear Colleagues

A Good Education for Every Norfolk Learner

I hope that you have had an enjoyable Summer and I wish you and your school a successful 2015-16.

I know that you will want to understand fully the results of public examinations, tests and assessments. This is clearly a pre-requisite for your accurate self-evaluation which in turn will inform your future planning. Many children and young people have achieved well in Summer assessments and this is a cause for pride and celebration. In many Norfolk schools, children achieved all that was expected of them. However, it is always dispiriting when children do not do as well as they should and it is particularly disappointing when children in similar schools in other parts of the country do better. I'm sure that your analysis will include a thorough exploration of such differences and this is particularly important when too many Norfolk children do less well educationally than children with similar starting points elsewhere.

Our role as a Local Authority (LA) is to find the best ways to support and challenge you as you lead, manage and improve your school. Many of you will be familiar with the ways in which we have done this over the last two years. Our arrangements have been developed in conjunction with Headteachers and Governors and will continue to be adapted in the light of the unfolding educational landscape. For example, the criteria we are using for risk assessment are now slightly different given the potential for some schools to be identified as 'coasting' from 2016.

Important aspects of our arrangements as the new year dawns is to support you in your own self-evaluation and to provide validation for this. As term starts, Primary School Heads and Governors will receive our 'Flying Start' packs for this purpose. Secondary and Special school leaders will receive their packs by 17 September 2015.

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Secondary leaders will also be able to use the first 2015 edition of the regional 'families of schools' data pack that the Headteacher associations, LAs and Regional Schools Commissioner have jointly produced. For those of you who lead schools with 105 children or fewer, your self-evaluation will be able to incorporate the small schools review, further details of which will be distributed on Tuesday 8 September.

Schools that we assess as being of concern will shortly be assigned an Intervention Officer who will work closely with you on your self-evaluation and planning. Other schools will be able to use their Education Challenge Partner to test and validate their own self-evaluation and plans. Further details are contained in the 'Flying Start' pack.

This Autumn sees the launch of 'Norfolk Better to Best', Norfolk's approach to self-improvement. Schools at all stages of development are able to be part of the scheme that is a successor of the effective approach 'Norfolk to Good and Great' that was designed for schools assessed as requiring improvement. The County Council's range of traded services – including teaching & learning services and governor & leadership services – are now available through our more coordinated approach to providing Services for Schools ('S4S'). We are determined to ensure that all of our support for school improvement helps you in becoming a school that is at least good – a reality now for around 80% of Norfolk's schools – and then moving on to become outstanding. Of course, we all want to be sure that our efforts result in Norfolk's children and young people achieving their very best.

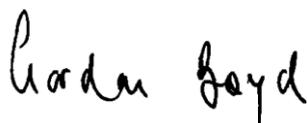
I know that the Headteacher and Governor associations have ambitious plans for the year ahead and for their role – together with the Teaching School Alliances – in improving achievement and teaching across Norfolk and I really look forward to seeing the impact of this. An exciting development is the inaugural NPHA conference 'Refreshing Leadership' in November.

I hope that Headteachers will be able to come to one of the termly Headteacher meetings in early October at which our collective leadership of Norfolk's education system will be further refined. I'm sure that Michael Rosen, the new Director of Children's Services, will be able to give some headlines about his aspirations and vision for Norfolk's children and young people. It is likely that topical issues – new approaches to assessment and education inclusion – will feature on the agenda. To book for one of the termly Headteacher meetings please go to www.s4s.norfolk.gov.uk

Our pamphlet of '[who's who' in education services](#) is being sent out in conjunction with this letter and I urge you to contact my colleagues whenever you think that any of us might support you in your work. The full series of pamphlets that describe our strategy 'A Good Education for Every Norfolk Learner' can be [accessed here](#).

With best wishes for the year ahead.

Yours sincerely



Gordon Boyd
Assistant Director, Education