

Transforming Learning – Norfolk’s Future

This document sets out how Norfolk County Council as the Local Education Authority; the Norfolk Learning and Skills Council; the Norfolk Connexions Service; schools; colleges and training providers will work in partnership with other key partners in business, health and social services, to systematically transform secondary education in Norfolk.

Why change?

Norfolk has pioneered many innovative developments in education and there are many outstanding examples of good practice. Overall performance of Norfolk schools is in line with the national averages, but the averages mask the extremes. There is good progress at Key Stage 3. We need to improve boys performance. Resources are being targeted at the poorest performing schools and by 2005 we have an LEA target of 54-56% with 5+ A* to C grades. We also aim to ensure that we have no school with attainment less than 30%. To drive up standards further we need average attaining schools to aspire to be good. Post 16 participation rates are lower than the national average and tackling this issue is a high priority to ensure that we increase the number of students staying on in education and training. The Community Strategy for Norfolk has three cross-cutting issues: these are

- Raising aspirations and achievement,
- The interplay between the rural and the urban communities and
- Making connections.

We want to meet these challenges.

What do we want to achieve?

- High levels of learner attainment in all subjects and skills, wherever and whenever they are provided.
- Happy young people with a “hunger for educational success” who have the confidence and skills to achieve their potential, at home, work and in their community.
- Individual learners able to access a wide range of learning opportunities and support that meet their individual needs.
- Learners who understand their responsibilities as well as their rights.
- A sustainable, accessible, high quality education system, that meets the needs of all young people, schools and communities with appropriate facilities, equipment and skilled personnel.
- A society that supports and prizes learning.

What do learners need?

Norfolk is a large and diverse county. This means that we expect a variety of teaching and learning approaches to flourish across the county and to play their part in transforming secondary education. This transformed secondary system must be coherent and equitable. Every learner in Norfolk, wherever they live, and whatever their age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, ability or educational level will share the same right to a comparable standard of and access to learning.

Every learner in Norfolk will be entitled to:-

- High quality and inclusive learning opportunities, wherever and whenever provided.
- Access to the full range of the national curriculum within a broad, relevant, stimulating curriculum that has a wide range of academic, vocational and social opportunities strengthened by appropriate links with business and the local community.
- A happy, enjoyable, challenging, safe educational environment, which stimulates high aspirations and a desire to continue or return to learning.
- Access to all 11 – 14 provision in a local high school.
- Access to a broad, relevant curriculum for 14 – 19 year olds delivered by several local schools or colleges with a maximum daily travel time of 2 hours.
- Access to appropriate and well co-ordinated specialist support when it is needed particularly for young people with high levels of complex needs and vulnerability.
- Effective transition planning for movement from one learning environment to another.
- Careful assessment of their individual needs, giving learners and their families advice and support as well as learning opportunities that match their needs and aspirations.
- Have their needs met.

What needs to be done?

- Every school where secondary students learn will be rebuilt or renewed, over the next 15 years, to provide a sustainable, accessible, inclusive, 21st century infrastructure, which effectively supports all learners and their communities on an equal basis and meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Opportunities and services will be developed around the holistic needs of young people, not the needs of institutions.

- We will develop effective multi agency assessment and specialist support that enables learning to be effectively tailored to the needs of the individual.
- Young people will be encouraged to aim high and be stimulated to think about and plan their futures and given appropriate support and advice. Their emotional health and well being will be a priority.
- Every school will take its share of responsibility for delivering the 11-19 curriculum, offer a good broad range of subjects, become a specialist school and will excel in some curriculum areas or subjects.
- All schools will be part of county networks responsible for sharing best practice, fostering innovation and driving improvement.
- All schools/colleges will be effectively led and there will be excellence in teaching and learning, wherever and whenever provided.
- Every school or college will work as part of a local learning community (collaborations of 3-5 schools plus other providers) responsible for planning and delivering a high quality, sustainable, broad curriculum that is accessible to all learners of all ages within their area.
- It will be the norm for young people to attend their local school or college but not all subjects will be available at every school.
- Employers will be involved in planning and delivering education.
- Every school or college will work with their community and key partners to extend the use of school facilities and develop their community role.
- All services and agencies will work together to join up services and ensure that interventions and/or support to young people and their families is timely, co-ordinated and as effective as it possibly can be.
- Admissions to schools will be co-ordinated. Schools across a learning community will take responsibility for including all learners in the area.
- Forward looking and imaginative curriculum planning and timetabling strategies will ensure that all pupils are able to meet their needs.
- All learners will have creative and life skills opportunities.

What will a transformed secondary system look like?

Norfolk will have the best possible educational infrastructure. It will be coherent, accessible, inclusive and sustainable. It will form part of a wider continuum of provision that meets the needs of learners of all ages. It will provide across the county:-

- The right schools/colleges in the right place.
- The right number and type of places in each school/college.
- The right balance of specialist provision (SEN & Specialist Status)
- The right balance of post 16 provision.
- 21st century facilities, effectively supported by ICT.
- A range of extended facilities, building upon schools' community roles.

This will create a healthy, stable system where young people want to, and do, attend their local school or college. Local schools will work together collaboratively. The importance of the learning environment for promoting the social and emotional well being of learners is recognised.

Across Norfolk, collaborations of around three to five schools/colleges will work together to meet local need, share best practice and develop and implement local strategies that will create new opportunities for all learners. These collaborative groups (learning communities) provide the context within which a broad, accessible curriculum (particularly at 11-19) can be planned and delivered locally. These arrangements will broaden the curriculum, improve teaching and learning and enable planning for any necessary changes to the local secondary infrastructure.

The aim is to ensure all learners can fulfil their potential, accessing the right opportunities and support, in the right place at the right time. In broadening the curriculum, whilst ensuring both quality and access, many collaborations will have to consider using ICT to develop distance learning, linking the business community and minimising the movement of pupils and staff between schools/colleges. Each of these small collaborations will also form part of a wider county network. Strategic collaborations, such as those between special schools, specialist schools, training and leading edge schools, advanced skills teachers, FE colleges and training providers, employers and the business community will drive forward innovation and improvement of the system.

This transformed system will be outward looking and the development of extended schools will be key. It will be through the involvement of employers that young people can gain an understanding of the world of work and experience cutting edge vocational education. Similarly it will be through partnerships with health and social services that complex health and/or social issues will be addressed quickly or prevented. Broad community involvement in schools will enable young people to more fully develop important social skills, confidence and an awareness of the importance of community. The learning community will be the context beyond the home where learners can develop the moral, cultural and spiritual aspects of life and develop a mature understanding of their role as citizens.

In a large county such as Norfolk "one size does not fit all". This document sets out clear aspirations and the entitlement of every learner but within this context the right solutions must be identified and driven locally.