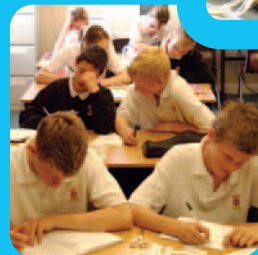


Transforming Learning in Suffolk

Vision into Action



Introduction

Our overall vision for children and young people is :

“To enable all children and young people in Suffolk to aspire to, and achieve, their full potential, giving them the basis for a successful life as active members of the community.”

(Suffolk Children and Young People’s Plan 2008 / 09)

Schools and learning are at the heart of our strategy for children and young people set out in the Children and Young People’s plan, and guided by the Children’s Trust Partnership. Integrated local services based in Community Clusters are built around school catchment areas. High quality early learning, successful schools and effective transition into further education, employment and training, will ensure the best possible start in life for all our children and young people. Equally the efforts of all agencies and communities will ensure children and young people are encouraged to achieve, to develop a lifelong delight in learning, and that families are supported in their important role.

This ambition for all children and young people to reach their full potential has inspired us to aim for a world-class education system that will equip learners for life in a rapidly changing world. To guide future developments we propose the Vision for Learning for Suffolk set out in the pages which follow, and which can be summarised thus

Our aim is for Suffolk’s education is to be amongst the best in the country, to be innovative and high achieving. We will ensure learning is successful, enjoyable, inclusive, accessible and ethical. We will ensure choice and diversity within the school system, working with a wide range of partners. We will encourage all schools become learning centres, providing a range of services for children and young people and the wider community. We will promote collaboration between learning settings, and will ensure that all become at least good, with many outstanding, so that all children and young people progress and attain at each stage of their education. We will successful and supported transition planning at each stage and into adulthood.

Our Vision for Learning will inform developments across the 0 – 19 age spectrum in all learning settings. It will be used as the basis for our submission to the Department for Children, Schools and Families for Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital finance. It will provide the framework for all our schools to enable them to develop their own local vision for learning, and will link to adult learning and skills strategies being developed by the Local Authority and Learning Skills Council as part of the broader Community Strategy.

We have listened to the views of children and young people, consulted with parents and carers and gathered the views of teachers, support staff, head teachers and governors in the development of this Vision. Local Authority Officers, councillors, representatives of the dioceses, LSC and FE colleges have also been involved. The Schools Organisation Review and initial work on Building Schools for the Future have enabled us to gain the views of a wide range of stakeholders across Suffolk and these have informed the Vision.

Transformation of school age learning is a complex and demanding programme that will take many years to deliver. During that time our Vision will need to develop and change in response to local and national changes. We recognise that the aspirations we have must support learners in schools today, as well as those entering the system over the coming years. So, we must act quickly and enthusiastically.

Targets and detailed action plans to support this Vision will be published in an Implementation Plan following further detailed consultation with all stakeholders.

Patricia O'Brien
Portfolio Holder
Children, Schools and Young People's Services

Rosalind Turner
Director for Children
and Young People

For further information please contact us at: 01473 260697 or look at our website on:
www.suffolk.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/Schools/BuildingSchoolsForTheFuture/Listing.htm

1 A world-class education system for Suffolk.

Schools, colleges and other education providers are at the heart of delivering this Vision. Outside the family, education providers offer the greatest opportunities for ensuring that children stay safe and healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to their communities, achieve economic well being and are able to get the most out of life now and into the future.

We want the very best for Suffolk's children, starting with early years through transition into adulthood and thereafter. We are committed to working with all our partners to ensure that all educational efforts are harnessed to that common aim. Achieving an effective start in life for all our children will do a great deal to contribute to the wider aspirations for Suffolk to have a prosperous and sustainable economy and to ensure community well-being into the future.

There are many challenges for centres of learning and the Local Authority to ensure we can deliver the very best education now and into the future. Expectations are high, both locally and nationally, for us to deliver a modern and relevant curriculum to meet the demands of the 21st century and to achieve ever higher standards. There needs to be continuity and progression in learning from 0 – 19 to ensure that all Suffolk's young people become life long learners beyond the age of statutory education.

We now know more than ever about how children learn best and we need to build on the best practice in all our learning centres. There will be more choices available from the age of 14, and schools are strengthening their links with colleges and others to support all young people within education or training up to the age of 18. Information technology offers new ways of learning and will support individual programmes tailored to the needs of each boy or girl.

Increasingly schools are becoming self-governing institutions, with integrated services based in and around them, providing a range of extended opportunities for children, parents and the wider community. The Local Authority, in its role as commissioner of school places and services, wants to support schools and all learning settings in ensuring that young people and their families gain the best from their education..

The Local Authority recognises the benefits of schools and colleges developing external partnerships on a long-term sustainable basis, and is keen to support any new Trust arrangements for schools. We also recognise that both learners and parents will have an increasingly important role in shaping the future of education in the county. We will continue to support school governors and parents to ensure active involvement, and will ensure clear information and guidance for parents in their choice of schools through, for example, Choice Advisers.

Our plans for children and young people are set out in The Suffolk Children and Young People's Plan. *Transforming learning with Communities* sets out Suffolk's strategy for learning, it provides a clear set of principles and goals on which to build our world class education system to equip our young people for life in an increasingly changing world and developing global economy.

We are proud of the progress we have already made in Suffolk towards achieving our aims. Sure Start is providing a new modern infrastructure for the expansion of early years education and childcare including the development of children's centres. We are also ensuring positive activities and programmes for all young people including those in the most challenging circumstances. The development of University Campus Suffolk (UCS) will provide opportunities for progression from school, college and work based learning. UCS will become a regional centre for leading edge research, professional training and development.

The role that the Learning and Skills Council has played with the local authority in remodelling 14-19 learning has been critical and we are committed to working in close partnership on a number of exciting new opportunities such as the proposed 16 to 19 learning centre in South West Ipswich.

Transforming learning with Communities will build on this progress by embracing six key developments:

1. The new approaches to learning embodied in **Early Years provision, the revised National Curriculum, the National Children' Plan and the Suffolk 14 to 19 Strategy** will enable us to transform what and how our children and young people learn.
2. The **reform of our workforce** will enable a more flexible, dynamic and relevant approach to learning.
3. The **Primary Capital Programme** and the **Building Schools for the Future Programme** will provide over £600million of capital investment in order to create 21st teaching and learning facilities across Suffolk.
4. **School Reorganisation** following School Organisation Review along with robust pupil place planning is helping us establish a coherent, consistent and sustainable education system for the County by ensuring schools are the right size and in the right place to meet community needs
5. **Special Educational Needs Review** ensuring centres of excellence and expertise for the full range of special needs, collocated on mainstream school sites and providing outreach services into local communities, as part of the overall integration of all special needs services
6. Implementation of The Suffolk **Children and Young People's Plan** will remove some of the key barriers to learning, especially for vulnerable learners, by ensuring our children and young people are happy and healthy, safe and sound and on the right track.

This Plan provides for a new leadership role for schools, putting them at the centre of their local community but being shaped and developed by the people they serve, and more effective links between the NHS and other children's services so that together partners can tackle the barriers to learning, health and happiness of every child.

2 Our changing world

Our world is changing. The rate of change has been accelerating over recent decades and is likely to continue to do so. In designing our new schools and learning environments, we will need increasingly to respond to:

- A more diverse and fragmented society in which the gaps in achievement and prospects for people from different social and ethnic backgrounds should not be allowed to persist and limit life chances.
- Far greater access to and reliance on technology, especially information and communications technology, as a means of conducting daily interactions and transactions
- A skills based economy where it will be possible to compete with developing and global markets only by offering products and services of high quality, matched closely to customers' needs
- Employers, who are clear about the skills they need in their workforce
- The demand for transferable skills, as an increased number of job changes becomes the norm
- Inward and economic migration bringing additional skills and new challenges into the county
- An increasingly ageing population and the need to ensure health, well-being and lifelong learning for an active older age
- A younger, less experienced, but more flexible and dynamic workforce to support learning
- Complex pathways through education and training, requiring young people to make choices and reach decisions especially at points of transition
- "Portfolio careers" where over our life, we may need to work in a variety of different occupations
- A sharper focus on sustainable development, the role of individuals within their communities, and their impact on the environment
- An increasing understanding about how people learn including an awareness that the classroom is no longer the main, or only, access point to a range of knowledge, information and skills.

Each of these changes will provide great opportunities as well as challenges for our children and young people of the future. We have a responsibility to ensure our staff can ensure that our children and young people have the capacity and skills to respond to these challenges and make the most of these opportunities, and that our workforce reflects and champions this changing picture..

A changing Suffolk

As the world changes so Suffolk must change with it.

Suffolk is a good place to live, work, bring up children and live mature lives. Its overall performance is good and the county provides a high quality of life for its people (*Suffolk Community Strategy 2008 -2028*). This positive picture is reflected in the *Joint Area Review* and the *Annual Performance Assessment* which both awarded Suffolk a Grade 3 (“Good”) rating across each of the five judgement areas. Suffolk children and young people generally achieve well compared to regional and national standards.

However, we know that there are too many variations across the county and that there is a need to develop a skilled and committed workforce that can meet the future needs of our economy. This is not just about examination and test outcomes but ensuring their young people have the broader skills and attitudes they will need, including mathematical reasoning, being self motivated, able to communicate effectively, able to make choices, developing resilience, the ability to act as a leader and able to work cooperatively and independently.

We have a responsibility to strengthen support for all families to ensure that children and young people can develop worthwhile, interesting and enjoyable lives.

Particular attention also, needs to be given to those children and young people who are vulnerable to underachievement in learning (including some learners from minority ethnic backgrounds, children and young people in care, and those with learning difficulties or disabilities), to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve at their full potential. Schools in communities damaged by generations of underachievement, unemployment and social fragmentation will need other agencies and initiatives to help them tackle the deep-seated barriers to raising the aspirations of children, parents and teachers. The **Every Child Matters** agenda and **The Children’s Plan** are of vital importance in helping to improve the continuity and progression in learning for children at risk of falling behind.

Increasing our post 16 participation is a key priority in Suffolk as is the need to raise the proportion of our young people progressing to higher education. Too many young people, aged 16-18, are not in education, employment or training (NEET), with the highest levels corresponding to the incidence of the highest levels of deprivation.

We have an outstanding workforce within early year’s settings, schools and colleges and we will need to continue to support them by ensuring that the high quality of leadership and training is sustained and developed through exploring new partnership models of educational leadership.

Although social and demographic trends are emerging, few aspects of the future for Suffolk can be predicted with absolute confidence. Meeting these new challenges will offer many opportunities, and at the same time place demands on our education system. We must ensure that the system is best equipped to deal with the challenges of the future.

Suffolk's response to change

Suffolk has developed some important responses to the national and local challenges likely to emerge over the next 20 years.

1. Suffolk's Children and Young People's Plan Vision is:

To enable all children and young people in Suffolk to aspire to and achieve their full potential, giving them the basis for a successful life as active members of their community

In order to achieve this we will:

- Aim for every child and young person in Suffolk to be healthy and safe, to achieve their aspirations, to contribute successfully to their community and have a successful transition to adulthood. We will ensure this by ensuring we provide high quality services that meet local and national objectives;
- Give extra attention and support to those children and young people with additional needs, and will support and involve parents and carers in the design and delivery of provision and services;
- Strive to achieve ever-higher standards and improved outcomes for children and young people in Suffolk within the available resource, by improving performance and efficiency;
- Work across all agencies to develop an integrated service with shared values and culture to ensure that children and young people, their parents and carers get a joined up service.

2. Suffolk's Community Strategy 2008 - 2028

The Suffolk Strategic Partnership has agreed a vision for a Suffolk where 'all people are able to participate and contribute to the community and can live active and fulfilling lives no matter what their age or circumstances'. In order to make this happen four strategic themes have been prioritised:

1. A Prosperous and Vibrant Economy

- Affordable, quality homes for all
- A strong vibrant economy
- Attracting business and employment opportunities

2. Learning and Skills

- A workforce with the skills to meet the needs of Suffolk's economy
- High quality and successful learning from early years through to adulthood

3. A Green Environment

- A reduced carbon footprint
- Minimal impact of climate change on communities
- Retained, enhanced and valued environment and wildlife

4. Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities

- People have choice and control to enable them to live independent lives
- People able to pursue a healthy lifestyle
- A sense of belonging in communities where everyone is valued
- Less crime and disorder
- Less fear of crime
- Minimal impact from drugs and alcohol on communities
- People and Communities safeguarded from harm

5. Suffolk's Principles for School Re-Organisation

The County Council in March 2007 agreed the following principles for school organisation:

High quality provision in schools should:

- Provide engaging and enjoyable learning experiences that deliver the highest possible standards for children and young people
- Develop Suffolk as a centre of professional excellence for all staff
- Ensure all schools have the capacity to deliver a broad range of learning opportunities
- Ensure that all schools provide suitable support for all children and young people, including those with additional educational needs
- Ensure that schools are able to develop a range of services, that meet local needs including, where applicable, integrated early years and child care
- Involve local stakeholders, children and young people, in the development of learning opportunities in the community
- Ensure that all our schools promote social cohesion and harmony

Suitable structures in schools should:

- Ensure a single line of accountability for each key stage
- Minimise the number of points of transfer from one school to another within the statutory age range
- Make best use of limited resources, including capital and revenue
- Ensure that schools can recruit and retain the highest quality staff
- Ensure that 14 – 19 provision is sufficient to meet the national entitlement and provides breadth and choice of subjects on offer, the best possible student outcomes and value for money

School size and the rural nature of Suffolk are also important considerations:

- Priority will be given to safeguarding the position of village schools with federations encouraged where viability is at risk;
- The preferred size for secondary schools will be in the range of 6-10 year groups, with an optimum size of 1200, excluding sixth form
School sixth forms be no less than 200 in number

6. Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion Strategy

The County Council has approved five principles to help improve our understanding of what 'inclusion' means in practice, these are:

- Understanding the needs of individuals, families, neighbourhoods and communities
- Recognising, planning for and responding to the changing demography of Suffolk
- Recognising that social exclusion can affect anybody
- Understanding the specific barriers to participation faced by individuals and communities
- Involving individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds in planning services

3 Shaping our vision for learning

Our ambitions for Suffolk's children and young people have been shaped by global and national challenges, by Suffolk's current state of health and by listening to the views of learners and others with a stake in learning.

We are acutely aware that in September 2020, the children who joined reception classes in September 2007 will be preparing to enter higher education or employment. Thirteen years is almost one entire school generation. Most new school leaders in 2020 are now in their early years of teaching or still studying. Many of the parents of the children who will start primary education in 2020 are just coming to the end of their own schooling.

We have listened to the views of children and young people, as we want to know what they think schools in the future should be like. We have consulted with parents and carers, and gathered the views of teachers, support staff and head teachers. The School Organisation Review has enabled us to gain the views of a wide range of stakeholders across Suffolk on some of the key issues for the county as well as on important local concerns. This information has been analysed and has helped us to arrive at the aims which are at the heart of our learning plan. We will continue to consult in order to reflect changing circumstances.

Our 'Vision for Learning' will help schools develop their own vision for learning in relation to the Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF) and the Primary Capital Programme (PCP). It will inform our plans to develop schools and shape the way we want clusters and local groups of schools, colleges and work-based providers to work.

The 'Transformation of Learning with Communities' is a complex and demanding programme that will take at least ten years. During that time, our vision will need to develop in response to local and national changes. We recognise that the aspirations we have must support children and young people in schools today, as well as those entering the system over the coming years. We need to act quickly and enthusiastically if we are to transform the experience of children starting school today.

Whilst we do not underestimate the challenges involved, we believe that the process of achieving our vision is exciting and one in which Suffolk schools are well placed and ready to lead the way. With passion, enthusiasm and a commitment to work together we are confident that our hopes and aspirations will be achieved.

4 Our principles for learning

We believe that:

**Everyone can make progress and succeed
Learning is a personal experience
Learning happens all day and every day
Learning is everyone's responsibility**

As a starting point, we have developed some principles for learning that we consider are central to our planning for the future of learning in Suffolk.

Our goal is to build an educational system around the needs of each learner within a framework of standards so that learners and parents become active investors in their own learning and by so doing achieve their full potential.

Our work so far in preparing this Vision has led us to five key themes: SUCCESSFUL learning, ENJOYABLE learning, INCLUSIVE learning, ACCESSIBLE learning and VALUES-BASED (Ethical) learning. Our aims and actions within these themes - the core of our Vision - are described below.

5 Our aims and actions

Successful learning - our aims

We will aim to make learning **successful** through improved progress and aspirations across the whole age range, additional support for those at risk of underachievement, higher levels of participation and commitment for those aged 16+, improved life skills and attributes for all learners, a good or outstanding workforce, good or outstanding centres of learning.

Pupils in Suffolk schools generally achieve well in comparison with their national and regional peers and regional comparators. Outcomes for children at the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 are good. We will continue working to maintain these and strive to improve achievements and the rate of progress during Key Stage 2, for students in Post-16 learning and for some groups, particularly those children from disadvantaged backgrounds. We are taking preventative action, for example, to engage boys from an early age and to meet the needs of pupils vulnerable to underachievement, so that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential.

Our children and young people are being prepared for an increasingly complex world and we will ensure that more of them progress into further education, higher education or work based learning opportunities.

Having a sound grasp of literacy and numeracy is vital; our younger learners make an excellent start, learning together through talk as they play and as they engage in activities that develop their proficiency in using the written word. Our aim is for children starting secondary school to be competent and confident in these basic skills as well as in their ability to succeed as they tackle new things and reach for new goals.

The National Curriculum is changing to encourage children and young people to develop many of the 'softer' transferable skills that will be required in the future. One of our key tasks will be to ensure that all learners acquire these high-level skills through a broad, challenging and dynamic curriculum.

We will continue recruiting and developing high quality workforce ensuring that our staff have the skills to identify the next stage of learning, know what action to take to bring about progress and adapt to changing aspirations and demands.

Our leaders in education will be encouraged and supported to work closely with a wider range of partners. Increasingly, they will need to lead their communities in developing a vision for the transformation of learning.

Successful learning - our actions

To raise aspirations and standards we will:

- Reduce points of transition and increase coherence through school reorganisation
- Improve progression through implementation of the 14 – 19 strategy
- Ensure an Early Years Children's Centre in each locality linked to primary schools

- Create strategic partnerships with businesses, community leaders, University Campus Suffolk, colleges and others
- Ensure a well trained workforce, high quality school teachers, support for governors.

To support those at risk of underachievement we will:

- Reduce the attainment gap for vulnerable and looked after children, those from disadvantaged background and ethnic minority children
- Narrow the outcomes between boys and girls
- Implement the Special Education Review recommendations
- Target the participation and progression of post 16 vulnerable learners

To increase participation of 16+ learners we will:

- Develop progression strategies with Further Education, Higher Education and Work Based Learning providers
- Reduce the number of post 16 learners not in education, training or employment
- Provide access for all 14 – 19 learners to the 17 lines of learning
- Encourage school sixth forms and further education colleges into formal | partnerships with UCS and other universities

To improve learners' life skills and attributes we will:

- Support schools to enable learners to become independent
- Ensure a cross age programme of “learning to learn”, problem solving and thinking skills
- Ensure all learners meet national standards for functional skills
- Develop strategies to encourage life long learning skills

To ensure all learning centres are good or better we will:

- Strengthen the commissioning role of the Authority
- Provide robust challenge and early intervention
- Strengthen the role of School Improvement Partners in transformation
- Ensure new approaches to performance management are embedded

To ensure a good or outstanding workforce we will:

- Focus training programmes on satisfactory to good teaching
- Encourage schools to increase their numbers of advanced skills teachers
- Develop more comprehensive leadership training programmes
- Develop a strategy for succession planning

Enjoyable learning - our aims

We will aim to make learning **Enjoyable** through more inspired learning experiences, more personalised learning approaches, more varied learning opportunities, “anytime and anywhere”

It is one thing to ensure that children and young people gain the basic skills; it is another that they want to use them and get pleasure in so doing; and it is yet another that they feel motivated and empowered to continue their engagement in learning for the rest of their lives. Our vision is for all children and young people to gain the skills and desires to become lifelong learners.

Our aim is to develop articulate, independent and collaborative learners, who develop their understanding of what works for them as learners as part of the educational experiences they have.

Young people have a huge appetite and capacity to learn, yet not all learn as enthusiastically or effectively as they could. They learn in different ways, at different paces and with different styles. As they get older, they develop their own ambitions about the type of person they want to be: not just the career they want to follow but also interests that express their sense of identity. There are few schools in Suffolk in “challenging circumstances” where the conditions for learning can lead to disengagement. However, there are more where a minority of learners lose interest in learning. That could be because the way we expect them to learn does not always reflect and meet their particular needs and aspirations. Our ambition is to meet the different needs of all children and young people in our early year’s settings, schools, colleges and other learning bases.

A key part of our vision to make learning an enriching and engaging experience for all learners is to use personalised learning strategies and this has implications for the curriculum on offer and the way we teach it. Personalised learning does not mean individualised learning, it means that for some youngsters, some of the time, personalised approaches could mean learning on their own – at home with a mentor or tutor, or in a pupil referral unit, special school or youth work setting. However, we must remember that learning stems from creative and social interactions too. Personalised learning is about tailoring what we offer to individual needs and the goal is to raise the level of personal investment in education and by so doing raise aspirations and levels of attainment

The National Curriculum is developing in a more flexible way so that lessons can use project and problem based approaches to make them more engaging and interesting. Primary teachers know that children learn best when learning takes place within interesting and engaging contexts. For students in secondary schools the new specialised diplomas at 14 – 19 will provide new ways of providing relevant and interesting experiences and will impact on school specialisms and design.

The power of the new technologies will enrich the learning opportunities of our young people; create greater engagement and deeper experiences in a way we are only beginning to comprehend. We want to develop a robust, flexible and sustainable Information Technology infrastructure which links up all Suffolk schools and learning providers in order to provide Suffolk learners with 24/7/365 access.

Enjoyable learning - our actions

To ensure inspirational learning we will:

- Ensure appropriate curriculum and learning activities to match each child's abilities and readiness (stage not age approaches)
- Develop case studies for teacher use
- Ensure opportunities for learning and enrichment outside and beyond normal hours
- Support schools to implement the revised national curriculum

To ensure personalised learning approaches we will:

- Encourage the development of individual learning plans for all learners
- Allow young people to have a direct input into their learning
- Provide training for effective learner coaching and mentoring
- Encourage formalised partnerships between schools and others

To provide more varied learning opportunities we will:

- Encourage schools to develop project based learning opportunities
- Ensure that all 14 -19 learners can access a broad curriculum
- Encourage schools to develop a flexible curriculum approach
- Ensure high quality vocational learning
- Enrichment through sport, arts, cultural activities, international links, schools library service, museums and arts providers: cultural partnerships

To ensure anytime and anywhere learning we will:

- Implement and further develop the UniServity e-learning platform
- Develop a flexible and incremental approach to IT infrastructure
- Create shared applications, content and data linking all schools
- Encourage Specialist Schools to provide on-line content for other schools

Inclusive learning - our aims

We will aim to make learning **Inclusive** through higher levels of attendance and low levels of exclusion, safer and more supportive learning environments, increased numbers of vulnerable learners in local mainstream schools, more effective support for those facing personal challenge and change, greater engagement of learners in decisions that affect them, and engaging families in the learning process.

All learners should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential. With the right training, strategies, resources and support, most vulnerable learners can be successfully included in mainstream education, where they can be near their family. We know that mainstream schooling will not always be right for every child all of the time but we recognise that just because mainstream education may not be right at a particular time it does not prevent an individual from being successfully included at an earlier or later stage.

The development of inclusive learning is wider than the development of special schools and support for children and young people with special educational needs. We will continue to recognise the needs of other groups of learners including those who do not attend school, those that have English as a second language, vulnerable learners including children in care, travellers, asylum seekers, young carers, teenage parents, young offenders and minority ethnic learners. This is in addition to those needing particular support at times such as bereavement, family trauma or periods of transition or stress.

Childhood should be an enjoyable time. Children and young people learn better if they are safe, healthy and feel secure. Keeping children and young people safe from harm and establishing good habits in childhood, as a basis for lifelong health and wellbeing, are priorities for us all. Learning to be independent and responsible for themselves when they are away from the familiar environment of home is also important if they are to expand their horizons through new experiences. We will support families and schools to strike the right balance between keeping children safe and allowing them the freedom they need.

The county outreach services provided by the special schools and the behaviour support teams based at the PRUs have a key role in further developing mainstream capacity to promote good attendance and behaviour. Our special educational needs strategy *Special schools in Suffolk – the vision for 2016* sets out how we will implement this vision.

For most children and young people strongly led personalised learning approaches will help them achieve. Others face greater challenges in their lives and no teacher or school alone can offer the necessary specialist support that will be provided by other professionals and the use of an increasing range of technologies, including Information Communication Technology .

The role of special schools will change and provide greater support for children with SEN in mainstream school and training for colleagues who work with them. We will develop appropriately resourced provision on mainstream sites, especially to meet the changing level and type of SEN.

Families are the bedrock of society and the place for nurturing happy, capable and resilient children. Circumstances vary and change with time and we will provide services which are flexible in meeting the needs of all families, through our integrated children's services and Community Clusters, in whatever shape or form, so that they are supported in the most appropriate way.. This will include particular support for lone parent families, stepfamilies, families supported by grandparents, and young carers.

Inclusive learning - our actions

To ensure high attendance and low exclusions we will:

- Develop local bases for special needs provision
- Encourage the use of ICT to support home schooling when necessary
- Ensure appropriate programmes of support for families in need
- Develop preventative programmes that help parents support their children's education

To ensure safe, supportive learning environments we will:

- Integrate support services in schools
- Ensure a variety of social and play spaces in schools
- Provide health and well being checks and support for all learners
- Provide additional sport/leisure opportunities through Extended activity

To increase numbers of vulnerable learners in local mainstream schools we will:

- Support co-location of special schools on mainstream school sites
- Ensure that new schools have appropriate specialist facilities
- Enable special school staff to support mainstream colleges
- Ensure that each locality has appropriate provision

To ensure effective support for learners facing challenge we will:

- Ensure effective packages of support to help children reach their full potential
- Develop a 'team around the learner model'
- Ensure access to specialist counselling in all settings
- Ensure that transitions are planned focusing on children's needs
- Ensure that specialist mentors support vulnerable learners as they move on to new schools

To ensure the engagement of learners in decisions that affect them we will:

- Encourage schools to train learners as learning observers ie. to provide critical and constructive feedback on the basis of classroom observation
- To learn from every opportunity and circumstances in their lives
- Encourage schools to involve learners in the design of new schools
- Strengthen the voice of learners in strategic decisions at school and county level
- Create spaces with learners that they can call their own
- Promote family involvement to support learners

Accessible learning - our aims

We will make learning **Accessible** through increased choice and diversity for parents and learners, improved access to a full range of support services, increased access to Extended services, and more impartial information, advice and guidance.

An “early education” place is available for all three and four year olds whose parents want one.

Suffolk is a geographically large authority and transport is essential to enable many young people to access learning opportunities, whether in school, college or another centre of learning. We currently spend nearly £17 million pounds each year on transporting learners to and from centres of learning. The Transforming Learning with Communities programme will allow us to consider whether or not we can minimise the home to school journey and so better sustain our environment.

Some learners have a range of specific learning difficulties that can make access to learning challenging. We will continue working to implement our vision for specialist provision to be closer to home wherever that is. This will include dual placements between mainstream and special settings that may be in a special school, one of its satellites or at a specialist facility on a mainstream school site.

We are committed to keeping schools at the heart of local communities by retaining village schools within a more flexible local learning community. ICT has an important role to play in meeting this challenge. We will promote greater collaboration amongst Primary schools to ensure that children’s social development is supported alongside an enriched broad and balanced curriculum.

Ensuring that parents are able to choose provision that reflects their particular needs is an important priority for us. We will promote schools with a distinctive ethos as part of a diverse range, from community schools with a strong personalisation ethos, through to specialist, Foundation Trust and, where the circumstances warrant, academies. To do this we will establish a strategic framework that seeks to retain collaboration and partnership whilst at the same time recognising the need for local autonomy. All schools should have specialist status in one or more curriculum areas.

Most schools in Suffolk are on track to provide access to the full range of extended services by 2010. The Local Authority will continue to support schools in these developments and in responding to their communities aspirations by increasing community use. The Authority recognises that the capacity of head teachers needs to be further developed in relation to their extended role and is therefore committed to appropriate leadership programmes.

The Suffolk Schools Sports partnership is already helping many more children and young people participate in at least 2 hours of PE and sport each week and well set to extend this to provide access for 5 hours each week through partnership work with sports bodies and other providers. We will continue to promote Healthy School, Artsmark and Sportsmark status in order to help create the environment for high

quality leisure opportunities, and to promote health and well-being in every community.

As the choices and opportunities for children and young people increase so they and their parents require better-informed support to help them choose the best options for them. We recognise that every child is unique and will benefit most from an approach tailored to their needs. We will therefore ensure effective systems of information, advice and guidance, personal mentoring and meaningful engagement of learners in the matters that affect them.

Accessible learning - our actions

To increase choice and diversity we will:

- Encourage schools to define themselves in distinctive ways
- Encourage schools to develop as Trusts
- Ensure increased Extended School opportunities
- Ensure learners can access learning anytime anywhere
- Develop a clear home to school transport offer

To improve access to support services we will:

- Encourage the development of both similar schools coming together, as well as primaries and secondaries federations
- Encourage the integration of support services into new school design
- Develop the role of school leaders into community leaders
- Establish partnership with local councils and other service providers

To ensure learners have access to a range of extended services we will:

- Develop schools as centres for support from health and welfare agencies
- Ensure all schools offer the core curriculum
- Promote the Artsmark and Sportsmark awards
- Ensure schools are designed with extended activities in mind

To ensure access to impartial information, advice and guidance we will:

- Encourage learners from an early age to use a wide range of resources
- Ensure that all learners have mentoring and coaching support
- Ensure that every learner has an e- Individual Learning Plan
- Ensure that all learners have peer tutoring or cross age support

Ethical learning - our aims

We aim to make learning **ethically-based** through more caring, empathetic and sensitive learners, more globally and culturally responsive learners, more responsible, resilient and independent learners

Many parents and grandparents of Suffolk school children grew up with the expectation of a continuous career for life and a relatively stable family life, with the support of public services and a health service free at the point of delivery. Work and home life were usually separate activities. Despite the impact of the Second World War, the country remained not very diverse either religiously or ethnically, but the world is rapidly changing. Our children will grow up in a more complex and diverse society, they will need to learn new skills and knowledge throughout their lives as they live longer and are expected to work smarter rather than harder.

Perhaps the greatest responsibility we have as adults is to guide and support our children and young people so that they can become self-fulfilled confident and positive men and women with a sense of self-worth. At the heart of this we need to develop, articulate and model our values. The values laid down in our curriculum aims will enable children to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. By teaching these values, we hope our children and young people will grow to believe in themselves, care for others, respect their community and environment and deal with failure.

Transforming Learning with Communities is about how we develop what we do to make these aims and values clear for our children, young people and their families. Belief and faith values offer positive motivators for personal development and we want to work closely with all faith communities to help us promote clear values.

Our vision in Suffolk is not restricted to the school alone, rather, we have a joint responsibility to do our best for all learners and their families. Individual schools must contribute to the whole community not just their part of it. From this perspective, it is not merely teachers who can teach, it is not just pupils who need to learn, and it is certainly no longer just the classroom that is the major access point to a range of knowledge, information and skills.

Within the community there is an ever-increasing number of people with the skills, experience and understanding of life, that can help our young people. Learning from reliable role models, is one of the most important ways for children and young people to develop. We will promote ways of working in which the whole community can play a more active part in inducting the next generation into the skills and values already practiced by adults.

We want to provide opportunities for the whole community in partnership to nurture our children and young people and we want to ensure that they gain the perspectives, skills and attributes to be effective custodians of our planet. Our schools are in a strong position to place environmental sustainability at the heart of their work. Creating the Greenest County is a major policy thrust of Suffolk County Council and The Community Strategy and offers a vision for the future that encourages schools to not only be greener but also to be truly 'sustainable schools'. As we design schools and other places of learning for the future, we have the opportunity to embrace that vision.

Ethical learning - our actions

To develop caring, empathetic and sensitive learners we will:

- Encourage learner engagement through co-operative and challenging activities
- Support schools in developing robust moral and spiritual programmes
- Encourage schools to support life long learners
- Encourage schools to develop group working and enterprise programmes

To develop more globally and culturally responsive learners we will:

- Encourage schools to develop exciting trips and cultural visits
- Develop international links between schools and colleges
- Encourage schools to use ICT to engage with other worldwide communities
- Encourage all schools to take part in the eco-schools scheme
- Ensure that sustainable principles are integrated into learning
- Ensure all schools have a green travel plan and sustainable energy strategies

To ensure learners are confident and responsible citizens we will:

- Encourage schools to engage learners in community issues
- Support schools in enabling learners to gain the skills to become participative citizens
- Help schools develop 'buddying' or mentoring programmes
- Ensure that contributions that learners make to their community are celebrated
- Have a strong focus on personal, social and health education
- Ensure all schools have anti-bullying and social cohesion strategies

6 Implementing our vision for learning

Choice, diversity and partnership

Each learning community will have a strong individual ethos and culture, driven by its core values, that makes it unique. This is of crucial importance to the development of community values. Indeed, we recognise the need to preserve and protect the distinct identity and ethos of schools, particularly church schools, where we are committed to working in partnership with diocesan authorities to preserve and nurture the benefits that such schools already offer to their pupils, families and wider communities.

We believe that schools on their own cannot achieve transformation and the ability to establish partnerships with a range of organisations, including colleges, other providers, UCS and employers is essential.

Our ambition is for each learning community to offer every student access to a curriculum that meets their personal learning needs, interests and abilities despite the limitations of the capacity of one provider. Strategic plans will capitalise on individual centre specialisms to offer, collectively, the range of opportunities ensuring that interests and abilities can be catered for irrespective of whether the provider is a school, specialist hub, college, training provider or employer.

We will encourage specialisation along philosophical or ideological lines so that parents are offered choice in terms of distinctive educational values. Schools in each partnership will be encouraged to define themselves in a distinctive way, supporting other schools and pupils in the area through the ethos they espouse, and celebrate the differing values that will develop in the young people they teach.

Nearly all secondary schools in Suffolk are now specialist Colleges. We believe that greater diversity in schooling will not only enable the education system to more effectively meet the differentiated needs of individual pupils but also liberate and energise schools.

The Council will provide strategic leadership to ensure that curriculum specialisation through the Specialist School programme creates distinctive educational choices for pupils in each local area. The Authority wants all its schools to gain dual specialist status in relation to the new specialist diplomas. It wants specialisms to be determined by agreement with other partners in a local area so that a mix of specialisms is encouraged and pupils in the area are better served. The choice of a second specialism will be co-ordinated across areas to ensure that these complement each other and avoid duplication and overlap and that there is a balance of specialisms.

The Authority also wants to ensure that schools are designed with their specialism in mind so that distinctive curriculum offerings are evident in the design providing real choice for pupils. Our vision is for these schools to become sites of innovation in their specialist area, attracting high quality staff and offering support for other schools in the area.

Our new Uniservity Platform will enable specialist, high quality learning modules to be available to learners without physical access to a particular course. A number of Schools in Suffolk already provide minority 'A'-level subjects via teleconferencing

links but our ambition is to take this much further. We want our specialist schools to teach pupils in other schools qualifications in their specialist area to an equally high standard, for the University College to provide degree level modules to school based students and for employers to provide on line vocational modules to students with no access.

We see seven benefits to partnerships:

- A ready-made structure for sharing learning and effective practices
- A larger pool of expertise and talents to draw on for planning and for working with learners;
- A cost-effective way to offer a broad curriculum and extend specialisms
- Greater scope to meet the needs and aspirations of learners through individualised learning pathways
- Collective responsibility and accountability for the quality of provision and for learners' well-being, progress and achievements
- Improved career opportunities that attract high quality staff
- Economies of scale

There is a strong tradition of collaboration between Suffolk schools and some soft federations have been established in the last five years. We will promote partnership working along the continuum of collaboration from informal and semi-formal arrangements such as soft federations, to those with the formalised governance and constitutional arrangements of hard federations or self-managing Trusts that provide more robust mechanisms to withstand changes of leadership and fluctuations in commitment.

At the heart of these partnerships they may be, either a group of schools catering for the full age range of statutory schooling (vertical grouping) or, a group of schools catering for the same age range (horizontal grouping). A number of external partners already support schools in Suffolk, for example, Children's Centres, Leading Edge? partnerships, Colleges of FE, business and churches and the outcomes have been positive. We will actively promote and facilitate strong links with partners who can bring additional expertise into local communities, provide enriching experiences such as in sport and the arts and, multi-agency support to ensure that barriers to learning are removed or minimised.

The Authority recognises that for some schools greater external capacity than even a Trust can bring will be necessary. In these cases, the additional capacity that Academy status can provide will be implemented.

Human Scale Schools for Learners and Teachers

Consultation with learners, school staff and parents has demonstrated a strongly held conviction that the learning of children and young people best flourishes when it is built on positive, effective relationships within collaborative, sustainable communities. Good relationships between the teacher and learner are fundamental to good learning. This has implications for the scale of school organisations and the number of people involved. This means that viable village schools are central to our vision, although they may need to work in close partnership and federations.

The medium sized schools proposed in the structural principles of the School Organisation Review will enable students to benefit from a wider choice of provision, economies of scale and the greater capacity that personalised learning requires.

However, personalised learning also implies human or small-scale education: size matters if children and young people are to learn well at school, and to flourish as human beings. The resolution of this paradox comes through our vision of “schools within schools” which will enable learners to benefit from the personalised effect of belonging to a smaller community whilst also enjoying the benefits of economy of scale. Smaller units can help students develop positive values because they often feel more protected and cared for.

Developing the Role of the Local Authority

The development of school and college partnerships is consistent with the changing role of the Local Authority as more of a commissioner of services than as a provider. Service delivery will be transferred to the new partnerships; with the LA acting to challenge and intervene when appropriate.

We believe that our vision will enable BSF to support the regeneration of more vulnerable communities. The county will work closely with District and Borough Councils and the new Trusts to bring greater local capacity, we will try to increase inward investment into these communities, try to reduce the outflow of resources including pupils, staff and parents, and make these communities our priority in the BSF programme. Our vision will also be sensitive to the local context and culture. New learning spaces will be sustainable and we will try to reduce the travel time and bussing of children and young people by ensuring that local communities have the capacity to meet local needs.

There is a great deal to do, and much enthusiasm about taking the work forward to realise vibrant, dynamic new centres of learning to support our children and young people over the next 50 years.

We recognise that schools and other organisations will join the programme at different stages, but we will do our best to keep all stakeholders informed. We will make widespread use of the Internet to keep parents, learners and other organisations up to date. Although the strategic priorities will probably stay the same, we recognise the need to adjust the business plan as circumstance change, and we will do our best to involve stakeholders in that process.

Acknowledgement

This Vision for Learning has been co-ordinated by Howard Lay, Headteacher of Samuel Ward Upper School in Haverhill. Howard has been working on a part-time secondment to the Local Authority to assist with our strategy for change and in the development of our Vision for Learning. He has worked with a team of headteachers and local authority officers and has consulted widely including with young people.