

Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Nuneaton Education Strategy Update

14 February 2023

1.0 Background

1.1 The Nuneaton Education Strategy (NES), which was endorsed by cabinet 19th March 2020 was set up with the aims of :

- Raising educational aspirations in the town and community
- Recruiting and retaining the best teachers
- Supporting parents to make a positive contribution to their children's educational outcomes and get them ready for work and life
- Helping schools and teachers to raise standards
- Work with businesses to give young people valuable work experience to increase employability

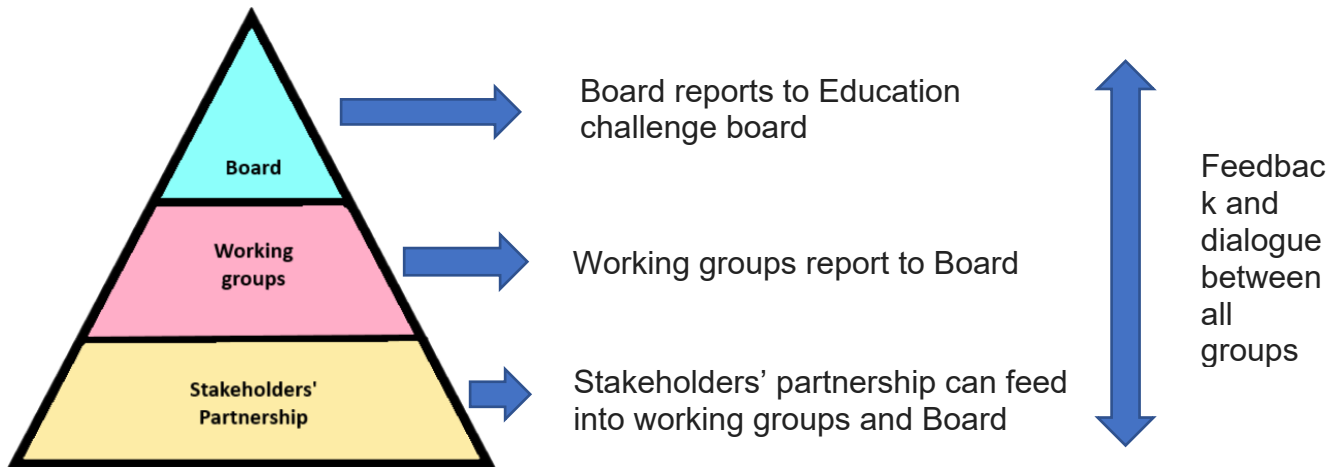
1.2 The work is organised into three strands, focusing on three phases of education (early years, schools, preparation for work).

2.0 New structure 2022

2.1 A new governance structure was established to streamline oversight and delivery. This was in response to the half-termly NES Steering Group meetings becoming increasingly popular, with 67 members including county and borough council officers and elected members; school and multi academy trust leaders; representatives from early years setting and post 16 settings and representatives from community groups with a link to education.

2.2 Following feedback from members and other partners a new structure was implemented as follows:

New structure



- 2.3 The new NES Board, which has had its inaugural meeting and continues to meet termly, includes around 10 members, including all the strand leads and the NES coordinator. The Board has oversight of the NES budget and provides the strategic steer, scrutiny and challenge. Membership includes volunteer representatives from Nuneaton education settings (all phases). See appendix 1 for the list of members of the group.
- 2.4 The Strand Working groups will meet as required to deliver the work required. Membership includes those with interest in the strand as well as those able to facilitate the aims of the strand.
- 2.5 The Stakeholder's Partnership is made up of anyone with an interest in the work of the NES and provide a 'sounding board' of the NES work we well as a communication channel to the wider Nuneaton community.

3.1 Strand 1: Best Possible Start

- 3.1.1 The focus for the group is the '50 things to do before you are five' programme which is being developed based on a model from Bradford. An app has been created and launched, including local Warwickshire activities to support the development, learning and school readiness of 0–5-year-olds.
- Since launching, there have been over 3000 downloads of the app in Warwickshire, with the Nuneaton postcode CV10 having the most downloads.

- The programme was launched at an event in June 2022 at Stockingford Early Years centre and Library. This was a partnership between the NES, Stockingford Nursery, WCC Library Services and Adult and Community Learning (ACL). Each child attending the nursery (around 120 across the day) was given a goody bag with 50 Things app information. Throughout the day there were preschool library sessions taking place, as well as the ACL team encouraging parents to sign up for their courses as well as engage with the app. Each activity related back to content on the app so that parents could get used to using the app and could see its benefits.
- There will be a new lead for the strand, with Sharon Kindred (Lead Commissioner for School and Early Years Improvement) taking on the planning and activities for the strand from Feb 2023.

3.1.2 The Early Years and Childcare, Sufficiency and Business Team are reviewing partnership working and supporting marketing in Nuneaton to raise awareness of the free early years' entitlement for 2,3 and 4 year olds. The take up of the two-year-old benefits related funding for those eligible families in the summer term for the last three years is detailed below:

Term	Take up of two-year-old funding of children eligible according to the Department for Education
Summer term 2020 (June)	64% ¹
Summer term 2021	73%
Summer term 2022	64%

Covid and the cost of living crisis is continuing to change the economic circumstances of families and we are seeing an increase in applications for funded two year old places, which are dependent on receipt of benefits.

3.2 Strand 2 Empowering Schools

3.2.1 Headteacher members of the subgroup have remained proactive despite the demands schools currently face in the post Covid landscape. This has enabled the work of this strand to continue to move at pace.

3.2.2 The Nuneaton Education Alliance (NEA) is well established and continues to offer professional development opportunities, school to school support and recruitment and retention initiatives. The organisation of the NEA is owned by the school leaders that form the steering group.

¹ 2020 data covers the whole of Nuneaton and Bedworth, the subsequent data (2021/22) is for Nuneaton only.

3.2.3 The NEA continue to spearhead the training and use of the Thrive approach² in schools. In 2020 when the approach was introduced in schools there were 3 Nuneaton schools who took part. The NEA have now managed to ensure that the 18 Nuneaton schools listed below use the Thrive approach:

1. Glendale Infant School	11. George Eliot School
2. Middlemarch Junior School	12. Values Academy
3. Stockingford Academy	13. The Hartshill School
4. Chilvers Coton Infant School	14. St Pauls Primary School
5. Milby Primary School	15. Queens Junior School
6. Arley Primary School	16. Abbey Infant School
7. Michael Drayton Junior School	17. Oakwood Primary School
8. Galley Common Infant School	18. Park Lane School
9. Nathaniel Newton Infant School	19. St Nicholas Cof E Academy
10. The Nuneaton Academy	

3.2.4 In addition to the schools above, Nuneaton Significant Adults (SAP) have received Thrive Licensed Practitioner training via consortium funding. This supports schools without Thrive subscription/licensed practitioners increasing impact/numbers. SAPs are able to profile those they are supporting, develop action plans and evaluate impact using the system.

3.2.5 Through feedback from the NEA and the consortium, it was identified in 2022 that schools would benefit from specific Autism staff wide training. The NEA worked with an Autism Specialist Teacher and Trainer to provide a series of online training sessions for school staff and these took place February 2022. Each session had around 50 live attendees with a further 50 benefiting from a recording of the training afterwards. The sessions were as follows:

Autism and challenging behaviours	Understanding Autism and attachment disorder
Understanding and supporting girls on the Autism spectrum	Social stories training
Autism and sensory processing differences	Using comic strips.

The feedback from the training was very positive, with teachers commenting that it helped them improve their support for their pupils living with ASC. The training proved so popular that it is currently being repeated in Feb 2023 with around 40 members of staff signed up for each session,

² The Thrive Approach is away of supporting children with their emotional health; wellbeing and social skills; all of which are needed to facilitate effective learning taking place.

3.2.6 As a follow up to the Autism training, a small informal parent support network has been established for parents with children on the Autism Spectrum. Advertised through school SENCos parents were invited to 6 weeks of workshops with the same trainer offering support, information and advice, taking place at Nuneaton Library in November 2022. Each session was oversubscribed with parents able to share their experiences and receive advice from the autism expert. At least 10 parents attended each session, and as of February 2023 the group have kept in touch and are informally meeting to support each other. The feed back from the sessions was overwhelmingly positive with one parent saying:

'This was an absolutely fantastic course. Louise who took the course was superb. The fact that she is highly trained in this area, and also has personal experience of a child with autism is of the utmost help. I am truly grateful that our paths crossed and to have had the opportunity to access all the information and resources that Louise provided.'

3.2.7 To continue the idea that the NEA encourages partnership working between schools, a series of Continued Professional Development has been put together for secondary teachers to lead sessions for primary colleagues on their specialist subject to explore how it is taught at secondary phase and how this can be linked with primary teaching methods. Secondary teachers volunteered to lead the sessions after school and it allowed networking between secondary and primary phases in a way not carried out before. The first sessions, which took place in June 2022 were as follows:

Geography – fieldwork throughout KS1 and KS2	History – integrating artefacts into lessons
STEM – ideas for STEM projects, collaborating science with technology and engineering at KS1 and 2	PE – gymnastics: how to teach forward and backward rolls; cartweels etc safely
French – memorable teaching strategies for sentence structure	Music – composition, vocabulary and notation. Assessment and progression through the primary curriculum
Food tech – what progression in the subject looks like and practical activities	RE- Buddhism and Judaism and the links with other religions at KS1 and 2
Art – figure drawing at KS1 and 2	

The second set of sessions took place in November 2023 and were as follows:

History, using artefacts in the classroom	Music – composition
PE Gymnastics	Computing and coding
Food tech – evaluating food products	Art - sculpture
RE for the primary age group	Science – how to conduct and write up experiments

All schools involved have commented that they have found the sessions useful to improve the working relationships between secondary and primary teachers as well as subject knowledge and curriculum improvement.

- 3.2.8 The NEA are working with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) on providing bespoke learning behaviour training for Nuneaton schools. This is being match funded by WCC and has been offered to all Nuneaton schools, of which 19 will be taking part. This includes all 7 schools that EEF have recognised as ‘priority’ schools, identified by high disadvantage and being below national attainment. This has also led to Nuneaton schools taking part in a Research advocate programme with the EEF.
- 3.2.9 There is a further focus on recruitment and retention strategies which includes gathering good practice and effective models. The NEA are offering a funded programme for the new Early Careers Teachers Framework. It is being delivered through the Best Practice Network and is being led by teachers and leaders from Nuneaton schools (with Higham Lane School coordinating the project). The offer is unique to Nuneaton and will help to foster a relationship of collaboration through the schools as well as working to retain high quality staff.
- 3.3.1 **Strand 3 Ready for Work and Life**
- 3.3.2 This strand is now led by Stephanie Hodgson, Technical Specialist Employability & Post 16.
- 3.3.3 A Nuneaton careers task and finish group was set up with career leads from all Nuneaton secondary schools and representatives from sixth form providers and the Warwickshire Skills Hub. The success of the group has led to the establishment of the Nuneaton Careers Alliance which has the following mission:

The young people of Nuneaton will have good quality careers information, advice and guidance, along with exposure to a range of quality careers activities. The education providers and careers professions are stronger together, collaborating to achieve the best outcomes for the young people of Nuneaton.

The meetings take place every half term and allow Nuneaton careers leads to share existing careers provision in schools and discussed ways to work together to improve outcomes and overcome common barriers. Prospects, who are contracted to work with Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) in Nuneaton are also new members of the group and want to improve their communication with schools to encourage a reduction in the overall NEET numbers.

3.3.4 The members of the Careers Alliance worked closely with North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College (NWSLC) to put on a STEAM (Science; Technology; Engineering; Art and Maths) careers event which was held in July 2022.

- The first part of the event was a virtual careers platform hosted by Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- The event, held over two days at the NWSLC campus, was attended by groups of pupils from each Nuneaton secondary school and showcased a range of information for the young people about careers in STEAM industries. The NCA provided funding for the schools to transport their students to the event, as this was identified as a barrier leads in their careers support programme.
- The event included employers such as:

WinVic	Triumph	Cotswold Financial Planning
NHS	MIRA	Wincanton
Meggitt		

as well as further information on post 16 study.

- The employers gave practical demonstrations and talked to the young people about interview and other employability skills.

- **84** Nuneaton year 10 students attended (unfortunately one of the school cohorts were impacted by a Covid outbreak the week of the event, but over 100 students were registered) alongside students from other areas.
- Of all the students in attendance over the two days 94.4% found it useful and would like to attend a similar event again.
- As the feedback is so positive and with the support of the NCA, it is likely that the event will take place again at NWSLC in Spring 2023.

3.3.5 The Student Lounge project at Saints, Nuneaton has proved popular and successful. The Saints building is open for young people after school to drop in for study advice, careers advice and any other information. The original predictions for the project were that around 40 young people would attend per session, but some sessions are reaching up to 70 young people, who are reporting that they appreciate the study support and a warm, welcoming place to go after school. One of the Student Lounge sessions a week is being funded and run by the team at Think Higher³ and is targeting the young people in Nuneaton who may be thinking of going on to Higher Education.

4.0 Links with the Warwickshire Cultural Education Partnership (WCEP)

- 4.1 The NES coordinator has been working with the steering group for the WCEP which has members such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, Compton Verney, Motionhouse and WCC and has the aim of increasing the engagement of young people with the arts⁴.
- 4.2 There is a youth board for the CEP, which we are trying to increase the number of Nuneaton young people taking part.
- 4.3 An arts based careers event will be taking place on the 20th Feb at the new KECs W building in Ropewalk, Nuneaton. There will be talks from the RSC, the BBC as well as local artists (Alisha Miller) talking about their pathway to becoming an artist. The event is being led by WCC Heritage and Culture team, with support from Sarah Cox.

³ Think Higher is the local network for Coventry & Warwickshire and partners include University of Warwick, Coventry University, Warwickshire College Group and North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, as well as the Local Enterprise Partnership and both Coventry City and Warwickshire Councils.

⁴ Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough has been identified by the Arts Council as a 'Priority Place'- an area where engagement with the arts is low, so more investment will be put in place. See <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/your-area/priority-places-and-levelling-culture-places>

4.4 There is an opportunity for young people to take part in experience of being on the board of an Arts organisation which is being offered out as of October 2022. The Abbey Theatre, Nuneaton is included in this project and will be taking on their young person shortly.

5.0 Summary

5.1 The members of the Strategy Board continue to work at pace despite the current and continuing circumstances, demonstrating a significant passion to make a difference to the town of Nuneaton through successful delivery of this strategy.

6.0 Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: None

Appendix A
Members of the Nuneaton Education Strategy

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