

Welcome to the latest Darlington Children's Trust Partner Newsletter. This issue focuses on celebrating the achievements of Darlington's Children and Young People. We have much to celebrate with excellent GCSE results which were published in August.

Cllr Cyndi Hughes, Chair Darlington Children's Trust, the Council's Member for Children and Young People.



Darlington Schools celebrate GCSE Results

Since securing its position in 2008 as the most improved local authority in England, as regards GCSE attainment, schools in Darlington have continued to build on performance by celebrating an increase of 3.5% in attainment – this means this year over 56% of young people achieved five or more GCSEs with A* to C grades, including Maths and English.

56.4% of pupils in local authority maintained schools passed five or more GCSEs gaining A* to C grades, including Maths and English this year, compared to 52.9% in 2009.

Longfield School Sports College is celebrating after achieving its best-ever GCSE results with 51.1% of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades including Maths and English, compared to 34.3% last year – an increase of 16.8%.

Carmel RC College and Hurworth School Maths and Computing College maintained their outstanding performance, with 80% of Carmel RC College students and 76.4% of Hurworth students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and maths.

Haughton Community School and Arts College and Hummersknott School and Language College have maintained their improved performance of 2009.

At Branksome, the results were down 3.4 % from last year, with 34.1% of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSEs including maths and English.

Cllr Cyndi Hughes, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, said: "I'm sure I share the delight in the achievement and successes of Darlington's young people.

"As our young people continue to go from strength to strength in achieving academic success, I would like to thank the parents, carers, teaching staff, students and governors for all their hard work."



Pupils emerge victorious from the Dragon's Den



PUPILS from across Darlington took part in the third annual final of the Bannatyne's Bright Sparks event last night (Monday July 5).

Celebrity business tycoon and star of BBC TV's Dragon's Den programme Duncan Bannatyne, headed the panel of judges at the education and enterprise competition.

The event, organised by Darlington Council with Durham Education Business Partnership, is aimed at encouraging enterprise among secondary school pupils.

Each school team devised a business concept with a mentor from local companies to help them progress their ideas ready to face the judges at the final, when they presented their businesses to a 'Dragon's Den' style panel.

Mr Bannatyne and the other judges, who were Laura Woods, Director of Academic Enterprise at Teesside University, David Cox, Executive Director of Humantics Community Interest Company and Charlotte Nichols founder of Harvey and Hugo PR, had the difficult task of deciding the overall winner.

The schools which took part were Carmel RC College, St Aidan's CE Academy, Longfield, Polam Hall, Hurworth, Education Village, Hummersknott and Hurworth House.

The overall winner was the Education Village, which took the £1,000 prize donated by Mr Bannatyne, with a £250 prize for best advertising going to

Polam Hall and a £250 prize for best business plan being won by Hummersknott School.

Connor Lishman, 14, from the Education Village, said: "I've really enjoyed coming up with an idea and seeing it through from start to finish. Our idea is to use art and the psychology of colours to help businesses – for example yellow encourages enthusiasm and learning and blues and greens are very calming."

Lauren Turner, 15, from Polam Hall School, said: "I think I've enjoyed the creativity the most and how everyone has worked together on this. Not all of us do business studies as a GCSE, so it's given us the chance to learn about setting up a business, looking at finance, locations and marketing – how it would work in the real world. It's made me think maybe I would go into business. Our business is the Gift Fixer, an on-line shopping service where we make up hamper packs or gift assortments to meet different people's needs."

Rebecca Humphrey, 15, from Hummersknott School, said: "It's been a lot of hard work, but definitely worth it. It's been really educational, fun and interesting. Our business is for renting out a recording studio to up and coming bands. I didn't do business studies, so I have learned a lot about enterprise. I will definitely use the presenting skills. I would like to be a teacher so the presentation side of things will be important for that."

Council Leader John Williams, said: "The Bannatyne's Bright Sparks event is always inspirational. Last night's presentations showed so much creativity and business acumen. I was very impressed.

"Congratulations to the winners and well done to everyone who took part. They all worked very hard on their ideas and business plans. I think some of them could well be registered with Companies House in the future."

Darlington youngsters going for gold

THREE Darlington youngsters have travelled to Scotland to receive their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Rachel Hewitson, 20, Daniel Wildsmith, 20, and Jamie Myers, 19, received their awards from the Duke of Edinburgh at the Royal residence Holyrood House.

Working towards a Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award involves completing a number of challenging activities in five categories; volunteering, skills, expedition, physical and residential.

Rachel, who is studying speech and language sciences at Newcastle University, took part in various challenges including attending a deaf awareness course, volunteering as a Brownie Leader and completing a four day walking expedition in the Lake District.

She said: "My final gold expedition was in the Lake District walking from

Keswick to Bowness. "My most memorable moment was going over High Street in thick fog - we really had to pull together as a team."

Daniel has just finished his second year as a maths student at Leeds University.

Among the challenges he completed to get the award were volunteering as a Beavers' Leader, learning to play the baritone and training for a coast-to-coast bike ride. He said 'The expedition was my favourite part of the award scheme, the physical challenge and the teamwork that went towards it was a unique experience'

Jamie has just graduated from RAF Cosford, the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering. He is now a Leading Aircraft Technician (LAC) and has been posted to RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland. As part of his Gold Award he learnt bee



keeping, went on a five day expedition in the Yorkshire Dales and undertook a moth survey at the Ingleborough Nature Reserve.

Cyndi Hughes, Darlington Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, said: "To gain a Gold DofE Award is an excellent achievement. These three young people have shown true commitment and dedication. Both they and their families should be proud of their achievement and I hope they enjoyed the presentation ceremony.

Working Together for Children Educated At Home

The Elective Home Education (EHE) team held a successful training event on 9 July for partners across Darlington Children's Trust.

Partners attending the session included representatives from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, North Yorkshire County Council and the EHE Charity Education Otherwise, who provided a wider perspective. The Admissions, Special Educational Needs and Youth Offending teams are also part of the group.

The EHE team work with families who have chosen to educate their children at home, making monitoring visits and providing advice and referrals where needed. It typically monitors over 100 children, about two thirds of whom are from the traveller community.

Council officers involved with EHE already meet each term to discuss issues and promote integrated working. This has led to better relationships between the services, including making joint visits to children involved with more than one service or who would benefit from specialist advice. In turn, this has led to better relationships with EHE families. As they do not

have to agree to meet with us, this is the key to improving success rates for monitoring visits and so making safeguarding easier.

Nigel Pell-Ilderton, Lead Officer for EHE said, "EHE is rarely understood and the numbers involved are very large in comparison to other authorities. Developing effective professional relationships is vital if we are to safeguard EHE children and ensure their education is of a good standard".

For more information about EHE, contact Nigel Pell-Ilderton on 388 825 (x2825).



Volunteer Awards

This year is the 7th Annual awards held by eVOLution and each year the quality of the nominations keep getting better and better.

The calibre of nominees once again this year, was extremely high. Trophies for this year's awards were sponsored by a number of organisations, including Exis Technologies, Groundwork West Durham and Darlington, First Stop, Darlington College and Darlington Children's Trust.

In attendance for the event held at Darlington Football Club were his worshipful The Mayor of Darlington and the Lady Mayoress. The new Mayor was delighted to be invited to hand out certificates to all the individual nominees and present the two age group trophies.

The nominees for the under 25 category were as follows;

Jen McGraw - Jen is a young person who leads the Tees Valley YMCA Youth Action Team. She is currently working towards her impact award for completing over 100 hours of volunteering.

Thomas Bowen - This young person has demonstrated

exceptional volunteering talents in various different placements.

Roland Bingham - Roland has been volunteering at the museum for over 18 months, since he did his school work experience with us. **Hannah Wood** - Hannah is a student at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College and she is currently volunteering on the involved Team YAT (Youth Action Team), running club, college magazine and Standard bearer for Darlington Branch of the royal British Legion Women's Section.

Jade Dwyer - Jade has been nominated for this award two years running this is her third time and she, is still, if not more deserving!

Jade is a young volunteer who racked up so many volunteering hours it's hard to count. She volunteers tirelessly for various projects including the Darlington Youth Action Team, Youth Volunteer Forum, most YMCA events, JJ's café, and more recently her new venture in the Age UK charity shop.

What is truly outstanding about Jade is that when she isn't volunteering with another

organisation she creates her own volunteering. In what little spare time she has she makes greeting cards which she sells all over the town for a charity of her choice. Also, every year come rain or hail she pulls together a bring and buy stall in aid of a different charity each time, she has raised money for JJ's Café, Young Carers and YCare International...to name but a few.

Despite lacking confidence when she first started Jade now has become part of the team and has a huge input. Jade is a keen YAT member who is very sociable, she will often make cakes and cards for the team, when they need some extra motivation. As part of the YAT team Jade has taken part in the bigvbus event and fundraising.

Jade's latest venture is volunteering at the Age UK shop where she merchandises, manages the till and prices up stock. She loves this placement because she says it 'stops her from being bored' and 'keeps her busy'. Jade has had her fair share of struggles but despite this she continues to be a great volunteer who is at the heart of the YAT team.

Jade Dwyer was the winner of this category and also went on to be the overall winner of Volunteer of the Year 2010

Jade commented on her win "I am really shocked and pleased to receive the Volunteers under 25's Award and Volunteer of the year. This is my third year being nominated and I would like to thank everyone who has helped me with my volunteer placements especially Donna Caygill from Tees Valley YMCA."



"Under 25 winner" and Volunteer of the Year 2010 Jade Dwyer with eVOLution's Executive Director Karen Grundy.

Apprentice takes top award

APPRENTICE electrician Andrew Emmerson, who works in Darlington Council's Community Services Department, has won a national award.



He scooped the award in the Male Mechanical and Electrical Skills Category, in the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Apprentice Awards, sponsored by Baxi.

Of his win, Andrew said: "To be honest, it was a bit of a surprise, I didn't expect it, but it's really good – quite an achievement I suppose."

The APSE apprentice and trainee awards scheme has been running for 12 years throughout the UK. The aim of the awards, which are open to councils across the UK, is to recognise the skills of future tradespersons, and the councils which invest in and provide first class training and employment

initiatives in Modern Apprenticeship schemes.

Andrew, 20, has been with the Council since he left school and has enjoyed his apprenticeship. He said: "I really enjoy it. It's the mixture of work-based learning and going to college as well.

"Working at the Council also means I'm getting a variety of training, at the moment I am training as a fire alarm technician, but I can also be doing full installations and maintenance work, and that could be in public buildings, houses or schools, so it's a great place to start and train in different areas."

Andrew is hoping to further his education with a Higher National Certificate in Electrical Engineering, and is looking for sponsorship for this.

Darlington Council also received an award in recognition of its long term investment in the apprentice scheme and commitment to local employment.

Cyndi Hughes, Darlington Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, said: "Congratulations to Andrew. He and his family should be very proud of his achievements.

"The Council is committed to increasing the opportunities for apprentices throughout the Borough. Apprenticeships are suitable for all sectors of business, not just the traditional trades, and can benefit all types of employers and employees. Andrew has shown just what can be achieved

Young gymnasts win competition

YOUNG gymnasts from Reid Street Primary School are leaping for joy after they won a regional competition.



After taking first prize at the local finals, they are now officially the best primary school squad in the North-East having won the Tees Valley Partnership Key Steps Key Stage 2 Gymnastics Final.

Although they have won the Darlington heats in the past, this is the first time the team has got through to the regional final and won the title. Elements of the competition included a floor routine which demonstrated key gymnastics moves and a vault.

Talking about the success, Debbie Hancock, YR5 teacher and PE coordinator for the school, said: "I am incredibly proud of the children as they have worked so hard to compete at such a difficult level this year. It was lovely to see their determination to do well pay off!"

The team members were: Ashleigh Newnham age 11, Chloe Bright age 11, Jessica Dinsley age 11, Danny Lewin age 10, Leah Lakin-Cairns age 9.

Children's Trust Reforms



On 22nd July 2010 the Department for Education announced reforms for Children's Trusts. The statement is outlined below:

Strong local partnerships are crucial to meeting the needs of all children, but a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. That is why this Government intends to remove much of the bureaucracy surrounding children's trusts and allow schools to choose how best they may engage. The Secretary for State of Education intends to:

- remove the duty on schools to co-operate through Children's Trusts via the forthcoming Education Bill
- remove the requirement on local authorities to set up Children's Trust Boards and the requirement on those Boards to prepare and publish a joint Children and Young People's Plan, at the first available legislative opportunity
- revoke the regulations underpinning the Children and Young People's Plan and withdraw the statutory guidance on Children's Trusts, in the autumn.

If you require further information about this please contact Melanie Brown, Darlington Children's Trust Partnership Manager on 01325 388219 or melanie.brown@darlington.gov.uk.

Click to Switch for advice on drugs and alcohol misuse

YOUNG people and their parents/carers can now click onto a new website for help and advice on substance misuse.

The Switch website: www.switchdarlington.co.uk is now live and available to give advice and information on how to stop using, reduce use and minimise the risks of drugs and substance misuse. Alongside information and contact details, website users can also use the site to put forward a referral to the team.

Designed by Edward Robertson, the site gives details of what the Switch team can do and how to contact them. It offers information on drug alerts, where parents/carers can go to for more help as well as how to get involved in a forum for parents/carers and for professionals. Details of national help lines and other agencies are also included with links to a number of relevant websites.

Darlington Borough Council's Switch team works closely with other services to offer support for young people aged from 10 – 18 who are at risk of having problems with substance misuse including drugs and alcohol. It also offers support for their parents and /or carers where needed.

A young person can be referred to Switch by a professional, parent/carer or even as a self-referral. The Switch team will then work with the young person to agree a plan of action to help them.

Alongside information and advice on alcohol, drug and solvent misuse, the Switch team also offers positive activities for young people through other services including the Youth Service and Connexions, Hepatitis A & B vaccinations, blood borne virus testing, pregnancy and Chlamydia testing, needle exchange, substitute prescribing and a counselling service.

The Switch team is based at Central House Annex, Gladstone Street in Darlington and can be contacted by the new website or via e-mail: switchteam@darlington.gov.uk or by telephone (01325) 346283.



Darlington Children's Trust finds out 'What makes children happy?'



Throughout the summer holiday, Darlington Children's Trust held a competition and asked children under ten years old 'what makes you happy?'

Playschemes, Children's Centres and libraries across Darlington were involved – asking children to create artwork to illustrate what makes them happiest.



Over 54 entries were received and 6 winners met Deefor the Dragon, received certificates and a book in a short ceremony that took place at Crown Street Library, Darlington.

The winning entries were:

Under 4 years

- Paige Morehead (4 years old) 'going to the beach with mummy'
- Thomas Black (4 years old) 'mummy'

4-8 years

- Adrian Hesltine (7 years old) 'life'
- Charlie Jaye (8 years old) 'my Sunday dinner makes me happy'

9-10 years

- Regan Hesletine (10 years old) 'my family makes me happy'
- Chloe Robson (10 years old) 'no hunger, no war, peace, lots of nature, love to dance'

Cllr Cyndi Hughes, Cabinet Member of Children and Young People, said: "This really has been a lovely competition – it is always a privilege to share time with the children and also have the opportunity for them to remind us that sometimes it's the simple things that really make life fun".

Darlington Children's Trust will now incorporate the feedback from the children in developing the area's Children and Young People's Plan which sets out the priorities for the area. Darlington Children's Trust undertakes a range of work to identify and address how the lives of children and young people can be made happy, healthy, safe and fulfilled and is a partnership between private, public and voluntary sector organisations who oversee the well-being of children and young people in Darlington.



14-19 Partnership News - Transition Work

The 14-19 Partnership organises a number of schemes to ensure that our young people are well supported at age 16 as they leave school.

Whilst most young people are happy and eager to move on to college or work based learning at 16, some worry about the move and others are not sure which course of action is right for them. It is at this transition time that young people may fall through the net without specific support.

Darlington College, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Carmel RC College and Darlington Borough Council Work-based learning send their mentors to Year 11 assemblies in schools to introduce the Darlington Transition Mentoring scheme to the Year 11 students. The mentors then have 1:1 meetings with students who would benefit from transitional support as they move through to post-16. Students are supported during the summer, eg through making visits to college and are welcomed by a mentor as soon as they join in September. Post-16 colleges feel that this scheme has a great effect on settling the students in during the first few weeks of post-16 and it has a positive impact on retention rates.

The Partnership also organises efficient one-hour meetings in schools with members of staff from school, college (eg Heads of year, SENCOs, college learning support and mentors) and Connexions who discuss and exchange support information about every young person who is moving to Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College or Darlington College in September. These meetings ensure that all safeguarding and learning support needs are known before a young person arrives at college, and colleges can properly prepare for their arrival and target support appropriately.

In addition to the young people who are progressing on to post-16, arrangements are also in place to support

those young people who may become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) at 16. Schools and Connexions Advisers meet to identify at an early stage, those young people who have the potential to be NEET after leaving school. The aim of these meetings is identify any additional interventions that both parties plus partner agencies can put into place to ensure that young people not only apply to take up an offer of learning but are also supported in sustaining that learning.

Finally, a meeting takes place between Darlington College and Connexions SEN Personal Advisers for students at Beaumont Hill School. This meeting reviews in detail the transition needs of those pupils leaving Beaumont Hill School who will be accessing courses delivered by Darlington College. All appropriate information to support and sustain learning will be discussed and transferred at this meeting.

For further information about our transition work, please contact Karen Williamson (01325) 388051 or Debs Archer (01325) 480055.

