

# Transforming Secondary Education in Blackpool

Building Schools for the Future

Strategy For Change Part 1

December 2007

## Section 2 – Strategic Overview of the Education Strategy

### 2. Where is Blackpool now?

#### 2.1.1 Key Issues

Blackpool is the largest seaside resort in Great Britain and is a town in transition. After a period of steady economic decline, a vibrant, modern coastal town is emerging and the town is achieving recognition for its radical development and innovation. Blackpool's BSF programme will link with the ambitious redevelopment programme to provide access to state of the art facilities delivering the highest levels of learning for all the towns' young people.

Blackpool is the fourth most densely populated local authority district of England and Wales outside Greater London. A high proportion of the population lives in flats or shared houses. When taken in the context of high unemployment it can be seen that the town still faces significant social and economic problems.

Throughout the secondary school age range, young people experiencing high levels of deprivation are more likely to underachieve. In families from the proportion of deprived families where multiple generations have experienced this situation, parents' ambitions for their children may not be matched by their expectations for them or their ability to guide. Low parental expectations transfer to young people leading in some cases to a spiralling cycle of disaffection and disengagement.

Primary schools add good value with pupils achieving key stage 2 results in line with national averages, although they start school well below national expectations. The numbers of pupils achieving 2 levels of progress from key stage 2 to 3 were below national averages. Blackpool's Value Added GCSE scores for 2007 were above national averages. All schools were above 1000 VA score at key stage 2 to 4 and key stage 3 to 4. However GCSE achievement remains below national averages. A key priority is to increase the numbers of pupils achieving 5A\*-C grades including Maths and English, as performance here is below national levels of achievement.

Blackpool's resort profile, seasonal employment in the town's tourist industry and the large stock of low cost privately rented accommodation, contributes to the highest levels of migration of children and young people in the country and this presents considerable challenges to schools, some of which have an annual pupil turnover as high as 30%.

The detrimental impact to a child's social and academic progress of moving schools establishes transience as a significant issue for Blackpool to resolve. Difficulties in adequately meeting the needs of these young people have resulted in unacceptably high numbers not in education, employment or training after the age of 16. BSF provides an opportunity for the needs of these young people to be addressed. This can be done by providing facilities, support and a curriculum that does not assume a unique start date and enables them to achieve in accordance with their potential and aspirations.

#### 2.1.3 Managing Falling Rolls

Allied to the issue of transience is the fluctuation in pupil numbers brought about by demographic changes in the town. Blackpool's secondary school population reached a peak in numbers in 2005, since which date the falling numbers have started to work through the secondary sector. Forecasts indicate that numbers will fall from 8600 to 7600 between 2007 and 2015. Thereafter an increase to 7900 is forecast by 2020. Demographics in Blackpool follow this cyclical pattern with population extremes constantly changing. Blackpool's plans for BSF will provide the necessary flexibility to respond to this cycle.

#### 2.1.4 Special Educational Needs

A local review of provision for pupils with special educational needs, undertaken in conjunction with the DCSF SEN Adviser has indicated an inconsistency of provision and therefore entitlement across the town for a number of key groups. In particular this relates to insufficient opportunities for pupils to be integrated into mainstream secondary schools, together with significant duplication of provision between two all age special schools. Some attempts have been made to resolve this

issue but now BSF provides the opportunity to promote a more holistic approach.

Our BSF programme will be an important catalyst to help engage key partners to ensure that opportunities are taken to provide a coherent pattern of support throughout all Key Stages. It will provide more choice and diversity for parents as they work in partnership with the Authority to achieve the best outcomes for their children.

#### 2.1.5 The 14 – 19 age group

Provision in Blackpool for many pupils in the 14+ age group has evolved from a traditional base. In the context of GCSE attainment levels rising from a low base and which exceeded 50% for the first time in 2007, it is apparent that the pattern of mixed results previously seen is now a clear improving trend. BSF will build on these successes.

Blackpool's educational outcomes at the end of key stage 4 are improving steadily as the gap between national and local performance narrows in terms of 5A\*-C and 5A\*-C including English and Maths. The increase in 5+A\*-C from 2002 – 2007 is +15%, with no schools performing below the 30% floor target. 3 schools, however, performed below the 30% floor target for 5A\*-C including English and Maths.

The focus nationally on this age group has demanded reviews of educational delivery linked to the changing needs of young people as they make decisions about their next stages of learning or entry into work. Although the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training is falling, there is still work to be done to provide suitable alternatives for people in this group. BSF will enable Blackpool to meet identified needs by:

- Increasing vocational provision.
- Enhancing Post 16 Level 2 provision.
- Providing flexible start dates for courses for 16-19 year olds, to complement the seasonal patterns of employment due to the tourism industry
- Developing greater use of ICT across the town to enhance further the opportunities for learning.

These challenges have guided the identification of key priorities for BSF which, working within previously agreed principles (Appendix 1), will allow us to:

- Meet the needs of Blackpool children and young people as a whole.
- Deliver a state of the art curriculum in state of the art facilities.
- Have ambitions for all schools to perform at national target levels by 2017.
- Raise aspiration and expectation levels of young people and families.
- Maintain and increase the current rate of improvement in standards.
- Enable all secondary schools to play a part in delivering the 5 ECM Outcomes.
- Enable all secondary schools to deliver high quality extended services to meet the needs of their local communities.
- Promote increased opportunities for inclusion/integration for all pupils including those with special educational or other needs who would not normally be able to attend high school.
- Provide for a learner entitlement for all pupils.
- Support all young people as they aim to achieve their 14-19 entitlements and progress into the next stages of their lives.
- Enhance collaboration and avoid competition between schools.
- Ensure staff working in the transformed schools have the necessary skills to do so effectively.

Blackpool and Fylde FE College and Blackpool Sixth Form College work closely with the Secondary Federation. The LSC has indicated a willingness to align LSC funding with the BSF programme to increase the accessibility of level one and level two courses across Blackpool.

The following outlines the means by which these priorities will be achieved.

### **2.1.6 Educational outcomes**

The upward trend described above for Key Stage 4 is not replicated at Key Stage 3 with a mixed picture of

progress. Writing standards are a key area impacting on overall achievement levels.

As a response to the lack of improved attainment Blackpool schools and local authority are working in partnership with QCA to develop a 'Blackpool Community Curriculum'. This new approach to teaching and learning for 11-14 year olds is being piloted in all secondary schools in 2007-2008. The vision for a very different learning experience for 11-14 year olds will take shape as we progress through BSF enabling us to create visionary learning spaces in which we can deliver a skills based, integrated learning experience developing key life skills as well as the best possible educational outcomes for young people.

## **2.2 What Added Value will BSF provide?**

### **2.2.1 Diversity, choice and access**

The flexibility of curriculum delivery through BSF plans will ensure that each young person has ready access to an age and ability appropriate course, which will meet their learning needs. Learning centres will have specialisms at key stage 3 and key stage 4, and will deliver courses made up of a 'menu' of learning strands. Each young person will be guided in their choice of learning strands as appropriate to their skills and abilities. Learning centres across the town will provide core provision plus specialist provision. Access to learning through Blackpool's learning platform will be part of our core offer of learning.

### **2.2.2 Underperforming schools**

In 2007 Blackpool's 5A\*-C results of 51 % showed an improvement on 2006 results by 2.8%. This follows on from last year's rise of 7%. They are the highest ever achieved by Blackpool schools. Blackpool is narrowing the gap between national and Blackpool achievement. 5A\*-C including English and Maths results also went up by 0.5% to 34.6%, continuing an upward trend. BSF plans will provide additionality to curriculum options, and more flexible methods of delivery, offering greater continuity and progression in learning pathways. Through BSF the pace of change will be greater as

supported by ICT we will deliver improved teaching and learning conditions earlier, ensuring that the gap between national and local performance continues to narrow.

Blackpool schools employ a range of school improvement strategies, which are supported through partnership working at every level of leadership between school leaders and local authority officers. Through BSF the collaborative working relationships between schools will be strengthened as we site additional resources in areas of greatest need. There is the opportunity to rethink our core purpose of delivering a 21<sup>st</sup> century education and to engage all our stakeholders in delivering the vision.

The DCSF and the local authority are monitoring two schools for attendance, Palatine and Collegiate, as in 2005 the attendance was below 90%. However the picture is improving. BSF will add value in improving attendance, which will impact positively upon attainment, through the provision of additional curriculum pathways, a more flexible pattern of delivery and school day, and the provision of more flexible holiday patterns that will allow some children and young people more days per school year of access to learning. All of this will be underpinned by the use of e-attendance packages.

Through BSF we are raising the baseline of attendance and achievement across all Blackpool schools to deliver the same outcomes for Blackpool children as are achieved by all children and young people nationally.

### **2.2.3 Personalised learning**

Our Core offer of learning to all children and young people will ensure that socially, personally and emotionally young people are able to access a challenging programme of learning which meets their needs. Our Specialisms, delivered through learning centres, will provide a range of courses. Strongly supported, but not directed, by ICT, young people will access academic and skills-based learning to ensure they can develop into informed citizens and achieve the highest level of qualification in order to passport them to the next stage of lifelong learning. Individual institutions will no longer be responsible for providing the full range of curricular provision. This will be provided through an

area-based consortium of learning centres managed through Blackpool's Trust Partnership. Each young person will have a small home group based in an appropriate learning centre. As their skills and confidence develop that will access a broader range of courses across the area and Blackpool, throughout key stage 3. This will prepare them for the 14-19 curricular pathways which some may access earlier or later, depending upon their aptitude and self confidence. Each locality will have a nurture centre and a gifted and talented centre of excellence building the capacity of partner schools to ensure the learning needs of all children are met.

### **2.3 Choice, Diversity and Access**

At the heart of Blackpool's proposals is a drive to transform the way education is managed, organised and delivered. Leadership and accountability are critical factors in this drive and we propose a radical rethinking of our current models to ensure that schools are responsive to the needs both of the local and wider communities. The integration with other services such as health and the collaboration with other agencies and learning providers will ensure that the five outcomes of Every Child Matters are achieved.

The most innovative element of the Council's BSF programme will result in the changing of status of our mainstream Community High Schools into Trust Schools. The authority is promoting this agenda amongst the schools and supporting Governing Bodies seeking to pursue this option. Two schools, Montgomery and Collegiate, have applied, with Local Authority support, to become Early Adopter Trusts from September 2008. Remaining Governing Bodies are working positively towards resolving to move in this direction. This radical change will bring additional support and influence from trust sponsors to drive forward Blackpool's programme for raising standards. To facilitate the management of falling roles and also to ensure existing specialist facilities are retained, Beacon Hill and Bispham High Schools are actively considering operating under a single trust. To this end, Officers of the Authority have conducted joint briefing meetings with Governing Bodies and Senior Leadership teams of both schools and separate meetings of all staff at both schools. A

working group from the joint schools has been established to identify options for moving this project forward and for appropriate, viable, use of the 2 sites. To ensure adequate resource is available to complete this complex task, the Headteacher of Bispham High School has been seconded to work with the BSF Project Team to lead the work with this working group. Options will be reported in February thereby enabling decisions to be confirmed for completion of SFC2.

Blackburn Diocese, with Blackpool, is exploring the adoption of Academy Status for St George's Voluntary Aided High School with possible post 16 links to local colleges. With St Mary's retaining its existing Voluntary Aided status, all Blackpool's Secondary schools will be self-governing.

There will be strong governance links between the Children's Trust and school trust boards as a proportion of trust board members are also members of the Children's Trust.

In the future, our schools, Local Authority and other partners will continue to be adaptable, flexible and to work with each other to effect change, support improved attainment initiatives across the borough and deliver sustained excellence. With this objective achieved, pupil's choice of schools will be driven significantly by the availability of personalised provision.

To support this aim the existing subject specialisms held by all our schools will be increased with our objective being for all our schools to have a second. Lead institutions have been identified for the roll out of diploma lines and BTEC provision, will all schools and both colleges having a clear role in Blackpool's 14-19 strategy.

Each school will also develop a specific key stage 3 specialism, linked to the new Blackpool curriculum key stage 3, currently being developed in partnership with the QCA.

A significant element of our strategy for change is to ensure that our schools, all of which will be self governing, are organised in a variety of collaborative ways, making centres of learning available to pupils, each with their own distinctive features drawing on ethos,

faith and areas of specialism. Wherever possible, ICT systems and technology will be used to enhance and promote this collaborative working environment.

Blackpool schools have worked collaboratively with the authority since Local Government Review in 1998. To enhance this collaborative approach, a Soft Federation of all eight Secondary Schools, secondary age special schools and the FE and HE Colleges was established in 2003. This has brought about notable changes resulting in improved standards. This group has taken on the role of Blackpool's Behaviour Collaborative. Through the collaborative working of the Trust Partnership, Schools would continue raising attainment.

The denominational education needs of the Blackpool community are and will continue to be served by St George's and St Mary's, with the former becoming an Academy. It is anticipated that as standards in these schools continue to rise they will draw pupils into Blackpool from the neighbouring authority.

We are developing a Blackpool style – an outlook and philosophy that encapsulates key standards and offers students a definite and attractive 'flavour' of educational offer. Our teachers and other operational staff will be managed in new ways, resources used innovatively and there will be an expectation that the autonomy of individual institutions will need to alter. We will offer a wide range of courses and offer education on sites specialising in 11-14 and 14-19 education, a nurture unit and a Gifted and Talented centre of excellence in each locality.

Developing use of ICT and a constantly available virtual learning platform will enable access to learning in ways that will enhance choice for families and young people.

The range of school types available will also be extended through the establishment of Blackpool's Studio School. This 14-19 school will operate as a business, delivering education through a real world, human scale environment. We are actively exploring with the Department, of Children, Schools and Families, the possibility of the Studio School being an Academy. The freedoms and flexibilities offered by the academy structure will facilitate the operation of a very different organisation compared with a conventional school. There will be opportunities to engage with external

partners and local businesses at various levels from sponsorship to work placements and mentoring.

This highly innovative 14-19 establishment will have a unique learning atmosphere and leadership structure, working closely with the local business sponsors to develop the skilled workforce needed by the Blackpool economy. Its vision is to create collaborative working between local businesses and groups of schools, making maximum use of resources and creating a much stronger connection between education and the world of work and jobs of the future.

Blackpool is working closely with the Young Foundation to develop this unique concept into a real experience for young people. No such provision currently exists in the UK or elsewhere in the world.

The authority's Admissions Scheme will be adapted to ensure the availability of this option for all Blackpool's young people.

Post-16 provision will be delivered as at present with the two FE and HE Colleges working with St Mary's R.C. VI Form College. The St George's Academy may provide post 16 provision in a manner to be confirmed by Sfc2.

Blackpool's commitment to providing diversity of choice and access extends to our plans for providing education for young people with Special Educational Needs. BSF will enable us to bring about significant enhancement to our already 'Outstanding' (OFSTED definition) Special Schools by allowing:

- ⊕ Fully integrated mainstream provision,
- ⊕ Well resourced SERFs in mainstream schools,
- ⊕ Special School provision where required.

## 2.4 Addressing Underperformance

Central to our aspirations for all children and young people to receive a personalised education to take them successfully through their school days and beyond is an absolutely immovable intention to provide excellence in provision in all schools. We will build on the demonstrably effective programme of support end challenge, which has resulted in no secondary schools in

failing categories. This is due to Blackpool's Early Warning system that leads to timely intervention. Schools causing the LA concern work in partnership with School Improvement teams, taking a holistic approach to school improvement, and including national strategy consultants, advisers, SIPS, ASTs and senior leaders from successful schools. They are managed by the principal adviser. Under performing groups are built into KPIs for each school and for Blackpool Trust Partnership. These KPIs cover all 5 ECM outcomes. Collaborative trust working arrangements will further facilitate school improvement through weaker schools or departments being supported by stronger schools and departments.

Three schools, Palatine, St George's and Beacon Hill, achieved below 30% 5A\*-C including English and Maths in 2007. All 3 have set targets above 30% for 2008. BSF offers structural change opportunities as we explore the potential of St George's becoming an academy and so adding additionality through sponsors, Beacon Hill will form a joint trust with a school achieving above the 30% floor target, and Palatine will become a trust using external partners to focus on English and Maths. HE and FE institutions will have close links to these and other Blackpool schools through trust partnerships.

All Blackpool schools and colleges will form a Blackpool Trust Partnership. Through membership of this collaborative, trust partner and school specialism expertise will be shared across all Blackpool schools. The collaborative will take strategic lead in improving outcomes for all children, including under performing groups, in Blackpool secondary schools and colleges. There will be KPIs for the partnership, for individual trusts and individual schools to measure progress. The partnership will form Blackpool's Behaviour Collaborative. The partnership will improve outcomes through developing on existing good practice and monitoring and evaluating Blackpool's School Improvement strategy, including the Teaching and Learning, Collaborative Leadership, Strengthening Community and Raising Achievement strategies. The Trust Partnership will monitor the performance of under performing groups of students, in particular white working class children and more able children. Members of this

group sit on the ICT Strategy Group that is developing the model for supporting this agenda.

We will create a specialised workforce for each key stage thereby improving standards through enhanced teacher and leadership specialism, sharing good practice across the estate.

At an individual school level, all Blackpool schools will retain an individual ethos, subject specialisms at key stages 3 and 4 and a unique focus on learning styles.

## 2.5 Personalised Learning

BSF allows for innovation in delivery and flexibility of teaching space leading to improved engagement, motivation and ultimately attendance, to drive higher achievement.

Our vision is that Blackpool Schools become the 'broker' for learning with flexibility of time, location and attendance, allowing and encouraging the pupil's individual responsibility for his or her study. With guidance and support, our pupils will be able to determine their own developmental paths.

Children and young people who have the aptitude and motivation to go on to further and higher education and training will achieve more in schools that recognise and meet individual needs. We will promote the individual needs of children and young people who find learning difficult to enable them to achieve more and be socially included in all schools. We shall ensure that a robust tracking system measures pupil performance regularly and individual pupil underperformance is remedied efficiently through individual programmes of study, delivered by the home school or at other learning centres.

ICT is central to enabling pupils in learning which meets their personalised, individual needs. The tools and devices will connect them to their teacher on a 24/7 basis enriching and supporting their learning.

Following this model, learning will be truly personalised. The work done by students in Blackpool will be planned, evaluated and structured to gain maximum advantage

across the learning spectrum. The structure will incorporate mixed age classes and for learning outside of the traditional school environment to be valued and accredited. The aim is to build a learning map that will enable students to plot their own courses towards success.

Beyond academic learning, there will be enhanced opportunities to develop skills for life. The world of work and citizenship will run through the fabric of our schools, with employer connections. Examples of these links forming an integral part of the student experience are Young Apprenticeships, business incubation and scenario units, investment opportunities and structured employment schemes.

Blackpool recognises the need for high levels of practical support through the encouragement of social and personal responsibility. Beyond the provision for citizenship within the curriculum, we propose personal skills such as financial literacy, which addresses issues such as borrowing, debt and personal finance supported by professional institutions and other financial partners with an interest in promoting financial responsibility.

## **2.6 14 – 19 Entitlement**

There are currently well-established approaches to collaborative provision particularly in the 14-19 phase. All secondary school, both colleges and 14-19 stakeholders in Blackpool form the Blackpool 14-19 Executive Steering Group, which is chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services. The BSF programme will allow us to build on this collaborative approach working with partners in FE, HE and partners in the workplace to increase flexibility, choice, pace, location and timing of learning. The LSC are members of both the 14-19 Executive Steering group and the strategic officer group. Blackpool's 14-19 plan is supported by the LSC, for example the LSC has funded the Route 12 pathway. This flexible approach will be supported by borough wide deployment of comprehensive ICT systems and infrastructure designed to provide access to online student portfolios. ICT will be used to provide access regardless of location and through a number of device types and platforms. They will receive accreditation wherever possible to recognize their achievements and progression towards larger goals. We expect every young person to achieve

excellence whether that is through an academic, specialist, threshold or vocational pathway or a combination of these routes. This approach is fully inclusive and means the achievement of everyone, whatever their starting point, whatever their need, will be recognized and celebrated. Aim Higher support for learners is integral to Blackpool's 14-19 plan.

BSF will enable different kinds of opportunities to meet the academic and vocational needs of all students, through the already agreed Blackpool 14-19 Strategy. This includes a broader and enriched curriculum, flexible styles of delivery and new assessment frameworks.

Much of this innovation will result from deeper partnerships between schools, colleges, voluntary organisations, workplace training providers, employers and businesses. These partnerships will be established to promote:

- a better match of provision to the needs of learners
- continuity and progression pre- and post-16
- recruitment and retention of students
- improved retention and completion rates
- improved standards
- improved advice and guidance

Blackpool's 14-19 Strategy describes the four pathways – academic, vocational, specialist and threshold, which students will access regardless of which school they attend. The BSF programme will accelerate the development of a Blackpool collaborative timetable for 14-19 year olds that began operating on a small scale in September 2007. Schools will specialise in vocational and general education areas so that areas of minority interest and/or where specialist resource is required can be delivered on a cost effective basis. Some areas of specialisation will require either learners and/or staff to move between institutions. Blackpool recognises the need for mobility across the town.

Much of the new provision including the development of diploma lines in vocational areas will require the training of teaching and other staff. Such training will be delivered through a comprehensive Change Management programme designed and delivered through the Children's Workforce Development Unit.

To the following sample of the many areas of good practice in Blackpool...

- Carousal activity for sampling occupational areas at FE and sixth form colleges
- Curriculum groups of teachers and post 16 tutors in specialist vocational areas
- Agreed Collaborative timetabling arrangements
- Excellent links between Blackpool's two 3-19 special schools, secondary schools and colleges and shared delivery of the 14-19 curriculum across all institutions
- Route 12 – an additional year at school for 17 year olds
- Young apprenticeships aimed at 14 year olds, with guaranteed post 16 apprenticeship offer.

..the following will be added:

- The four identified pathways in Blackpool's 14-19 strategy incorporated into BSF
- A tracking database for individual learners
- 11-19 online learning platform shared by all .

Robust challenge will be provided through School Improvement Partners offering external challenge complemented by peer review programmes organised by the Trust Collaborative. An ICT trigger system will flag up underperformance early.

Blackpool's 14-19 pathways ensure that for gifted and talented pupils the IB and academic routes are accessible across Blackpool, and for pupils with SEN there is inclusion in all 14-19 pathways, with additional support where appropriate.

## **2.7 Integration of Every Child Matters**

Blackpool embraced the Every Child Matters agenda at an early stage, bringing Education and Social Care for children together under one Director of Children's Services from April 2003. By April 2006, a Children's Trust was well-established and had agreed the current 3 year Children and Young People's Plan, which outlines the delivery arrangements for nine locally-agreed key priorities. Lead Officers for each of the priorities are drawn from the local authority, Connexions, the Primary

Care Trust and the voluntary sector. Since September 2006, the Children and Young People's Department has been re-structured to bring workers together around the common themes of learning and achievement, health, targeted services and preventative and community support.

Schools in Blackpool, as universal providers, recognise their important role in the delivery of this local agenda and have responded enthusiastically.

Blackpool was one of the first authorities in the country with over 50% of schools providing the full core offer of:

- Wrap-around childcare
- Varied menu of after-school activities
- Support for Parents
- Community Use of Facilities
- Swift and Easy access to Specialist Support

Significantly, this has been achieved over a period in which there have also been marked improvements in some of our most important performance indicators; Key Stage 4 attainment, teenage pregnancy conception rates, permanent exclusions etc, demonstrating clearly that in Blackpool the attainment agenda and the ECM agenda are truly complementary.

Grant funding and support from other agencies in Blackpool has enabled the introduction of Youth Workers, Family Support Workers, Health mentors and/or Community Police Officers into selected schools to facilitate swift and easy referral. Capital investment of £0.5m has also helped to provide dedicated facilities to support the development of emotional health and well-being. Montgomery, our Full Service Extended School now hosts *Questions Answered – A Place to Talk*, our multi-agency support for children, parents and professionals across the town that brings together specialist expertise around the sensitive areas of mental and sexual health.

Our locality strategy provides a clear framework to coordinate the extended role of schools, building upon their existing strengths. Working within collaborative structures, the strategy will enable Blackpool to respond to the identified need within its localities, commissioning some community-based provision in schools and

supporting a co-location of services. More importantly for our children, young people and families it will ensure that schools are truly centres of their communities and offer speedier access to those services which can help to overcome the barriers to learning that many of our children experience. As a pilot authority for Budget-Holding Lead Professional, Blackpool's development of the integrated processes such as Common Assessment Framework (CAF) that will help bring these grand aspirations to fruition is well advanced.

BSF will facilitate Blackpool meeting the anticipated demand for study support, community use and family learning through the provision of increasingly flexible learning spaces. These flexible space environments will seek to embed ICT into the building fabric in order to provide seamless connectivity and services to both students and staff alike.

Our aspiration is that, by 2016, all secondary schools will be sustainable providers of all five extended service areas. BSF will support the creation of the "things to do, places to go" element of the youth agenda. Facilities created as a result of BSF will contribute to those needed to support young people across the town in terms of quality information, advice and guidance. Local priorities including the need to reduce the numbers of young people not in employment, education or training will thus be addressed. By providing flexible, outward-looking spaces that support community and family learning, secondary schools will be better able genuinely to extend their reach and maximise local access to specialist resources. The same cutting-edge, accessible ICT which supports improved learning outcomes will also make access to services, and the required information-sharing between professionals, practical realities, thus helping to eliminate many of the current barriers to learning and raise the attainment of our young people.

## **2.8 Inclusion and Special Education**

The needs of all pupils will be met through the BSF personalisation agenda and the strategic focus of the trust partnership on under performing groups. Blackpool's gifted and talented students will improve their attainment through greater access to improved facilities through the trust partnership, and through attending a G&T centre of excellence. Master classes and fast track

classes will be organised through the trust partnership. The progress of gifted and talented pupils will be tracked through the locality centres of excellence. These centres will develop teachers' skills in the classroom to ensure the most able pupils reach their full potential. Ethnic minority pupils perform in line with the majority of Blackpool pupils, with some groups outperforming white working class pupils. Blackpool's Virtual School monitors the progress of Looked After children, who achieved targets for 2007 and who are well supported by the schools they attend, with good additionality provided by the three dedicated virtual school staff.

A local review of provision for pupils with special educational needs undertaken with the support of the DCSF SEN Adviser has confirmed the view that post LGR an inconsistency of provision across the town has emerged for a number of key groups of pupils with significant special educational needs. In particular, this relates to insufficient opportunities for pupils to receive their education in mainstream secondary schools. Whilst some response has been made to this issue over the past several years, up to this point there has been insufficient opportunity available to promote a more holistic approach and the current provision is "patchy", inefficient and does not provide entitlement to all pupils.

The BSF programme will now support a more coherent pattern of support through the Key Stages, with full access to ICT facilities tailored to their needs, providing more choice and diversity for parents as they work in partnership with the Authority to achieve the best outcomes for their children. Importantly, the BSF programme will be an important catalyst to help engage key partners, some of whom may have been reluctant to participate in the past.

The successful delivery of this strategy will ensure that an increased number of pupils who traditionally may only have had the option of attending a special school will have mainstream integration opportunities. This will provide the opportunity for the Authority to use the capacity created within special schools to accommodate a number of pupils whose needs can currently only be met outside the Borough. Recent consultation with secondary and special schools has resulted in widespread support for this direction of travel. Furthermore, there was support for the re-configuration

of the residual special school provision within the secondary transformation arrangements; resulting in a proposed secondary/primary split, for pupils with Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties.

### **2.8.1 Moderate Learning Difficulties**

The Borough currently has a successful special school that has traditionally provided specialist placements for pupils with MLD. The pupil profile for this school indicates that it is “top-heavy” at key stages 3 & 4. At the primary phase there has more recently been a tendency to admit pupils with more complex communication needs.

The reasons for increased numbers at Key Stages 3 & 4 are, firstly, a lack of resourced provision at secondary level to complement that which is available at the primary phase, leading to some pupils transferring from primary to special at the end of year 6. Secondly, due to the high influx of pupils to the town throughout the year who have a statement of special educational need requiring specialist provision. The creation through BSF of a total of 72 resourced places within designated secondary schools will significantly improve this situation. It is anticipated that approximately 20 secondary places will remain in the existing school supported alongside existing primary MLD pupils .

### **2.8.2 Pupils With Emotional, Behavioural & Social Difficulties & Pupil Referral Unit**

From the outset of the new Blackpool unitary Authority in 1998 it was decided not to develop a specialist EBSD School and instead to commission the private sector when such places were required with more emphasis then placed on supporting pupils within mainstream schools. To an extent the original strategy has been successful but hampered by the high levels of pupil mobility. This has meant the need to provide additional places within the Pupil Referral Unit/s and a recent review of this provision has identified a need for two Key Stage 3 “units” within secondary schools to complete the continuum of provision required for targeted pupils requiring longer-term placement. There is also the aspiration to improve the quality of provision within our PRU arrangements, particularly at KS 3 & 4. (This need was highlighted through a recent OFSTED inspection).

This particular strategy will lead to a decrease in the number of pupils requiring out-of-borough placements, it will improve the provision and curriculum opportunities available to them, it will support the continued reduction in exclusions and improve the over-all outcomes of children & young people involved.

### **2.8.3 Pupils With Lower Incidence Special Educational Needs (Sensory Impairment, Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Physical Disability, Severe Learning Disability)**

In order to overcome the inconsistency of opportunity for pupils who have lower incidence special educational needs, the BSF programme will allow the embedding of a complete strategy and effective deployment of resources at KS 3, 4 (&5) working in tandem with special schools. It is essential that parents have access to a clear pathway of provision for their children, starting at the Foundation Stage and graduating to post 16. To deliver this objective, a pattern of specialist provision is required within designated secondary schools. For access purposes this will broadly exist in both the north and south of the Borough. In order to support this strategy it is the intention to develop a Secondary (post 16) Special School Centre of Excellence at the current Highfurlong Site on a shared campus in conjunction with Blackpool VI Form College and Collegiate High School. Initial discussions with these establishments, the PCT and other agencies have generated much support and enthusiasm for this proposal. An important vehicle for the success of this aspect will be to ensure that it is “owned” within the Blackpool Children’s Trust. This development will also build on current specialisms.

To ensure adequate resource is available to complete this complex task, the Headteacher of Woodlands Special School has been seconded to work with the BSF Project Team to lead the work in this area. Options will be reported in time for decisions to be confirmed for completion of SFC2.

## **2.9 Change Management**

Blackpool has long focussed on supporting its school staff in developing pedagogical structures that are responsive to the learning styles of young people. Our

support for learning is people focussed, based on the philosophy that environments which are right for pupils can be combined with environments that are right for staff. These two agendas are mutually inclusive and supportive. To develop this philosophy to its full potential requires flexibility in the creation and design of those learning environments. Our plans for enhancing provision will be significantly supported by BSF as it provides opportunity to create flexible and varied spaces that are well resourced and serviced where both learners and those delivering and supporting learning can employ their skills to the full. It is central to the thinking around design that spaces should be capable of adaptation to accommodate changing models of curriculum delivery and social/community need. Such planning will also ‘future proof’ the buildings.

Blackpool actively supports both the principles and practice of workforce remodelling. Releasing teachers to focus on teaching and learning is key to this initiative. Blackpool schools are already witnessing a significant change in the composition of their staffing establishments with the introduction of new categories of staff such as Cover Supervisors and HLTAs and as a result of our well established and expanding Extended Schools Strategy. As part of the planning for this expansion of school staffing, BSF provides a significant opportunity to provide facilities for staff that can meet a much broader range of demands in terms of their nature and size and the different times of day when provision is required. To support staff of all categories, designs will include a range of ICT and other resources that allow for individuals and groups of staff to take advantage of professional development opportunities both in their own and other schools.

A change management programme for staff in all our secondary schools will be devised to ensure all users of the new and refurbished buildings are prepared for the new facilities. Programmes will be delivered so that when users take up the new accommodation they are ready, willing and able to exploit them fully.

The Authority has a strong record of leading and delivering significant change. As an early adopter of the Children’s Services Authority concept, Blackpool has undertaken a three phase transformation and re-organisation process to ensure that its services are

properly geared up to supporting young people. The most recent APA has commended this work and progress and in particular has recognised the leadership and management within the Children & Young People's Department as being a key strength.

To enhance the expertise of staff, the department has created a Children's Workforce Development Unit. The unit will support the change management strategy employing a wide range of resources including ICT to promote:

- Continuous Professional Development geared to the new techniques and technologies.
- Organisational development.
- Workforce planning and remodelling.
- Recruitment and retention of staff.

The expertise of the National College for School Leadership will be employed to develop a bespoke training package for Blackpool's school staff to support them during this change.

A plan is being put in place involving the use of Link Advisers and the BSF Team to support Schools through the preparation of the School's Strategies for Change.

## 2.10 Sustainability

In keeping with the recent update to the Building Regulations and changes in legislation there will be a clear drive from Blackpool Council to achieve more sustainable buildings, not specific to schools but any new development within the Borough.

The Council has already adopted the principles of the 'Merton Rule' in seeking to achieve at least 15% of renewable energy sources on new building projects. We are also currently working with the Carbon Trust to achieve a 25% reduction in carbon emissions over the next five years and the Council's 'Carbon Management Strategy' provides a clear declaration to its commitment of putting climate change at the heart of decision-making processes.

Buildings commissioned by the Authority will have to be designed to minimise the use of energy, water and

running costs and include elements of renewable energy sources. Where possible these will be linked to a Building Management Systems and potentially to educational tools and systems. The authority is committed to incorporating renewable energy and to using these tools to offer real educational benefits to pupils and staff alike, through practical learning.

The Authority will ensure that consideration and where appropriate implementation of sustainable practices are built into the physical form of the buildings and are incorporated as part of the day-to-day principles of the management and operation of the building.

Development briefs will set out the criteria, which shall ensure that consideration is given to the following:

- Minimum BREEAM status of 'very good'
- At least 15% of energy from renewable sources
- Energy Saving Measures e.g. rain harvesting
- Low Embodied Energy – use of locally sourced materials, plant and labour
- Use of Sustainable Materials
- Good Building Design Principles – for example: thermal mass and passive / natural ventilation
- Site and locality – consider building orientation and the local environmental conditions.
- Reduction in construction and long-term waste
- Good pedestrian access and provision of cycling facilities - promotion of public transport
- Waste Management and Recycling
- Monitoring / Review

There will be a commitment to create buildings and spaces, which enhance the local environment and are sustainable in the local community, creating strong and healthy societies, where people want to live and work.

## 2.11 Strategic Sports Provision

A Strategic Sports Planning Group has been established to address this aspect of BSF planning and development. The group, which has actively engaged with the PFS Sports Adviser, has representation from Lancashire Sport, Blackpool Sport and Physical Activity Alliance, the Authority's Sport Specialist Colleges and the Authority's Physical Education Adviser. The group has engaged

with the Governing Bodies of Football, Cricket, Cycling and Rugby amongst others with a view to nurturing their involvement and commitment to the development of these sports in schools.

Plans are emerging re the development of one school site as a cycling centre.

## Section 3 Proposals for the School and FE Estate

### 3.1 Estate Proposals

#### 3.1.1 Pupil Place Planning

The turbulent nature of Blackpool's demographics makes the forecasting of pupil places extremely complex. Over a number of years this process has been refined to a point of accuracy showing errors of the low order of approximately 0.5%. The projected pattern shows pupil numbers declining by approximately 1000 by 2016 after which numbers rise. Only a small number of pupils transfer out of the authority after Y6 and as standards of provision and achievement rise at St George's, it is anticipated that this school, the only Church of England High School on the Fylde, will draw pupils into the Authority. Its future status as an Academy will enhance this trend.

Blackpool's BSF plan will ensure sufficient flexibility is built into the estate to allow for future growth but without compromising value for money in the project development.

All of Blackpool's secondary providers are included in the BSF programme, ie 8 High Schools on existing sites (see below re Beacon and Bispham High Schools), 3 special schools and the Pupil Referral Unit. In addition a Studio School will also be created on a site to be confirmed. Its location has been the subject of consideration with a range of sites reviewed by key council officers. With a preference for positioning it on a council site a full appraisal will be completed in time for Strategy for Change Part 2.

The proposed estate reflects the benefit of retaining eight sites. Beacon Hill and Bispham High would develop

under one trust thereby removing the excess capacity from the estate while retaining the specialist facilities of both the sites.

The LA is engaging with the LSC on several key projects. The FE College is expanding and potentially relocating to the centre of Blackpool. There are plans for a vocational skills centre in the south of Blackpool, and the sixth form college is expanding to include co-located special educational needs provision.

### 3.1.2 Assessment of the Estate

Based on analysis combining educational standards and needs, the removal of barriers to learning created by inappropriate buildings, condition and suitability data 'new builds' will be required at Highfield and Highfurlong and either at the Beacon Hill or Bispham High School sites. (This decision will be reached at the conclusion for SFC2 of a feasibility study/optional appraisal which will be undertaken as part of the plan to bring together both of the schools under the umbrella of a Trust or similar arrangement.) Collegiate, Palatine and St Mary's will undergo remodelling with St George's and Montgomery receiving minor remodelling. The PRU and Studio School will be new builds. Park school will remain as an all through special school as it will retain its primary places and those secondary pupils for whom mainstream MLD placements are not appropriate. Park will therefore undergo minor remodelling.

### 3.1.3 Phasing

It is anticipated that the programme will be carried out in two phases combining new build school and remodelled schools in each phase. Decisions on phasing will be confirmed following a prioritisation exercise to be completed for SFC part 2.

## 3.2 Headline Strategic Vision for ICT

Our aim is to develop Blackpool into a town where wireless ICT makes e-learning possible in a wide range of locations – homes, schools, colleges, libraries, youth centres, cafes, the City Learning Centre, places of work - and integrates resources in ways that enable all residents to pursue their learning interests and agendas online. To realise this will require:

- ❑ Infrastructure - a reliable, high-speed network with wireless facility allowing links from schools, homes and other places of learning to one another and to a wide range of high quality online learning resources;
- ❑ A personalised learning environment - a virtual learning environment which allows learners in high schools and beyond to access content and courses regardless of physical location;. Every child will have an easily accessible electronic portfolio to store work and record progress, they will also have an individual electronic learning plan that they will be able to access throughout their school career and beyond.
- ❑ Change management and professional development - an education workforce at all levels that is skilled in making the very best use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning;
- ❑ Data Management Systems - effective use of ICT as a management tool in schools and colleges;
- ❑ An environment where innovation is encouraged and monitored and where best practice is shared effectively.

Our vision is one which is not predicated upon currently available technology but assumes that ICT devices will become smaller, lighter, and more portable and may look nothing like today's desktop and laptop PCs. It anticipates that each student may well have their own personal ICT device and will need spaces where they can work independently on online learning materials as well as participating in large and small group "lessons" in spaces which have equipment for generating, displaying and storing learning content.

Released from the confines of ICT suites and hard-wired networks, schools will be places which cater for a range of teaching and learning styles, designed to enable all who use them to take full advantage of developments in ICT as they emerge.

We do not presume that all future learning will take place in schools. The portability of equipment and access to networks will significantly increase the options available to pupils, families and schools alike as to the nature, time, style and content of learning experiences.

To this end, Blackpool sees the development of its Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as an essential step in ensuring that the vision for our schools for the future is achieved. The VLE will enable pupils to develop their learning through the use of online tools and will enable pupil connectivity with teachers and other school staff. The VLE will enhance and extend the learning opportunities within and beyond the school setting.

There will be close liaison with FE and workplace training providers to ensure that there is seamless provision from 11-19 and beyond and that this is accessible from other locations for learning such as libraries and youth centres. All learners and their families will be able to access the VLE from home via PC or laptop links.

Leading the way in researching and developing new technologies and content development tools is our City Learning Centre, which is the largest in the country. As the BSF programme develops, the CLC will support and enhance the development of the BSF programme as well as the use of ICT in schools by acting as a test bed to pilot the use of cutting edge technology and to examine the effect of new technology on teaching and learning.

Our vision for professional development is that through a sustained programme of LA and national support and training, senior staff in all schools will be well prepared to lead their staff through the processes of change as the full potential of ICT as a management tool to drive up standards, to monitor the progress and achievement of individual students.

Our ICT vision and development path throughout BSF will be driven from and act as an extension to the Children and Young People's Department ICT strategy. In the past our strategy has focussed purely on teaching and learning and while this has delivered strong results in raising attainment, we must now 'zoom out' from this narrow focus and seek to work with the community development, business modernisation, integrated working and extended teaching and learning groups as valid stakeholders in the ICT strategy development process. It is from this multi-agency approach that the ICT vision will pull strength and allow us to make a significant impact on the life chances of our young people.

### 3.3 Stakeholder Consultation

Engagement with stakeholders is a key element of BSF project. An audit of key stakeholders has been conducted and the means by which proper and meaningful engagement with these stakeholders will take place is outlined in the communication and engagement strategy included in the Project Initiation Document. Robust links have been made with the Schools to develop their Strategy for Change document, with the Project Manager acting as the key link alongside Education Advisers. A plan has been established and initial meetings with the Headteachers have already taken place. Support through regular meetings will continue on a weekly basis to ensure delivery is managed in accordance with the agreed date.

Informal discussions have been taking place with Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and College Principals since September 2006. Student views have been sought through a forum established by the Department's 14-19 Adviser and through representatives of the Children and Young People's Council who sit on the Children's Trust. Further such consultation will take place and will influence decision-making. The Council's Executive Group has been consulted on the School Estate proposals. The Council is in the process of designing a BSF Website to ensure effective and timely communication is available to a wide reaching audience and a full stakeholder analysis has been conducted to inform future communication requirements.

Council Officers will guide and support Governing Body statutory consultations regarding the adoption of Trust status. Formal consultations will take place according to an agreed schedule and that will comply with statutory timescales

### 3.4 Project Governance and Management Arrangements

As BSF is a corporate priority, the project is governed at a high level within the Council. The Chair of the Project Board, which began meeting as a shadow board in May 2007, is the Executive Member for Children's Services. The Project Owner is the Executive Director of Children's Services with the Assistant Director, responsible for the Transforming School Division that has been specifically

established to lead the BSF programme, serving as Project Director.

The Project Board has been established using the good practice structure recommended by the 4Ps. Its membership includes, in addition to the officers and elected member identified above, Executive Directors for Business/Finance and Regeneration, the Head of Legal Services, the LSC, representatives of the 2 Diocesan Bodies represented in the school estate, Teacher Association representation, PfS and 4Ps. It has clear Terms of Reference.

A Project Team has been established to deliver the programme. This team is composed of a permanent element and a virtual element with colleagues from across the council bringing expertise to the programme as required. Capacity has been enhanced by the appointment of an experienced and qualified Project Manager and a Project Support Officer. These key staff will take significant roles in helping to drive the project forward to PfS timescales. External Advisers will be employed to further support the work. The appointment process is currently under way and aims to be complete with Advisers engaged early in Strategy for Change Part 2.

Both the Project Board and Team have engaged with, and will continue so to do, the 4Ps expert Client Programme.

As a key element of the programme relates to the re-organisation of special school provision, the secondment of an experienced special school Headteacher has been facilitated. The secondee will join the project team. This not will only provide additional capacity for the secondary age plans but will also ensure the continuity of planning at the earlier Key Stages.

An Officer at Head of Service Level has been designated to lead the development of a process to facilitate the transfer of Community Schools to Trust Status. Further resource has also been established to second a Secondary Headteacher to develop the work package around the joint trust proposal for Beacon and Bispham Schools.

To facilitate the setting up and running of the project, a budget has been agreed by the Council over three years. A combined total equivalent to £2.3m has been agreed with cash contributions from the council and the schools totalling £1.5m with an 'In Kind' element on top equivalent to £800k.

### 3.5 Key Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators in terms of academic achievement, driven locally and nationally are key to the programme. Further indicators, drawn from the CYPF and other local agreements will be identified for Strategy for Change Part 2. Work is also currently in hand to align outcomes from BSF with the Every Child Matters agenda to ensure no opportunities are missed to enhance the lives of young people in Blackpool. To ensure effective and efficient outcomes from the capital element of the programme, performance indicators will be identified regarding design quality and value for money.

Headline KPIs for the BSF programme have been identified at this stage as follows:

- GCSE 5A\*-C inc. English & Maths above National Averages.
- All mainstream schools having 2 specialisms.
- 14 – 19 Strategy fully implemented.
- Greater continuity and progression from pre 16 to post 16.
- Pupil Place Provision appropriately meeting demand.
- Consistent and effective provision for all pupils including Gifted and Talented pupils along with those with Special Educational Needs.
- Pupil learning enhanced and supported by an effective and visionary ICT policy and infrastructure.
- All young people having access to an age and ability appropriate curriculum.
- All mainstream secondary pupils in self-governing schools.
- Improved sustainability as indicated in 2.

