

# EDUCATION OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER SERVICE

NEWSLETTER 2

MARCH 2008

Our first newsletter generated a number of responses from social workers, teachers and carers mainly around the issue of free music lessons for children in care. For clarification - schools should provide tuition and contact Paul Matthews, Head of Music Service, who will help provide the instrument. Paul will also be writing a policy for September.

## **GOOD NEWS / BAD NEWS!**

Our Children's Officer, Annette Jones, has been appointed Manager of the Special Educational Needs Service. This is great news for SEN and children with statements but a blow for us. We wish Annette good luck in her new role and thanks for all the work she has done for children in care.

## **OFSTED INSPECTION OF FOSTERING SERVICES**

The recent inspection judges Bristol's fostering service as "good" and we are delighted that "Helping Children achieve well and enjoy what they do" received an "outstanding" meaning the support is judged as being of exceptionally high quality.

Thank you to all of you for working in partnership with us to raise achievement. However we are not complacent and know we still have a way to go to ensure that all children in care are reaching their potential.

## **PROJECTS**

At the moment we are involved in a number of projects aimed at improving outcomes for children in care.

### *Hand held computers*

The City Learning Centre 3 (based at Whitefield Fishponds) has provided a number of small hand held computers for children in Years 9, 10 and 11, through the government's Computers for Pupils scheme. These are targeted at young people in mainstream schools approaching GCSEs or SATs to assist with their revision. Internet access is restricted and monitored for safety. A very successful training event for carers and young people was held in February, with 25 computers being distributed. For more information on this please contact Liz Osborn 903 7713 who is project managing this for us.



### *Every Child in Care a Reader*

Representatives from Barnardo's ECLAS, Library Service, CSV, Our Place, Reading Recovery, the Learning Mentor service met to discuss ways of working together to support our "Every Child in Care a Reader" project. The aim is to ensure that, where possible, every primary school child in long term care leaves school as a confident reader. We will update on progress through the newsletter but a couple of

initiatives are already underway. Together with Barnardo's we have applied for funding for a 'Reading Recovery' teacher for children in care. CSV have undertaken to recruit volunteers to work in Bristol schools to offer an additional session every week to hear a child read. These volunteers will be trained by Reading Recovery specialists. Finally the charity Our Place has offered support in the same way to the children in care in the five Bristol primary schools in their immediate vicinity.

#### *Letterbox Club*

This has been running since last June. This is a government funded project whereby children in year 3 and year 5 received their own parcel of books every month for six months. Also included are number games, book plates and other information. Bristol was chosen as one of the pilot authorities and 40 children took part this time. Reading ages and numeracy levels are assessed at the beginning and end of the project. Holly is currently finalising the closing assessments but at the moment the outcomes for many children are very encouraging. They all said how much they enjoyed receiving the books. The project will continue next year bringing more children into the scheme.



#### **TRAINING UPDATES**

All training should be booked through your usual training provider not ECLAS.

#### **Social Workers**

Supporting and promoting education for children in care 5<sup>th</sup> March '08

#### **Foundation Stage Practitioners**

Supporting and promoting education for children in care 13<sup>th</sup> March '08

#### **School Governors**

The Care Matters White Paper - action planning to meet guidance  
17<sup>th</sup> March '08

#### **Designated Teachers**

Supporting and promoting education for children in care 28<sup>th</sup> March '08

We have recently delivered training to 10 school governors and 8 foster carers. Both sessions were well evaluated by the participants with fosters carers only criticism that they wanted more time!

#### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSON'S BILL - IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS - BRIEFING DATES**

There will be three briefings 4.30 - 6.00pm on the implications of the new Children and Young Person's Bill. You will receive more information in due course but dates are:

23<sup>rd</sup> April St Mary Redcliffe & Temple school

7<sup>th</sup> May venue TBC

21<sup>st</sup> May Portway School

We would like to see teachers, carers governors, social care managers, social workers and elected members and all others are welcome.

#### **ACTIVITIES**

We have been a little disappointed on the uptake of recent activities offered. We would welcome feedback about what you would like to see and what gets in the way. Thanks

For more information about anything in this newsletter please contact Pauline Cole at ECLAS 37 73056  
[pauline.cole@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:pauline.cole@bristol.gov.uk)