



Children, Young People and Learning Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Alisa Flemming December 2019

LATEST NEWS

I was delighted to attend the Star Awards 2019 on Friday 8 November. More than 150 children in care and care leavers were celebrated for their talents and achievements at a glittering ceremony held at the Fairfield Halls.



The 15 categories are designed to recognise every kind of success, from academic and sporting achievement, to inspiring others, caring for siblings and personal journeys. Every young person who is nominated receives an award. They were accompanied by their carers and the social workers, teachers and members of the community who had nominated them.

Two young people received special awards, including a care-leaver who had fled North Korea, and travelled to the UK unaccompanied to seek asylum. Despite these challenges, she had excelled at school and university. The second special award was presented to a young person who, despite battling a serious health condition over several years, always tries to see 'the good part' and has been described by others as 'kindness personified, absolutely amazing and inspirational.'



I had great pleasure in handing out the awards along with Robert Henderson, Executive Director and the Mayor of Croydon. I was totally inspired by the award winners and by all of the children and young people who we are honoured to look after.



The audience were treated to performances by Bensham Manor School's rock band, and Legacy Youth Zone's dance troupe, NRGY.





Children, Young People and Learning Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Alisa Flemming December 2019

Banquet

On Wednesday 13 November Children Families and Education held a 'Banquet' to celebrate different cultures and diversity across the department. Around 200 staff from the department attended and contributions of food, included curried goat, jerk chicken, beef stew and dumplings, chicken and mushroom pie, Cheese and biscuits, fish and chips, haggis, Italian salads, scones with jam and cream cakes/fruit, etc. Cultural Music was provided by the Graeme Smith Trio. It was wonderful to see everyone enjoying the food and music from the different cultures.

Children's Centres

I was really pleased to visit two children's centres – Shirley and Woodlands at the end of October. During the visit I spent time talking to Children Centre leaders and reviewing the Children's Centre offer. There were also opportunities for me to speak to families and look at programmes taking place at the centres.

Community Engagement

On the 22 October a number of Councillors, Council officials and partners attended a public meeting at Thornton Heath Salvation Army offices, where a lively discussion was held on early help, knife crime, anti-social behaviour and many other subjects. There were a number of guest speakers, which included; Cllr Ali, Clive Seall, Head of Service for Early Help and Youth Engagement, the Borough Commander and voluntary sector agencies.

The meeting was a good example of local residents and partners meeting together to discuss issues pertinent to the locality North area and using the opportunity to develop relationships and joint working.

Ofsted Monitoring Visit 16th & 17th October 2019 - Feedback

The focus of the 7th and final Ofsted monitoring on 16 & 17 October 2019 was on children on a Child in Need or Child Protection plan in the Social Work with Families service, with a smaller focus on adoption.

In summary the feedback from the inspectors was positive with the headlines that we have a lot to be proud of, we are working at an accelerated pace and are keeping this pace up. Inspectors saw positive outcomes achieved for our children including a number of positive examples of purposeful, positive work.



Children, Young People and Learning Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Alisa Flemming December 2019

Nevertheless, inspectors were clear that we still have a long way to go to ensure that every child and family benefits from high quality practice; they are clearly raising the bar for us now and we must rise to this challenge and be ready for the full re-inspection which could take place at any time from the date the Ofsted feedback letter is published.

Verbal feedback from the visit was shared by Robert Henderson Executive Director of Children, Families and Education with staff from Children's Social Care the day following the inspection with 'tea and cake'.



Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2019-2022 The Launch:

On 2nd October 2019 the launch of the SEND Strategy 2019-2022 took place at the Legacy Youth Zone. The Strategy outlines our ambitions for our children and young people with SEND and how we can work together to achieve them.

This was attended by a range of professional agencies, partners, parents/carers and members of the SEND Delivery groups who are already working on bringing the Strategy priorities into reality. The event also offered opportunities for us as a local area to network and share the vision and ambition contained within the SEND Strategy.



AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON



Children, Young People and Learning Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Alisa Flemming December 2019



The Legacy Youth Zone provided a fantastic setting which modelled the ethos of inclusion and aspiration as well as providing access to quality facilities and expertise particularly for the youth of Croydon who have SEND. They also served a fabulous lunch and an opportunity for all to tour the building and meet with staff.

The stars of the launch were the young people who participated on the day and, in so doing, gave life to the vision of the SEND Strategy. Daniel shared his story highlighting the challenges he faced in his life accessing suitable education, training and employment. His story gave insight into some of the barriers we are seeking to remove.



We also had an excellent dance performance from The Priory Crew and Bensham Manor Rock Band closed the event with their version of Queen's 'We are the Champions' – just the perfect note to end on.

The launch gave energy and purpose to the SEND Strategy which will deliver improvements for our Croydon community.

Contact Officer: Kathy.roberts@croydon.gov.uk

Successful Post 19 SEND Provision opens:

Following a programme of partnership development with Croydon College and significant financial investment by Croydon Council provision for students with complex SEND aged 19-25 has opened on the Coulsdon campus. The formal opening took place on the 10 October 2019 where the quality of the accommodation and the provision was complimented by many of the parents/carers of the students. In one instance the parent thanked the SEND Officer for their encouragement and support in accessing a place at the college.

20 students attend the college which offers a range of learning and skills development. The programmes are tailored to the needs of the students and run in conjunction with placements on the Waddon Youth programme. It is the aim of the provision to make

AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON



Children, Young People and Learning Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Alisa Flemming December 2019

links with more local settings and employers to maximise opportunities for the students.

Contact Officer: Kathy.roberts@croydon.gov.uk

Croydon's Young Artists at Fairfield Halls

Croydon's young artists have been heavily involved during the opening two months of Fairfield Halls. Young musicians performed in the foyer before Fairfield's opening Gala Concert with the London Mozart Players, and have had two concerts themselves with the Croydon Young Musicians Showcase in September and the Croydon Schools Music Association and Friends concert in October. Young dancers were prominent in the Dance Umbrella Takeover in October and young spoken word artists performed at Well Versed Incs Living in Poetry festival.

Most recently the Croydon Youth Arts Collective's annual Youth Takeover took place on 2 November, an event jointly run by Croydon Music and Arts and the Youth Engagement Team. Theatre, singing, art, fashion, spoken word, dance and music filled Fairfield, based on the theme "Unite, Create and Celebrate". Highlights included a collaboration between the Chineke Junior Orchestra and Croydon Youth Orchestra performing Othello by Samuel Coleridge Taylor with contributions from Rap Club and dancers from Harris Invictus Academy. The day finished with Croydon's MOBO award winner Nadia Rose performing in the Rec with emerging young artists from Croydon who had performed on the Future Stage at The Ends Festival.

Contact Officer Graeme.smith@croydon.gov.uk