

Bringing the Local Offer in Leicestershire to life

SEND NEW

FREE

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a bright blue jacket with black accents, is crawling on a green tarp. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. To his right is the thick, textured trunk of a tree. The background shows some outdoor equipment and a black bin. The scene is set outdoors on a grassy area.

Enjoying
outdoor
play without
boundaries

See page 6

Produced by

A warm welcome to the new look SEND News

Words by:

Paula Sumner

Assistant Director,
Early Help and Education,
Leicestershire County Council



▶ It's vital that you receive regular updates from the team at the council, as well as our NHS partners, our schools and the Parent Carer Forum.

Our local offer newsletter was really valued and I wanted to build on this good work. I hope you enjoy the new look for this newsletter. I want it to be shorter, easier to read and much more frequent.

New provision

This term, you can read about the exciting progress being made in developing our new SEND provision, which means more children are now being educated in their local area.

They are in school with their peers – that's how it should be – and they can be part of their school community as well as not having to travel long distances to schools outside of their area.

It is also important to acknowledge the fantastic enthusiasm and hard work shown by academy and maintained school heads in supporting the development of new facilities as part of their schools.

This positive report on progress being made comes at a time when the county council continues to face tough budgetary decisions.

At a recent meeting of the council's Cabinet, it was acknowledged by Councillor Ivan Ould, our cabinet member for children and families, that the pressure on SEND budgets is the single most significant financial issue facing the local authority.

No-one could have predicted the rise in the number of EHCPs and that is one of the factors behind the challenges we face. But we will meet these head-on.

Supporting families

In the meantime, we continue to support our children, young people and their families every day in Leicestershire. I have really enjoyed getting to know some of you over the past few months since I joined the council. I have especially valued hearing the stories of individual success – some of which we've captured here for you to read.

I am committed to building strong links with parents and carers across the county. Our strong working relationship with the Parent Carer Forum is key to this, and I'm delighted to share this opening welcome with the forum's chair, Anna. ■



our attention
is turning to
building up our
membership and
our training offer



Words by:

Anna Bromley

Chair,
Leicestershire Parent
Carer Forum

▶ It has been a busy few months since we last wrote. Over the summer, we spent time working on the policies and procedures that make the Parent Carer Forum strong, resilient, effective and transparent.

Building a bright future

Now, our attention is turning to building up our membership and our training offer. The autumn term has so far been a whirlwind of meetings and opportunities to work with our service providers.

This has included some work on the new neurodevelopmental pathway for ADHD and autism, and the planned improvements to the local offer website – which will be greatly improved over the next few months.

We are also continuing to work with SENA around improvements to the EHCP process and with the transport team on communications.

We're looking for new members

As always, we sometime struggle to represent our members because of the limited capacity we have. If you're interested in taking a more active role – we'd love to hear from you.

Everyone is welcome to come along to our steering group meetings. The meeting calendar is available on our website www.leicestershirepcf.org.uk Or you can email us at: info@leicestershirepcf.org.uk or call **07732 812493**.

As we move through autumn, I hope you and your families are able to enjoy each other's company and the many delights the season brings. Take care, stay healthy and try to get involved. ■



**INFORMING
INVOLVING
IMPROVING**

New provision for SEND pupils

Ambitious plans to develop local provision for children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) across the county are well on track.



Forest Way School,
Coalville



Winstanley School,
Braunstone Town

▶ Planning, building and refurbishment work at 15 new 'resource bases' has continued across the summer months as part of the county council's commitment to invest over £30m of capital funding in SEND and create almost 700 extra places, some of which have already opened for the start of the academic year.

The 'resource bases' will cater for pupils with communication and interaction needs (C&I) which includes ASC (Autism Spectrum Condition) or social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). Selected schools in towns such as Loughborough, Melton, Hinckley and, Ashby are either having existing space refurbished, or extensions built.

New schools in Blaby and Barwell

Plans include creating a new 50 place SEMH school to open in September 2020 on the site of the current Oakfield Short Stay School in Blaby, which is being moved to new purpose-made locations in the north and south of the county.

A new 80-place communication and interaction school in Barwell is also expected to open in September 2020.

Councillor Ivan Ould, cabinet member for children and families, said: "This is a challenging and ambitious programme of work and we're pleased that everything is progressing really well.

"We know that parents are already taking a keen interest in the new provision, which has the other tremendous benefit of being entirely geared around local placements. We're very appreciative of the support being given by schools to help us achieve our goals.

"I want to pay tribute to heads of academies and mainstream schools for their willingness in having facilities on their establishments which means that children with SEND who need extra support can go to schools in their local area."

New places are prioritised to children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and a high-level of SEND need who are already in a specialised placement, possibly a distance from their local community and where, following a review, it's no longer possible for a child to attend a mainstream school.

Staff in the new provisions will also be sharing skills and knowledge with local schools.

Apply for placement

If parents of children in either category would like their child to be considered for a possible placement, they should contact their local SEN officer or the wider team at senaservice@leics.gov.uk

More information on the council's SEND provision at: www.leicestershire.gov.uk/send ■

Some of the projects

Charnwood College, Loughborough

Expansion of 6 special schools, including new block for post-16s.

Winstanley School, Braunstone Town

15 places at The SHINE centre for students with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Forest Way School, Coalville

12 places in a new eco-block.

Birch Wood School, Melton

2 'resource bases' for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties as well as autism spectrum condition.

£30m

INVESTMENT
of capital funding
planned

700
SEND places

31
SCHEMES
One of which admitted
pupils in September

5
MORE SCHEMES
Expected by Easter 2020



We explore the inclusive practice at three holiday clubs and playschemes which received funding through the county council last summer.

I can be included too!

Words by:

Alison Birkin
Play and Leisure
Inclusion Officer



Outdoor holiday club for all

▶ In August, I visited Ethan: a very muddy, happy 7 year old at the Chestnut Woodlands Forest School Holiday Club near Ashby.

Wet, muddy, forest environments would usually be a 'no go' for a child with Quadreplegic Cerebral Palsy with complex needs, but Ethan and his Mum had other ideas.

Ethan attends a mainstream school and loves the outdoors, so his Mum chose a local mainstream inclusive club. She

felt that this club was more appropriate for Ethan as socialising with mainstream children increased his confidence, skills and independence, and the environment embraced his love of the outdoors.

I work with playschemes and holiday clubs to ensure children with SEND can be included. I was happy to support Ethan's wish to attend Chestnut Woodlands and working with the club leader I was able to secure county council funding to ensure that Ethan had the support that he needed. ■

A letter from a parent

BOSCAPS is a community, traditional-style inclusive playscheme in Barrow Upon Soar. They pride themselves on being inclusive to as many children as possible. They were successful this year with a county council playscheme grant.



I just wanted to put into writing a huge thank you to everyone that helped run and support this year's BOSCAPS scheme. As you may remember, my son has ADHD which in itself is a challenge as he struggles to concentrate or sit still, but he also has severe issues with self-esteem and self-doubt which makes it incredibly difficult for him to mix with other children or even make friends.

After having a conversation with one of your team members making them aware of his difficulties and how concerned I was that he might struggle, everyone involved helped to support him and his needs, which helped make his experience so fantastic, including during the trips that he went on.

He really enjoyed going and he got a lot, both physically and emotionally, from the week at BOSCAPS. He even came home every day with a smile on his face, which as a parent to a child with the issues he has, is lovely to see as there are not many activities that makes him feel so happy! He now can't wait to come back again next year!

Written by a parent to BOSCAPS playscheme Barrow Upon Soar

For more information about the council's playscheme grant or inclusion funding, please contact the Early Learning, Inclusion and Childcare Service on **0116 305 7136** or at childcare@leics.gov.uk



Words by:

Alison Bates

Founder of Little Explorers Playgroup, Explorers Playscheme and Mum of Josh with SEND

Half the children had some sort of disability. Everyone took part!

▶ I went into childcare when my son was 2 years old and I vowed no child would ever be turned away.

The Explorers Playscheme, previously in Burbage, responded to parents' feedback by moving their scheme to a rural location to deliver an outdoor 'forest school' playscheme.

Parents of children with SEND had told them that they were frustrated about the lack of provision suitable for mixed abilities for their children. Activities included cooking on open fires, fishing, animal husbandry, nature walks, willow weaving, target shooting and much more. The scheme applied for a county

council playscheme grant to fund the scheme.

Alison Bates is Mum to Josh, a 13 year old who has a learning disability, autism and is registered blind. Josh attended Explorers and got involved with all the activities.

Although Josh couldn't see, with the advice from Mick our shooting expert, he was able to shoot the gun and hit a target 40 feet away. The feedback from the gun, the noise and the round of applause and shouts of encouragement from his peers was overwhelming. His grin was enormous. ■



Success stories

Project for young people with autism scoops award

Project Digby picking up their award for Volunteers for Museum Learning

A heritage project for young volunteers aged 11 to 16 with autism has scooped the top regional volunteering prize at the Marsh Trust awards.

'Project Digby' picked up the award for 'Volunteers for Museum Learning' at a ceremony at the British Museum in London.

Presented to Project Digby's young volunteers, the award recognises the best and most innovative ways in which volunteers work within local and national museums and galleries to engage the public with collections and exhibitions.

Richard Blunt, cabinet member for heritage, leisure and arts, said: "We are delighted that volunteers from Project Digby have won this prestigious national award. Their efforts and commitment highlights that everyone has something valuable to offer as a volunteer.

Their contribution inspired a change in how our heritage sites and teams can work with and for their local community. The legacy of the project has been

far-reaching and has improved everyday working practices."

Developed by Leicestershire County Council and Autism East Midlands, Project Digby, which ran in summer 2018 is a free five-week programme based at the 1620s House and Garden in Donington Le Heath, near Coalville. It focuses on the history of the 1620s House and the Digby family who lived there.

Autism friendly museum

Through the group's learning, they were able to make the museum more autism friendly and create a fun quiz for visitors to enjoy. Some of the interpretation volunteers at the 1620s House and Garden were also involved in delivering the project.

Jane Howson, Autism East Midlands chief executive said: "We are extremely proud to be part of a project that was designed to engage autistic young people in a heritage environment. Working alongside Leicestershire County Council developing this project was extremely

rewarding, and all members of the team were passionate about developing the best possible environment for autistic individuals to thrive in.

"It was fantastic to see how the individuals who accessed this project became less anxious and more willing to engage. We hope that moving forward the work produced during this five-week project can be developed across the county's heritage and museum sites, allowing autistic individuals across Leicestershire the opportunity to engage with, learn from and enjoy the county's heritage sites."

Staff training

Since the award, more than 30 staff have received autism awareness training. In addition, environmental audits have been carried out across three sites and a guide on autism-friendly activities and how to make autism-friendly adaptations, has been created for independent museums across Leicestershire. ■

National recognition for Leicestershire school



● One of Leicestershire's specialist schools has been recognised for its outstanding work with children with SEND.

Ashmount School has been highlighted for its best practice in the 2019/20 Parliamentary Review.

Based in Loughborough, the school caters for more than 170 students aged four to 19 who have a range of special educational needs.

It has been designated as a National Support School by the Department for Education, and Headteacher David Deacon became recognised as a National Leader of Education in 2018.

The Parliamentary Review is a series of independent publications, which aims to share best practice.

Headteacher David Deacon said: "We are delighted to be involved in this year's

Parliamentary Review and we hope our story is read widely and has a positive influence on the education of children with special educational needs."

You can read more at www.theparliamentaryreview.co.uk/organisations/ashmount-school ■



Little Hill Primary School in Wigston picking up their award for recognising Partnerships with Parents

Schools celebrate SEND success

● Two Leicestershire schools are celebrating winning individual awards at the National Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Awards.

Little Hill Primary School in Wigston picked up an award recognising Partnerships with Parents, while Meadow View Farm School in Barwell picked up the award for Excellence in Special Schools.

Councillor Ivan Ould, county council cabinet member for children and families, said: "This is a fantastic

achievement for Little Hill and Meadow View Farm, there were more than 40 finalists across the main categories so competition was fierce and for these schools to emerge triumphant is a testament to the hard work involved by the schools to provide an award-winning level of SEND provision."

Praise from judges

The judges said of Little Hill Primary School's award: "[This is] Excellent partnership work fully embedded across the school, we can see the impact of parent partnership. We liked that the

entry told us what they did with parent feedback. Impressed with the direct access to services for parents."

The judges said of Meadow View Farm's entry: "The use of emotional intelligence to replace a traditional behaviour approach we felt was innovative. A well evidenced entry."

The awards attracted 48 finalists in four categories and celebrate the role which schools and colleges play in ensuring children with SEND are inspired to succeed. ■

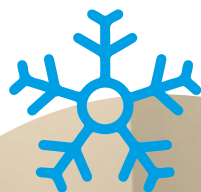
Winter news



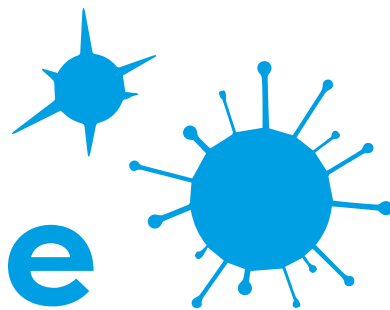
▶ When temperatures fall, follow us on Twitter at **@LeicsCountyHall** for gritting updates and listen to local radio for the latest travel advice.

It is also advisable to follow your schools on social media for closure updates and only travel if necessary. Here's a few tips for meeting the challenges of winter:

- Prepare for the worst and keep a shovel, torch, wellies and blankets handy when you're out and about.
- Wear appropriate footwear and warm clothing when out in cold weather.
- Check on the elderly or vulnerable in your neighbourhood to make sure they are okay during the cold snap. ■



Beat the winter bugs!



▶ School can be a breeding ground for illnesses like colds, flu and the winter vomiting bug.

There are some simple steps you can take to reduce the risk of germs:

- 1** Model good handwashing using soap and warm water, and remind children to wash their hands regularly, especially after using the toilet and before eating.
- 2** Encourage children to use tissues when they cough or sneeze, and bin them quickly – germs can live on surfaces for 24 hours, sometimes longer.

3 Your child can have the nasal flu vaccination in school – it's quick and painless!

4 If children do come down with the Norovirus sickness bug, they should stay at home for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea. Make sure they drink plenty of water, and give liquid paracetamol for fever aches and pains. They do not need to go to the GP or to A & E. However, if symptoms last longer than a few days, contact your GP or call NHS 111.

Check out more germ-busting tips at www.healthforkids.co.uk ■



Move it Boom!

Sherard Primary School
Move it Boom Launch event



Great prizes
up for
grabs!

Get moving

► Move it Boom, the physical activity competition for primary school children is back from Monday 7 October.

The competition encourages children to get active when and where they can – through swimming, dancing, playing ball games, doing yoga, or getting out in a wheelchair.

Each child is given a username and password for the website to log activities. As they do so, they'll build their own virtual robot, and win points for their school.

There are great prizes up for grabs for the winning schools including outdoor play equipment, sports coach sessions, stadium tours and lots more.

For ideas and challenges look out for the bookmarks at school, or talk to your school nurse for more.

Visit www.leicester.moveitboom.co.uk to sign up. The competition runs until the end of December. It has been created by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust. ■



Who's who? And what do they do?

Have you ever been baffled by the job titles at the council or in the NHS? There are so many different roles and responsibilities, it can be hard to pin down who does what.

▶ In this edition, we look at the role of an 'information and support coordinator' (ISC). This is someone you might speak to if you've been referred to early help.

If families are looking for support, they're asked to complete a 'multi-agency referral form' for early help and social care. Once completed, they can call the early help duty line and speak to one of six information and support coordinators.

This team provides information, support and guidance to families and works together with them to explain the type of early help and social care support available.

This may include signposting to other services – such as the Leicestershire Information Support Directory, the Local Offer or other services such as ADHD Solutions or The Bridge.

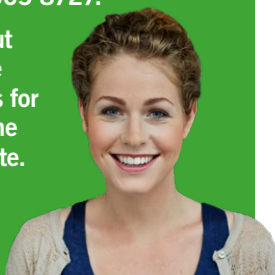
Many families will go on to be supported by the in-house team through group work or one-to-one support. The team works closely with partners to bring support together to best help a family.

ISCs might attend behaviour partnership meetings which support children who are struggling in school or CAMHS meetings.

Referrals

Once a referral form has been completed, you can contact early help on 0116 305 8727.

You can find out more about the referral process for early help on the council's website.



Did you know?

▶ John Lewis in the Highcross, Leicester has a quiet room on the third floor which can be used by families.

John Lewis also offers Autism shoe fitting. You can book an appointment or just call in advance on **0116 242 5777**.

Every Saturday morning between 9am and 10am the whole of the Highcross shopping centre runs a quiet hour.

Have you used the AccessAble website? You can search for places such as shopping centres and cinemas **www.accessable.co.uk/**

We would love to hear from you with more of your top tips to share with other families – you can email us at **Leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk** or send us a message on Facebook. ■

Dates for your diary

Local Offer Roadshow	29th January 2020 10am - 12:30pm	Loughborough Town Hall
Local Offer Live (Leicester City Council)	31st January 2020 10 - 5pm	Morningside Arena, Leicester