

NQT Welcome Event 11.09.13

Welcome to Brighton & Hove

Dr Jo Lyons, Assistant Director, Children's Services (Education & Inclusion)

I am sure you are now quite rightly focussing all your attention on your teaching and the children in your classrooms and your school. But I think it is important that you understand a bit about the wider context in which you are now working. Understanding how schools work together and with others to provide services for children & young people to meet their additional needs is important.

We recognise that some of you work in academies, independent schools and a few of you are from outside the authority. But it is important that whatever setting you're in, you ensure that you have high expectations of the children and young people you teach and understand how they can access extra help if they need it.

In Brighton & Hove all services that have a role in supporting children & young people (education, social care, health etc) have been working together in a partnership to better join up their services, so children access these early when they need them. Working with us are parts of the private, community and voluntary sector and Sussex Police who work with children & young people. So you are now part of a complex network of support from a wide range of experts in the city.

It is especially important that these services work better together where children & young people are vulnerable or have extra needs (social, health or educational) that result in them not being able to learn and develop in your classroom as well as they can without additional support. Many of you will have children & young people in your classrooms who may be subject to a child protection plan, who may be carers for a parent or be in care themselves, they may witness domestic violence or live in poverty....all of these will affect their ability and readiness to learn and succeed. In these circumstances you will be one of several people making sure they get the right help and support to learn and progress. This multi agency working to deliver co-ordinated support through a common assessment process is crucial. This makes sure that information about a child's needs is properly shared between professionals and enables them, along with their parents/carers, to jointly decide what early intervention and support would best meet their needs.

Like any city, there are things that are not as good as we need them to be: these are our local priorities that inform all of our work with children. As a new children's professional in Brighton & Hove, you need to be aware of our priorities and where appropriate contribute to addressing these:

- A city of contrasts, with some of the most deprived wards in the south east and the city being within the top 20% of most deprived LAs in England. The rate of family homelessness is worse than the England average.
- The number of children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan has fallen but remains significantly higher than national rates
- Under-18 conception rates continue to decline, but are still above the south-east rate. Conception rates for girls aged 13-15 are above the national and regional average.
- More than 31,000 children have a special educational need (SEN) – almost a quarter of the school cohort – and just under 3% of children have a statement
- There are at least 500 young carers in the city
- On average, 16.5% children in maintained schools claim free school meals and 28% in the secondary school academies
- 11% of pupils have English as an Additional Language
- 22% of pupils have an ethnic minority background
- The rate of children looked after is joint 8th highest out of 152 LAs in England
- Approx 110 traveller children based at various transit sites in the city
- Attainment gaps are narrowing for children with SEND, FSM & EAL, but there is still a way to go. Secondary attainment levels are still a big focus, although have seen good improvements this year.

Some of these children will be in your classrooms – your teaching will make a major contribution to these most vulnerable children's future. But where needed, working in effective partnership with other service providers to provide extra support will also be part of your role. As part of your induction in school, find time to understand the work of your designated person for child protection, inclusion co-ordinator, school nurse, Education Welfare Officers, Educational Psychologists and other staff who help co-ordinate and deliver the wider group of agencies that make up children's service in the city.

We have some excellent schools in the city, with experienced and trained staff supporting you along the way. You will also have the support of our very experienced and knowledgeable School Workforce & Governor Support Team, who will be able to offer you professional development advice in your induction year and then all the way through your career, maybe even to headship!

I wish you well in your teaching career. Apart from parents/carers, teachers have the potential to make the most difference to children's achievements. You have a very important job ahead of you!