



Department
for Education

Press release EMBARGOED for 10am Tuesday 12 June 2018

Boarding school ‘highly effective’ for vulnerable children

- New research shows social, educational and financial benefits of boarding school placements for young people in and on the edge of local authority care
- Almost two thirds of children were taken off local authority risk register after spending at least three years in boarding school
- GCSE results exceed the national average for Looked After Children

New research showing that boarding school placements can ‘break the cycle of risk’ for vulnerable young people has been published by Boarding Schools Partnership (BSP) today, **12 June**.

Commissioned by the BSP, carried out by Norfolk County Council and validated by the University College London (UCL) Institute of Education, the research shows that almost two thirds of children were taken off the council’s risk register following their boarding school placement. In addition, more than 50% of the boarders who were Looked After Children (LAC), ceased to be LAC as a result of their successful development at boarding school.

Norfolk analysed the outcomes of 52 vulnerable young people who were either in, or at risk of going into, care, and who they had subsequently supported to attend 11 state and independent boarding schools over the past 10 years.

The study shows that:

- 71% of the Norfolk-funded boarders showed a reduced level of risk and 63% moved off the risk register completely; Over half moved off the risk register completely having previously been in care;
- A higher proportion of children who took the placements attained an A*-C or Grade 4+ in both maths and English, than did so among Looked After Children nationally;
- Placing children who are in or on the edge of local authority care in boarding schools can be cost-effective. The boarding school fees paid by Norfolk ranged from £11k per year for state schools to £35k for independent schools. With Norfolk County Council spending an average of £56,200 on children in their care, it is clear that the boarding school programme becomes financially efficient for the local authority.

Lord Agnew, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Schools System, said:

“We are improving education for every child, irrespective of background or circumstance, and welcome the findings from this report. It is right that all children should be given the opportunity to reach their full potential and this report demonstrates that – for the right person, at the right school, at the right time – boarding school can be highly effective in improving both social and educational outcomes. I urge local authorities to consider these findings and the positive impact boarding school placements can have on vulnerable children.”

Colin Morrison, chair of Boarding School Partnerships, said:

“This important research – the first of its kind by a local authority - confirms that local authorities and young people in and on the edge of their care have much to gain from the more extensive use of places in state and independent boarding schools. We are now working with many other local authorities to help them develop programmes like the one in Norfolk. There is now a strong interest in giving increasing numbers of vulnerable young people the opportunity of boarding school to help transform their lives and prospects.”

Dr Wendy Thomson, managing director of Norfolk County Council, said:

Dr Wendy Thomson, Managing Director of Norfolk County Council, said: “Norfolk County Council is proud to be leading the way in working with boarding schools to improve the lives of children in or on the edge of our care. Our research shows that with the right placement, boarding schools can enable children and families to remain together. Most importantly, children and young people feel valued and supported, giving them a far better chance of achieving their potential in life.”

Notes to editors

Boarding School Partnerships (BSP) is a Department for Education collaboration with the Boarding Schools Association, Royal National Children’s SpringBoard Foundation, Buttle UK, and the Reedham Children’s Trust. It was launched in July 2017, to give local authorities access to the expertise and resources of state and independent boarding schools and specialist charities. It operates a free web-based service of case studies, research and schools search. The BSP organised the Norfolk Boarding School Partnerships research with the UCL’s Institute of Education, as part of its commitment to better equip local authorities with the knowledge of boarding school placements for children in care and on the edge of care.

<http://www.boardingschoolpartnerships.org.uk/>

Full report of Norfolk Boarding School Partnerships research on this link

<http://issuu.com/glenncoombsshelleys/docs/73153?e=7058634/62112622>