

BY STEPHEN BURROUGHES - NOVEMBER 2016

• EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE - PROFILE RESULTS 2016

There is more good news for Suffolk's children as results in the early years continue to rise. Provisional figures which have just been published by the Department for Education show an increase in Suffolk children achieving a Good Level of Development in their Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) results. The assessments recognise children's achievements in the EYFS. This includes key areas of learning and development such as communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development.

Children are assessed by their teacher at the end of the Reception class in school. For most children their early learning will have included attending an early education place at a pre-school, day nursery or childminder before moving into school. In Suffolk 70.2% of children achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) this year. This is slightly above the rest of England.

The percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a GLD compared with those not eligible, has also improved this year. This means the gap between the groups has narrowed by 7% points.

It is particularly pleasing to note the improvement seen for children eligible for free school meals across the county. The results include a group of children who first received a free place at two years old rather than aged three, because their parents were eligible, for economic reasons. This national policy seems to be making a difference to the children whose families are less well off, because we can see they have achieved more compared to children with similar backgrounds who did not have a place at two in previous years.

• NEW GREATER ANGLIA RAIL FRANCHISE TOP ISSUE AT SUFFOLK RAIL CONFERENCE

Rail network infrastructure requirements needed to deliver the new Greater Anglia Rail Franchise were the key topics discussed at this year's rail conference held during October in Ipswich.

The phasing of rail infrastructure was one of the issues delegates explored with rail industry leaders and representatives from Government departments including Network Rail. Improving track capacity, signals and level crossings are just some of the areas required for improvement to support new rolling stock and additional train services, which have been confirmed as part of the new Greater Anglia rail franchise contract announced in August. The conference was attended by speakers from Greater Anglia, Network Rail, and the Department for Transport. Representatives from the Transport Research Laboratory, Crossrail and The East West Rail Consortium also provided presentations on rail innovation and new opportunities for businesses that wish to use this opportunity to benefit from faster, more reliable services.

This annual conference is a key date in the diary each year in helping to lobby Government and rail organisations to deliver better East Anglian passenger and freight rail services. The new passenger franchise is the reward for this effort but there is still more to do for the Suffolk's residents and businesses to make it a reality in the next decade.

• BE SAFE BE SEEN IN SUFFOLK - CHILDREN TO GET FREE SAFETY REFLECTORS

Suffolk County Council is working in partnership with BBC Radio Suffolk to launch a new road safety campaign this autumn – 'Be Safe and Seen in Suffolk.' The campaign will see over 12,000 badge reflectors given to primary school aged children, which can be worn on their coats or backpacks to reflect the beam of vehicles in darker conditions to ensure that children are seen as they walk with friends and parents.

The idea and concept for the campaign was developed earlier this year through discussions with BBC Radio Suffolk. A design competition took place as part of the events and activities at this year's Suffolk Show with the winning design selected from over 190 entries. A major part of undertaking this campaign was the determination to promote exercise, walking and physical activity amongst young people. It was understood that to achieve this, the children and their families needed to feel safe before stepping out during the darker months. So the reflector campaign was born!

The campaign is part of Suffolk's Year of Walking, which celebrates walking in Suffolk, promotes walking events and encourages new walking opportunities. Children are most active during the spring and summer months. An average of around 65 minutes of activity a day in April drops to around 48 minutes during the colder months of January and February. Staying active promotes physical and emotional wellbeing and it is important that young people stay active as there is emerging evidence that suggests links between physical activity and better academic attainment and attention.

Suffolk County Council's Road Safety Team and Public Health Team have invested £9,550 into the campaign to deliver enough reflectors to benefit over 60 primary schools across the county.

- **SUFFOLK RECORD OFFICE MAKES FINAL SHORTLIST**

Suffolk County Council is delighted to announce that its Suffolk Record Office project – 'Preserving Suffolk's Digital Assets' is a finalist for The National Archives Award for Safeguarding the Digital Legacy in the prestigious Digital Preservation Awards 2016. Run by the Digital Preservation Coalition, the awards are a world-wide celebration of those who have made significant and innovative contributions to ensuring our generation's digital legacy will be available into the future.

A small team from the council worked with external suppliers Preservica and Orangeleaf to transform how digital files are managed, preserved and shared. In a short space of time they have delivered a trusted digital repository (the equivalent of a strong room for paper records) and a brand new interactive website: www.suffolkarchives.co.uk which provides easy access to 900 years of Suffolk's history, with links to over 326,000 electronic catalogue records, interesting information and stories, image galleries and online exhibitions. It also hosts the latest news on the Hold: A Suffolk Archives Service for the 21st Century project, which has attracted initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and is in the early stages of the Development Phase: www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/thehold.

Winners will be announced at a ceremony at the Wellcome Trust in London on Wednesday 30 November.

Clr Stephen Burroughes
COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR FRAMLINGHAM
Vice Chairman of Suffolk County Council

