

LSC supports larger sixth forms in Suffolk

Research shows students have a wider choice of courses and are likely to gain better exam grades in larger sixth forms.

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Sixth form students in Suffolk will have a wider choice of courses and are likely to gain better exam grades in the larger sixth forms that could be put in place if the county moves from a three-tier to a two-tier education system, claims the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

Suffolk LSC cites local and national research drawn together by Suffolk County Council in a review of school organisation which shows that, on average, students in the county's larger sixth forms gain better results than those in smaller centres, and better grades than the national average. The figures also reveal that students in Suffolk's larger sixth form centres take more A levels or equivalent qualifications than those in smaller institutions.

Commenting on the findings, Judith Mobbs, Area Director for LSC Suffolk said: "This research backs up the lessons learned in other parts of England and Wales which show that young people aged 16 to 19 do better in specialist centres that can offer a wide choice of courses, specialist teachers and facilities. It's also important to note that the relative progress each student makes is greater in larger sixth form centres."

The LSC's responsibility is to ensure the highest quality learning and training for all young people over 16 years old and I find this research a compelling argument for supporting the County Council's recommendations that sixth form centres should be at least 200 students in size".

At a meeting in Ipswich last night, LSC Suffolk agreed to support proposals by Suffolk County Council to phase in a two-tier education system as it would make possible a review of the county's arrangements for post-16 study.

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“We have a fantastic example of what an innovative new approach to 16 to 19 education can offer young people in the new centre planned for south west Ipswich. The new state-of-the-art facility will offer better specialist facilities and school teaching staff will be able to gain particular expertise in post-16 learning as well as retaining links with the high schools involved” said Mrs Mobbs.

Proposals to move to a two-tier education system will be discussed by a full meeting of Suffolk County Council on 22 March.

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Notes to editors

For an interview with Judith Mobbs please contact Sarah Leith Russell, LSC regional press officer on (01234) 420076 or Donna Barker at Band & Brown Communications on 01603 417722 or email donna.barker@bbpr.com.

The Learning and Skills Council

The Learning and Skills Council exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

In the east of England we have six offices, one in each county: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. We work with our partners, local employers, training providers, schools and colleges to realise the vision of developing the region as one of the most successful knowledge-based economies in Europe.

LCC Suffolk is based at Felaw Maltings in Ipswich. The Area Director is Judith Mobbs.

For more information please go to www.lsc.gov.uk

Suffolk School Organisation Review

In January 2006 Suffolk County Council launched a review of school organisation in Suffolk. A Policy Development Panel (PDP) was set up to undertake the review. The PDP included in its membership Nick Foster, the then executive director of Suffolk LSC, and latterly Judith Mobbs, Area Director of Suffolk LSC.

The PDP reported its findings in late 2006 and these were endorsed by Suffolk County Council in January 2007. The final proposals will go the full Council on 22 March 2007.

For more information on the review please go to www.suffolk.gov.uk/sor