

Sellafield Ltd launches transformational education programme

Sellafield Ltd and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) are funding the £1.7 million WELL programme.

It has been developed by Cumbria County Council and the Cumbria Alliance of System Leaders (CASL).

WELL stands for Western Excellence in Learning and Leadership.

Funding will come from our annual £10 million social impact budget.

Jamie Reed, our head of corporate affairs, said:

The success of this programme will benefit every family in our community.

It's an exciting, inspirational project and will help us go further towards meeting our commitment in helping to build the Northern Powerhouse.

The scheme is a key component of our [social impact strategy](#), which aims to ensure our local community benefits from our work in the long term.

The Well Project

Jamie added:

At the heart of our social impact programme is a commitment to helping our communities unlock a sustainable and prosperous future.

Creating a diverse and strong local economy starts in the classroom.

We're fortunate to have some outstanding schools in our community led by committed and talented teaching staff.

But independent research has repeatedly told us that our area is falling short in terms of educational attainment.

We are committed to helping build an environment where every child has access to the highest quality education, tailored to their needs.

The WELL scheme will be an important step towards improving the educational attainment and life-chances of every west Cumbrian

pupil.

WELL's headline aims are to:

- improve the consistency and quality of teaching
- raise pupil achievement to be in line with the UK average
- improve attendance levels
- enhance students' health and wellbeing

Councillor Sue Sanderson, Cumbria County Council Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning, said:

There has been a real commitment to a more collaborative approach to school improvement in Cumbria for a number of years.

We have many dedicated and talented professionals working in our schools who want the very best for our children and young people and who do a great job in maximising the existing financial resource they have.

This new funding will help them do even more, enabling exciting and sustainable partnerships which will give schools greater capacity to work together, and help establish West Cumbria as an area of educational excellence.

CASL is looking forward to working in partnership with Sellafield Ltd and the NDA to make a real difference to the lived experiences of children and young people in Allerdale and Copeland.

Strategies will be developed to recruit, retain, and develop high quality teaching staff, including the creation of a West Cumbria Educational Leadership Academy.

This will develop current and future school leaders, encouraging leaders to adopt and use best practice from business and industry in an educational context.

A fund will also be established to help teachers develop their knowledge, with an emphasis on visiting schools around the UK to learn from best practice.

Other plans include the creation of a west Cumbria-wide curriculum plan to underpin Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership's strategy for inclusive economic growth.

Strategies enhancing children's 'cultural capital' will be drawn up, to ensure access to sporting events, theatre, and the arts.

The 'closing the gap' initiative will develop best practice techniques for

teaching children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This will include measures to raise attendance levels, create better home-to-school relationships, and improve careers advice.

Subject weaknesses across the 2 boroughs will be addressed and efforts made to improve students' 'working memory, cognitive flexibility, and attention'.

A particular focus will be 'transition points' like the switch from primary to secondary where children can often fall behind. And a fund will be created to give poorer households access to books and resources.

Poor attendance will be addressed through a range of measures, including improving home-school relationships, with measures to reduce exclusions, including the creation of facilities to keep young people in school where possible.

The wellbeing element will provide mental health training for staff, develop early identification and intervention techniques, and create a network of mental health first aiders.

Mike Smith OBE, chair of the people employment and skills strategy group of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, said:

We support the ambitions of Sellafield Ltd and CASL in supporting our schools to improve teaching and address attainment challenges in Allerdale and Copeland.

The Cumbrian economy provides significant opportunities for young people to meet their aspirations, and secure great careers.

We look forward to working in partnership to support our education sector in attracting high quality talent and improving the opportunities available to young people.