
New Youth Cabinet elected

More than 16,000 young people from across East Sussex have now voted for the 12 representatives who will be their voice on the county's Youth Cabinet for the next two years.

This year's Big Vote 07 took place in the last two weeks of November at 45 different voting stations in schools, colleges, and youth projects across East Sussex. Nominations for the Cabinet closed in October and a total of 25 young people contested the seats.

Of 33,418 young people on the electorate from the schools taking part, the voting turnout was almost 50%. This is the second highest in the country based on last year's figures.

The Youth Cabinet represents young people on issues such as transport, drugs, the environment, sexual health, bullying and exams. Three members of it also represent the county at a national level in the Youth Parliament.

Each district in East Sussex has its own elected representatives. Two candidates have been elected in each of the areas of Wealden, Rother, Hastings, Lewes, Eastbourne North and Eastbourne Central.

Find out who your district Member is [here](#) or download an [interview with Hannah Sayers, Member of the Youth Cabinet](#).

Working together at Bexhill High School

We went to visit Bexhill High School to meet the some of the people and services working there – and to find out what it's like being together on one site.

Bexhill High School has all the buzz and bustle you'd expect from such a thriving secondary school. It spills across a site housing over 1,500

young people aged 11-18 (apart from Year 7 who are at Gunter Road). Staff and students to and fro in bursts of activity, and the whole place exudes a sort of concentrated energy. It 's also one of the schools in East Sussex scheduled for a complete rebuild in 2010 – something that everyone is looking forward to.

Additional Needs Support Team

Across from the main school is the office of the Additional Needs Support Team, led by Penny Jones. They are responsible for coordinating and putting in place any needs that students may have which are not already provided by the school. These could be anything from Teaching Assistant support or help with literacy, to peer mentoring, counselling, or CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services).



The Additional
Needs Support
Team

The Team manages a weekly referral meeting where professionals from inside and outside the school (for example teachers, educational psychologists, the School Nurse, Family Link Team, Connexions, Youth Offending Team and so on) come together to consult and decide how best to support the needs of each young person who has been referred to the team. Subsequent referrals to services are always made with the consent and involvement of parents and the young person. Penny's team generally act as the Lead Professionals and work with young people, their family and other services on the CAF (Common Assessment Framework).

Penny says *"our work is about enabling each young person to fulfil their potential and to help remove barriers which could prevent them*

from learning and developing – we put the young people's needs at the centre of everything we do. We liaise closely with Heads of House, teachers, the family/carers, and other professionals, to make sure that the most appropriate support is put in place. Being on the same site as other members of the referral team helps make this process effective.”

Family Link Team

Down the corridor from Additional Needs Support, is the Family Link Team, led by Tina Frost. They work both with children having difficulties at school, and with the families at home. They cover the local primary schools, and children and young people up to 13 years old at Bexhill High School, and St. Richards.



The Family Link Team

Having listened to the problems of parents as well as children, the team then develop a 12-18 week plan of action to boost the child and the family's confidence, motivation and self-esteem, as well as encouraging them in out-of-school activities.

Tina says, "Working with the whole family, we act as a sort of 'professional friend' to them. So often it's the problems of the family that are affecting the child or young person at school, so our aim is not only to listen to the child, but also to empower the family at home. We act as an independent link between home and school."

Signposting families to specialist help, advice and activities is also key, so the team have built up an excellent network of contacts, not only within the school, but also with organisations, clubs, charities and

support groups across Bexhill, who meet regularly. People use this meeting to gather information and fliers and then take them back to the families they come in contact with. The meeting has provided an excellent opportunity to deliver partnership working to support a wide range of families and is highly valued by all that attend.



Bexhill monthly
network meeting

Connexions

Down a flight of stairs from the Family Link Team is the Connexions office, where Tracy Townshend, Intensive Personal Adviser (IPA) holds weekly one-to-one support sessions with young people aged 13-16. Young people are referred to her for various reasons, for example if there's been change in their behaviour: perhaps they're not engaging in school, or are under-achieving academically.



Tracy Townshend, Intensive
Personal Adviser

Tracy, who originally trained as a teacher says: *"my job is to support and advise young people who have complex needs that may result in them becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) so it's vital that we build up a relationship of mutual trust, as well as with*

their parents and the school. I also signpost young people to other services if necessary, such as Careers Advice, the Anti-Bullying Team, Under 19's substance Misuse Service and so on. Being on the school site alongside other services and colleagues really improves communication. Of course, I am also part of a great team at Connexions (Hastings) who support me and with whom I'm in constant touch."

One of the people Tracy works closely with is social worker Sandy Phillips, who is also based at the school. Tracy spent a week shadowing Sandy's work during the summer, and found the experience very valuable. As she says: *"Knowing what Sandy does has helped us to work more closely together. It was a real eye opener. I had no idea until then how demanding a social worker's job is – and the difficult decisions they are asked to make that affect young people's lives."*

Sheila Elliot, Sandy's manager said: *"Tracy and Sandy's working relationship is a true reflection of how we are hoping the integrated Youth Support Services will benefit all young people and their families by providing the right service at the right time."*

Richard Lewis, Connexions Team Leader added: *"the good working relationship Sandy and Tracy have built is an excellent example of how being based together is benefiting young people and their families. Since April 2007 Connexions also adopted the CAF. We've worked with the school to introduce it and to enhance the integrated way in which we work."*



Di Hawksby, Deputy Head Teacher commented: *"Learning, development and wellbeing of children and young people are our top priorities. Bringing together integrated support services onto the school site and using the same assessment framework means that children and their families in Bexhill are*

*receiving quicker and more
responsive additional services
which are targeted to individual*

*need. I am very proud of the hard work and commitment shown by all
our staff and colleagues at the school."*

Contact Bexhill High School at office@bexhillhigh.e-sussex.sch.uk

Would you like your school to feature on Children's Trust

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childrenstrustexpress@eastsussex.gov.uk – we'd love to hear
from you!

Launch of largest ever anti-bullying survey

The largest ever anti-bullying survey of children and young people in East Sussex was launched during Anti-Bullying Week, 19-23 November. The survey is designed to assess the effectiveness and impact of anti-bullying initiatives in our schools and so target anti-bullying resources more effectively.

Ten schools across the county are initially taking part and then the survey will be rolled out to a further 20 schools. It asks young people many questions across different areas of bullying, such as:

- how safe they feel at their school
- what their experience is of bullying both inside and outside of school
- whether they have been bullied or been a bully.

Once the information is gathered and analysed, schools will be able to focus on specific bullying issues that may be identified from the survey.

In the run up to Anti-Bullying Week, the Children's Services Anti-Bullying Team issued primary and secondary schools with a resource pack featuring lesson plans and other ideas for anti-bullying initiatives. Assemblies, workshops, performances and events, as well as parents' evenings, were also held to raise awareness of bullying issues.

For example, Hastings Youth Council held an event inviting every secondary school in the area publicly to sign the Anti-Bullying Charter . 75% of schools across East Sussex have now signed the Charter.

The Anti-Bullying Team is currently running a countywide poster competition focusing on e-safety, cyber-bullying, and bullying out of school, all of which are growing concerns for young people and for the community as a whole. For more, contact John Khan , Head of Service, Anti-Bullying on 01323 74 7060 or email john.khan@eastsussex.gov.uk .

Parent and pupil support at Shinewater Primary School

We went to visit, meeting Anne Marie Cox, Parent and Pupil Support Manager - and a very lively group of parents!



Shinewater Primary School sits tucked away from the road, in a cluster of immaculately kept, low-rise, modern buildings. It serves over 460 children, from 370 nearby families in the Langney district, Eastbourne.

Inside, the atmosphere is calm and welcoming. Artwork, and all kinds of projects and information adorn the walls. The open plan interior is beautifully cared for and somehow manages to be light and spacious while at the same time really cosy. There's also lots of space outside to play and run about. You get the feeling that here is somewhere very safe for young children to learn and grow.

Shinewater is a school at the heart of the community and believes that involving and supporting local families has a key role to play in its success. It was the first primary school in East Sussex to employ a Parent and Pupil Support Manager – Anne Marie Cox.

Part of Anne Marie's job is Parent Information Contact (PIC) giving advice and information to parents and signposting them to specialist help and advice if needed. It's also important that parents can access her easily, which is why she's always available, either at school or through family visits, and also by phone or by email. Anne Marie says *"it's important that parents and children feel able to approach me – or I can visit them. Building trust and good relationships with parents and children is a major part of my job – and it's a job I love doing."*

Supporting parents was one reason why Anne Marie helped set up the informal Thursday Morning Group (or as one mum put it, the 'Thursday Morning Moaners' Group' !).

The Group is for any parents with children at the school, and provides a regular, supportive place to meet. One mum commented: *"it's great to be able to get together for mutual support, and brainstorming. We've been on a recent parenting course and some of our children have ADHD, autism, or other problems. Here we can talk about things, work through issues and come up with ideas. And Anne Marie is on hand if we need info on where to go next. Perhaps the best thing about the group is being with friends and having a really good laugh – that's so important."*

The school works closely with many different professionals to make sure local children and families get the best possible support. These

include teachers, social workers, CAMHS, the Traveller Education and English as an Additional Language Service, as well as people from other agencies like Sue Antell, Able Worker and Gail Whittington – Family Link Worker.



As both Anne Marie and Sue agree *"we all work together - professionals, parents and the community - to help make sure the needs of each individual child are met, and we adapt our support accordingly.*

Being an extended school also means involving the whole community in out-of-school activities."

Headteacher John Greenwood added: *"At Shinewater our aim is to create a happy, safe and creative learning environment for every child who comes to the school. By supporting parents, we are helping to support children. I am very proud of the work Anne Marie does. We are convinced that including other professionals and parents in an intergrated approach to education will benefit all our children."*

Contact Annmarie Cox, Shinewater Primary School at office@shinewater.e-sussex.sch.uk .

Would you like your school to feature on Children's Trust Express? If so, please contact us at childrenstrustexpress@eastsussex.gov.uk – we'd love to hear from you!

Information Sharing and Assessment in East Sussex

Working together in effective, integrated teams is the future for Children's Services. But what systems and training are enabling this to work in practice? Celia Wilson , the Information Sharing and Assessment (ISA) Manager, Children's Services, reports on the back-room service behind the implementation of CAF and the Lead Professional role.

[Download Celia's article here.](#)

Gifted and Talented students make feature film

120 gifted and talented young people from across East Sussex have made a feature length film called 'Get Santa'. The young people (from years 6, 7 8 and 9) made the film during the summer, with the help of experienced film-makers and teachers. The finished movie - which is based on the original screenplay of 'Get Santa' - is the result of a 'Gifted and Talented' project, led by Gifted and Talented Advanced Skills Teacher Gareth Jones.

The project meant that students were involved in all aspects of movie-making, gaining first hand experience in front of and behind the camera. Using professional film equipment, they took on the many and complex challenges involved in film production, and in the process were able to focus on their own particular interests.

'Get Santa' was premiered ' Hollywood style' with a celebration viewing on 25 November at the Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne . More than 600 people – including families, friends, and special guests – were there.

You can view a short trailer, and the music video 'Gangsta Times', on **[You Tube](#)** . To find out more about the Gifted and Talented

programmes supported by East Sussex County Council, visit the [CfBT East Sussex School Improvement Service website](#).

Joint Area Review Report shows East Sussex Children's Services are good

The Joint Area Review (JAR) Report was published on 16 October 2007. Its findings show that services are good , with the capacity to improve further as outstanding . [Find out more](#) and [download the full report](#) .

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