

Investment for children



Picture courtesy of Stoke Damerel Community College

Why investment now?

In recent years Plymouth has seen real progress in improving the attainment, achievements and well being of children in schools, giving them the strongest possible base for later life. Schools are becoming increasingly adept at responding to the needs of every child, and at reducing barriers to learning and other inequalities that might otherwise hold children back.

The *Plymouth Children's and Young Peoples Trust Plan 2008-2011* states that we want:

- more children, young people and families to lead healthy lifestyles;
- to prevent bullying and safeguard children who live in vulnerable situations;
- to enable children and young people to have fun;
- to ensure that every child has access to quality education;
- to equip young people to become active, positive and resilient adults;
- to raise young people's aspirations, with particular support for young people who are not in education, employment or training.

The achievement of these bold goals will not be realised while we deliver services to children, and teach them in school environments that are out dated and of poor quality.

Local authorities seek capital funding for children's services from a number of sources. However, the major source remains central government. Capital funding for school buildings has increased significantly over the last decade. With increased investment has come the opportunity for local authorities to be more strategic in their approach. The *patch and mend* mentality of the 1980's and 1990's has been shaken off and now the strategic deployment of assets is able to contribute to the drive to make 21st Century learning the best in the world.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has modified its methods of allocating capital funding to local authorities from a bidding process to an allocation based on a formula calculated according to need. The Council is now presented with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to align strategic plans to ensure that all schools are again at the heart of their communities, are able to deliver world-class standards and can further raise aspiration and address disadvantage.

“Education is not just about exam results – the learning environment should encourage children to stretch themselves and open up new horizons. It is important to invest in classrooms to give our children the very best start in life.”

Former Prime Minister, Tony Blair

What children say

“Our school hasn't got enough space. We want bigger classrooms.”

“If you have a school that looks nice then you want to go there.”

“We want new toilets, ours are smelly and unpleasant!”

“We want buildings that are light and airy and grown up.”

“I would like a bright coloured hall.”

“We would like a dance studio.”

“I would like a park area in the playground.”

