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Bexley schools success: 100% achieve National Healthy School Status

The London Borough of Bexley became the first authority to see 100% of its schools reaching National Healthy School Status, well ahead of the targets set by the Government.

The Local Healthy Schools Programme, based in the Bexley Care Trust, held an official celebration event to mark the achievement at the Council Chambers, Bexley Civic Offices, joined by a range of partners.

Anthony McKeever, Chief Executive of Bexley PCT, said:

"We are absolutely delighted to have 100% of our schools at National Healthy Schools Status. It is thanks to the hard work of students, staff, governors and whole school communities that we have been able to reach such a milestone. We have worked extremely hard together, and our children and young people are now reaping the benefits of being part of a Healthy School. I am very proud of this well earned success."

The programme, which is a joint initiative between the Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families, awards schools which meet the requirements of 41 different health and education criteria. These aim to promote positive behaviour in a wide range of physical, emotional and social areas amongst children and young people.

Local programmes grounded in local education and health partnerships, are key to supporting schools in the process of achieving National Healthy School Status. Each local authority in England now has a Local Healthy Schools Programme and

Coordinator, offering close professional support as they work towards this.

Local Healthy Schools Coordinator for Bexley, Tricia Oates, believes that working together has been the key to their early success. She says:

"We took a very practical 'hands on' approach in working with our schools and encouraged close working between schools. Our schools have been sharing good practice and resources so that every school doesn't have to keep reinventing the wheel as they work towards achieving National Healthy School Status and beyond. This has proved an absolutely crucial factor in achieving 100% status within schools across Bexley."

Schools shared good practice, resources and used the National Healthy School Status website to record evidence and outcomes of success.

Director of Children's Services at Bexley Council, Deborah Absalom, said:

"The National Healthy Schools Programme has really struck a chord in Bexley. Our schools find that the Programme is something they can fully embrace and is a tool they can use to address important topics. It has also encouraged us to develop a stronger relationship between our Children's Services and the PCT enabling us to deliver excellent results in health issues."

The Government has set a target for all schools to be engaged and participating in the programme and for 75% to have reached Healthy School Status, by December 2009.