

# [News story: Education Secretary tours the Midlands and North of England](#)

Education Secretary Damian Hinds has met teachers, children, young people, parents and social workers in the Midlands and North of England.

This was part of a three-day tour to see first-hand how high expectations and the right support can ensure all children and young people get the opportunities they deserve.

With 1.9million more children now in good or outstanding schools across the country, standards are rising. In his first visit to the regions, the Education Secretary visited a range of organisations from across the education system – from childcare through to primary school, further education and support for unemployed adults.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

It has been fantastic to get out and meet so many inspiring teachers, young people, children and education leaders who are all working so hard to improve outcomes for children and young people in their area.

We know that there is some really excellent teaching and learning going on up and down the country – and this trip has really highlighted to me how well it can be done and how we must work together to learn from the best and ensure it is happening across the board.

From high quality childcare to achieving excellent results for disadvantaged pupils and training engineers of the future, I have seen some truly inspiring work.

## **Further details on the Secretary of State's visits:**

On Monday, 12 February, the Education Secretary met teachers and pupils at Sandon Academy in Stoke-on-Trent – an outstanding primary school where progress for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is well above average. The school, which has been praised for its innovative use of pupil premium funding to raise results for disadvantaged children, is home to a farm, mini village and on-site nursery.

Also in the region, Mr Hinds met the North Staffordshire YMCA which offers skills training to young people to help them improve their employability skills and gain qualifications. The Secretary of State saw the youth campus, which offers accommodation to 16 – 25 year olds, and sports centre, and met some of the young people who have been supported into employment, education or training through the centre's work.

He went on to meet apprentices at local data solutions business, Synectics Solutions, crowned Staffordshire Business of the Year and employer to over 350 staff, including local apprentices.

On Tuesday, 13 February, the Education Secretary headed north to Blackpool to see some of the high quality technical and professional education and training available to young people and adults in the region. On a visit to Blackpool and The Fylde College's nautical campus in Fleetwood, he met apprentices and trainee nautical engineers while being shown round by Principal Bev Robinson and Head of Campus Captain Neil Atkinson. The college, rated outstanding by Ofsted, is the UK hub for the National College for Onshore Oil and Gas and is an Associate College of Lancaster University.

The Secretary of State went on to visit the Build Up project, which uses the college's classroom facilities two days a week to offer vital construction skills training to unemployed adults – helping them get the skills they need to find employment.

While in the region, Mr Hinds also visited Hawes Side Academy to see the half term activities being run in partnership with the Blackpool Football Club Community Trust – designed to offer extra-curricular activities to young people and aim to reduce the number of those not in education, employment or training in the area.

This was followed by a meeting with a number of multi academy trust leaders from across Blackpool and Lancashire to discuss how schools can work together to raise education standards and increase opportunity for young people across the country.

On Wednesday, 14 February, Mr Hinds' visit focused on how high quality early education and childcare is crucial to a child's future success at primary and secondary school. He travelled to the North East and North Yorkshire where he visited nurseries in Stockton-on-Tees and Bedale. Visiting Fairfield Day Care in Stockton on Tees and Incy Wincy nursery in Bedale, the Education Secretary heard from staff and parents about how the Government's 30 hours free childcare offer is being implemented in their area.

This was followed by a visit to North East Lincolnshire's Children's Services to meet with council leaders, social workers and local organisations such as charities and the police, to understand the strengths and challenges associated with delivering a wide range of children's services.