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# Town reviews skills to boost job prospects

## Criticised council aims to boost results

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A REVIEW into education and skills in Doncaster will help its residents take advantage of new jobs being created in the area, the town's mayor has said.

Mayor of Doncaster Ros Jones has announced that Doncaster Council and its partners are setting up an independent review.

The Education and Skills Commission will be led by national experts and three new commissioners will also be appointed.

Last year the Government demanded answers from Doncaster Council after the area's primary school results in National Curriculum tests were among the worst in the country.

The town was also one of the worst performing in the region in secondary school league tables with 50 per cent of pupils failing to get the GCSE benchmark of at least five good grades, including English and maths.

The review aims to help raise attainment levels to ensure that young people have the skills needed to secure new jobs being created in the borough.

The Commission is expected to hear evidence from local people, including parents, businesses, education and training providers, before putting forward its proposals.

Mayor Jones said: "Job creation and economic growth are vital to Doncaster and I have made them my top priority as mayor. We need more highly skilled, well-paid jobs to benefit Doncaster and its residents.

"Great progress is being made, but it will be for nothing if local people aren't able to benefit from the opportunities that are being created.

"At the moment the overall level of skills and qualifications in the borough are not where they need to be, so we need to be honest about the situation and take action.

The Commission will help us to meaningfully address these issues in both the short term and long term. I am delighted that we have received the support of our 'Team Doncaster' partners in helping to set up this initiative."

The independent commission will be chaired by Dr Ann Limb with Professor Sir Tim Brighouse

as vice chairman.

It will start work this month. It is expected that it will publish its initial findings in the spring and deliver its final report in the summer.

Mayor Jones said: "With developments such as FARRRS (Finningley and Rossington Regeneration Route Scheme) and the National College for High Speed Rail these are exciting times for Doncaster, bringing new private sector investment and creating huge employment opportunities. We need to make the most of these opportunities, so I look forward to hearing their recommendations and working with our partners to deliver real improvements."

Dr Ann Limb said: "With so many positive developments taking place in Doncaster right now this is a good time to take stock of the local education system. I am keen to see how we can help the council and its partners improve the career prospects of young people across the borough."

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### Rapid improvements sought after report shame

AN EARLIER report into Doncaster's poor primary school performance said the council was "shamed and disappointed" by results which fell short of what had been predicted.

Primary school league tables published at the end of the last year showed that Doncaster schools had the lowest level of 11-year-old pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in Yorkshire in 2015. Collectively Doncaster schools in the local education authority area were ranked in the bottom 10 nationally out of 150 areas with more than one in four children not achieving level four results in the three subjects.

Schools Minister Nick Gibb wrote to Doncaster Council to demand answers. Doncaster Council's reply set out details of a "rapid improvement initiative" for pupils up to the age of 11 in primary schools.

“ The level of skills and qualifications are not where they need to be. ”

Doncaster Mayor Ros Jones.



**ROS JONES:** Doncaster mayor said the review could help to raise educational standards in the area.