

**EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

*To:* **Children and Young People Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **13<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

*From:* **Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **N/a**

*Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **The purpose of this paper, which is to be accompanied by a short presentation, is to inform CYP Committee about educational performance in Cambridgeshire at each key stage.**

*Recommendation:* **The Committee is asked to note the findings of this paper and comment as appropriate.**

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Learning Directorate reports annually to CYP Committee on the performance of Cambridgeshire's maintained schools and academies in the end of key stage assessments and tests for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which is end of Reception year; Key Stage 1 (KS1), which is the end of Year 2 [infants] and Key Stage 2 (KS2), which is the end of Year 6 [juniors]; and in the end of Key Stage 4 examinations (GCSEs or equivalent).
- 1.2 The results given in this paper and accompanying presentation (**Appendix 1**) are provisional because we do not yet have the statistical neighbour<sup>1</sup> figures for vulnerable groups for KS2 and GCSE, and the GCSE figures for vulnerable groups have been checked by schools but not released by the DfE.
- 1.3 This year's Key Stage 4 results are not directly comparable with those in previous years because of the implementation of recommendations from the Wolf Review (restricting the range and value of Key Stage 4 qualifications) and the DfE (Department for Education) adopting an early entry policy (only counting a pupil's first attempt at a qualification). This has affected schools in different ways because they have different curriculum and entry policies.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

- 2.1 For the **Early Years Foundation Stage**, provisional results for 2014 show that Cambridgeshire's performance has improved (51% to 61%) and is now marginally above the national level (60%) but below the level across our statistical neighbours (63%). Overall, vulnerable groups made good progress although SEN did not improve as much as the other groups.
- 2.2 At **Key Stage 1**, Cambridgeshire's provisional performance is the same as in 2013. Nationally performance improved slightly, such that performance in Cambridgeshire is now in line with the national level in Writing (86%) and Maths (92%), but marginally below in Reading (89% compared with 90%). Cambridgeshire is still below the statistical neighbour average. Vulnerable groups were stable, with Free School Meals (FSM) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) recording improvements.
- 2.3 At **Key Stage 2** Cambridgeshire's performance has improved in Reading, Writing and in Maths (from 72% to 75% in all three combined) but it is still

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◆ <sup>1</sup> Oxfordshire  
◆ Gloucestershire  
◆ Hampshire  
◆ Wiltshire  
◆ Bath and NE Somerset  
◆ West Berkshire  
◆ West Sussex  
◆ Hertfordshire  
◆ Worcestershire  
◆ New: South Gloucestershire (was Shropshire)

below the level seen nationally and across our statistical neighbours in each subject and in all three combined. The performance of all vulnerable groups improved, reversing last year's decline; the eight percentage point improvement for children with FSM (Free School Meals) and SEN (Special Educational Needs) is particularly pleasing because this has been an area of weakness.

2.4 At Key Stage 2 a school or academy is judged to be 'below the floor' by the Department for Education if:

- fewer than 65% of pupils achieve Level 4 or higher in Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing (Teacher Assessment) and Maths; and
- pupil progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is lower than the national benchmark in each of Reading, Writing and Maths.

2.5 Of the 169 Primary Schools (excluding special schools) with 11 or more pupils in the KS2 cohort:

- 16 failed to reach the benchmark in all four areas (11 failed to reach the benchmark in 2013 but this year a higher benchmark has been used and the equivalent figure would have been 25); and
- 24 failed to reach the combined attainment benchmark; 99 the Reading benchmark, 91 the Writing benchmark and 99 the Maths benchmark.

The results in 33 schools were above the benchmark in all four areas (30 in 2013 - 27 using the 2014 benchmarks).

2.6 It is important to emphasise that this year's **Key Stage 4** results are not directly comparable with those in previous years (see 1.3 above).

2.7 Cambridgeshire's end of Key Stage 4 performance (55.5% 5+ A\* - C including English and Maths first entry) is above the national level (52.6%) but below the level seen across our statistical neighbours (58.8%). The data for vulnerable groups is still provisional but first impressions are that Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils performed as well as nationally but that FSM, FSM+SEN, and EAL pupils under-performed compared to national figures.

2.8 With regards to the KS4 benchmarks, of the 29 Secondary Schools/Academies (excluding PRUs & special schools) with 11 or more pupils in the KS4 cohort:

- four<sup>2</sup> failed to reach the benchmark in all three areas (three in 2013); and
- five failed to reach the combined attainment benchmark; 12 the English benchmark and 12 the Maths benchmark.

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• <sup>2</sup> Ely College  
 • North Cambridge Academy  
 • Thomas Clarkson CC  
 • Witchford VC

- 2.9 The LA rankings are listed in the penultimate slide of Appendix 1 and present a mixed picture. However, the 11 place improvement for KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths combined is significant because this is one of the key criteria used by the DfE to judge the performance of a LA.
- 2.10 In summary, results across the Primary age range have improved, which is pleasing following the decline in performance at KS2 last year. However, the rate of progress at KS2 has barely kept up with national performance and gaps between vulnerable groups and the rest of the cohort remain too wide. This remains a priority for schools and the LA.
- 2.11 New actions being taken by the LA to help further improve performance at KS2 include all aspects of monitoring, challenge, intervention and support. For example:
- working with schools to monitor in-year progress towards achieving end of key stage targets, with additional support where it looks as though targets may be missed;
  - six weekly rating of schools to identify direction of travel, with challenge / intervention / support if performance appears to be declining;
  - issuing significant concerns letters and/or warning notices where performance is a concern, setting out (and following up) the actions that need to be taken; and
  - a briefing and training programme for headteachers and subject leaders as part of the Primary School Improvement Offer.
- 2.12 The difficulties in making comparisons with previous years makes drawing conclusions about performance across the secondary age range at best tentative. However, overall performance appears to have declined. With all but one of Cambridgeshire's secondary schools being academies the LA has discussed all aspects of KS4 performance with the Regional Commissioner for Academies and with Ofsted. We are working with both where it is appropriate and possible to do so, to support improvement activities, e.g. using our good relationship with the secondary academies to broker collaborative work between schools.

### **3.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

#### **3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

- 3.1.1 The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:
- improved educational outcomes will provide a more highly skilled workforce; and
  - a key factor in major companies' decisions to move to Cambridgeshire is access to good and outstanding schools for their workforce.

#### **3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

- 3.2.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- there is a positive correlation between educational outcomes, standards of health and independent living.

#### **3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

- 3.3.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- Poor educational progress of vulnerable groups correlates with poor life chances. Children who fall behind find it hard to catch up. In particular, children from low-income families, as measured by eligibility to Free School Meals, achieve badly compared with children not eligible for Free School Meals.

## **4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Resource Implications**

- 4.1.1 There are no significant implications within this category. The actions identified can be met from within the Learning Directorate's current budget.

### **4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

- 4.2.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places upon LAs a duty to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential in all schools.

### **4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 4.3.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- The vulnerable groups who make poor educational progress include those covered by the protected / significant characteristics of race and deprivation, e.g. Gypsy, Roma Traveller and Free School Meals.

### **4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

- 4.4.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- It is necessary to engage and consult extensively with schools, academies and key stakeholders on Cambridgeshire's educational performance in order to develop appropriate and effective school improvement and accelerating achievement strategies.

### **4.5 Public Health Implications**

- 4.5.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- Improved educational outcomes will have a positive impact on standards of public health.

### **4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

- 4.6.2 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- Educational performance varies across the county.