

Service Director Education Report

To: Children & Young People Committee

Meeting Date: 19th January 2020

From: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn: Executive Director, People and Communities

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Key decision: No

Outcome: To provide an overview of the activity in the Education Directorate during the COVID-19 situation

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the issues outlined in this paper and comment as appropriate.

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the latest position on COVID-19 and restarting education in Cambridgeshire. The report also outlines key service updates / topical issues from across the Education Directorate so members are fully briefed on the challenges we face moving forward in the second half of the autumn term.

2.0 Update on COVID-19 and Education

- 2.1 From the 20th March 2020, schools, colleges and settings were formally closed. During the spring and summer term, they opened first to critical worker and vulnerable children before wider opening to children in early years, reception, year 1, year 6 and years 10 and 12. On the 1st September, schools and settings formally reopened in line with the Education Act 1996. Restarting education for the Spring term was initially delayed for secondary schools but on the 6th January following an announcement by the Prime Minister, schools were closed again and moving to a mixture of remote learning and in-school support for vulnerable and critical worker children. Early years settings and special schools remain open during this time.
- 2.2 The latest highlight report for responding to the COVID-19 position can be found in Appendix 1.

Key issues to note are –

- The issues we have faced with staff and perceived risk around the current rate of Covid-19 cases in the community. There has been significant challenge to the government nationally by two of the largest trade unions which have education members.
 - National guidance has been slow and confusing for leaders. The Local Authority, Diocese and Academy Trusts have had to make judgements on opening schools based upon ensuring the safety of staff and pupils.
 - The decisions to keep early years provision fully open creates a number of challenges from a perspective of safety and financial viability.
 - There remains a lack of clarity in relation to the provision of laptops / devices for remote learning and the government support for free school meals.
 - We have sought to limit numbers in schools as there is a risk that admitting all vulnerable and critical worker children will be counter the messages about staying home and minimising contact.
- 2.3 The current Covid-19 situation will be monitored on a bi-weekly basis, at ward and school catchment area. If we determine in a locality that there is a high and increasing trend in infection levels, we will seek support from the Department for Education to close the school and move to a complete remote learning model. This information will be shared with schools to inform their risk assessments.

3. Key Service Updates

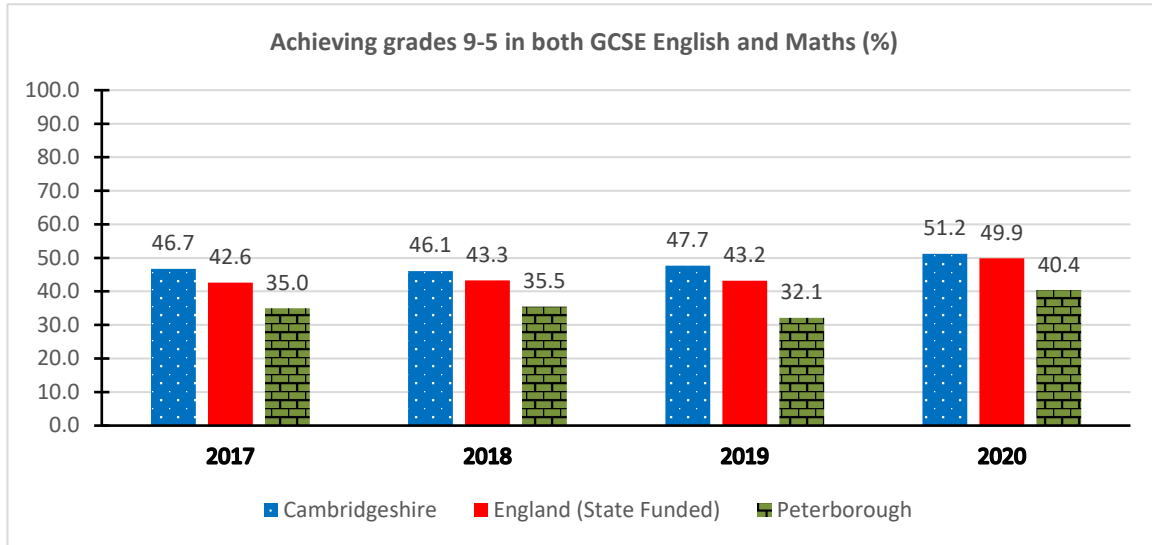
Key Stage 4 and 5 Outcomes

- 3.1 The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on formal assessment in 2020 with Primary Assessments, including the Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) SATs, being cancelled and both GCSE and A-Level examinations being replaced with centre assessed grades as of 18 March 2020. The resultant GCSE and A-Level grades would then be standardised by an algorithm to ensure that the distribution of outcomes was similar to that seen in previous years.
- 3.2 There were several consistency issues with this grading including the fact that unlike KS1 and KS2 Teacher Assessments (TA), there is no mechanism in place to externally moderate judgements made by GCSE teachers; prior education reforms had reduced/removed the coursework element from examinations and the fact that schools set their own internal mock examinations. These factors contributed to the design of the results algorithm and this in turn lead to widespread anomalies and injustices in the final outcomes. The problems with the reported A Level grades led to a U-turn on results and pupils received the higher of their centre assed grades or algorithm based grades. Therefore, extreme caution should be used when comparing this year's outcomes with those of previous years. There is not the level of analysis we normally have and we have not worked at individual school level owing to these issues.

GCSE

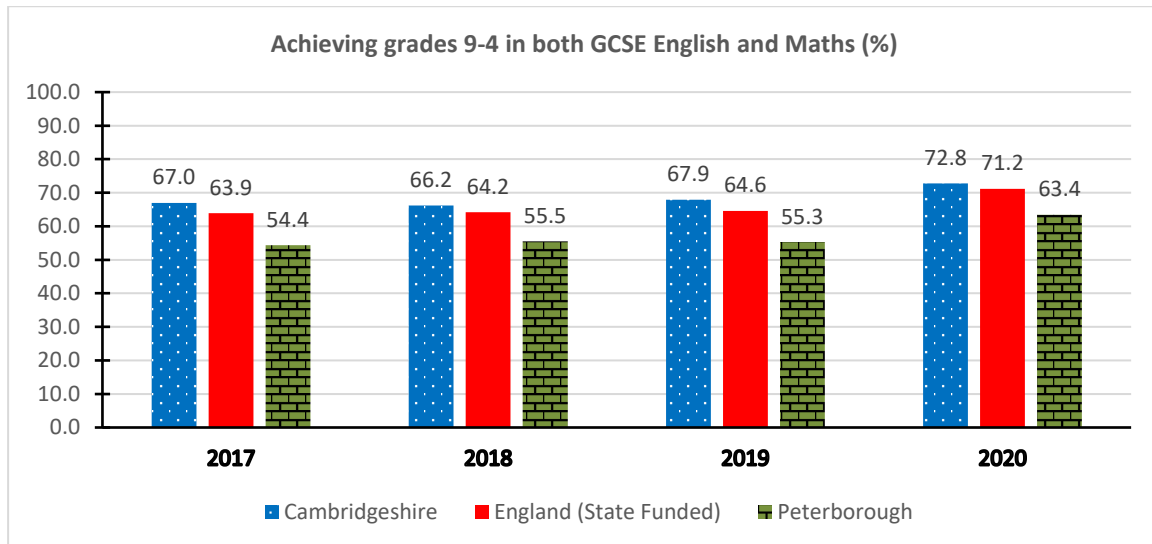
- 3.3 Two of the core national and local authority (LA) benchmarks for GCSE outcomes is the proportion of pupils achieving a good pass (grades 9-5) or a pass (grades 9-4) in both GCSE English and Maths.
- 3.4 Historically, outcomes in Cambridgeshire have been above the national (See charts below – note that they show the national outcomes for state funded schools/academies which are higher than those for all schools).
- 3.5 In Cambridgeshire, 51.2% of pupils achieved a good pass in both English and Maths GCSE, compared with 49.9% of pupils nationally at state funded schools/academies (see chart 1). 72.8% of pupils achieved a pass in both GCSE English and Maths compared with 71.2% (see chart 2).
- 3.6 At district level for a pass in both English and Maths GCSE outcomes were highest in South Cambridgeshire (80.1%) and lowest in Fenland (62.3%). The pattern was similar for a good pass; South Cambridgeshire 63.3% and Fenland (36.1%).

Chart 1. The proportion of pupils achieving a good pass (grades 9-5) in both GCSE English and Maths



Source: DFE LAIT and DfE KS4 performance data published 26 November 2020

Chart 2. The proportion of pupils achieving a pass (grades 9-4) in both GCSE English and Maths

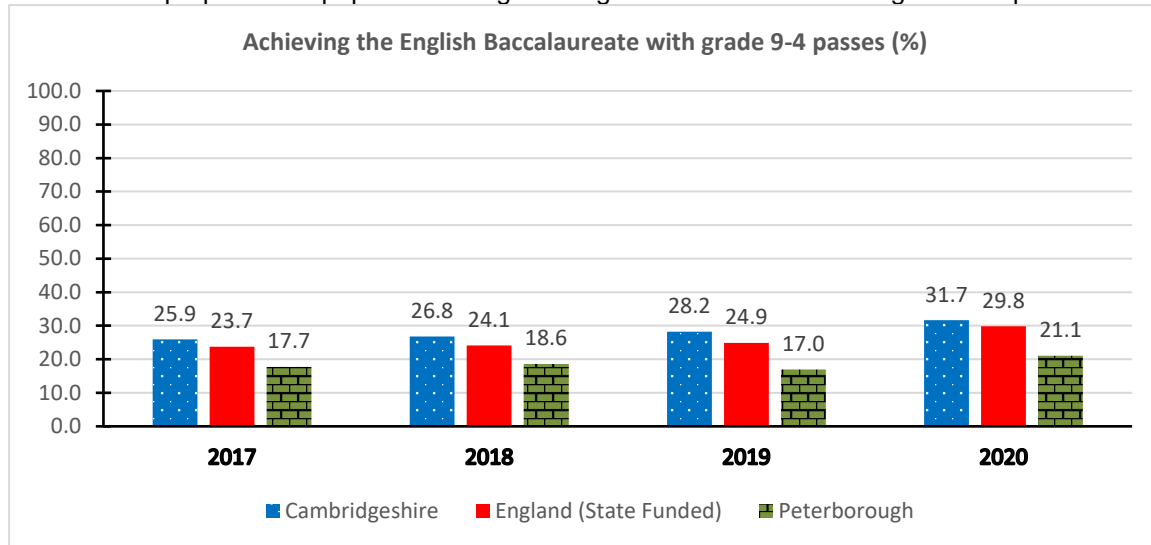


Source: DFE LAIT and DfE KS4 performance data published 26 November 2020

- 3.7 Patterns are similar for the proportion of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate (GCSE passes in English and Maths, in Science, a Modern Foreign Language and either of History or Geography). Cambridgeshire continues to be above the levels seen nationally and regionally (see chart 3).

- 3.8 At district level outcomes were highest in Cambridge City (47% of pupils achieved the English Bacallaureate with grades 9-4) and lowest in Fenland (11.6%).

Chart 3. The proportion of pupils achieving the English Bacallaureate with grade 9-4 passes.



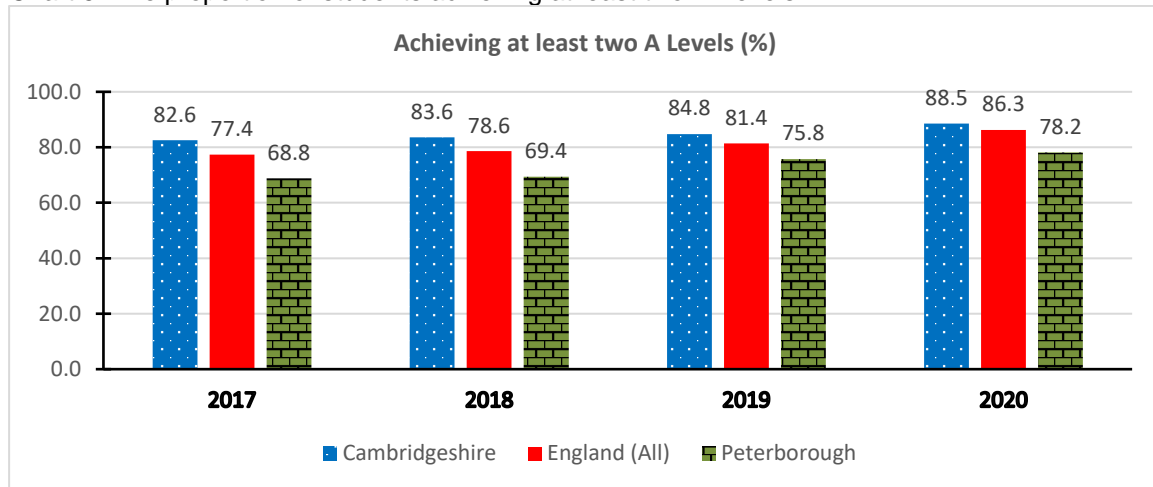
Source: DFE LAIT and DfE KS4 performance data published 26 November 2020

- 3.9 The two other benchmarks for GCSE outcomes are attainment 8 and progress 8 – the former is a measure of how well pupils have done in their GCSE results (it converts pupil grades into an average point score). The latter shows how pupils have done compared with other children in England who started with similar attainment at in KS2. For the reasons outlined above, caution should be exercised when comparing this year's figures with those from previous years.
- 3.10 Attainment 8: As with the previous measures, performance in Cambridgeshire is marginally above the level seen nationally and regionally.
- 3.11 At district level, outcomes were highest in South Cambridgeshire (56.9pts) and lowest in Fenland (44.4pts).
- 3.12 Progress 8: Due to the change in methodology and the consistency issues raised above, the Department for Education are not calculating Progress 8 Scores for 2020. Also note that there are no school performance tables for 2020.

A-Level

- 3.13 As media coverage highlighted this year's A-Level results share many of the consistency issues seen in the GCSE results. This is reflected in the fact that several of the national benchmarks have seen large increases this year. Therefore, extreme caution should be used when comparing this year's outcomes with those of previous years. The figures reported below include students attending colleges.
- 3.14 One benchmark for A-Level outcomes is the proportion of students achieving at least 2 A-Level or equivalent qualifications – this is the minimum requirement for many universities when considering mature students who have left education and then gained experience elsewhere before deciding to continue their studies. Levels in Cambridgeshire continue to be above those seen nationally and regionally.

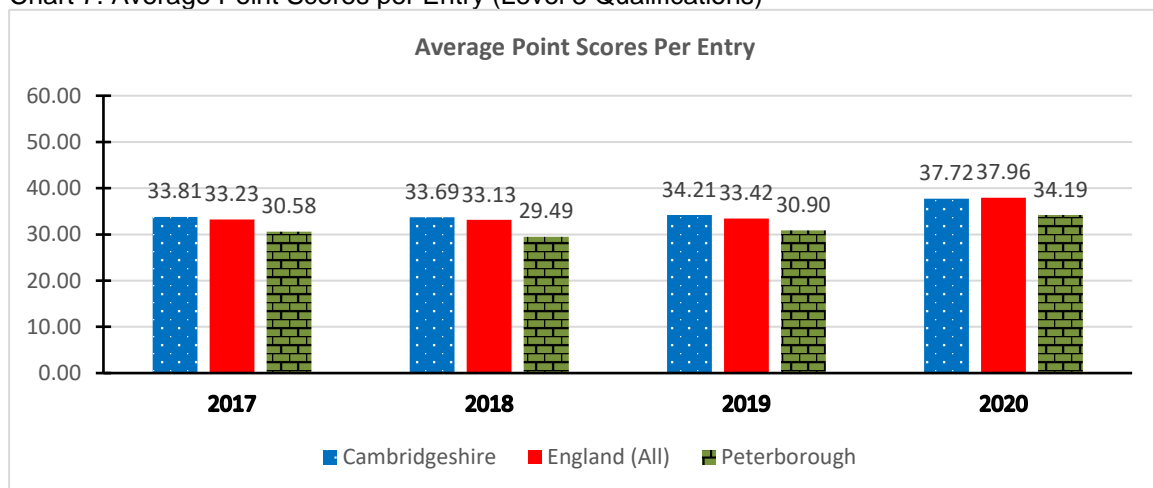
Chart 5. The proportion of students achieving at least two A-Levels



Source: DFE LAIT and DfE KS5 performance data published 26 November 2020

- 3.15 A more rigorous benchmark for performance at A-Level is the proportion of student achieving grades AAB or better at A Level, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects – subjects used by Russel Group Universities when making offers. Locally and nationally, these outcomes have fluctuated as more rigorous examinations were introduced but had started to improve again ahead of 2020. As with other post-16 measures Cambridgeshire is usually above outcomes both nationally and regionally.
- 3.16 To help to compare different types of Post-16 examinations and qualifications (e.g. academic and technical) outcomes can also be converted to Average Point Scores. The patterns for Average Point Scores per entry have also fluctuated over time as more rigorous examinations have been introduced. (Note that a single grade C at A-Level has a value of 30 points).

Chart 7. Average Point Scores per Entry (Level 3 Qualifications)



Source: DFE LAIT and DfE KS5 performance data published 26 November 2020

Destinations of Key Stage 4 Students in 2018/19

- 3.17 Key stage 4 destination measures follow pupils who were at the end of key stage 4 study (GCSE and equivalent qualifications) in 2017/18, and reports their destinations in the following academic year (2018/19). Due to the time needed to collect and collate this data, there is a lag on these figures but this is the latest set that has been published.
- 3.18 They show the percentage of pupils going to an education, apprenticeship or employment destination. To be counted in a destination, young people have to have sustained participation for a 6 month period in the destination year. The headline statistics refer to pupils leaving state-funded mainstream schools in England.
- 3.19 Not all pupils achieve a sustained destination by staying in education, employment or apprenticeships for at least two terms, but in most cases some data exists on their activity in the destination year. Overall, there is activity information on 99% of the national cohort.
- 3.20 In 2018/19, 94% of the Cambridgeshire end of KS4 cohort from 2017/18 were in sustained education or employment in-line with the levels seen nationally and regionally. At district level, the figures varied from 93% in Fenland to 5% in South Cambridgeshire.
- 3.21 These figures break down to:
- A sustained education destination: Cambridgeshire 86%, National 87%.
 - A sustained apprenticeship: Cambridgeshire 4%, National 4%
 - A sustained employment destination: Cambridgeshire 4%, National 3%
 - Destination not sustained: Cambridgeshire 5%, National 5%
 - Activity not captured in the data: Cambridgeshire 1%, National 1%
- 3.22 At district level the level of 'apprenticeships' varied from 2% in Cambridge City to 7% in East Cambridgeshire. The highest level of 'in sustained employment' was in Huntingdonshire (5%) and the highest level of 'destination not sustained' was Fenland (6%).

Winter Grant

- 3.23 We have issued 40,204 supermarket vouchers (for a total of £30) to families across Cambridgeshire for the two weeks of the Christmas holidays. These were issued to those families meeting the low income criteria for the following benefits:
- Free school meals
 - Funded childcare for 2 year olds
 - Early years pupil premium
 - 16-19 bursary fund / free school meal scheme.
- 3.24 The scheme also had 3,236 individual applications for additional support from families across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Support requests include food, household energy bills, clothing, blankets, shoes, and white goods.
- 3.25 Over 2000 contacts were received by our [Winter Support](#) contact link and advice was given to all.

- 3.26 The scheme saw over 180 new successful applications for free school meals (FSM) during last 3 weeks of December.
- 3.27 We have identified that the provision of Universal Infant Free School Meals to all pupils in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 has meant that many parents have not signed up for free school meal entitlement. This has impacted schools budgets and also meant that pupils' premium children are understated. We have also seen that siblings not always signed up automatically when one qualify. We have issued guidance to schools.
- 3.28 We are currently reviewing the financial commitment to date and we intend running the scheme again in February half term.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4.1 A good quality of life for everyone

- 4.1.1 Providing high quality education should enhance the skills of the local workforce and provide essential childcare services for working parents or those seeking to return to work. Schools and early years and childcare services are providers of local employment.

4.2 Thriving places for people to live

- 4.2.1 There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children

- 4.3.1 There are no significant implications for this priority.

4.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

- 4.4.1 There are no significant implications for this priority.

5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

- 5.1.1 There are no significant implications.

5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

- 5.2.1 There are no significant implications.

5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

- 5.3.1 There are no significant implications.

5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.4.1 There are no significant implications.

5.5 **Engagement and Communications Implications**

5.5.1 There are no significant implications.

5.6 **Localism and Local Member Involvement**

5.6.1 Members receive a weekly briefing on the situation in Education from the Service Director for Education.

5.7 **Public Health Implications**

5.7.1 Public Health Directorate and Education Directorate working closely on the COVID-19 response and safe reopening of Education.

6.0 Source documents

6.1 [Key stage 4 performance 2020](#)

6.2 An accessible version of this report and appendix are available on request.